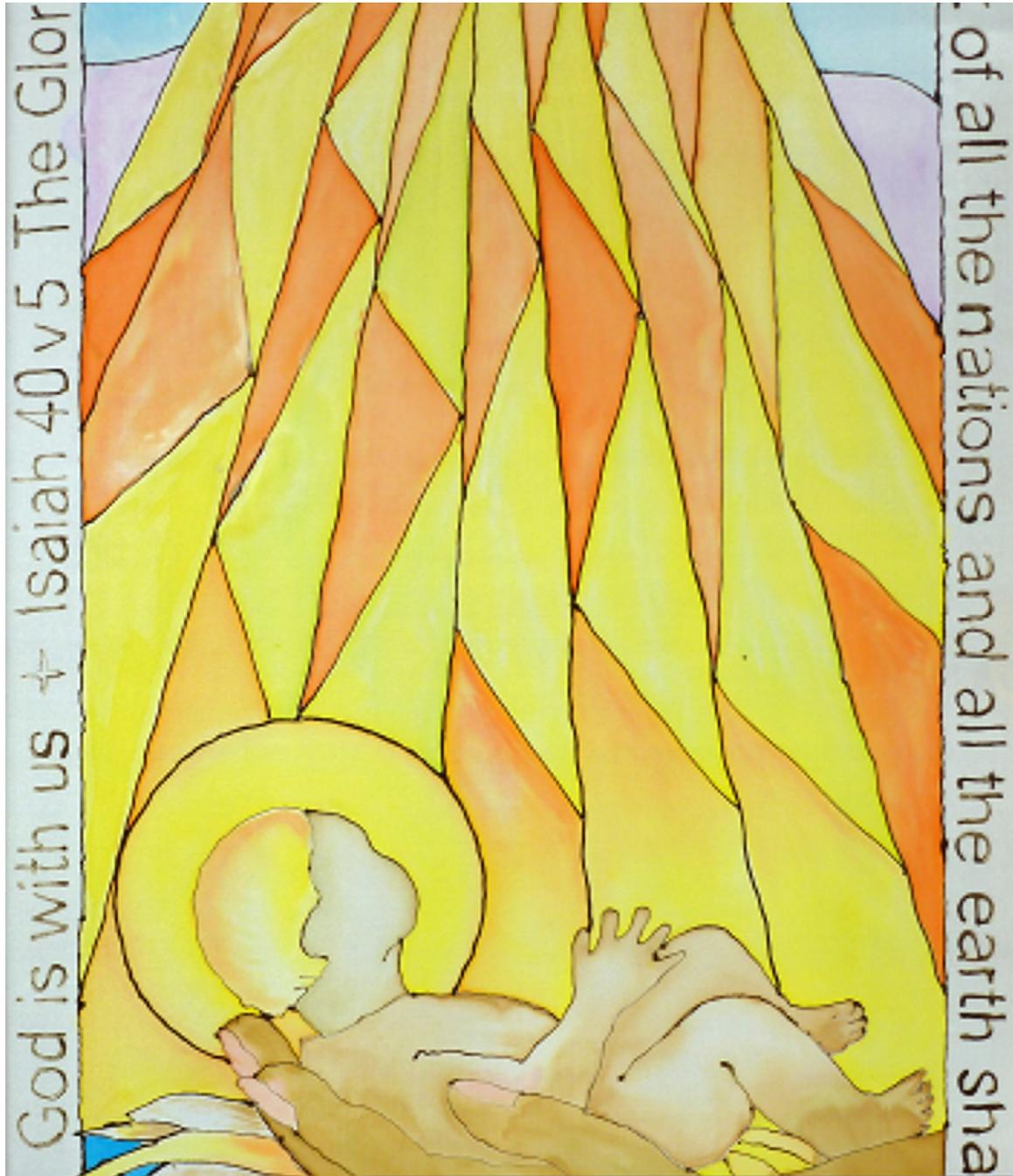




**PASCOE VALE
UNITING CHURCHES**

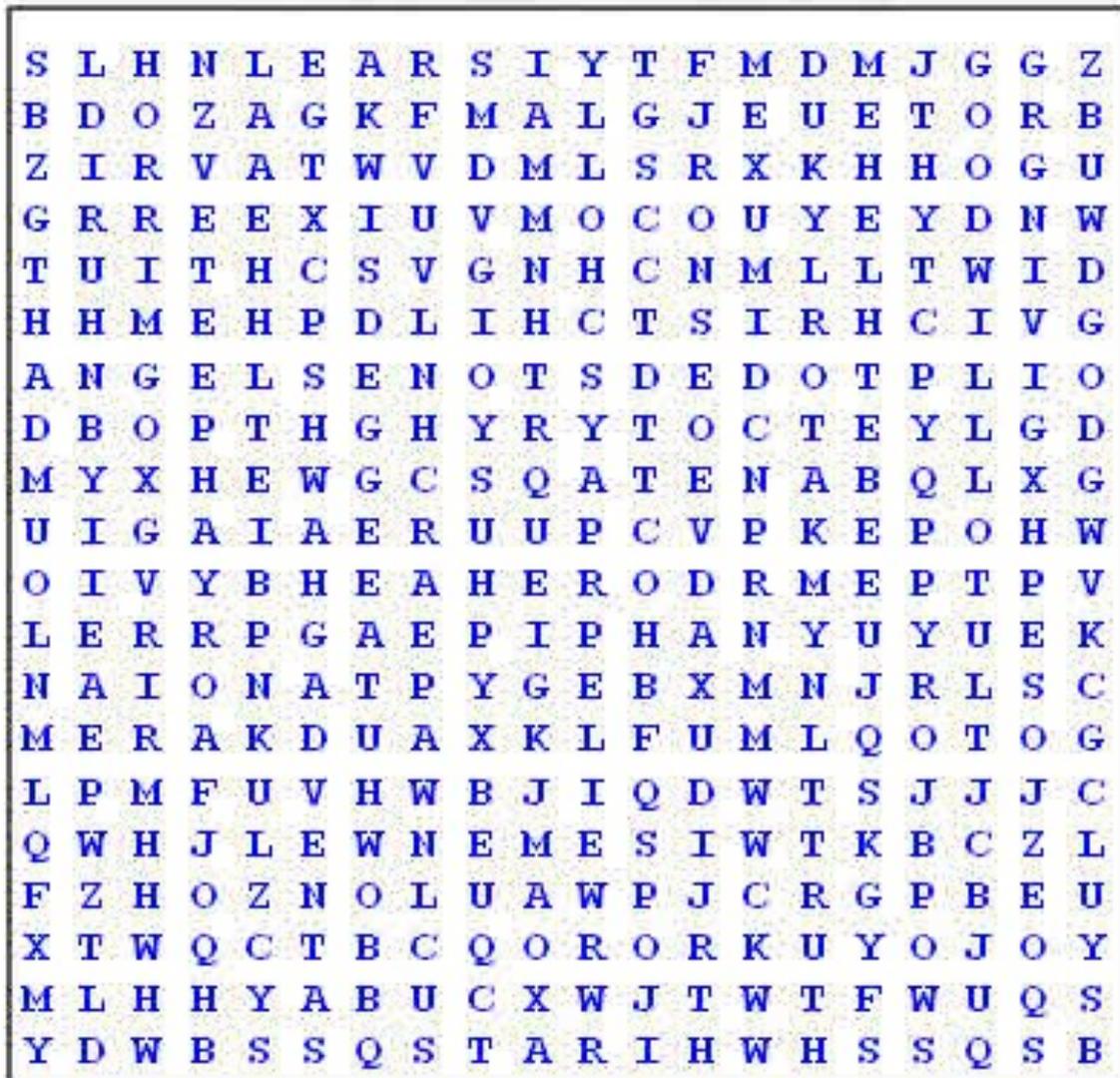
DECEMBER 2016 MAGAZINE



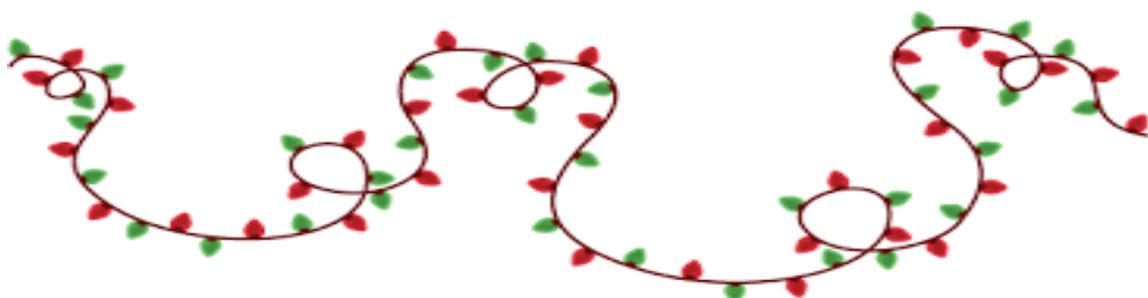
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A Christmas Wordsearch



ADVENT, ANGELS, BETHLEHEM, BIRTH, CAROLS, CHRISTCHILD, DONKEY, EGYPT, EPIPHANY, GABRIEL, GIVING, GOD, GOODWILL, HEAVEN, HEROD, HOLLY, ISRAEL, JOSEPH, JOY, LIGHT, LOVE, LOWLY, MANGER, MARY, NATIVITY, PEACE, PROPHECY, TRUMPET, SON, STAR, TRUTH, WISEMEN, SHEPHERDS



A MESSAGE FROM REVEREND TINA

God's Great love for us

The image of a mother holding her baby speaks to us of love. See how Mary holds her child Jesus to her heart. We crave love like this. As children our mothers held us, as Mary held Jesus. Most of us were cared for, nurtured and embraced and loved unconditionally. Our mothers did their best.

Mary knew about surrender to God. Her life was changed by the incarnation of God in Jesus. For us the incarnation can be a mystery. Through prayer and surrender we come to some understanding of its true meaning.



John Harvey wrote about surrender in: *Going Home Another Way*. He said: *Once again we welcome you. Bending so low to creep among us, not forcing, not shouting, too gentle to even flicker our candle flames. Make your home among us again, we pray; be our guest, in heart and home and city, in the empty, howling wastelands of our times and light up our world once again, with the new hope and the life that faith in you still brings.*

Each Christmas we come face-to-face with God in the form of a tiny helpless baby and we remember when we were tiny, vulnerable and helpless. There is much grace in this kind of love, in Jesus surrender to being born amongst us. How it all happened cannot be reasoned and thought about. It requires a deep knowing, a step of faith, where we put aside what we've learned and our questions. We simply cannot think it out or use our reason to understand it.

