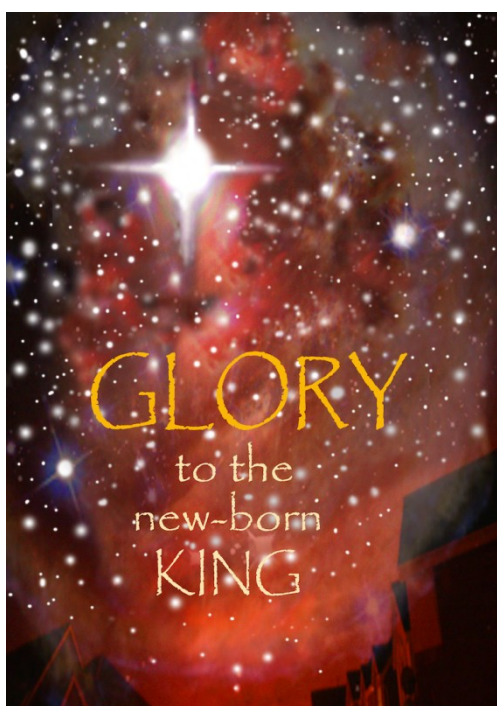




NEWSLETTER

Christmas & New Year 2012



Are You New To This Church?

Please make yourself known to the Rector or the Warden.

Please do join us for a cup of tea or coffee and a chat after the service.

Wedding, Baptism & Funeral enquiries
Please contact the Rector.



Rector

Revd Debbie May: 0417 178 688

Church Office: 08 9330 1550



Church Warden

Mrs Jill Bowman: 08 9330 9594





The Church of the Holy Cross

Christmas Services:

- **CHRISTMAS EVE 24th December**
6:00pm Family Service & Carols,
11:30pm Midnight Service
- **CHRISTMAS DAY 25th December**
9:00 Family Communion Service
- **Sunday 30th December**
9:00am Holy Communion Service

Dear Friends

Time for New Beginnings

This Christmas Time and into the New Year I would like to pay tribute and say thank you to a lovely group of people who live, worship and pray at the heart of our community, they can often be found visiting the lonely, tending the sick, reaching out in acts of kindness and sharing their time, talents and even their finances in an effort to bring hope back into the world. These people may be found on a Sunday morning at the Anglican Church of the Holy Cross Church in McLean Street Melville at 9.00am. This is your church at the heart of the community and all who attend this church are doing their best to live lives that are good and fulfilling as they reach out into our community with the love of Jesus Christ.

Throughout the year we seek to promote fairness, justice, goodwill and service in an effort to bring hope to all who are feeling lonely or hope-less and we endeavour to offer a true Australian mate-ship welcome to our community and beyond. We have learnt to value family of all ages and truly believe that all ages are necessary for a good balance and we know that we can all learn from one another. Whether we are old or young we all have something to offer. But there is something missing in this Ch—ch? **U R.**

(continued over page)

(continued from previous page) We would really love to offer you a warm welcome, maybe even to help you find a new purpose or meaning for your life. Maybe we could start by offering to share our time, our tea, coffee & biscuits and if you would like we could even introduce you to someone who might be able to help you find new meaning and purpose in your life. Someone who loves you cares about you and thinks you are pretty special, even if you don't feel this way about yourself yet.

We admit that sometimes we have got it wrong, we have failed to reach those who are hurting in our community or we have acted in an inappropriate way, for this we are truly sorry, but we will keep on trying to get it right because you are important to us and we care. If you or someone you know would like to come and join us or would value a visit at home please contact Revd Debbie 0417 178 688.

Remember this Christmas season that the baby who we celebrate at Christmas didn't stay a baby, he grew up, he became a man who loved us so much that he was prepared to die for us, and he did. That baby Jesus meek and mild became Jesus the man, Son of God who we also remember at Easter-time. Jesus the man died and then proved that death does not have the last word by rising to life again and he offers us hope with meaning. If you would like to explore more about what it means to be a Christian and to find out more about the hope we share please do give me a call.

May I take this opportunity to wish you a very Happy & Peaceful Christmas and may you know and experience the love & richest blessings of God.

Revd Debbie May



Contents

FESTIVE FUN	6
NEW CHILDREN'S GROUP KIDS PLUS.....	6
IN LOVING MEMORY.....	6
POSADA.....	6
ANGLICARE - CHRISTMAS 2012.....	7
REMEMBRANCE SERVICE & BAPTISM	8
STAMPS	8
THE APPRENTICE COURSE.....	8
HARVEST FESTIVAL	8
MISSION ACTION PLAN (MAP).....	9
MEMBER DIRECTORIES	9
WEDDINGS & BAPTISM	10
MAINLY MUSIC	10
WARDENS WISH LIST.....	10
HOW WE LIVED.....	11
LIES.....	12
CHRISTMAS:.....	14
THE WAY I SEE IT: TAKING THE STRESS OUT OF CHRISTMAS.....	18
DATES FOR YOUR DIARY	19
SERVICE TIMES	20
READINGS	20
ST. JAMES THE LEAST OF ALL.....	21
MOUSE MAKES (DECEMBER).....	22
ROSTERS (DECEMBER).....	23
ST. JAMES THE LEAST OF ALL.....	24
ROSTERS (JANUARY)	25
MOUSE MAKES (JANUARY)	26
KIDSPLUS + HOLIDAY CLUB.....	28

Welcome To Christmas and New Year At Holy Cross

We would love to welcome you to Holy Cross Church. We hope that you find the worship uplifting and that your relationship with Jesus Christ is enriched through it.

