



The Grapevine

Volume 13, Issue 2

July 2011 to October 2011

Our Triannual Parish Magazine

The Vicar's Letter

The Vicar writes.....

The last four month period has been very busy with Lent and all the lead up to the many services of Holy Week and Easter.

The Lent Study Group was very enjoyable and successful with our best attendance yet of between 8 and 11 each night.

The four Easter Talks I gave to the Holy Trinity Kindergarten four class groups seemed to be a great success too and I got many comments from parents about how the children talk about what I have shared with them - sometimes the children are quite accurate and at other times rather inaccurate!!

I also led a Quiet Day for the Lay Oblates of the Community of the Holy Name (an Anglican Order of Nuns in Cheltenham) in March and this was well received.

I also attended a compulsory Diocesan Professional Standards Training Day in May which was all about the realities and legalities of the Diocesan and the National Anglican Church's Professional and Ethical Standards Requirements of all Clergy and Church Workers whether paid or unpaid. The ongoing legalistic requirements are getting more and more burdensome and complicated as with most professional business practices these days.

The following two sermons I preached recently which I think are worth sharing with you all again. The first is titled "If Easter is True....." and the second "God is Hate - You're Joking!"

Please take note of the events coming up in the next four month period and that I intend to take 5 weeks Long Service Leave during October and early November to use up most of my remaining accrued leave.

I will not be traveling overseas but will be taking

short local trips and attending one Clergy conference at the end of it.

God Bless You over the colder winter months,

Your friend and vicar,

Fr. David.

If Easter is True.....

Preached 8/05/2011 by Fr. David

Many of us no doubt watched and were engrossed by the beauty and pageantry and splendour of the Royal Wedding a week ago. It was a grand service, wonderfully choreographed and organised, and yet also relatively simple and straightforward. In all ways it was Anglican Liturgy at its traditional best. As one clergy remarked the other day, it's amazing to think that on a Friday night two billion people would sit in front of a TV to watch our Anglican Service. There's hope for us yet!

I was particularly moved by the way the lesson was read by James, the brother of the bride, Catherine. He read the lesson seemingly almost by heart. He read it slowly and with telling emphasis on various important parts of the reading. How many of you ordinarily listen well to the lessons on Sunday? But I'm sure everyone listened to the bible passage that James read! It is important to listen and take in the readings – they are chosen to be read and heard and God will speak to us through them if we open ourselves to that possibility. It is also very important to those of us who read the lessons in church to learn an excellent teaching lesson from James as a reader. That lesson is to have always prepared the reading in quiet beforehand – not a rushed 5 minutes before church – but at home in peace and quiet – and to take note and emphasize what we believe are the important verses in the passage – then to read clearly, loudly and most importantly unhurriedly.

(Continued on page 2)

If Easter is True..

(continued from page 1)

Each of the three readings this morning are about hearing and seeing the message of the Risen Christ. Unless people are able to clearly hear and see the message and the reality of the Risen Christ, then they will never believe the Gospel and its wonderful truth and power for the world.

In the first reading (*Acts of the Apostles 2:14, 22b-24, 36-39, 41*), Peter is preaching to a large crowd in the very early days of the Christian church after the Resurrection. There is some scoffing but the crowd is listening. Peter appeals to the crowd to repent – to change their ways which clearly aren't working for them. They are asked to repent and to be baptised and thus to take on the way of Christ and the power of Christ which, if lived truly and humbly and compassionately, will be a blessing to oneself and to the world. In the second reading from the first letter of Peter (*1 Peter 1:13-16*) written perhaps some 50 years later, Peter (or the writer, probably a disciple of Peter's) exhorts the people he is writing to, to live their lives in the light of the sacrifice of Christ.

The Gospel reading (*St. Luke 24:13-35*) tells the wonderful story of two of Jesus' disciples several days after the crucifixion and the day after the Resurrection walking along the dusty road from Jerusalem to the little village of Emmaus. They are despondent, deflated and despairing. They had seen the death of their wonderful teacher and master whom they believed was the new Messiah, and yet he was now dead! They had heard that some women had claimed to have seen Jesus alive, risen in power and glory, but they did not and could not believe it. Then Jesus strolls along the road and joins them. Somehow they don't know it is he until they listen – until they get out of their sadness and personal prison of grief – and listen to what this stranger has to say. He states that all that happened to Jesus had to happen according to the Scriptures. Then they stop and have a meal and Jesus breaks the bread and blesses it and then they see! They hear and see – then they believe

and know!