The Logos or Word overcomes the darkness of our lack of understanding and incomprehension. John's prologue invites us to be open to God and receive God's communication to us. His hymn of poetry touches our deeper parts and helps us understand when Jesus joined us God created a new world and universe, of eternal light and life through Jesus, who was with God long before the creation of the world.

God reached out to us through Jesus, who was willing to be enfleshed amongst us in order to communicate how much we are loved and draw us into the light of the life he was offering us.

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A MESSAGE FROM REVEREND TINA *continued from previous page*

So how can we respond to God's great love for us?

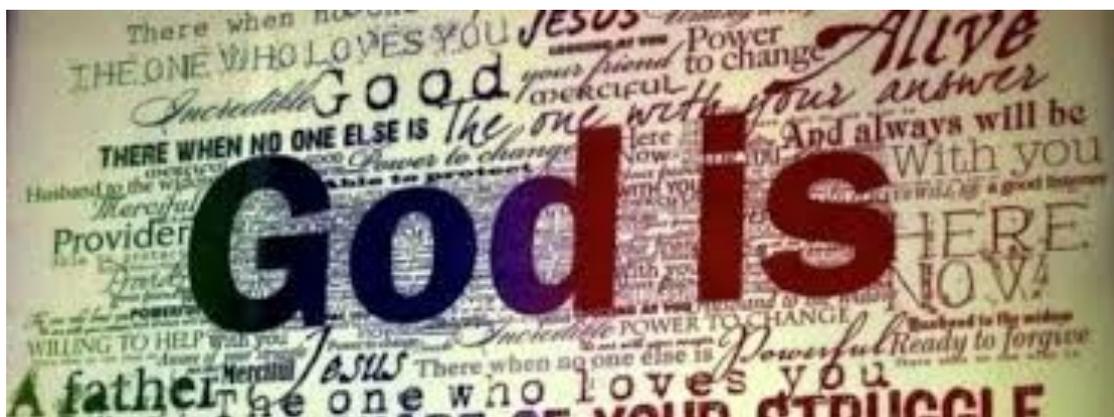
Richard Rhor in: *Preparing for Christmas, Daily Meditations for Advent* wrote: *We are called to be a people who can say: Come Lord Jesus. Many of us search for someone to surrender to or something we prefer to life. God is the only one we can surrender to without losing ourselves. The irony is when we surrender to God, we find ourselves.*

We open the doors of our hearts to this great gift from God and new birth, where we are reborn of the Spirit and become children of God. This is something to pray about and sit with. We grasp it through our heart. God loving us so much he was willing to be humbled and become one of us.

God is mystery and the universe seems far away and bigger than us. Yet, God is about relationship and intimacy and we're part of all God's creation. What we do affects it all as it all affects us. Since Jesus became flesh, we've been moving along with the galaxies. All God created may disappear, yet, God will remain and since we are kin with God, we too shall remain and continue on in eternal life, which never ends, is timeless and for evermore.

Jesus is the exact imprint of God's being and he communicates to us the nature of who God is, in a helpless baby. This Christmas may we all catch a glimpse of God's true nature. May we be still long enough to listen to what God is trying to communicate to us. May we be able to surrender to God's love for us.

Rev Tina



‘FROM JUDY’S BLOG’

The German poet, Rainer Maria Rilke, in his Letters to a Young Poet, counselled:

‘Have patience with everything unresolved in your heart and try to love the questions themselves ... Don’t search for the answers, which cannot be given to you now, because you would not be able to live them. And the point is to live everything. Live the questions now. Perhaps then, someday far in the future, you will gradually, without even noticing it, live your way into the answer.’

This piece of advice contains Advent themes: patience, waiting on answers by living the questions and hope for future resolution.

I don’t generally listen to talk-back radio, but recently, in only five minutes of a discussion about men and women sharing household labour, I heard a man live into his answer.

He rang in to say that he couldn’t understand why his wife didn’t always react well to his attempts to help her around the house. The guest speaker replied that perhaps he could re-frame his approach: rather than offering to help, he could ask his wife what he could do to share the work.

But, he replied, he was more than willing to help, why did she not understand that. The guest speaker tried again. By offering to help, he was implying that the work was hers and perhaps, she was failing in it. They lived together, the household was theirs, by offering to share the work he would be saying he understood that.

He started to speak again, but then paused, and in that moment of silence the listening audience heard the penny drop. His next words told us that he could see the distinction.

It was an Advent moment, for both of us. Clearly, his question troubled him, he had been living it and there, on public radio, he lived into the answer. And the answer surprised him, not something he could do, but a different way to think about it. A way to re-frame the question.

As for me, I witnessed the coming of light into darkness. I heard the birth of understanding and insight, made all the more wondrous because I did hear it rather than see it.

