

THE MESSENGER

NOVEMBER 2021



THE MESSENGER is the official magazine of the Anglican Parish of Devonport
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HOLY TRINITY
DEVONPORT

Church Community since 1856





From the Vicar's Desk

This has been a very strange year for all of us and a difficult one for many. As we reflect on 2021, our memories seem to be clustered around Covid lock downs and calls to isolate, to stay at home, to wear masks, to use the contact tracer, to get vaccinated and so forth. And after all that effort, the number of cases continued to rise and tragically people not only got very sick, some died. What a grim time! But wait that's not the whole story is it?

There were unexpected benefits that emerged from the 80+ days Auckland has found itself in lockdown. These included more family time, seeing evidence of nature bouncing back, opportunities to get to know neighbours better as we chatted over the fence and of course for many, there was the joy of spending more time at home and so avoiding the daily commute into the city.

I'm not inferring that these benefits did not come with their own challenges. As the saying goes, "it is possible to have too much of a good thing!" What I am saying is that the Jesuits are quite right when they advise that we should look for the gift in all circumstances.

Our faith teaches us in the words of Psalm 23 that *even though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, God is with us.*

This is not just a theory. Not at all. Daily we are able to experience the presence of God in nature; when we read His Word; in the love extended to us by others and in the profound answers to our prayers.

Personally I have experienced the presence of God in the random acts of kindness that so many of you have extended to me and that I have witnessed you extend to others; in kind words of encouragement; in the numerous seasonal expressions of new life all around us.

God is here. God is present in our world and as we approach Advent, it is good to be reminded of the fact that

God so loved the world that he sent his Son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

There it is.....
God sent his son.

The message of Christmas is that God is in the house, God is here and God loves the world that God inhabits. This message is one that speaks prophetically into a Covid ridden world where there is much unwelcome change and much disquiet. It is incumbent on the Church that we fulfil the commission which Jesus gave us that reminds us that the incarnation is Good News and that we have been called to go out and proclaim this Good News which brings light into the darkness of the human condition. That darkness is currently very much in the shape of the Coronavirus.

Rev Charmaine Braatvedt

FAREWELL TROYDAN



Troydan has completed his youth pastor internship with us and has moved on to a new role as Youth Pastor at Ponsonby Anglican Church.

He will be greatly missed and we thank him for his dedication to our church community over the last two and half years.



A Special congregational MEETING

Tuesday 30th Nov at 7.30pm
to update you on the Hall Project
This will be on Zoom

Further details will be sent out via the weekly Parish Email.

If you are not receiving the Parish Email, please email the office on admin@holytrinity.gen.nz so we can update our records.

A Different kind of Christmas Lunch

You are probably wondering why you are receiving a printed copy of the Messenger when you may have also received a copy via email. It is because we would like you to read it, and then pass it on. Maybe to someone who is finding lock down difficult, maybe just someone you know who likes a good read! Either way, we would be very grateful if you would accept our request.

At the time of going to print our annual Christmas Lunch remains a big uncertainty. With all the restrictions that will possibly be in place, we feel that it most unlikely to go ahead. So, we decided to plan ahead, and prepare some Christmas dinners for those who are struggling or on their own.



Without bursting any bubbles, we have enlisted some volunteers and as a result, we are going to prepare some frozen Christmas dinners suitable for individuals, couples or families available from our Food Bank. So, if you know someone, maybe a family member, someone on their own, a couple, a neighbour or a family who will find Christmas 2021 a very stressful or a lonely time, we want to know.

We will provide them with a Christmas pack. A meal, with dessert and small Christmas cake (or similar) to brighten up their festive season. All you have to do is let us know. Either phone/email Charmaine on 021 857 997, vicar@holytrinity.gen.nz or Andie on 027 4077 070, admin@holytrinity.gen.nz. All we ask is you don't leave it till the last minute!! We would rather plan, than panic if, we can.

If you would like to donate or make something special for our packs eg a dessert that can be frozen, chocolates, pavlova, mince pies, Christmas cakes, brownies, turkey, chicken or vegetables we would love your contributions, just let Andie in the office know for planning purposes. (admin@holytrinity.gen.nz)

So, please, help us get the word out about this initiative. After you have read this Messenger, please put your copy in someone else's letterbox, and if you want more copies just let us know.



Together, we can make Christmas a little brighter for someone else.



Advent Services online

On account of the Covid restrictions this year we plan to have a number of our Advent and Christmas services online .

Combined Churches of Devonport and Belmont Lessons and Carols

*an online service
of Advent Readings
and Carols
on Sunday 19th December
at 7pm via You Tube*



[https://www.youtube.com/user/
HolyTrinityDevonport](https://www.youtube.com/user/HolyTrinityDevonport)

An online Service of Reflections on Christmas

**Tuesday 21st December
6pm**

**A contemplative
service of healing and hope for those who
find the festive season difficult.**

<https://www.youtube.com/user/HolyTrinityDevonport>

**Celebrate Christmas Eve online
with your
children or grandchildren at our
traditional**

Christingle Service

Christmas Eve 24th December

**5.00pm
for all ages**

**If will be more fun if you have on hand an orange
and 4 toothpicks with lollies or dried fruit on.**

<https://www.youtube.com/user/HolyTrinityDevonport>





Church Online

Last year we had to learn on the hop as we faced the prospect of not being able to gather at church, in person. We had to switch to online services and endeavour to deliver services that people would find helpful and relevant as they were confined to their bubbles. I was

blessed to have Julian my son who is a cameraman in my bubble at that time. He proved to be a Godsend as he assisted us with the upgrading our online resources. We had a bumpy passage as we grappled with low spec cameras and computers, but eventually we got there. Thanks to Vestry for investing in the technology and thanks to all of you who tuned in with uncritical patience as we navigated what turned out to be a steep learning curve.

