CROSSTRAX

St Martin's St James Church - Special Christmas Edition

December/January 2021/2022

This Christmas give life not luxury

Is it just me, or does the fretting about Christmas presents arrive earlier every year? By early November, it's difficult to miss the adverts from major retailers, subtly telling us to spend and then spend some more.

Drawing up a list of people for whom one feels obliged to buy presents can induce a gnawing anxiety. Expensive gifts must be lavished, we are told, on immediate family, extended family, Godchildren – not to mention work place Secret Santa. Then there's the price of Christmas social activities: the office restaurant meals, the plays for the kids.

All wonderful things – but they come with a price tag attached. It's no surprise that January can be a cruel

month when it comes to finances as credit card bills land on the doormat and the cash machine informs us we have exceeded the overdraft limit. For some, the financial pressures of Christmas put enormous strain on their relationships: parents argue with one another and get more cross with their kids.

Does it have to be like this? Don't get me wrong: I love Christmas – including the giving and receiving of gifts. Despite having played Scrooge in a parish Christmas play (quite convincingly, I was told), I don't, in real life, respond as a grump when someone tells me how much they love Christmas. But I don't think to have a great Christmas; we need to run up crippling debts.



THIS CHRISTMAS GIVE LIFE NOT LUXURY

The origin of Christmas gifts lies in the Christian tradition that says God gave his son, Jesus, as a gift to bring us life: we

us the hope of life.

gift to bring us life; we reflect that generosity by giving gifts to each other. Of course, no gift, however pricey, can truly reflect the gift God gave the world in sending Jesus to share our suffering on the cross, bear the weight of our wrongdoing and offer

However, our gifts can, in small ways, reflect and point to the self-giving love of God. But the most meaningful gifts are about expressing life, not luxury. This is especially true if, as a moneysaving expert tells us, people feel pressured into tit-for-tat giving at Christmas – buying something equally as luxurious as what they're given.

There is nothing wrong with giving something small, something that is meaningful and reminds the person that you care for them — something from a charity shop, perhaps. It also gives the recipient the freedom to buy you something similarly small but meaningful.

Giving need not necessarily involve any financial expenditure at all. You can give your time – that increasingly precious and rare commodity. Offering to babysit for the time-pressed parents next door, so they can enjoy a rare night out together. Spending an evening or two serving food at a local city mission. Inviting the older person in your street who lives alone to join your family for Christmas lunch (keeping covid safe). Some of the best



Christmases we as a family have enjoyed have been when we've invited someone for Christmas lunch who would otherwise

have been on their own.

There are ways of cutting the bill for Christmas and not waking on Boxing Day with a sense of dread about the bills that will come through the letterbox in the New Year.

Christmas will always cost something, so it's important to plan ahead and budget. When I was a parish priest, with five young children, it was a particular challenge ensuring there was enough money to last the month.

We learnt that it was vitally important to plan ahead, to decide on a budget and stick to it. You could put money aside each month during the year – into a credit union, perhaps – and decide to spend no more.

If you do find yourself having overspent this Christmas, don't sit around worrying – seek help quickly. Debt counselling agencies can help you put a plan in place to get your finances in order.

(www.kingdomresources.org.nz Addington).

You don't need a large bank balance, or a huge credit card limit, to show generosity. You can be generous in way that shows love and affection, rather than trying to buy it.

Of course, in February, Lent arrives – the perfect antidote to Christmas.

—Archbishop Justin Welby



The "O Antiphons" inspired the hymn "O Come O Come Emmanuel". As well as singing psalms and a motet, we'll sing O Come O Come Emmanuel, adding more verses as we work our way through the Advent seasonal journey. Sung by Olivia Webb; classical choralist + Noel Meek; musician, composer and friends. Come and join the reflective journey of scripture, psalms and song.

Thursdays December 2, 9, 16, 23 at 7.00pm to 7.45pm Venue: "the Sacred Space" at St Martin's St James Anglican Church 50 Lincoln Road, Spreydon



The holiday season can be hard for those of us whose hearts are hurting. You are not alone. Blue Christmas is a gentle, contemplative remembrance service for those who are carrying pain or loss during this season of celebration while also seeking hope and peace.