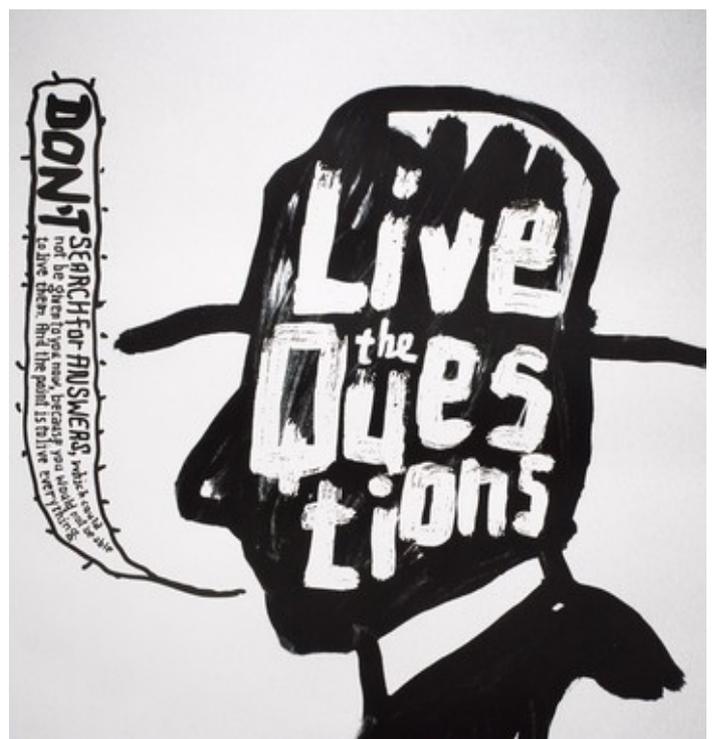
Have patience ...

Love the questions ...

Live everything.

An Advent call.

<http://judyrigby.com>



Church Bulletins and Bloopers

The Fasting & Prayer Conference will include meals.

Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Bring your husbands.

Next Thursday there will be tryouts for the choir. They need all the help they can get.

Irving Benson and Jessie Carter were married on October 24 in the church. So ends a friendship that began in their school days.

At the evening service tonight, the sermon topic will be 'What Is Hell?' Come early and listen to our choir practice.

Please place your donation in the envelope along with the deceased person you want remembered.

Potluck supper Sunday at 5:00 PM. Prayer and medication to follow.

The eighth-graders will be presenting Shakespeare's Hamlet in the Church basement Friday at 7 PM. The congregation is invited to attend this tragedy.

Weight Watchers will meet at 7 PM at the First Presbyterian Church. Please use large double door at the side entrance.

(Many thanks to whoever left this listing in the magazine pigeon-hole)

GOD'S PLAN FOR AGING

Most seniors never get enough exercise. So in his wisdom, God decreed that seniors become forgetful so they would have to search for their glasses, keys and other things misplaced and move around more. And God looked down and saw that it was good!

Then God saw there was yet another need. So God in his wisdom made seniors lose coordination so they would drop things, which would require them to bend and reach and stretch. And God looked down and saw that it was good!

Then God considered the functioning of senior bladders and decided that in his wisdom there might be calls of nature more frequently, requiring more walking to the bathroom, which would burn more calories. God looked down and saw that it also was good!

Seniors were obliged to exercise more from these senior shortcomings and did become more active as a result. So if you find you are required to get up and down more as you age, remember it's God's will and in your best interest, even though you mutter under your breath!

SMILE — A — WHILE

An elderly woman decided to prepare her will and told her solicitor she had two final requests:

First, she wanted to be cremated and second, she wanted her ashes scattered over Bunnings.

"Bunnings" the solicitor exclaimed.

"Why Bunnings?"

"Then I'll be sure my family will visit me every week" she replied...

UCAF FELLOWSHIP GROUP.....

