



Church on the Hill

Sunday 18 December 2016



Theme: Prince of Peace
Vicar: Susan Gill
Preacher: Susan Gill
Readings: Jeremiah 33:1 - 3, 10 - 16, John 14:25 - 31

Sentence:

For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. The government will rest on his shoulders. And he will be called: Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

- Isaiah 9:6

Prayer for the day:

Gracious Lord, we thank you for your promises and for coming to earth to be our Prince of Peace. As we continue our Advent journey, grant us the peace that comes from trusting in

your grace, and relying on your promises. Help us spread this peace through all the things we say and all the things we do. We pray this in the name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Amen

Following Jesus, Building Community

Reflections...



Life and Death

"In the midst of life we are in death" is a phrase used Cranmer's Prayer Book as part of the funeral service. We don't use it any more – or at least I don't. And yet, taking two funerals this week means I have been pondering death.

In this Advent season we prepare to celebrate Christ's birthday. The one who came to be one of us took the most vulnerable form possible – that of a human baby. Mind blowing really! This season is a time of celebration and great joy. Yet in the midst of our parties, services, family gatherings, death is never far from us. As I contemplate this fact I am aware of three things:

First, there are many of us for whom Christmas reminds us of sad occasions as well as happy ones. All of us need to take time to acknowledge our feelings of sadness and regret as we remember people and possibilities that are lost to us for now.

Secondly, this is the time of great loneliness for many. How can we get alongside those who need a friend? Thank you to the AAW for hosting their January morning teas – a safe place to invite anyone. Thank you to Michaela and the team for the Community Christmas lunch – no-one has to be alone this Christmas.

Thirdly, it's good to ponder our own death for a moment. I know... no one really wants to do this. But let's be brave for a moment: What kind of a legacy do we want to leave behind? What difference do we want to make in our world? Who are the people most important to us? How do we convey to them the depth of our feelings for them? Do they know they are truly loved? What would happen to them if we died suddenly? Would they know where to find our

important papers? Would they be able to prepare our funeral easily? What would be their enduring memories of us?

For Death - John O'Donohue

From the moment you were born,
your death has walked beside you.
Though it seldom shows its face,
you still feel its empty touch
when fear invades your life,
or what you love is lost
or inner damage is incurred...

Yet when destiny draws you
into these spaces of poverty,
and your heart stays generous
until some door opens into the light,
you are quietly befriending your death;
so that you will have no need to fear
when your time comes to turn and leave,

that the silent presence of your death
would call your life to attention,
wake you up to how scarce your time is
and to the urgency to become free
and equal to the call of your destiny.

That you would gather yourself
and decide carefully
how you now can live
the life you would love
to look back on
from your deathbed.

'In the midst of life, we are in death' does not lead to despair. Rather it is a call to celebration and to life in all its fullness. It reminds me of Jesus promise;

"I came that you might have life and that life abundantly".
- John 10:10b

The baby Jesus is the beginning of that life. Let's live it!

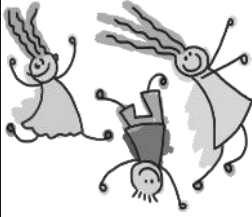
Learning in love,

Susan

Church open for Prayer - Join in on Monday from 9.00am to 2.00pm to pray for your personal needs, our parish, our community and the world. Coffee and prayer. All welcome. Feel free to come and go.

Community Christmas Lunch - Please bring your clean ice-cream containers and lids to the parish office your to use for left overs on Christmas Day.

Tea and Talk - If you are available next year to assist, even if only occasionally please see Shiona Frengley. Tea and Talk resumes on Wednesday 8 February 2017.



= KIDS' CHURCH CALENDAR =

Today Sunday 18 December - No Kids' Church but Video "Why do we call it Christmas"

The toy box and baby change facilities are available anytime at the rear of the Church. Prayers and offers of help are appreciated.
Catherine 022 647 9810

Prayers for the Week

God's World - We continue to pray for those civilians who are suffering in Aleppo and Mosul, may the proposed cease fire in Aleppo really hold, that the civilians may be able to find safety from armed conflict and those who are trapped under rubble be rescued and receive medical care. We continue to pray for all those who have suffered loss of homes and livelihoods in the recent earthquakes, particularly those in the Kaikoura and Awatere parishes and in the Aceh province of Indonesia and the Solomons. Give wisdom to central and local government as they plan major repair works to restore communications and services to those badly affected. We uphold in prayer those who have lost loved ones in the Cairo bombings at St Mark's Coptic Cathedral. We pray for Your church in Egypt, which has been under increasing pressure over the last few months, that You will uphold and strengthen Your people, and reassure them of Your presence with them at this time of Christmas.