VESTRY SNIPPETS—NOVEMBER 2021

Devotions: Tom Johnston

Correspondence Inwards:

- CCC- Works Act: Widening Lincoln Road: purchase of frontage.
- Anglican Diocese: Policy Statement for Traffic Lights Covid

Regeneration, spiritual life and ministry of our church

Vicar's report:

- Goals going forward: We continue to press into our strategic goals of Discipleship, Mission, Regeneration and Spiritual Growth as we lead into our 2022 AGM
- Fair: 'FUN'raiser Fair: A huge success and a lovely picture of church (gathered believers) in the community together. March repeat on a Saturday morning.
- Coming up Series on Healing and Emotional health, Advent Choral Evensong, Welcomers Training, Garden Bee, Blue Christmas, Advent Study, Prayer and fasting until a tenant is found.

Associate Priest Victoria Askin see minutes

Finance Team Report YTD 2021 October:

- Income Giving & Hall hire Down \$65k poor result (small increase on last month) Expenses down \$35k for or year to date end of October - good result well done. Which means total for year to date down \$30k Income consistently downward trend from merging two parishes. Positive we are highlighting giving and fundraisers. Also the need to keep up the culture of giving in the future with less reliance on Church house.
- We will look to the end of year to fully review how the year looked for our 2022 budget.

- Matters to continue to consider and pray into are donation /giving/bequeath
- Giving directly to mission is practically zero
- Pray for tenants for 67 Riccarton Rd Church House
- Develop a culture of Fundraising, faith and generosity

Property: Church house replacement of guttering early December. Maintenance see full report.

Youth: Maximum numbers Thursday evening for the series "A biblical foundation for Relationships and Sex". Big thank you to the Youth Team for a great year. Award ceremony and end of year celebration next week.

Children's and Family Ministry: Please see report. Great to see the new family gatherings started and teaching and support form the leaders.

Pastoral Care: The Pastoral Care Team should have an updated phone list directory shortly. Meeting regularly and will be ringing parishioners over January.

Health & Safety: Mostly around covid level regulations. Parishioners will be updated early this week as to what announcements are made and Bishop's direction. Our #1 priority is to keep people safe and to be inclusive. Standby for our updated traffic light policy and procedure.

Worship and music Report: Our Advent Christmas Schedule is out now.

Thank you everyone for your contribution to Parish life and worship.

St Martin's St James

JANUARY FELLOWSHIP

When everyone seems to be on holiday in January, Christian fellowship comes to the fore.

Come and join us for a relaxed evening of food and fellowship enjoying the hospitality of church families.

Friends and visitors welcome.

Please bring food to share.

6-9pm

Wednesday January 5

Is this You?

See Sampson about hosting an evening

Wednesday January 12

Youth Leaders House 486 Sparks Road, Halswell Please bring a deck chair

Wednesday January 19

Is this You?

See Sampson about hosting an evening

Wednesday January 26

Allan & Sue Phillips 66 Domain Tce, Spreydon

AAW

Δt our November meetina Sampson conducted our Annual Communion Service before we held our AGM. Thank you to Sampson for officiating ... this evenina was poignant gathering, as we remembered our dear Ruth and her sudden passing. Many of us were in shock but as we chatted together, we remembered the input she had to our group and into our individual lives.

As part of the official business, we sadly recorded Velda's resignation from our group and although she was unable to attend, we thanked her for her faithful service in providing us with interesting speakers over the past five or six years and of course doing our monthly report for Crosstrax. At a later date we would like to publicly acknowledge her and thank her for her faithful service to our AAW.

Sue Phillips was affirmed as leader, Joan Kennaird as secretary and Sharon Rees as the treasurer. Maxine Carlsen, Bev Hartley, Helen Rawley and Dawn Rees form the committee.