President: Jean Kyte

Secretary: Marj Sproat



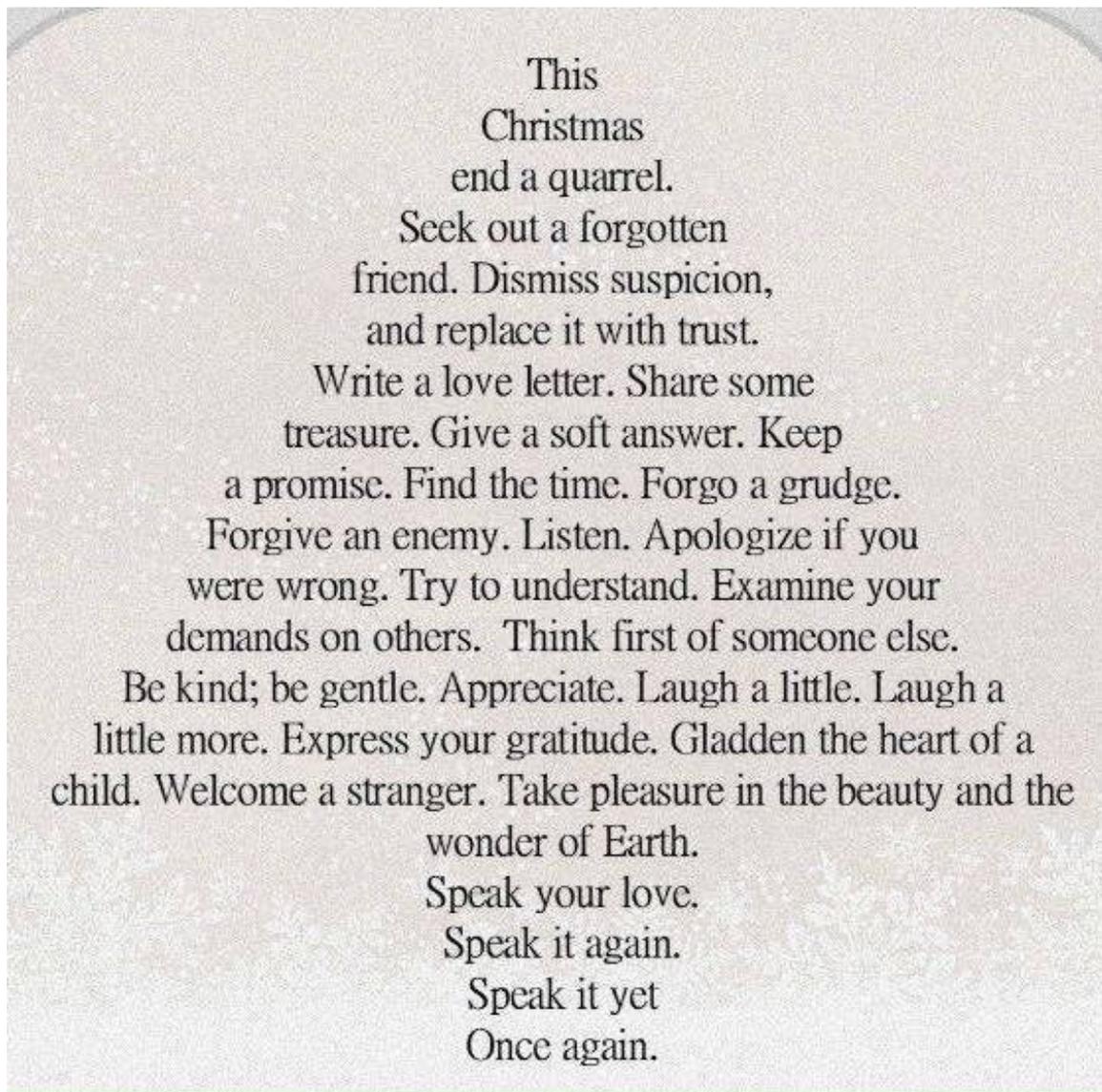
We meet at the PVS Uniting Church at 1 pm on the second Tuesday of each month (excluding January) and are always pleased to welcome new members and visitors.

After many years as secretary of the UCAF, we wish to thank Gwenda Williams for a job well done. I thought I had the sack as secretary on my first day as I left the minute book at home—but I was assured no-one gets the sack around here.

We held our Christmas Breakup with a bring your own lunch on 6 December and our 2017 syllabus was discussed—we are planning an interesting year ahead.

We start the year with our dedication service at 11 am on Tuesday 14 February and this will be a communion service.

Marj



SOUTHERN SNIPPETS

Christmas, as usual, is our busy time but this year has been enjoyable, rewarding and a time of sharing. Our traditional Christmas Tree has a large number of gifts, and festive food and general produce etc beneath it—which will all be taken to Lentara for distribution to needy families.



In November we held our congregation's annual meeting and elected our elders for a further 3 years and all other positions for 2017. Our second Hymn Sing-along was held on 20 November with approximately 50 people attending and the offering taken up for the Christmas Bowl Appeal.

Our Golden Oldie movie screenings on the 2nd Wednesday of each month started in October with about 20 people attending. We have now watched *The African Queen*, *Mrs Miniver* and more recently *Going My Way*. There is no screening in January but we are looking forward to *The Philadelphia Story* on Wednesday 15 February at 1.30 pm and *Rear Window* on Wednesday 8 March at 1.30 pm—please tell (or bring) all your friends this is a free event with tea, coffee and refreshments available.

With Christmas almost upon us, we have sung carols at both the Dorothy Impey Home and BUPA, the Remembrance / Blue Christmas service was attended by over 20 people who appreciated Judy's thoughtful words, music and the lighting of votive candles.

Perhaps the happiest days were after school on the first two Mondays of December when children and their parents/carers joined in our Countdown to Christmas program—led by 3 young people from OAC Ministries. The families also enjoyed a sausage sizzle, courtesy of the Boys Club, on the first Monday and, on the second Monday, a sit-down family tea with sausages, hamburgers, salads, etc plus sweets and ice cream—all in all a great get-together.

Please remember our Christmas Eve service at 7 pm and don't forget that there will be a combined service only held at Kent Rd at 9 am on Christmas Day.

Our prayers are especially for those members in hospital at this time—Margaret Golding, Noel Tatam and Allenby Crewther—as well as Barbara Rathbone's son, Robert.

We also thank God for the happy arrival of a baby granddaughter, June, for Jeanette Branch and the Taylor family.

A safe and happy Christmas to all and best wishes for 2017.

Jean T



Dating Christmas

(an interesting speculation...)

Using astronomy to date the nativity

The Bible itself does not give an exact date for the birth of Jesus, or even enough indirect information to pin it down with certainty. At the request of Pope John 1st in the early 6th century, the birth of Jesus was to be used as a dividing line for dating historical events into BC and AD. However, it's been known for quite sometime that the chosen point of division must be an error.

The birth of Jesus was marked by two astronomical events. The relatively short lived Star of Bethlehem is known to most people. Less well known is that fact that an eclipse of the Moon also helps to fix the date of the nativity.