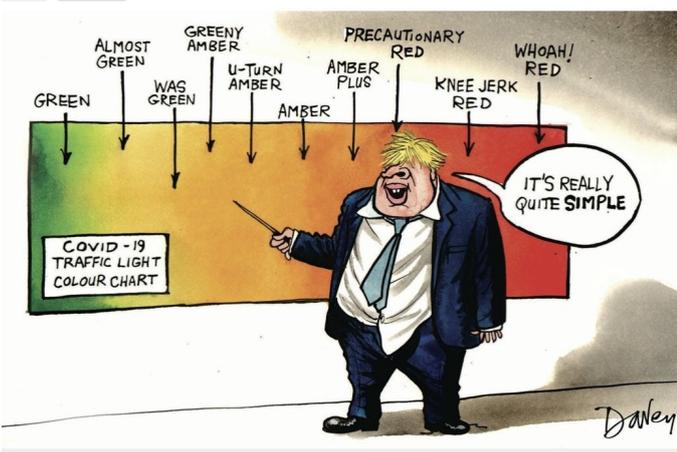
It was all worth it because this year when lockdown came and it was just Geoff and me in a bubble together we were well organised and prepared to run regular Sunday Services and morning prayers online. God is Good!

During these last 80+ days of lockdown we have had an Average of 128 devices that have been connected into our livestreaming services on Sunday mornings and on average 32 devices have joined us for morning prayers each day.

While it is not ideal to gather in this way it is certainly the pragmatic thing to do and the numbers of people who have availed themselves of this opportunity to gather virtually is very encouraging especially as there are often two or three people who gather around a device.

We do hope that as we move to the new strategy of dealing with the Covid Pandemic commonly known as the Traffic Light System that we will be able to gather in person in the not too distant future.

The chart on the opposite page provides a summary of how the traffic light system will work for us.

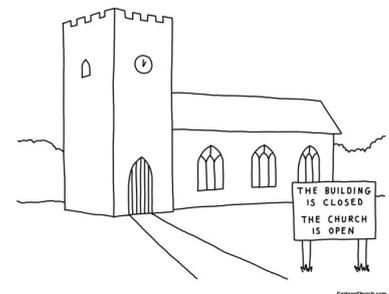


This year our Diocesan Synod was held online via Zoom. In his Charge Bishop Ross said about **COVID-19**



Once again the year has been unavoidably shaped and affected by COVID-19. We lived for a long time essentially shielded from the kind of impacts that many countries have suffered as a result of the virus. The last three months have been very hard. They have been hard on workers and businesses, hard on people who are isolated, hard on the dying, hard on those who already live with deprivation.

They have been hard for us as a church by not being able to gather together for worship, to enjoy our social networks, and to so easily undertake our normal ministry activities. My deep thanks to clergy and leaders in our ministry units for the ways in which you have held people together, extended care, and provided opportunities for people to attend to their prayer life and participate in virtual forms of corporate worship. It makes a huge difference to people.



Our challenge now is to manage our life with the new protection framework which is likely to take effect at the end of this month, which we know as the traffic lights system. It pivots around vaccinations, and the nature of our activities along with attendance numbers will depend on whether or not vaccination certificates are required at gatherings. We are all facing the tension between our theological ideal of welcoming all people into our churches whatever their situation and the need to provide a safe and healthy environment in which to gather. Whether or not vaccination certificates are required, there will be people who will feel excluded from attending. If certificates are required, those who are not vaccinated will not be able to attend. If certificates are not required, those who are immune-compromised or who feel unsafe, will not be able to attend.

Clearly our choices are considerably simplified if everyone who is eligible is vaccinated. This system does have explicit requirements for church gatherings, and these will vary between traffic lights and depending on whether vaccination certificates are required for participation in gatherings.

Please keep the Diocese and your Vestry in your prayers as we navigate a way forward through this torrid time.

Traffic light	With vaccination certificates	With no vaccination certificates
 Red	Gatherings up to 100 people / 1m distancing Record-keeping / scanning required Face coverings encouraged	Gatherings up to 10 people Record-keeping / scanning required Face coverings encouraged
 Orange	Gatherings of unlimited people Record-keeping / scanning required Face coverings encouraged	Gatherings up to 50 people / 1m distancing Record-keeping / scanning required Face coverings encouraged
 Green	Gatherings of unlimited people Record-keeping / scanning required Face coverings encouraged indoors	Gatherings up to 100 people / 1m distancing Record-keeping / scanning required Face coverings encouraged indoors



Pyjama Church

An Adventure into Advent and Christmas

This year Advent starts on November 26th.