Sunday Club is held during school term at all of our Sunday morning services at 9:00am service and crèche facilities are available at the rear of the church. A change table is in the disabled toilet. Nursing mothers can use the front meeting room, access through the hall (door has sign on it).

For those hard of hearing an AUDIO LOOP operates throughout the church area. Please use your "T" setting to make use of this.

Gluten free wafers are available. If you require these please speak to the service leader.

We invite you to stay for a cup of tea or coffee and a chat in the hall after the service.



For all your Pre-paid and Funeral Enquiries
please contact Simon Hughes on 93306344
or visit our Funeral Home at
103 Norma Rd Myaree.

Proudly Sponsoring the Holy Cross Newsletter

**ANGLICAN CHURCH
of the HOLY CROSS**
56 McLean Street, Melville
Western Australia 6156
t: 08 9330 1550
m: 0417 178 688
e: revd.debbie@gmail.com
w: www.holycrossmelville.org

Festive Fun

On 14th December beginning at 5:00pm come and join us for a Pre Christmas Happy Hour for all ages. Bring a plate of food to share and stay on for Christmas Carols & Festive Fun.

New Children's Group Kids Plus

On Wednesday 30 January from 10:00am till 1:00pm. Come and try Holiday Club Session. **

'Kids Plus' Taster session just \$5 per family, includes, games, crafts, stories, music & loads of FUN.

Also, watch out for the new 'Kids Plus' Children's Group starting the following week on Thursday evenings at 4:00pm till 5:30pm during school term time beginning Feb. 7th. The group is aimed at Pre Kindy to year 2 children (ages 4-7).

****Registration essential****

Phone Debbie to book a place for your children 0417 178 688

In Loving Memory

David Joachim
Harriet Joachim
Gertrude Conran



Posada

Look out for our nativity figures of Mary & Joseph travelling around our community this Advent. Please take care of Mary as she is heavy with child and the couple are feeling very delicate as they travel with their donkey to Bethlehem.

Some people have already offered to find room for Mary & Joseph during their long travels but from others there is still the familiar cry of NO ROOM in the inn. Will you make space for Mary & Joseph this year as we ponder the real meaning of Christmas? If so sign up on the noticeboard in the hall and welcome a symbol of the real meaning of Christmas into your home this Advent.

What is Posada?

Posada is an old Mexican tradition where young people dressed as Mary and Joseph travelled from house to house asking for a room for the night and telling people about the imminent arrival of Jesus in the weeks leading up to Christmas. On Christmas Eve they would visit the local church to re-enact the nativity and place figures of Mary and Joseph in a crib.

Modern day Posada uses nativity figures of Mary and Joseph who travel from place to place. This gives each 'host' the chance to create their own celebration in their home or place in the community, worshipping and reaching out to their communities with the real message of Christmas, making room for Jesus in their lives.

Our church has chosen to engage with Posada this year. Will you get be a host to Mary and Joseph for a night?

What is involved?

All you need to do is add your name to the Journey Roster on the notice board in the hall, for a night that will suit you to 'host' Mary & Joseph. Another person from our community will make arrangements to bring the figures to your place at a time to suit both of you.

For the evening you 'host' Mary & Joseph you can choose to do whatever you like. Why not invite friends and family to sing carols and to talk about the meaning of Christmas? We have a special Posada board game which should keep the children involved, alternatively you may choose to spend the evening in quiet prayer either alone or in a group.

This year we are encouraging you to contribute a financial gift to Holy Cross Church who has supplied the resources. Please make a contribution in an envelope marked on the outside 'Posada'.

The next day you need to take Mary & Joseph to the next host on the Journey roster or make arrangements for someone else to safely help them on their journey.

It's as simple as that.

Please consider your involvement. We hope you will enjoy taking part.

Anglicare - Christmas 2012

Each year, Anglicare WA provides food hampers to West Australians through the Christmas Giving Program. Christmas Giving this year will be held until Friday 7 December.

For more information on how you can help please see www.perth.anglican.org/anglicare

2012 Fete

A wonderful family occasion was enjoyed at Holy Cross on 10th November as we opened our doors once more for our annual Fete. It was especially enjoyable this year and everyone worked together like clockwork. Although everything appeared to fall into place effortlessly I know that a lot of work goes on behind the scene. A well oiled team set to work on Thursday evening and Friday afternoon setting up tables, cleaning the BBQ, setting up gazebos, there was cooking, pickling, gathering etc. all for the fun day that was to come on the Saturday.

When Saturday morning came after some last minute preparation and even more baking, we were ready to welcome the families in through the doors. How lovely to see such a long queue of people waiting excitedly to come in as the doors were opened at 9.00 sharp. The day was wonderful, most enjoyable and fun was had by all.

This year we were pleased to welcome some new helpers onto our stalls as well as to give thanks for our long term faithfuls. Lyn, one of our new helpers who was soon set to work on both the setting up of various stalls and then continued to help alongside Joy and others on the popular gift stall. Whilst Lee, another new helper worked with Michael on the chocolate wheel. Kelly did a wonderful job on the cake stall and Margaret, Ida, Carin and Brenda also fairly new members of the Fete team stepped up to organise most proficiently the clothing, bags and shoes. My thanks to all new recruits but also to the many other 'old faithfuls who have served the church year in year out so faithfully. Working together you all made the day so wonderful.