Jesus was born shortly before the death of Herod and Herod is recorded as dying shortly after an eclipse of the Moon. So there was an eclipse of the moon close to the time when Jesus was born.

Dating eclipses is easy – by applying Newton's Laws of Motion and his Universal Law of Gravitational Attraction you just have to work out the orbits of the Moon, Earth and Sun to see when they were in lined up in this order – as viewed from Jerusalem. There are just two relevant possibilities – in 4 and 1 BC.

The Star of Bethlehem ought to tie the date down with precision if we can identify exactly what sort of astronomical event it was. It must have been pretty impressive as it attracted widespread attention.

There are several possibilities but only those that persisted for several months need to be considered. This reduces the number of candidates to just two.

A comet was noted in the meticulous astronomical records of both the Chinese and the Babylonians. They describe a comet with a bright tail that appeared in the spring of 5BC and was visible for 70 days. The description of the 'star' in Matthew's gospel may mean that the comet's tail was seen from afar as being vertically above over Bethlehem. If this comet was the 'star of Bethlehem' then Jesus was born in the mid April of 5BC, which makes it the lunar eclipse of 4BC that occurred just after Herod's death.

The other possibility for the Star of Bethlehem is the apparent coming together in the sky – or conjunction – of the paths of Jupiter and Saturn in 7BC. Their combined brightness would have made them quite obvious in the night sky. In fact, due to the peculiarities of the motions of the planets as seen from Earth, Jupiter and Saturn would have moved back and forth close to each other in the night sky three times over a period of several months, before moving away to quite distinct regions of the sky.

To be guided by either these events – a comet, or the conjunction – the three wise men would have to travel about 1000km in two to three months – say 1000/75 days or about 14km/day – which seems to be quite feasible.

I favour the comet explanation not least because it would have been quite a bit brighter than the conjunction. Also, although the multiple conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter is a rare event – it does repeat every 800 years or so. The comet of 5BC only visited our solar system just once. Unlike Halley's comet for example, it doesn't keep returning.

So mid April of 5BC looks the best bet for actual date of the nativity.

In a previous article I explained how the crucifixion can be accurately dated using astronomical events. The date referred to our present day calendar was Friday 3rd April AD33

So for how long did Jesus live on Earth? It was from either 7 or 5BC until AD33. However, simply adding 7 or 5 plus 33 to get within 40 or 38 years gives the wrong answer! Remember that 1AD and 1BC start at the same instant. There is no zero AD - or zero BC for that matter. Counting back 1 year from 1AD gets you to 1BC. So to work out any time interval that spans the BC - AD divide, you must subtract 1 from the addition of the BC and AD years.

So Jesus lived for either 39 years if the Star of Bethlehem was a conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn, or, more likely, 37 years if it was the comet of 5BC that was the 'star' of Bethlehem.

Rick Marshall

This article used with permission of The Parish Window)

JOAN'S JOTTINGS

Here I am trying to find something to write about for the Christmas magazine. Only seems a couple of months ago I was writing an article for the last Christmas magazine—how times flies.

Cannot think of a great deal to write about. We raised \$292 at the Hymn Sing-along for the Christmas Bowl Appeal. Envelopes are in the churches for further donations up to mid-January.

I am running out of books with quotes and stories. Have been looking at the old magazines and found some articles I wrote in the 1980s in Munro Street times. Hope people have short memories.

Quotes from Munro Street

1984: "Sometimes we wonder why the Lord made certain things then realise even mosquitoes are religious—they sing and pray over us."

"Some minds are like concrete, thoroughly mixed and permanently set."

1985: "Some people are not only like salt that has lost its savour, but like pepper that that has lost its pep."



A Story from Munro Street 1985—entitled "Try Some Ducks"

A man rented a cottage with a beautiful river at the bottom of the garden. For five years he enjoyed the many blessings of the place and gladly paid the modest rent. He bathed in the river, fished in the pools, rested in the shade, tended the garden and kept chickens.

One day the river overflowed its banks. The garden was washed away and the chickens drowned. Suddenly he forgot all his past blessings and pleasures and it was all gloom and despair because of the dead chickens.

He told a surprised landlord he was moving out. "But why"? asked the landlord "you have been so happy here."

"Yes" replied the tenant "but it's different now, all my hens have drowned."

To this the landlord replied "next time, why don't you try ducks." Five years of enjoyment forgotten because of the drowned hens.

Have you been recently disappointed? Have you suffered a loss? Is everything blacked out? Have you forgotten all your past blessings?

Jesus said: "Be of good cheer: God knows what he is doing. He does not make mistakes."

If your chickens drown, try some ducks...

Munro Street 1987:

When high school kids wear rags today

We call it self expression.

When I was young and dressed this way

We called it The Depression.

Did you know there are 365 "Fear Nots" in the Bible—one for every day of the year.

Merry Christmas—Happy New Year.

Joan T

HAPPY NEW YEAR.....

The first day of the new year can be just another day, or it can be a fresh start, a resolution to improve the way we live and behave towards others.

We can't make the wind change or rains fall. We can't always undo mistakes. But we can learn from them and make small alterations to ensure our personal world is a happier one.

The secret lies in how we look at things – choosing to look at the cup as half full rather than half empty, and counting our blessings rather than those things that aren't going our way.



I was reminded of this by a festive message that came with a request to share it with others – I share this message (author unknown) with you today.