For many Christians unfamiliar with the liturgical year, there may be some confusion surrounding the meaning of the Advent season.

The word *Advent* is derived from the Latin word *adventus*, meaning *coming*.

The Advent season focuses on expectation and serves as an anticipation of Christ's birth in the season leading up to Christmas. During this season of preparation, Christians set aside 40 days to prayerfully prepare for Christmas, the celebration of Christ coming into the world.

However Advent has another dimension of waiting. This is the time when we reflect on Christ's second coming when he will judge the world. This is also known as the *Parousia*.

Seen in this light, the Advent hymn *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* aptly reflects the Church's cry during the Advent season. We sing this carol during Advent to commemorate Christ's first coming 2,000+ years ago and in expectation of His second coming sometime in the future.

To balance the two elements of remembrance and anticipation, the first two Sundays in Advent look forward to Christ's second coming, and the last two Sundays look backward to remember Christ's first coming.

As Karl Barth put it *faith knows for whom and for what it is waiting.*

Jesus Christ; he has come, and he will come again. This is the essence of Advent.

Traditions in Advent.

The Advent wreath is the most common Advent tradition, and involves five candles. A new candle is lit on each of the four Sundays before Christmas. The four candles traditionally represent hope, faith, joy, and peace. A fifth candle is placed in the centre and is lit on Christmas Day to celebrate Jesus' birth.

Another tradition is the **Advent Calendar** which children use to countdown from December 1st to Christmas Day. The idea dates back to the 1850s. The calendar usually has 24 doors, pockets or boxes to open, one for each day.

A third tradition in Advent is the use of **the Jesse Tree** as a way of journeying through the stories of Jesus' whakapapa. Each day of Advent, we are invited to read a Bible story about someone on Jesus' family tree and hang an ornament symbolizing the story on our own Jesse Tree. As we decorate our tree, we see how through many generations God was preparing for the birth of Jesus. *See opposite.*

A Prayer for Advent

By Renee Swope

The Manger of My Heart

*This Advent, Lord, come to the manger of my heart.
Fill me with Your presence from the very start.
As I prepare for the holidays and gifts to be given,
Remind me of the gift You gave when You sent Your Son
from Heaven.*

*The first Christmas gift, it was the greatest gift ever.
You came as a baby born in a manger.
Wrapped like the gifts I find under my tree,
Waiting to be opened, to reveal Your love to me.
Restore to me the wonder that came with Jesus' birth,
When He left the riches of Heaven and wrapped Himself in
rags of earth.*

*Immanuel, God with us, Your presence came that night.
And angels announced, "Into your darkness,
God brings His Light."
"Do not be afraid," they said, to shepherds in the field.
Speak to my heart today, Lord, and help me to yield.
Make me like those shepherd boys, obedient to Your call.
Setting distractions and worries aside,
to You I surrender them all.
Surround me with Your presence, Lord,
I long to hear Your voice.
Clear my mind of countless concerns and all the holiday noise.
Slow me down this Christmas, let me not be in a rush.
In the midst of parties and planning, I want to feel Your
hush.*

*This Christmas, Jesus, come to the manger of my heart.
Invade my soul like Bethlehem, bringing peace to every part.
Dwell within and around me, as I unwrap
Your presence each day.
Keep me close to You, Lord.
It's in Your wonderful Name I pray.*



LOOKING BACK AT 2021



May Navy Concert



May Men's Breakfast



Messy Church February 2021



Sunrise Service Easter Sunday



Harvest Sunday



Youth Group



SSC at Jump



Morning Prayers



Commissioning 2021 Vestry



Mother's Day Morning Tea



Trinity Sunday Dinner



A Sermon Series for Advent at Holy Trinity

8 am and 9.30 am or online at <https://www.youtube.com/user/HolyTrinityDevonport>

Sunday 28th November Advent 1
Guest Preacher Bishop Ross
Waiting for Christ

Sunday 5th December Advent 2
Preparing to meet Christ
Guest Preacher Jax Clark

Sunday 12th December Advent 3
Recognising Christ
Preacher Rev Charmaine Braatvedt

Sunday 19th December Advent 4
Glorifying Christ
Preacher Rev Charmaine Braatvedt

Friday 24th December
Christmas Eve

Saturday 25th December
Christmas Day

Time to Reflect in Advent

During Advent we will be using devotions written by Grace Claus, Managing Editor of RCA Today. Each morning we will stream a daily devotion online in the slot traditionally used for morning prayers at 9am.

During this time we will use the Jesse Tree as a way of journeying through Advent that traces the lineage of Jesus.

The Jesse Tree refers to an image in Isaiah 11 in which Jesus is compared to a shoot sprouting from the stump of the tree of his ancestor Jesse. It reminds us that the coming of Jesus was long prophesied and that in the stories of his ancestors we can hear echoes of his own life, death and resurrection.

I hope you will join me each morning in Advent, but if 9am does not suit you then you could go online at a time that suits you as together we ponder the wonder of the coming of our Saviour.