Our next meeting on 2 December will be our Christmas Coffee and Dessert Evening. This will commence at 6.30pm beginning with a brief business meeting followed by attending a Sung Choral Advent Meditation in Church at 7.00pm. This is certainly a Christmas treat and it will be followed by coffee and dessert. Please bring along an unwrapped Christmas gift of toiletries for the women

of Walsh House. Please exclude perfumes and sprays.

This invitation is for all the ladies of Riccarton Spreydon Parish. You are all warmly invited.



Blessings Sue Phillips.

FOODBANK

S† MARTIN'S & S† JAMES ANGLICAN CHURCH

If you, your family, friends, or neighbours are struggling do advise them of our Foodbank.

St MARTIN'S & St JAMES CHURCH 50 Lincoln Rd Spreydon

Foodbank open

Wednesday 9.30-11am

Donations of non perishable food items would be gratefully received so we can help more members of our community thrive and not just survive.

When we read and sing about Jesus as victor, what do we think that means? How relevant is that to us, in our everyday lives? Rowan Williams writes, in his third chapter of "God with Us", that in Jesus' everyday living, he was victor in every moment. His life was victorious because in every moment of it, he was obedient to God.

Williams writes that when we think of Jesus as victor, we tend to think mostly on his crucifixion and resurrection. We say in our Creed, that Jesus was "...born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified..." We do not focus enough on the actual life of Jesus, that in every moment he was victorious because he was totally obedient to God.

We cannot understand Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection fully without understanding his life. Jesus' life was given utterly to God and his fellow human beings. Williams says that Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection was "a coming of fulfilment of what his life was about ".

Jesus' life was lived victoriously because he overcame the devil, who seeks to destroy all that is of God in us. Examples of this are when Jesus, who was vulnerable because he'd been fasting 40 days in the wilderness, was tempted by the devil (Luke:4, Matthew:4). Another example is when Jesus cast a legion of demons out of a man who had lived in the graveyards (Mark:5).

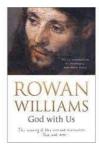
Jesus' life is victorious because he gave

every moment of it in obedience to God. Jesus conquered the power of the devil because he gave himself in unconditional love, and in total obedience to God and to people and their needs.

Jesus' victorious life culminates in his crucifixion and resurrection. When we read the Gospel of John, we see that Jesus is preparing the people for his crucifixion in his discourses. He says, in his last public discourse that "now the prince of this world will be driven out, And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself" (John:12). Jesus repeats these words to his disciples at the Last Supper (John:16).

John's Gospel tells us that Jesus died with a loud cry, "telestai", meaning, "it is finished". Williams says this single word, "telestai" carries within it a deep sense of victory.

Jesus accepted the pain, horror and humiliation of the cross as part of his obedience to God. This allows God's unlimited love and power to flow into the world.



St Paul writes about the crucified Jesus as victor (Colossians:2, from verse 13). We can see, when we read this passage, the relevance of Jesus as victor in our everyday lives. Our sins, which condemned us, have been nailed to the cross. Our enemies, too, have been bound and humiliated by Jesus,

GOD WITH US——CHAPTER 3

the victorious Son of God. Christ on the cross flings away the powers that enslave us, "that keep us less than human", writes Williams. As the body of Jesus was nailed to the cross, so also have all our debts, our wrongdoings, been, metaphorically, nailed to the cross. Our debts have been cancelled by Jesus' death. There is now no obstacle between God and us because

of what Christ suffered for us.

The victory in Jesus' crucifixion is fully displayed in his resurrection. The resurrection shows the integrity and the power of God's love, writes Williams, "the bursting through of the essential reality of who and what Jesus is". This integrity and power of God's love embraces us all.

- Kay Knowles



PAST AND PRESENT CHURCH

What is the difference between your church and the church in the

time of the apostles 30-75AD.

Most churches today concede that are dying out or they are concentrating on making people into Christians that is people who believe that Christ died to save them from their sins for once they believe that they are saved because of what they have believed.