Mission Partners - We pray for the Sussex family in Cambodia, bless the work that Phil has been involved with in an unevangelised village that a church might be established there. Help the children as they prepare for the family's return to New Zealand in the New Year, that they might make an easy transition from life in Cambodia to life in New Zealand.

Diocese - We pray for the parish of Greymouth, with Marge Tefft and Robin Kingston and their team, particularly Nicky Mora as she leads The Shed with its Friday night community youth group. Help the church grow in its passion for mission and in its depth of discipleship.

Local community - We pray today for Richmond Church of Christ with Steve and Lynn Rollo, bless their Christmas services and renew their vision for what You can do with Your people. We pray for the Woman's Refuge and all who seek to help the victims of family violence, which seems to be worse at this time of the year. Please help people to seek help before things get so bad and provide funding and places of refuge for women and their children when needed.

Our Parish - We thank you for the enthusiasm of the new Building Group and help us all to discern Your will and vision as we look at the latest plans. Bless all the preparations for the Christmas Day Lunch, for those who volunteer, for those who give and for those who distribute invitations – may it all fit together.

Those in need within our own church family - Please be with the Barnes family as they mourn the loss of Ron and Albie and the Aubrey family mourning for Joy. We pray also for Carole Burke, Ellie, John Barnes, Laurie D'Eganneh, Pam Butler, Val Jordan, Eric Gafa, Christopher and Sonja and others we know. May Your peace, healing and comfort surround them, and grant them the abiding sense of Your presence with them. We also pray for Your blessing on the staff and residents of the rest homes and retirement villages in our area.

This Week...

Monday 19 December

7.30pm Weekly group (K. Peterson)

Tuesday 20 December

10.00am Fortnightly group (M. Silke)
10.00am Fortnightly women's group (B. Page)
10.30am Fortnightly group (J. Payne)
10.30am Café Connection - Wooden Spoon
7.30pm Fortnightly women's group (S. Frengley)

Wednesday 21 December

10.00am Wednesday Service

Thursday 22 December

12.00pm Weekly Study group (W Wilkinson, J Lines)
7.00pm Fortnightly group (J. Palmer)
7.30pm Fortnightly group (N. Pritchard)

Saturday 24 December (Christmas Eve)

11.30pm Communion and Carols

Sunday 25 December

8.00am Holy Communion
9.30am Holy Communion

Coming up...

Friday 17 February - Sunday 19 February 2017

Convergence Camp - Bethany Park Kaiteriteri
Registration forms at the back of the church.

*For more information about services or groups
contact the office Ph. 544 8844*

St Albans' Appleby Services

10.00am Sunday 25 December Christmas Day
Service

10.30am Sunday 8 January Holy Communion

If you wish to give financial support to Holy Trinity Church, our bank account number is:

Roster for 25 December *Thank you for serving us all!*

Leader:	8.00am J/J Palmer	9.30am A Sardella
Reader:	8.00am S Frengley, M Reynolds	9.30am TBA
Sidespeople:	8.00am J Lines	9.30am M Martin
Welcomer:	8.00am A Webb	9.30am S Milligan
Tea:	N/A	
Chalice:	8.00am S Frengley, S Paine	9.30am TBA
Flowers:	R Armstrong	Creche: Glenda Thomson

Theme for Next Sunday: God with us

Readings for Next Sunday: Psalm 96, John 1:1 – 5, 9 – 14

Parish Contacts

Vicar	Susan Gill	544 8827	Children's Ministry	Catherine Barak	022 6479810
Priest Assistant	Jean Palmer	544 4275	Friends 'n Fun	Carol Sardella	544 9237
Senior's Ministry	Yvonne Smyth	544 8844	Parish Administrator	David Cowdrey	544 8844
Youth Leader	Antonio Sardella	027 3525598			

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Website

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Office Hours

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday
10.00am - 5.30pm
Wednesday 10.00am - 1.00pm