Remembrance Service & Baptism

When it was suggested that we hold a baptism on Remembrance Sunday I must confess to being a little dubious as to how we might incorporate the two. However on pondering the possibilities it became clear that indeed they do strangely go together. The terror of war and hopelessness in lives lost against the stark contrast of hope and forgiveness that is to be eternally found in Jesus Christ who sacrificed his life that we might live. While men of war risk sacrificing their lives to bring us freedom from tyranny in this life, Christ died that we might have life in all its fullness both now and in the life to come.

How lovely then to celebrate the baptism of Thomas Graves-Sylvester on such a poignant day, made all the more special as his grandparents from Bristol in the UK were also here to celebrate with us.

Thomas is our youngest member at the present time at Holy Cross and we look forward with his parents, Mandy & James and his brother George to sharing many more happy milestones with this family. Welcome Thomas to your new life in Christ.

Stamps

Please can you bring all of your used stamps along to the church for Joy as she collects and sorts them for charity. Already this last year over \$2000 has been raised for good causes. So please don't put them in the bin. It only takes a few seconds to cut or tear around carefully, (leave a decent space around them so as not to damage the edges) and then just

bring them along and place in the box in the hallway at church. Many thanks.

The Apprentice Course

Steve Chalk, Apprentice tells us that: "An apprentice's deepest desire was to follow his rabbi so closely that he would start to think, and act, just like him" In our study group on a Tuesday 11am to 1pm, thanks to Debbie, to date we have covered four sessions covering: "Journeying", "Longing", "Believing", and "Belonging". Our fifth and last session (unfortunately) next week is "Questioning". We have discovered by watching the DVD's; considering the questions from the booklet; and our discussions that Jesus requires us to make a relationship with him so that "we walk in His footsteps". Faith, Love and Hope will lead us as apprentices "walking the way of Christ". Our shared meal each week has been a feast of fellowship.

BS-G.

Harvest Festival

What a lovely harvest festival service we shared this year. This was followed by a scrummy bring & share lunch and a fun auction. Thank you to everyone who entered into the spirit of the occasion as well as to those who donated the lovely fruits & Veg for our fun auction. Thanks too to those who decorated the church so beautifully and to everyone who entered bids to win the lots. A spirit of generosity and good friendly comradeship was shown

throughout the day with gifts often being 'won' and then given away to the 'losers'. As usual the beautiful wheat-sheaf loaf along with the church mouse nibbling the produce, made by Nick Millard and donated by Coles bakery was a popular lot and enjoyed by everyone when generously donated back to the church by Mike Arnold. Was this year winning bid of \$85 a record for the loaf?

Mission Action Plan (MAP)

(or strategy for the future)

Our new mission action plan or strategy for the future is in its early stages but it is beginning to be formulated. This is an exciting time for Holy Cross and it is hoped that all members of Holy Cross will contribute to the planning for the future of the Anglican Church in Melville.

Our future vision will be one that we can all share in moulding and your views are valuable and appreciated. Thank you for the questionnaires that were recently completed, if you missed filling in a form but would like to there is still time, please ask Debbie for a copy.

Seeking God vision for the church is not a tedious task and neither should it be viewed as such. In truth it is an exciting prospect as we move forward together reaching out to the community whilst also nurturing our own growth in spirituality and discipleship. Let us not get left behind as God blesses us with wisdom and truth as we share together on 'the way.'

A 'disciple' or 'apprentice' who is seeking to follow in the footsteps of the 'master', will want to walk so close to Jesus that the

dust from his sandals will scatter onto our clothes. We will be so close to him so as not to miss a thing he has to say or show us. Let us all seek to become His apprentice in a new and real way.

Recently a vision was shared of the church now being like a plane filled with fuel and sitting on a clear runway just awaiting our MAP take off instructions. Our goal together is to search where God is active, where he is calling us and then for us to get involved and fly.

Please pray for the future of the church give thanks for past members and continue to pray for all current and future members as we move forward together to this exciting destination.

Member Directories

I am pleased to announce that the new colourful Holy Cross Church Member Directory is now available free to all members on the Electoral role. If you haven't yet picked up your copy please ask Debbie for your copy.

The directory contains beautiful photographs of most if not all of our electoral Role members and I would encourage you to use these pictures as a reminder to pray for everyone in the church on a regular basis. Also if you notice particular members are missing on Sunday at our Sunday morning worship and you don't know why, please do follow up just to check if they are ok.

Weddings & Baptism



At Holy Cross Church we give our Congratulations and ask for God's

Blessing upon David & Rebecca who are to be married on Friday 28th December and Mick & Leanne who are to be married on Sunday 13th January.

Wishing you God's Blessing on your Wedding Day and may He always be the heart of your marriage, the light of your home, Congratulations

Our Congratulations, welcome and God's blessings to Eloise Avard who will be baptised at Holy Cross on Sunday 13th January.