The Church in the first century AD did not seek to make people believe in what Jesus Christ had done for them but sought to make disciples who learnt about the gospel and teaching of Jesus and strived to model their lives on Christ and His preaching. So they could grow in His Grace and likeness and could urge other people to become disciples of Jesus and form a continually growing and self-perpetuating church.

It's the difference between the 'past' and the 'present' tense. The **Church today** tends to live in the past tense, Jesus died for me. I have believed in

Christ since I was converted.

The **Apostolic Church** members lived in the present tense. Since I believed Christ died for me I have become His disciple and seek to grow like Him and seek to disciple others so they can enjoy a precious relationship with Jesus Christ and grow like Him and disciple other people.

Are you a Disciple of Jesus living in the present seeking to learn to live, do and think like Him and to currently invite other people to be disciples like you?

Our church School of Good Soil's vision is 'Cultivating a Culture of Discipleship, Mission and Regeneration. Disciples making disciples. So if you want to live and flourish in the present rather than live in the past as it teaches people how to live in the present. If you want to be a disciple of Jesus and not just a Christian, then see Sampson (or Victoria, Jonathan or Tom) who can help you on this journey into the present which offers a great future for our church.

-Allan Bean

Our leaders and kids had a lot of fun at the Church Fair doing the car wash. Everyone got very soaked and the cars got shiny clean! We were lucky the weather was good. We are very grateful for all the support of the parishioners and locals who came by and supported the car wash.

This Christmas we are looking at how we can help others! We are wanting to team up with the Hoon Hay Food Bank to supply them with gifts they can give to families in need. Along with looking at how we can help others no matter how big or small we are and how big or small the gift is, we will be looking at

why Christmas is so important. This ties into what we have been talking about with the big picture story of the bible. Along with this we have lots of fun games and activities planned!

At the end of October we had our first Church Family Fun Night. It was a lot of fun with good food and company. There were some games and challenges run by the kids that people got involved with and connecting over food and fun. We are looking forward to continuing this at the end of November and then again at the end of January!

Ngā mihi

–Azaria Peach



BREADLINE FOOD BANK—S[†] MARTIN'S

Non perishable food items can be left in the Breadline basket at the back of the St Martin's Church. We are currently in need of the following items: breakfast cereals, sugar (500g), sandwich spreads, soups, tins of baked beans, tins of spaghetti, pasta, and pasta sauces, tins of vegetables, tins of fruit, and tea bags (30s). All donations are gratefully received.



YOUTH

This year has flown past, we are almost at the end for youth group for the year! As I write this, we only have 3 weeks left of youth for the year and it is crazy to think at how quickly it has all gone.

As we finish the year, let's look back over the year and see some of the highlights.

Eastercamp

This year we took a combined group of Halswell and Spreydon to Eastercamp and it was a great weekend. God was up to some pretty amazing stuff and I look back on this as one of the highlights of the year as it brought our groups together in a special way.



Dodgeball

Another highlight of the youth calendar for the year was the dodgeball competition that was held in July. The combined teams from Harvest came 1st and 2nd and we only injured a few



people on the opposing teams. We took home the trophy and some great prizes alongside it which was good fun!

The Basketball Community this

Basketball Community

year has really solidified in numbers and formed a great number of girls and guys who are regular and enjoy coming along. This photo is of us going on a trip to Laser Strike in term 4. We had a great time and Eva (white shirt kneeling) was the overall best player! Well done Eva.



Harvest Thursdays

This community is the longest running of the 3 communities and has the biggest group. We recently asked what it means to have healthy relationships and healthy sex and, as you can imagine, was very well attended! The



photo here shows one of these nights where we reached a record 35 people in one night.

Community Flat

This year we said goodbye to our community flat that has been running the last 3.5 years. It was sad to see the house go but we are excited about the development of the land in the future.

This year has been an incredible journey as we have navigated COVID-19 year 2, with a lockdown and the changing of levels. I look back over this year with such gratitude as we have grown together so well even amongst all the uncertainty. Our young people are amazing, and I am so grateful for God's faithfulness to us over this year.