Christians believe, or try to understand and believe that Easter – the Resurrection of Jesus as God's Son - is true. We believe that God, in an amazing act of divine vindication and love, raised the crucified Jesus from the dead. In so doing God definitively and for all time acted in our world and revealed who God really is and what God is really up to in our world. God as one God in a Trinity of Being – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – is the one who wins victory through suffering, who lifts up the downtrodden and the oppressed, who will not allow the Osama Bin Ladens of this world to ultimately have control, who will not allow the victims of evil and injustice finally to be crushed. In the end, no matter what evil is done – even the horrible and scandalous death of his only Son, Jesus, God will get God's ultimate way with the world.

Easter is True!

And if Easter is true, as we as Christians believe it to be, then how should we live? That is the question that each day should challenge us and hopefully inspire us to better and more compassionate and honourable living.

Our lives are a constant battle with the meaning of Easter for our daily lives and the dangers of our own self will and apathy and self centredness.

When the crowd, in the first reading today, hear Peter's wonderful passionate sermon about the risen Christ they ask him "What should we do?" He replies: "Repent and be baptised!" This is both a once only event and a continued daily event for each of us. Repent – look at ourselves and try to change the things we do and say that are not at all Christ like. Then be baptised – let the love and refreshing life giving water and power of Christ flow over and through us to empower us for daily living.

Peter then goes on to say, in his letter in the second reading, to the struggling Christian congregation he is writing too that in Jesus' Resurrection you are ransomed from the powers of darkness and despair. Therefore love one another deeply from the heart because you have been born

(Continued on page 3)

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Vicar

The Rev'd David Head
(03) 9598 1707;
Email drhead@netspace.net.au

Parish Secretary

Jill Esplan
(03) 9598 4239
Email jesplan@netspace.net.au

Email Distribution Lists

If you would like to be on the "General" email list (for notification of deaths, illness, special events), or the "Sunday School" email list (for Sunday School events) please email the Parish Secretary, Jill Esplan.

If Easter is True..

(continued from page 2)

anew. It is as though the resurrection of Jesus is for us a new birth that we have to hear, see, believe and live each day anew.

The two disciples on the road to Emmaus hear and see the Risen Jesus – Jesus then physically departs from them – but they are changed, renewed and then go back to Jerusalem in joy and power proclaiming that Easter is true – he had risen indeed!

Through the centuries, each new person has to hear and see and find for themselves the truth of the Easter mystery and glory. If Easter is true, then it means that Jesus Christ is not just a wonderful teacher, a great healer, an inspiring world figure, but that Jesus is none other than the full revelation of God available to us as we are able to absorb and accept some of the infinity of that reality.

If Easter is true then never again need we lose heart or despair or give up. When God transformed the evil and seeming ultimate destruction of life in the bloody crucifixion, into a glorious triumph, then who knows what God can do with our own set backs and dead ends, failures and hurts. No place is beyond the redeeming grace of the Risen Christ.

If Easter is true, then death is never the last word - it is never the ultimate tragic end to what would then be a meaningless life. There is new hope and a new beginning, and a "beyond" we know virtually nothing about in this life.

If Easter is true, then we are not and are never alone, no matter how alone we may feel at times. Jesus himself felt betrayed and forsaken at times and even uttered the appallingly stark words as he died on the cross "My God, why have you forsaken me?" But he knew and we know that this was not ultimately true. But it is something we all feel and

experience to varying degrees in our lives as we journey within our limited mortality and the imperfections of life.

God is here among us now if Easter is true. In daily life, in worship here together, in the Lord's body and blood of the bread and wine at Communion, in the shaking of hands and kissing at the peace, the Risen Jesus is reaching out to you and me to hear and see and believe.

Ha! Ha! Ha! The Funeral Procession

(from Julie Shembry)

A woman was leaving a 7-11 convenience store with her morning coffee when she noticed a most unusual funeral procession approaching the nearby cemetery.

A long black hearse was followed by a second long black hearse about 50 feet behind.

Behind the second hearse was a solitary woman walking a pit bull dog on a leash.

Behind her were about 200 women walking single file.

The woman couldn't stand the curiosity. She respectfully approached the woman walking the dog and said, "I am so sorry for your loss, and I know now is a bad time to disturb you, but I've never seen a funeral like this. Whose funeral is it?"

The woman replied, "Well that first hearse is for my husband."

"What happened to him?" I asked.

The woman replied, "My dog attacked and killed him."

She inquired further, "Well, who is in the second hearse?"

"His mistress. She tried to help my husband, then the dog turned on her."

A poignant and thoughtful moment of silence passes between the two women.

"Can I borrow the dog?"

Get to Know your Vestry

Wardens :

Richard Pennington and Glenn Adams. Tony Mayor is the Vicar's Warden.

