

From the Heart

There is the story about an old monk who sang a Christmas song every Christmas Eve for his brothers in the monastery, and for visitors who would come from the village for special services. His voice was not the best but he loved the Lord and sang from the heart. One year the director of the cloister said, 'I'm sorry, Brother Don, but we will not need you this Christmas. We have a new monk who has a beautiful voice.'

The new monk did sing beautifully, and everyone was happy. But that night an angel came to the superior and said, 'Why didn't you have a Christmas Eve song?' The superior was very surprised. 'We had a beautiful song,' he replied, 'Didn't you hear it?'

The angel shook his head sadly. 'It may have been inspiring to you, but we didn't hear it in heaven. You see, the old monk with a raspy voice had a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus, but the young monk was singing for his own benefit, not for that of the Lord.'

I made the point last week that in order for our celebration to be what Christmas is really all about, we do need to ensure that our relationship with God and with Christ is secure. In that way, our celebration will be genuine and will come from the heart. In that way, when we lustily sing those wonderful and familiar carols, we will indeed be paying homage to the true meaning of Christmas – glorifying a unique and very special birth.

'Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others – the armies of heaven – praising God: "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to all whom God favours."' Luke 2:13-14.

Carols at the Park

Join us this Sunday (14th) at 7.00pm for a community Christmas celebration. Sing your favourite carols, hear the Christmas story unfold, and a treat for the kids – Santa! Watch this clip: [Carols at the Park](#)

Christmas Services

Christmas Eve 6.00pm Family Carol Service

11.00pm Holy Communion

Christmas Day 9.00am Holy Communion

Food Bank

The response to our food bank appeals has been most heartening. A big 'Thank you!'. As you might imagine, there is high demand for charitable groceries in this period leading up to Christmas. Perhaps you might include goods suited to this festive season.

Nativity Lights

These have been erected at the north side of the old church. They have become a feature for our community. Thank you to Peter Darier and Tony Peters for attending to this.

Volunteers

The work of our church depends hugely on the goodwill and efforts of volunteers. There are many people who give of their time to ensure that our church operates as well as it does, and I am extremely grateful to them. Without their generous contribution of time, we simply would not be able to function as a church. A very big thank you!

On that note, I do want to acknowledge two people who have brought great experience and put in huge hours into the setting up and running of our new church and community centre: Dale Bradley and Shireen Powys. I cannot thank them enough.

Cottage for Rent

One of our parishioners, Phoebe Burge, has moved to the United States until October/November next year. She has a lovely 1 bedroom cottage for rent. 3 minutes away from Howick, fully furnished with 1 car park. Rent \$450/week, though she is open to offers. Address is 42 Castleton Drive, Howick. Her email address is phoebegraceb@gmail.com

Time for a Smile

A man goes into the doctor's and says, 'Doctor, I've swallowed a roll of film.' 'Ok,' says the doctor, 'Take these pills and we'll see what develops.'

A man goes into the doctor's and says, 'Doctor, I keep thinking I am invisible.' 'I'm sorry,' says the doctor, 'but I can't see you right now.'

To Ponder

'My idea of Christmas, whether old-fashioned or modern, is very simple: loving others. Come to think of it, why do we wait until Christmas to do that?' Bob Hope.

Reflection on Year

To say it has been a big year for our church would be kind of stating the obvious. I am most grateful to the many people who have made this possible. A big thank you to you all for being part of our journey. As we celebrate this very special time in our Christian year, let's also give thanks to God for the blessings he has bestowed upon us in the form of our new church and community centre.

The onus is now on us to use what he has blessed us with to grow his kingdom in Flat Bush.

I wish you all a very happy Christmas and a relaxing and fun-filled summer holiday.

Rev Warner Wilder
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