Thank you for all your ongoing support in the ministry!

-Tom Johnston



MISSIONS

December Report

Praise the Lord

Huge thanks for prayers answered for travel opportunities for two of our Mission partners families.

The DUNBAR family, Neill & Rebekah with their children Jonathan. Aaron and Emily, are safely in New Zealand after travelling from Cambodia, and into MIQ for a period of one week in an MIQ hotel and then spending a second week in isolation in a house near Rolleston where the children have a big lawn to play on. They will now be due for Covid tests to then be able to move into accommodation in Christchurch. After being away for three and a half years they have six months furlough at home. They have been fortunate in getting homes to stay in up to June 2022, CMS were able to help finding one of the homes. Rebekah's parents, our parishioners Judy and Jonathan Carson, are looking forward to the family times this trip will enable, the first month of which is a break for them all. In the new year our parish will have the opportunity to host the Dunbar family as they share with us their time on the mission field in Cambodia. There have been some real challenges in being overseas during this worldwide pandemic. Home schooling their three children and in particular learning the language in lockdown. Our prayers that this will be a real blessing and restful time in their homeland.

Ajit & Lorna DAS working in Bangladesh have secured an MIQ

booking for January 2022 as they endeavour to also rest at home in NZ and Ajit gets his first opportunity to meet his grandson. Please continue to pray for their health and that Ajit's heart health will allow him to fly internationally from Bangladesh to New Zealand.

Munyuku Secondary School in Zimbabwe continues to equip the youth of the area with an education which will enable them to gain qualifications which can give them the opportunity to engage in specific job situations helping both their families as well as meaningful employment and assisting their communities. The pupils are undertaking examinations following their very difficult year learning remotely during the COVID-19 lockdowns. We wish them well and keep them in our prayers as they work and study in very difficult situations.

Elaine ROBSON is still completing the translation of Christian writings to enable many to have the opportunity to read and learn much about the Lord. We cover Elaine with prayer for her work and especially for her health as she reaches her advanced years but continues with her outreach for the Lord. Elaine has been out in the Mission field for over 50 years now and we continue to uplift her with blessings in the Lord's name.

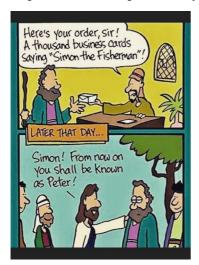
Maddie Collins continues to be in our prayers as she lives with the highs and lows of her 'without a kidney' life. We are blessed to have her grandmother, Elaine Manson, as a member of our

Tuesday homegroup at Gillian Smith's and hear what is happening at their little home village in West Melton. Maddie's transition from child to adult medical care has come with huge upheavals in continuity of care and hospital procedures. Please continue to uphold Maddie in your prayers and that she and her family will have some rest and calmness from the stressful situations her health presents. Some stability of health situation can then allow Maddie to take part in her much loved horse eventing. At nearly 18, her 14 years unwell has presented such a huge challenge for her and the whole family.

The Lord has been very much a part of the family's ability to handle such a huge health challenge and they and many of our parishioners continue to put Maddie in the Lord's care for the strength she needs to live each day. Please remember how much organ donations are essential to help people like Maddie who loose their organs to disease. BE AN ORGAN DONOR.

Now as we look forward to the special time of year when we celebrate the birth of Jesus we pray that all will stay safe from the COVID pandemic as the infection travels through New Zealand and that those we support on the mission field will have some rest time during such stressful times.

Blessings, Sharon Rees, Missions Co-Ordinator: *As reported.*





Prayer is the breath of faith.

Prayer meetings are the lungs of the church. C.H. Spungeon.