Vestry Members :

Linda Barry, Martin Turner, (Parish Treasurer), Andrew Esplan, Caroline Aikins, Greg Wolfenden, Clay Jones & Catherine Robertson.

Ha! Ha! Ha!

(from Maureen Gruenert - as it is tax return time)

Answering the phone, the priest was surprised to hear the caller introduce herself as a tax auditor. "But we do not pay taxes," the priest said.

"It isn't you, Father, it's one of your parishioners, Sean McCullough. He indicates on his tax return that he gave a donation of \$15,000 to the church last year. Is this, in fact, the truth?"

The priest smiled broadly. "The cheque hasn't arrived yet, but I'm sure I'll have it when I remind dear Sean."

God is Hate - You're Joking!

Preached 29/05/2010 by Fr. David

"God Hates You!" That was one of the signs that confronted TV viewers while watching 60 Minutes on Sunday night as Liz Hayes interviewed a rabid fundamentalist Christian leader in America whose church pickets the funerals of soldiers because God also hates soldiers.

One sign said "**God hates Liz Hayes**", another "**God hates Gays**", another "**God hates Australia**". This self-proclaimed Christian leader and his equally horrifying young male junior leader said God hates Australia and that is why we are having these recent floods and bushfires and tragedy - because God hates us - hates us because we are involved in the Afghanistan war, hates us because we tolerate and accept same sex attracted people, hates us because we have casinos and so on - the list is almost endless. When interviewed by Liz Hayes the Christian leader said "**God is much more a God of Hate than a God of Love.**" He claims there is much more hate from God in the bible for people than love.

Mark and I were over at my brother Roger's house for dinner and we watched the program together with his two teenage children. It was actually a great exercise in critical debate and I think it was actually very helpful for these young people to be faced with such hatred and to be able to discuss it and debrief with sensible, aware adults. Sadly there is much in the Old Testament which is appalling and hateful, but this is not God - it is attributed to God - but it is merely, I believe, the cultural norms and practices that were slowly being questioned and changed over a long period of time. God distinctly changes dramatically in his attitudes and character as the writings of the Old Testament develop and mature over time. Even so, the understanding of God is still very problematic even by the time of Jesus. But - and it is a very big BUT - it is not God at all that is changing, it is our ability

to understand God's ways and purposes that is changing.

We humans tend to make God in our own image and understand God on our terms, and we humans are often not very nice people as a whole - and we all know that! Just look at our world's continuing history of war and violence and abuse and oppression. God, in our image, is a pretty offensive God and God in the image of that appalling Christian fundamentalist leader on TV on Sunday night is a truly appalling God. Nobody, except a few psychologically and pathologically disturbed people in such an abusive group and their, sadly I think, brain washed children want to believe in a God that is a God of hate.

Jesus presents to us a dramatically different God. He says so many times that God is a God of Love - that God is a God of Compassion, of Mercy, of Forgiveness, of Love for the outsider and oppressed. This Christian Fundamentalist leader on TV is sadly not a follower of the Gospel Christ at all, but a follower of an angry desert patriarchal God of a warring brutalized people of 3,500 years ago.

The opening verse of today's Gospel (*St. John 14:15-21*) is Jesus talking to his disciples just before his arrest and betrayal and death. He says to them "If you love me you will keep my commandments". And what are Jesus' commandments - he only gave two - to love God with all your mind, your heart and your soul, and to love your neighbour as yourself. Not even the vaguest hint of hate here - not even the vaguest hint of judgment.

Jesus then goes on to say to his disciples that he will soon be leaving them as he has to return to God the Father. However though he will leave them, he will not leave them alone and desolate. Rather he will ask God the Father to send them another Advocate to be with them forever. This advocate is the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of all Truth.

(Continued on page 5)



God is Hate - You're Joking!

(continued from page 4)

Truth is a dangerous word. We humans again want to commandeer the word Truth and make God's truth into our own truth which is always a seriously "out of balance" truth. Jesus indeed tells us in this passage that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth and it is a Truth that the world cannot receive because it neither sees God and the Spirit, nor knows God and the Spirit. You can only know the Truth when the Holy Spirit abides in You.

But knowing the Truth is knowing the Spirit of God – it is not knowing the Mind of God completely and unreservedly. Religious fundamentalism of any sort is so dangerous because it claims to know the Truth - the total Truth and no-one who disagrees with them has any truth or access to God.

Jesus is very careful to tell us that we cannot be God, we cannot be the Holy Spirit, we cannot be the Truth, rather the Spirit of Truth will be the paraclete, the one who will come alongside us to lead us into truthful living for our daily lives. We will never ever get there, but it is a continuous lifelong process of being led into truth.