Mainly Music

Wednesday again – oh no – can I be bothered, do I have the energy to put everything out, get organised etc etc!!!! Then at about 10.15 they start arriving – delightful, excited, exuberant little people -running in, laughing, smiling coyly – they have been waiting all week to see us and share in the fun of mainly music. Of course I have the energy – it is such a blessing to be able to share in the lives of the families and get to know the tiny tots.

Mainly music is a place to meet your friends, make new friends, share time with children, sing, dance laugh, cry, welcome new babies, watch them grow into toddlers, say goodbye to the little ones going off to school, have a cuppa and a homemade morning tea.

At the end of a sessions – we wash up , put everything away – chat and every week we are thankful for the opportunity to share these moments sowing seeds for our Lord. We are not sure what will happen with the seeds but when you see all the parents, grandparents, and extended family singing God Made Me and sharing what we call a God song with such love and care – we know for sure we have started something that God will use in his time.

Thanks to everyone in the team who helps bring it all together, without the team Mainly Music could not happen. Come on, join us. A great time we can guarantee - we know you will love it!

Wardens Wish List

Area	Task	Status
Windows	Hall louvers cleaned, repaired and closed. Church windows, outside surfaces cleaned.	
Airconditioning	serviced before summer.	
East Facing Exterior Hall Wall	Removal of black marks on the wall	
Repairs	Children's bookcase at the rear of church and Playpen.	
Reticulation	Checked & set for summer watering	✓
Paving	Poison weeds	

The following is a short, prize winning essay submitted by Betty Rushforth (nee Pitman) to the City of Melville as part of its "The Way We Were" competition.

How We Lived

My parents, George & Ella Pitman, bought thirteen acres of bush with a small, one bedroom, asbestos cottage in North Lake Road in 1940.

My father cleared the bush at the front for breeding free range chooks. There were three other Poultry Farmers nearby; Castlemain, Love and Highgold. Our property was one mile up from Canning Highway. There were no houses and it was a narrow road with lots of lovely native Christmas trees that always were a mass of golden blooms in December.

We were seven children. Life was a lot different those days. We all slept on the little front verandah, beds so close, Mum and Dad at one end with a curtain for privacy. We were a happy family and didn't have many toys as such but if we had something special of our own, we would keep it under our pillows. I can remember we used to hear the banjo frogs singing at Marmion Street Reserve which in those days was bush with a swamp. On a still night we could hear the train whistle blow as it went over the river near Stirling Bridge. Mum always said, "It's going to rain" then it usually did.

Mum grew a beautiful Cape Lilac tree just out the back, which was watered with our waste water. She loved that tree; she used to say it saved her life from the summer heat. Cape Lilacs were grown in all the free range yards to keep the chooks cool. There are still some remaining from those early days. You will see them if you look around the Myaree area.

We were expected to help our parents with chores like milking the cows or goats before going to school, help to feed the chooks and we also helped Dad build his chook sheds. Dad always grew a beautiful veggie garden and two acres of carnation plants that he sold to "Coles" store near Petra Street on Canning Highway. They were called "Utopia" which I think have died out.

We travelled to school by "metro" buses that went along Canning Highway. In those days, the bus drivers knew everybody; he would see us coming down North Lake Rd, toot his horn and wait for us to put our bikes in Attwell's Dairy. The Attwell house these days is used for Arts and Crafts.

Even though we had to help with the chores we had a wonderful childhood, lots of bush to play in. Spring time was our favourite time, as we had beautiful wild flowers in the bush at the back. We would pick armfuls of kangaroo paws to sell by the side of the road and make enough money to go to the Royal Show.

Our block was one mile up North Lake Road, No 81 where Silver Chain now stands. Mr Highgold's farm was straight across the road. Our childhood in Melville was a wonderful, full of lovely childhood memories.



North Lake Road, Melville c1950

Lies.

The apostle Paul wrote:

“For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.” 2 Timothy 4:3-4

We are all susceptible to believing lies at any given time. The world is magical at presenting its counterfeit products as the genuine article. One would assume that because Christians are followers of the Truth, that we would be less susceptible to such lies.

The real truth however, is that Christians believe many lies. We sometimes don't even realise that they are lies because they are wrapped up so nicely with what appears to be a “Bible bow.”

There are hundreds of lies Christians believe, either collectively or individually. I chose these 5 lies because I have personally seen them infiltrate the Church, the lives of my friends and family and my own life.

Here are the Top 5 Lies I have seen Christians Believe :

1. Church is not necessary.

In other words, it's okay to be a lone Christian. I was a lone Christian for many years. I knew no differently and I honestly didn't know any better. Somehow in my daily reading of scripture, all the talk of the body, and fellowship just flew right past me. The saddest thing is that it was my lack of accountability and relationship that pushed me to my furthest point away

from God. I would wake up every morning and feel hopeless and alone.

2. All Christians need to do is be “good” and act “nice.”

That is what a “good Christian does.” This lie is one of the enemy's greatest weapons. He wants us to believe that if we just “act” a certain way and keep up appearances (i.e. do good works apart from grace) that we will be okay. Satan wants to convince us that we are capable, in our own strength, to accomplish God's Will, thereby rejecting the Holy spirit. We ignore the Holy Spirit and all of His available guidance, power, and counsel. We treat the Spirit as either insignificant to create change in our life or simply irrelevant. We believe wrongly that we can “make it happen.” Yet, it is through the Spirit that we are empowered to do God's work. Likewise, our salvation rests on knowing Christ loving Him completely, nothing else. God will not ask if you were a nice person when you stand before Him. He will want to know if you knew His Son.