Prayer MeetingMonday at 4-5pm, Neave Room—St Martin's Church

A prayer for World peace

O God of the nations, as we look to that day when you will gather people from north and south, east and west, into the unity of your peaceable Kingdom, guide with your just and gentle wisdom all who take counsel for the nations of the world, that all your people may spend their days in security, freedom, and peace, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

SUNDAY SERVICE TIMES		DECEMBER 2021	
Sunday December 5		Advent	
8.30am Traditional Service with HC 9.30-10.30am Parish Christmas Breakfast Parish Christmas Breakfast: We have pencilled this in subject to covid level regulations. Standby for any updates.		Malachi 3:1-4 Luke 1:68-79 (Ps) Phil 1:3-11 Luke 3:1-6	
	Family Service Kids' Church:		
Sunday December 12		Advent	
	Traditional Service with HC Family Service with HC Kids' Church:	Zephaniah 3:14-20 Isaiah 12:2-6 (Ps) Philippians 4:4-7 Luke 3:7-18	
Sunday December 19		Advent	
	Traditional Service with HC Family Service Kids' Church:	Micah 5:2-5a Luke 1:47-55 or Psalm 80:1-7 Hebrews 10:5-10 Luke 1:39-45, (46-55)	
Friday Do	ecember 24—Christmas Eve	Chris	tmas
5.30pm 11pm	Christmas Pageant & Messy Church Candlelight Carol Service with HC	Isaiah 52:7-10 Psalm 98 Hebrews 1:1- 4, (5-12) John 1:1-14	Isaiah 9:2-7 Psalm 96 Titus 2:11-14 Luke 2:1-14, (15-20)
Saturday 9am	December 25—Christmas Day Family Service with HC		
Sunday I	December 26	Christmas	
9am	Family Service with HC	1 Sam 2:18-20, 26 Ps 148 Col 3:12-17 Luke 2:41-52	

REMIND ME, DEAR LORD

DECEMBER DIARY

Please check with group leaders when Covid 19 level restrictions are in force.

- Mondays—Prayer Meeting: 4-5pm, Neave Room, St Martin's. This is a time of pray and praying for prayer requests.
- Wednesdays—Service of Holy Communion: 11am in the Thompson Lounge, St Martin's. Morning tea at 10.30am. Last service for 2021 8 December.
- Evensong Choral Advent: This year we will be introducing a choral advent on the four Thursdays leading up to Christmas at St Martin's St James, Thursday 7pm-7.45pm 2,9,16,23 December.
- Thursday 2 December—AAW
 Christmas Coffee & Dessert
 Evening: 6.30pm in the Thompson
 Lounge.
- Sunday 5 December: Blue Christmas Service: 7pm, St Martin's Church
- Cancelled: Carols at Riccarton Bush. December 12.
- Saturday, Date to be confirmed— High Tea: 2-4pm, Thompson Lounge. Tickets can be purchased from Catharine
- Healing Ministry Training—See Sampson & Victoria

GROUPS & ACTIVITIES

 Mondays—Strengthen and Stretch Exercise Class: A Low Impact class combines yoga, Pilates, balance and very low impact. 6.00-6.30pm. General exercise class at 6.30-7.15pm on Monday nights, school terms. St Martin's gym. \$5 per session or \$45 per ten week term. All welcome. Contact: the physio team at TuneUp Physio Village Health 338 8595 or visit www.tuneupphysio.nz

- Tuesday's—Craft Group: 1.30-3.30pm, 2nd and 4th Tuesday's of the month. Neave Room, St Martin's Church. Helen Williams 338 9336.
- Tuesday & Thursday—School of Good Soil: Disciple training: 2.30pm & 7pm
- Wednesday mornings— Breadline: 9.30-11am: Helen Williams 338 9336 or Joan 339 7135.
- Friday mornings—school term time: St Martin's Playgroup: Any enquires to Cindy 339 2939 or via the facebook page.
- Harvest Rangatahi (Youth): https://stmartinsstjames.church/ youth
 - Harvest Stags (Basketball) Gym: Seniors: Wednesday 3:30pm-6pm, Juniors: Thursday 4-5:30pm
 - Harvest Thursday 7-9pm: The Loft

Riccarton-Spreydon Anglican Parish St Martin's St James - 50 Lincoln Rd

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Associate Minister: Rev'd Victoria Askin

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PHOTO GALLERY