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth – the Holy Spirit of God is infinite, everywhere, mind-blowing, all powerful. We can only know moments of amazing awareness of God's love and presence. We can only know moments of deep clarity of, in reality, what are minute areas of truth for us in the power of the Spirit. We can never be or know the Truth – it is beyond our wildest comprehension. Even a person totally in tune with God's love and purpose, if there has ever been such a one other than Jesus, is only able, as a human being, to be in tune with a minute part of God's being and the Holy Spirit's Power and Truth.

It is a mind boggling reality that gives one great peace of heart and mind knowing that God is Love, that God is Compassion and Mercy, that God in Jesus is our Lord and Saviour, that God in the Holy Spirit is our constant companion and source of guiding power, no matter how badly we manage to source and use it all.

I can dismiss such ranting depraved caricatures of Christianity as this man and his group on TV made last Sunday night and those who claim the ultimate truth because I know a very, very different God and I know through Jesus' words that anyone who abides in Jesus and the Holy Spirit abides in God's love – nowhere is Hate to be seen!

**From the Parish Registers
March 2011 – June 2011**



May God bless you in your life in Christ!

- 06/03/2011 Isobel Grace Buchanan
- 06/03/2011 Angus James Buchanan
- 13/03/2011 Daisy Mavis Catherine Roberts
- 20/03/2011 Ben William Montgomery
- 10/04/2011 Aaron Kwok



Weddings

No weddings during this period



Funerals and Thanksgiving Services

20/04/2011 Shirley Mary Keenan
Our sympathies are with Ian and Lesley Keenan on the death of Ian's mother.

Also, we were saddened to hear of the death of a much loved former parishioner, Marj Crellin who died on May 18. Her funeral service was held at the Anglican Church in Gosford, NSW.

Postscript.....About our Email and Telephone Prayer Teams

Don't forget we have two teams of people who are very happy to pray for you or someone you know of in need of prayers. You can ring them through to Fiona Thomas on 9557 6577, or email her on fiphil44@hotmail.com. If you can't contact her, please contact Jill Esplan or Fr. David (details on page 2).

What's Been Happening Lately?

Lent Study Discussion Group

The Lent Study Discussion Groups were held over the five Wednesday nights of Lent, from March 16 to April 13. It was the best attended series of Study Groups since I came to Holy Trinity with around 8 to 10 people attending every night and around 12 different people who came at least once.

Well Done!

When I first arrived at Hampton, for 2 or 3 years it was hard to get 4 or 5 attending in total!

This year's studies were filled with lively conversation and a worthwhile experience was had by all.

Holy Week, Good Friday and Easter Services

These were all successful and numbers were up slightly on last year which was a surprise given the way that School Holidays fell this year. The Vicar also preached at the Ecumenical Ash Wednesday service at St. Mary's this year.

Vestry Planning Day

On March 5 most of our Parish Vestry attended a full day conference on the need for Inviting New People and Welcoming in the Parish. It was an excellent series of presentations and material from it will be used to prepare the congregation better to be "inviting people" closer to "Back to Church Sunday" on September 11.

Secret Men's Business

We held our inaugural Secret Men's Business Dinner at the Urchin Bar on March 1 to which a

number of our men in the under 60 age group were invited. The intention is to encourage better sharing and friendships among the men in our Church Fellowship. Around 15 men participated and it was a worthwhile occasion. The next Dinner will be on Tuesday, July 26. Enquiries to Andrew Esplan 9598 4239

Birthday Congratulations

We have had some very significant milestones reached by our parishioners over the past few months.

- Fr. David -60, Rob Clayfield -60
- Val Amess - 80, Trevor Wotley - 80.

Congratulations to you all!

Ha! Ha! Ha! Children are Quick ...

(from Fr. David)

TEACHER: Maria, go to the map and find North America .

MARIA: Here it is.

TEACHER: Correct. Now class, who discovered America ?

CLASS: Maria.

TEACHER: John, why are you doing your maths multiplication on the floor?

JOHN: You told me to do it without using tables.

TEACHER: Glenn, how do you spell 'crocodile?'

GLENN: K-R-O-K-O-D-I-A-L'

TEACHER: No, that's wrong

GLENN: Maybe it is wrong, but you asked me how I spell it.

TEACHER: Donald, what is the chemical formula for water?

DONALD: H I J K L M N O.

TEACHER: What are you talking about?

DONALD: Yesterday you said it's H to O.

TEACHER: Winnie, name one important thing we have today that we didn't have ten years ago.