“Two traveling angels stopped to spend the night in the home of a wealthy family. The family was rude and refused to let the angels stay in the mansion's guest room.

Instead the angels were given a small space in the cold basement. As they made their bed on the hard floor, the older angel saw a hole in the wall and repaired it. When the younger angel asked why, the older angel replied, "Things aren't always what they seem."

The next night the pair came to rest at the house of a very poor, but very hospitable farmer and his wife. After sharing what little food they had the couple let the angels sleep in their bed where they could have a good night's rest.

When the sun came up the next morning the angels found the farmer and his wife in tears. Their only cow, whose milk had been their sole income, lay dead in the field. The younger angel was infuriated and asked the older angel how could you have let this happen?

The first man had everything, yet you helped him, she accused. The second family had little but was willing to share everything, and you let the cow die. "Things aren't always what they seem," the older angel replied.

"When we stayed in the basement of the mansion, I noticed there was gold stored in that hole in the wall. Since the owner was so obsessed with greed and unwilling to share his good fortune, I sealed the wall so he wouldn't find it."

"Then last night as we slept in the farmers bed, the angel of death came for his wife. I gave him the cow instead. Things aren't always what they seem." Sometimes that is exactly what happens when things don't turn out the way they should. If you have faith, you just need to trust that every outcome is always to your advantage. You just might not know it until some time later.

Affirmations are also helpful.

Two of my favourites are:

- ◆ Yesterday is history, Tomorrow is a mystery, Today is a gift. That's why it's called the present!
- ◆ I think this life is special.....live and savour every moment.....this is not a dress rehearsal.

Let's make the most of it.

Author Unknown

MY TRIP—OUTBACK TO THE SEA

My friend May and I travelled with a Shepparton Bus Company—Fords Coach Travel. There were 20 on the coach—all friendly country people with most seeming to belong to the Uniting Church and two ladies from the CWA. Malcolm, our bus driver was marvellous—he even taped my lips up so I couldn't talk!



Our first day was up the Hume Highway to Jerilderie and then onto Griffith. We visited Fred Hollows grave in the Bourke cemetery. Our first night was spent in Cobar then onto Barcardine to see the remainder of the Tree of Knowledge—the original site of the birth of the Labour Party. Then onto Longreach where we visited the Australia Stockman's Hall of Fame, the Outback Heritage Centre and the Qantas Founder's Museum.

We travelled to Emerald and then to Rockhampton—which is known as the beef capital of Queensland—and enjoyed a visit to the Botanical Gardens. Next day we reached the sea at Great Keppel Island where I was able to have a swim in the lovely blue waters before lunch on a glass bottomed boat. Lots of fish and a turtle and plenty of coral.



Our next day was spent in Bundaberg at the Bert Hinkler museum and the Hinkler Hall of Aviation. Ilfracombe was so interesting with one and half miles of tractors and historic cars.

We took a boat trip to Fraser Island, the largest sand island in the world. The bus driver invited me to sit at the front of the coach with him along the 75 mile beach to see the historic Maheno shipwreck and the golden sands. There were lots of fern, black boys (now known as grass trees) and banksias.



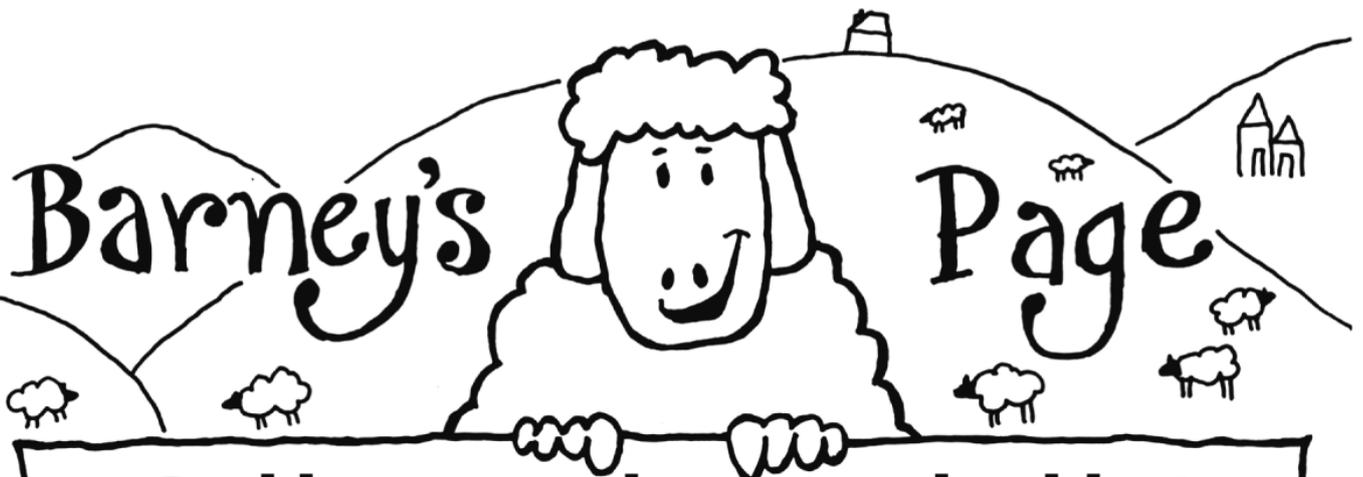
Our next day I think was the highlight of our trip. We were up early to go Whale watching—we boarded the boat and were taken on a ride to see the whales with Fraser Island in the distance all the way. Three whales really performed for us doing somersaults and jumping around—a wonderful experience. There was a beautiful sunset that night.