3. God doesn't care about your small things.

He is much too busy with all the big issues. I have personally struggled (and still do struggle) with this lie. Somewhere along the line we convince ourselves that God has got a lot on his plate and so we don't bother Him with our silly little lives. We pray for others, sure. Or make our own requests known only when they are “big” things and even then we doubt He might care or actually hear.

But oh how He cares. He knows the number of hairs on your head. He does

not just tolerate you or put up with you. He delights in you. He is overjoyed to hear your voice, calling out to your Abba. He cares about the details of your lives just as much as the "big picture." He desires you to let Him into the small spaces where He can take up residence and bring peace.

4. We believe that only pastors or those in "leadership" can, in fact, lead.

Churches use words like pastor, counsellor, minister of whatever, or lay person. They are essentially stating that you must be a professional to serve or lead within the body. The beauty however, of the Body of Christ is that God calls ordinary men to do His extraordinary work. You do not need a seminary degree, a certificate of training, or a title from your church's administration to serve, disciple, or equip those around you. You need three things: a willingness, faithfulness, and the Holy Spirit.

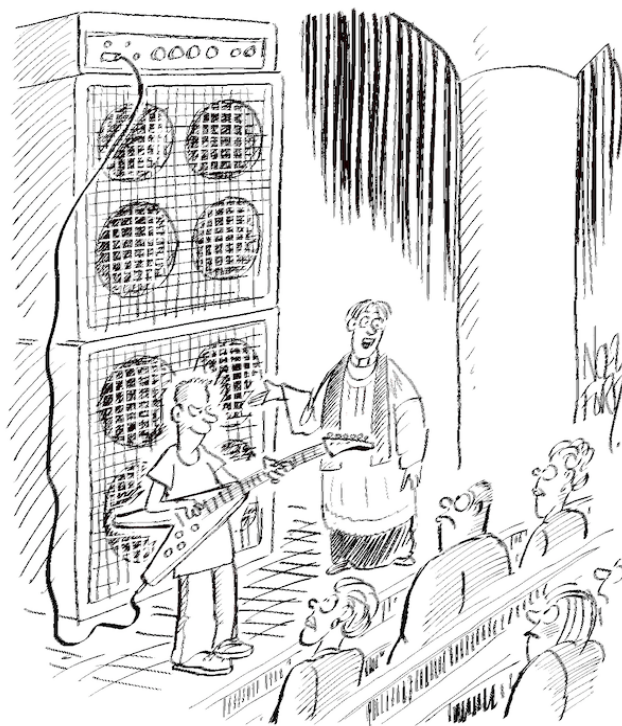
5. 5. God wants us to be happy.

Happiness in scripture is usually mentioned in terms of a fleeting moment or a temporal, earthly event. The scriptures, nor Christ (nor anyone else for that matter) never tell us that God wants us to "be happy." He wants us to be a lot of things: righteous, holy, Godly, pure, sanctified, etc....but "happy" ain't in the list. It's cliché but man is it true: God is more concerned with our holiness than our happiness. We tend to think more in terms of happiness and immediacy than joy and steadfastness. We want God to just rain down good feelings and good times. The truth however is that being happy and content in our daily lives is a by product of following Jesus with an obedient heart but it is not the reason

we follow Him. We give our life to Him because His sacrifice demands a response. In turn, as we engage with Him and let the Spirit lead. He offers us the abundant life. Abundance in Christ however is not synonymous with happiness. In fact I would argue, that in some ways, being a Christian is actually harder than not. The reward, blessing, peace, and fruit however far outweigh our temporal sufferings.

I would say that #3 and #5 are personal struggles for me. I am constantly battling lies within my mind, either self-perpetuated or flaming arrows from the enemy. Either way, recognising lies for what they are is the best cure. The result is freedom and ultimately that is what I'm after.

Which of the 5 lies, if any, have you believed or currently struggle with? What lies would you add to the list?



"For the next part of our carol-service, Nigel, the verger's nephew will play his interpretation of Silent Night..."

Christmas:

Where did Christmas trees come from?

There are two early stories that mention fir trees. The first involves St Boniface, who went to Germany in the 8th century as a missionary and found people sacrificing a child to their god under an oak tree. Boniface was appalled, and rescued the child. He then chopped down the oak tree and found a tiny fir tree growing nearby. He gave this to the people and said: "This is a symbol of life. Whenever you look at this tree, remember the Christ-child who is the one who will give you life, because he gave his life for you."

The second early fir tree story involves Martin Luther in the 16th century. It is said that one year he decided to drag a fir tree into his home and to decorate it with candles. He used it as a visual aid, telling people that the candles symbolised Jesus as the light of the world, and the evergreen tree symbolised the eternal life that Jesus gives to us. Many of the people who followed Luther were struck by the idea, and took up the custom.

Where did Christmas stockings come from?

No one is really sure, but a story is told of St Nicholas, a bishop who lived in the 4th century, who may have started the custom by accident. St Nicholas was of a wealthy family, and of a generous heart. As Christmas approached one year, he wanted to help a poor family whom he knew, but he did not want them to know it was him. So he climbed up on their roof on Christmas Eve and dropped some coins down the chimney.