WINNIE: Me!



COMING★UP.. at Holy Trinity in the next 4 months

Vicar will be Busy

The Vicar will be attending two different 3 day Clergy Conferences over June and July and will have 2 weeks Annual Leave in August and 5 weeks Long Service Leave beginning in October.

Annual Football Sunday

This will be held on **Sunday, August 28**. The 10am Service will be a Children's and Family Service with no communion, and will be followed by pies and sauce in the Hall.

Remember to wear your Footy Club colours – whether Aussie Rules, Rugby or Soccer - to the 8am and 10am services.

Annual Stewardship Sunday

The Annual Stewardship Sunday will be held on **Sunday, September 4** at both services. We are all asked to renew and recommit ourselves to the ongoing financial health and well being of the Parish by our regular offertory giving.

Back to Church or Come to Church Sunday

“Back to Church Sunday” is to be held on **Sunday, September 11**. All parishioners, with NO exception - even our young people - are encouraged to ask a friend, a neighbour, a work colleague, a school friend or parent, to come along with them to church that Sunday.

It is not a failure if the person you ask says “no” to the invitation. It's only a failure if you don't make the invitation! Let's make it a great occasion for people to experience what church is like, which is usually much better than they think it will be.



Annual Parish Progressive Dinner

Our Progressive Dinner is to be held on **Saturday, October 15 at 7pm** and the Spit Roast has already been booked. **Please put the date in your diary**. The cost will probably be around \$40/head but is yet to be finalized. The Entree will be at the Appelbes' home across the road from the Dessert Course which will be at the Esplans'. The main

course will be in the Church hall. Numbers will be limited to around 50 people so get in quickly when the notice goes up in the narthex in early September.



Annual Blessing of the Pets

This popular service will be held at the 10am service on **Sunday, October 16**. This will be a non communion service and it is a great opportunity to invite neighbours and local community friends and their pets to come along.

Annual General Meeting

This will take place on **Sunday, November 13**. We will have just the one service that day at 9.30am followed by the AGM and election of new Wardens and Vestry for 2012.

Blessing of the Fleet

Fr. David will be Blessing the Fleet at Hampton Sailing Club on **Sunday, October 2** and he also has 3 weddings taking place at Holy Trinity before Christmas - which is great news as we haven't had a wedding in the Parish church in almost 2 years!

Ha! Ha! Ha! Road Rage

from Fr. David.

The light turned yellow, just in front of him. He did the right thing, stopping at the crossing, even though he could have beaten the red light through the intersection.

The tailgating woman was furious and honked her horn, screaming in frustration, as she missed her chance to get through the intersection, dropping her mobile and makeup.

As she was still in mid-rant, she heard a tap on her window and looked up into the face of a very serious police officer. The officer ordered her to exit her car with her hands up.

He took her to the police station where she was searched, fingerprinted, photographed, and placed in a holding cell. After a couple of hours, a policeman approached the cell and opened the door. She was escorted back to the booking desk where the arresting officer was waiting with her personal effects.

He said, "I'm very sorry for this mistake. You see, I pulled up behind your car while you were blowing your horn, flipping off the guy in front of you and cursing at him. I noticed the 'What Would Jesus Do' bumper sticker, the 'Choose Life' license plate holder, the 'Follow Me to Sunday-School' bumper sticker, and the chrome-plated Christian Fish emblem on the boot, so naturally....I assumed you had stolen the car."

KIDS ONLY

KIDS ONLY

KIDS ONLY

What's "Pentecost" all about??

Pentecost was and still is a Jewish feast that celebrates the beginning of the harvest. It took place 50 days after the feast of Passover. Jewish pilgrims came to Jerusalem from all over the ancient world for the celebration.

Pentecost became a Christian celebration after Jesus rose from the dead. The first thing he did when he appeared for the first time to his disciples in the upper room... *"Then he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit."*

St. Luke describes this with more flourish: *"And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were. Then there appeared to them tongues as of*

fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and could suddenly speak in many different languages they had not previously known!"

The speaking in various languages meant that the pilgrims who had come to Jerusalem from many different countries for the Pentecost festival could each now hear the disciples speaking about Jesus in a language they could understand and demonstrated the presence of the Holy Spirit.

The feast of Pentecost today is meant to remind us to be aware of God's presence - his real presence - through his Spirit... present

within us and around us when we ride our bikes, when we eat, when we are at school, when we play, when we get up in the morning and go to bed at night, and when we sleep. All the time!

Can you guess now why Fr. David always asks us to wear red, orange or yellow to church on Pentecost Sunday??

The Holy Spirit Comes