After leaving Hervey Bay we travelled through some hilly countryside, through cane fields, and pineapple and mandarin fields—then onto Kingaroy, the peanut capital. We had afternoon tea at Dalby (where the twin brothers won first price on the TV show House Rules). We also saw lots of coal trains at Dingo.

We cam home through Moree and Narrabri, Coonabarabran and Gilgandra—lots of wattle and wisteria and fields of bright yellow canola.

A great holiday with great people...

Mari Sproat



God is great – let us praise him!

Hello friends,

Have you ever wondered why we worship God? After all, if he's the King of all, why do we need to tell him that he's great?

Psalm 96 gives us some hints: because what God has done is so amazing we have to shout about it!

When we really know God, we want to tell him that he's brilliant – and we want to tell our friends about him too!

The Psalm continues with a request that the trees will sing for joy and the earth be glad. It's a great image to think about. The whole earth, plants, animals and people are happy because they can praise God for his greatness.

Can you praise God today for something? Love Barney

Jokes

How do trees get on the internet?
They log on!

How can you tell that the sea is friendly?
Because it waves!

Sing and praise his name. Day after day announce, "The Lord has saved us!"
Tell every nation on earth, "The Lord is wonderful and does marvellous things! The Lord is great and deserves our greatest praise!"
Psalm 96:2-4 (Contemporary English Version)



A lot of Psalms were written by King David - they were his response to what was happening in his life

Father God, you have created everything and you are amazing! Thank you that we can worship you. Amen

Search for God

Can you find these words, based on Psalm 96, in our wordsearch?

- EARTH
- GOD
- GREAT
- LORD
- PRAISE
- SAVED
- SING
- WONDERFUL

P	R	A	I	S	E	N	Y	L
P	G	Y	R	O	P	C	U	S
E	R	L	O	R	D	F	W	I
A	E	A	L	V	R	M	D	N
R	A	V	I	E	H	V	F	G
T	T	E	S	A	V	E	D	V
H	G	N	V	C	E	P	R	Z
V	O	O	D	A	E	N	I	S
W	O	N	D	E	R	F	U	L



**GLENROY & PASCOE VALE
UNITING CHURCHES
WORSHIP LOCATIONS**

**CNR OF CUMBERLAND RD &
WESTGATE ST,
PASCOE VALE STH**

**CNR OF KENT RD & CORNWALL
RD,
PASCOE VALE**

**70 WHEATSHEAF RD
GLENROY**

Ministers:

**Rev Tina Lyndon
0423 715 590**

**Rev Judy Rigby
0402 473 976**

REGULAR (WKLY) ACTIVITY:

Prayer & Share—Monday lunchtimes at
June Bowen's home
excluding School Holidays

DATES TO REMEMBER:

Sat 24 Dec	Christmas Eve service at PVS at 7 pm
Sun 25 Dec	Christmas Day service at <u>Kent Rd ONLY</u> at 9 am
Sun 1 Jan	Combined service at Kent Rd at 10 am
Sun 8 Jan	Combined service at PVS at 10 am
Sun 15 Jan	Combined service at Kent Rd at 10 am
Sun 22 Jan	Combined service at PVS at 10 am
Tue 24 Jan	Church Council Annual Meeting at Kent Rd at 7.45 pm
Sun 29 Jan	5th Sunday Combined service (with Glenroy) at Kent Rd at 10 am
Thu 2 Feb	Communion service Dorothy Impey Home 2pm
Fri 3 Feb	Messy Church at Kent Road at 6 pm
Mon 6 Feb	Prayer & Share recommences for 2017 at June Bowen's at 1.15 pm
Sat 11 Feb	Yarns & Threads at Kent Rd at 10 am
Tue 14 Feb	UCAF Fellowship Group Dedication service at PVS at 11 am followed by BYO lunch & meeting
Wed 15 Feb	Westgate Flicks (The Philadelphia Story) at PVS at 1.30 pm (for a 2 pm start)
Thu 2 Mar	Communion service Dorothy Impey Home 2pm
Fri 3 Mar	World Day of Prayer at Kent Rd at 10.30 am
Tue 8 Nov	Afternoon Fellowship Group at PVS at 1.00 pm Annual Meeting
Wed 8 Mar	Westgate Flicks (Rear Window) PVS at 1.30 pm (for a 2 pm start)
Sat 11 Mar	Yarns & Threads at Kent Rd at 10 am
Mon 13 Mar	Public Holiday (for Labour Day)
Tue 14 Mar	UCAF Fellowship Group meeting at PVS at 1 pm
Tue 28 Mar	Church Council meeting at PVS at 7.45 pm

STANDARD WORSHIP TIMES & SERVICES

Kent Road

**Sundays at 9.15 am (10.00 am on 1st Sunday of the month)
Messy Church at 6.00 pm (1st Friday of Feb, May, Aug & Nov)
Contact Shirley Foster on 9355 7988**

Pascoe Vale South (PVS)

**Sundays at 10.30 am
Contact Jean Taylor on 9354 6689**

Glenroy

**Sundays at 9.00 am
Contact Faye Woods on 9306 6104**