The next morning the coins, to the great surprise of the family, were found in the

stockings of the ladies, who had hung them to dry by the fire the night before. Every year after that they put their stockings out, in the hope that some more money would fall into them. They told the story of this amazing appearance to their friends and neighbours, and the custom caught on.

According to the Gospel of St Matthew(Matthew 2: 1 – 11)

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him."

When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are not the least among the princes of Judah: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.

Then Herod, when he had privately called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.

When they had heard the king, they departed; and lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

Christmas as we know it!

Thank Dickens

Ever wonder where many of our Christmas traditions come from? A surprising amount can be traced back to the well-loved story of 'A Christmas Carol', by Charles Dickens.

When you read 'A Christmas Carol', you discover almost a template of the 'ideal Christmas' which we still hold dear today. Dickens seems to have selected the best of the Christmas celebrations of his day (he ignored some of the odd excesses) and packaged them in such a way as to give us traditions that we could accommodate and treasure – more than a century later.

So, for instance, in A Christmas Carol, Christmas is a family day, with a family-centred feast. In a home decorated with holly and candles the characters enjoy a roast turkey, followed by Christmas pudding. They give their loved ones presents. Scrooge even gives donations to charity (!). And all the while outside, there is snow and frost, while church bells ring, and carol singers sing, and hope for mulled wine. In 'A Christmas Carol' there is even a Father Christmas – in the shape of Christmas Present. Only the Christmas tree itself came later, when Prince Albert imported 'a pretty German toy' that won the heart of the English court, and hence the rest of Victorian society.

Christmas and St Luke's Gospel

It is to St Luke's wonderful gospel that many Christians turn as the year draws to a close and Christmas approaches, for it is to St Luke that we owe the fullest account of the nativity.

Luke alone tells us the story of Mary and the angel's visit to her, and has thus given the Church the wonderful Magnificat of Mary.

Luke alone tells us the story of Simeon's hymn of praise, thus giving us the wonderful Nunc Dimmittis. Imagine an Anglican evensong without the Nunc Dimmittis.

Luke alone tells us the story of how the angels appeared to the shepherds and how the shepherds then visited the infant Jesus. So – imagine Christmas cards and nativity scenes every year without the shepherds arriving to visit baby Jesus. Imagine school nativity plays without our children dressed as shepherds or sheep. So – thank you, Luke!

What makes it so amazing is that Luke was not a Jew! The man who wrote the fullest nativity story, and indeed more of the New Testament than any other single person, was a Gentile!

Reflections on

Why Jesus came when he did

Galatians Chapter 4, Verse 4 has the interesting phrase, "*When the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman ...*". What is "*the fullness of time*" which today we mark as 0 AD, even if Jesus may actually have been born a few years earlier?

During its 1 100+ years (753 BC to 410 AD), Rome had gradually conquered what today we know as Italy and Sicily, expanding also to Africa and beyond. The real explosion into the whole Mediterranean area and western and northern Europe only began in earnest in the 100 years or so before Christ, under brilliant generals like Pompey, Crassus and Sulla, and then consolidated and expanded further by Julius Caesar and his successors.

By the time Christ was born, the broad footprint of the Roman Empire was fixed. Hence there was a degree of stability – the message of the new religion was not impeded by massive social or political upheaval. Roman creative technology had led to the making of quality roads (the foundations of routes of some still being evident in Britain today), so communicating and spreading the good news of a risen Christ was much easier than it would have been a century before.

There was also order in the Empire. Though Roman rule was often hated, there was firm political regulation and control, sufficient to allow a peace – “pax Romana” – in which new ideas (and a new religion) could flourish. Though opposed by the Jews and several Roman emperors (who persecuted the Church and created thousands of martyrs), news Christianity slowly spread.

There were also many trade routes at that time; overseas commercial links were encouraged. Transport was available to enable movement of goods – and people – fairly efficiently. The opportunity to meet in homes was readily available. By the time of the conversion of Emperor Constantine in 313 AD, Christianity had

reached most, if not all, of the Roman world.

Rome began to fall apart in the 4th century (and the seeds were sown earlier). The empire imploded into confusion and fighting as the barbarians moved down from the north. So 0 AD was the perfect time, as is all God’s timing, to launch the fulfilment of God’s Eden promise to mankind. In the fullness of time, God did indeed send His Son, and His timing will be no less perfect in the coming again of His Son in power and glory.

Sources: Rome in the Ancient World, by David Potter, Thames & Hudson, 2009; The Fall of the Roman Empire, Michael Grant, Annenburg School Press, 1976.

The year Gabriel burst into tears

“And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.” (Luke 2:7)

One of my favourite things about the advent season is watching the children as they take part in the nativity play. It always brings a tear and a large smile.

This verse always takes me back to my youngest son, Daniel, and his first nativity play. He was just three years old and he was dressed up as the angel Gabriel - the cutest angel Gabriel I ever saw. All was going well until Mary and Joseph got to the scene where the inn keeper says “No room”.

As those words were spoken, Daniel burst into tears and rushed out to attack the little innkeeper. He was totally inconsolable! The innkeeper started to cry, and then other children started to cry.

Embarrassed and apologetic, his dad and I managed to remove him from the scene, still crying inconsolably. We left behind an audience fighting back fits of laughter....

As the angels in heaven rejoice when one sinner repents, I wonder if they cry, like Daniel did, when Jesus comes knocking at our hearts and finds no room. I wonder how they will feel as they watch our festivities this Christmas. Will they laugh and celebrate with us, or will our indifference to the Great Tidings of Good News break their hearts? Will you make room in your heart for Jesus? Will you make the angels smile, or cry?

Here is a Christmas prayer that will give you the best present you ever had:

‘Dear Lord Jesus, please forgive the times I’ve shut you out. My heart is open now, will you come in? Please cleanse me from anything that might cause you pain and fill my heart with your love this Christmas - and forever. In Jesus name, Amen.’

What Does God Want for Christmas?

George asked, ‘I don’t know what to get my Dad for Christmas. What do you give somebody who has everything?’ Harry replied, ‘A burglar alarm!’ Presents can be a real problem, when we want to give those we love something they really want. But what about God? What would he want from us this Christmas? What’s a suitable gift to celebrate the birthday of Jesus? What do you give someone who not only has everything, but who actually made everything?

The answer can be found Micah, a prophet who lived about 700 years before the birth of Christ: ‘He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love

mercy and to walk humbly with your God.’ (Micah 6:8).

This Christmas, God is looking for the gift of lives characterised by justice, mercy and humility:

Justice:- God is just - he is absolutely fair and righteous in all his dealings. Justice means ‘treating people right because you know God.’ In the Bible it means caring for the poor, speaking the truth and refusing to take advantage of the less fortunate. For us at Christmas, justice means doing right for those less fortunate than ourselves.

Mercy:- This speaks of sharing God’s heart by loving the unlovely even when they don’t love us back. How has God dealt with us this year? If He has forgiven us, then forgive others. Has God lifted us up when we were down? Then let’s seek to lift others. Where God has overlooked our faults, let’s overlook the faults of others. If God has been merciful to us this year, Christmas is a time to show mercy to others.

Humility: Humility is the opposite of pride. It reminds us that everything we have in life is a gift from God. Although some may have more or less than us, we can still thank God for what we have and do the best with what God has given me. This is the attitude we can reflect at Christmas, when we invest so much time in the presents we give.

God is looking to all these actions arising genuinely from our heart. As the carol says:

‘What shall I give him, Poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I’d give him a lamb.
If I were a wise man, I’d do my part.

What shall I give him, I'll give him my heart.'

Why does it begin at midnight with Holy Communion?

The hour was first chosen at Rome in the fifth century to symbolise the idea that Christ was born at midnight – a mystical idea in no way hindered by historical evidence! No one knows the hour of his birth.

Certainly in recent times, Holy Communion at midnight on Christmas morning has proved popular with modern families. One British writer pointed out its "domestic convenience" in 1947: "for where there are children and no servants, husband and wife may be unable to communicate at any other time." (So things don't change, then!)



The reindeer were on strike so Santa had to make do with what they had left in the pet shop.

The way I see it: Taking the Stress out of Christmas

We all know that turkeys (or seafood in Australia) don't vote for Christmas, but I suspect there's quite a few mothers, fathers, uncles, aunts and grandparents who don't either. They like the Nine Lessons and Carols bit, and the cards from friends, and the Queen on the telly, but for far too many people Christmas, instead of being an annual family delight, is a kind of nightmare. But it's a nightmare made worse because you have to keep saying how lovely it all is. When you're asked, on the first day back at work or by the supermarket checkout cashier, 'Have a nice Christmas?' it's not done to reply, 'No, awful. Glad it's all over'.

The trouble is, we have created an annual monster, a monster with a global appetite for swallowing our time and our money. It starts its pestering in mid-October and goes on, like a puppy demanding treats, right up to Christmas Eve. We all feel bound to submit to its demands. The alternative is to be a party-pooper, and who wants to be that?

Actually, in the end, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day are usually pretty good: plenty of nice, soporific food and drink, some decent undemanding television, children amenable with a few hundred pounds-worth of new electronic playthings and grandpa snoring on the sofa. But take a look at mum. She's running on empty by now - the turkey, the fish, the 'trimmings', the bread sauce, the pudding, and all produced in that kitchen that's OK for cereals and toast, or even spaghetti bolognaise, but definitely inadequate for a full-blown Christmas dinner for twelve. Not that she's going to complain, because

that would spoil the day. Hopefully they'll all eventually offer to help clear away the dishes and wash up (though last year it got left to Boxing Day).

Dad's got his own problems. It's one thing to give in to the blandishments of the retailers in November and December, with their flash ads about 'the ideal gift for the new son-in-law', or the must-have new electronic doll for the grand-daughter. It's quite another to pay for it in January. Last year it actually took until Easter to clear the wretched credit card bill.

So what's the clue to having a stress-free Christmas? Keep it simple, they say. Have a budget and stick to it. Don't start 'Christmas' until at least the second Sunday of Advent. Every able-bodied person must help on the day. Go carol singing on Christmas Eve. Go to church at midnight or on Christmas morning. Be grateful for the gift beyond words, the baby of Bethlehem, and all the gifts of love and kinship we celebrate in his name.

Sounds easy? Well, I've never quite made it myself, but someone told me it works.



The Mr and Mrs Druff couldn't understand why the Rector queried their choice of Dan as a name for the new baby.

Dates For Your Diary



Tue 4 December

07:00pm Church Council

Wed 5 December

10:30am mainly music

12:00noon Kids Plus meeting

Mon 10 December

01:00pm Mothers Union

Wed 12 December

10:30am mainly music

12:30pm Setting up Christmas Tree

Fri 14 December

05:00pm Happy Hour &
Bring & Share meal

Wed 19 December

09:00am Painting & Craft
Prep of Christmas props

Sun 23 December

11.00am Decoration of the Church
Christmas Tree (after Service)

Sun 28 December

03:00pm Wedding of David & Rebecca

Sun 13 January

05:00pm Wedding of Leanne & Mick

05:30pm Baptism of Eloise Avar

Wed 30 January 2013

10:00am Kids Holiday Club
For age 4 - 7
(Pre Kindy to Year 2)

Service Times (December)

Sun 2 December

09:00am Family Communion with
Sunday Club for children

Wed 5 December

09:30am Communion

Thu 6 December

07:30pm Order of St Luke

Sun 9 December

09:00am Family Communion with
Sunday Club for children

Wed 12 December

09:30am Communion

Sun 16 December

09:00am Communion with
Sunday Club for children

Sun 23 December

09:00am Communion

Sun 24 December - Christmas Eve

06:00pm Nativity Crib Service for
Families of all ages
11:30pm Midnight Communion

Sun 25 December - Christmas Day

09:00am Family Communion
Celebration

Service Times (January)

Sun 6 January 2013

09:00am Service of Communion

Sun 13 January 2013

09:00am Service of Communion

Sun 20 January 2013

09:00am Service of Communion

Sun 27 January 2012

09:00am Service of Communion

Sun 3 February 2013

09:00am Service of Communion

Readings (Dec & Jan)

Sun 2 December:

Jeremiah 33:14-16,
1Thessalonians 3:9-13, Luke 21:25-36

Sun 9 December:

Malachi 3:1-4, Philippians 1:3-11,
Luke 3:1-6

Sun 16 December:

Zephaniah 3:14-20, Philippians 4:4-7,
Luke 3:7-18

Sun 23 December:

Micah 5:2-5a, Hebrews 10:5-10,
Luke 1:39-45

Tue 25 December:

Isaiah 52:7-10, Hebrews 1:1-4,
John 1:1-14

Sun 30 December:

1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26, Colossians 3:12-17,
Luke 2:41-52

Sun 6 January:

Isaiah 60:1-6, Ephesians 3:1-12,
Matthew 2:1-12

Sun 13 January:

Isaiah 43:1-7, Acts 8:14-17,
Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

Sun 20 January:

Isaiah 62:1-5, 1 Corinthians 12:1-11,
John 2:1-11

Sun 27 January:

Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10, 1 Corinthians
12:12-31a, Luke 4:14-21

Sun 3 February:

Malachi 3:1-5, Hebrews 2:14-18,
Luke 2:22-40

St. James The Least Of All

On giving the after dinner speech

The Rectory

St. James the Least

My dear Nephew Darren

I had been slightly surprised that in your ministry so far, you have never been asked to give an after-dinner speech. Now you have delivered your first one, I can understand why. Speeches after any dinner come at the point where stomachs are dealing with a little too much food and brains with about the same quantity of wine. They should be short and witty; sadly, yours was neither.

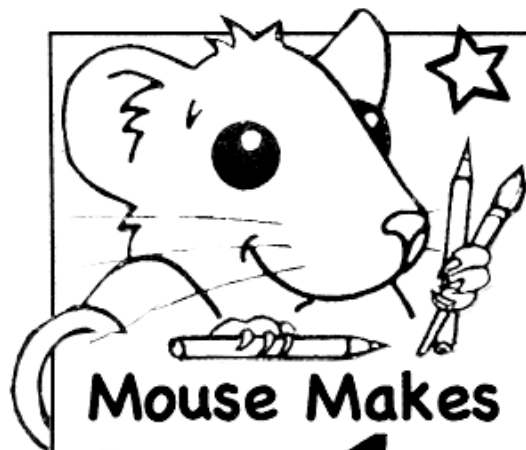
An hour-long speech on the Herodians and Second Temple Judaism at the time of the birth of Christ was not quite what we had expected. Of course, I applauded your enthusiasm, but I was the only one; the rest of them were asleep. Long after you had left, the catering staff gently vacuumed the carpets around the audience and it was only when the night security guard arrived that the last diners were woken and politely sent home. I suspect you will have put many marriages under strain as husbands, returning home in the early hours of the morning, had to explain to wives why they were so late. Their truthful answers would have been unbelievable.

When the head waiter appeared in a dressing gown and started placing chairs on tables, even you must have suspected that hints were being dropped and I have never heard of a hotel manager interrupting a speech to place his keys on the top table and asking if the last person to leave would kindly lock the main door.

I know that your clerical attire is more usually T-shirt and jeans, but borrowing the curate's dinner suit from your next-door parish was also not a good idea. He is a foot taller and several stones heavier than you. The result was quite worrying – several people wondered if you had just recovered from some dreadful disease that had made you shrink.

In the light of your qualified success, thank you for offering to come to repeat your speech after our annual Christmas dinner, but no thank you. The verger's son wants to share with us how many potholes he has counted in and around the town, and that should be most interesting.

Your loving uncle,
Eustace



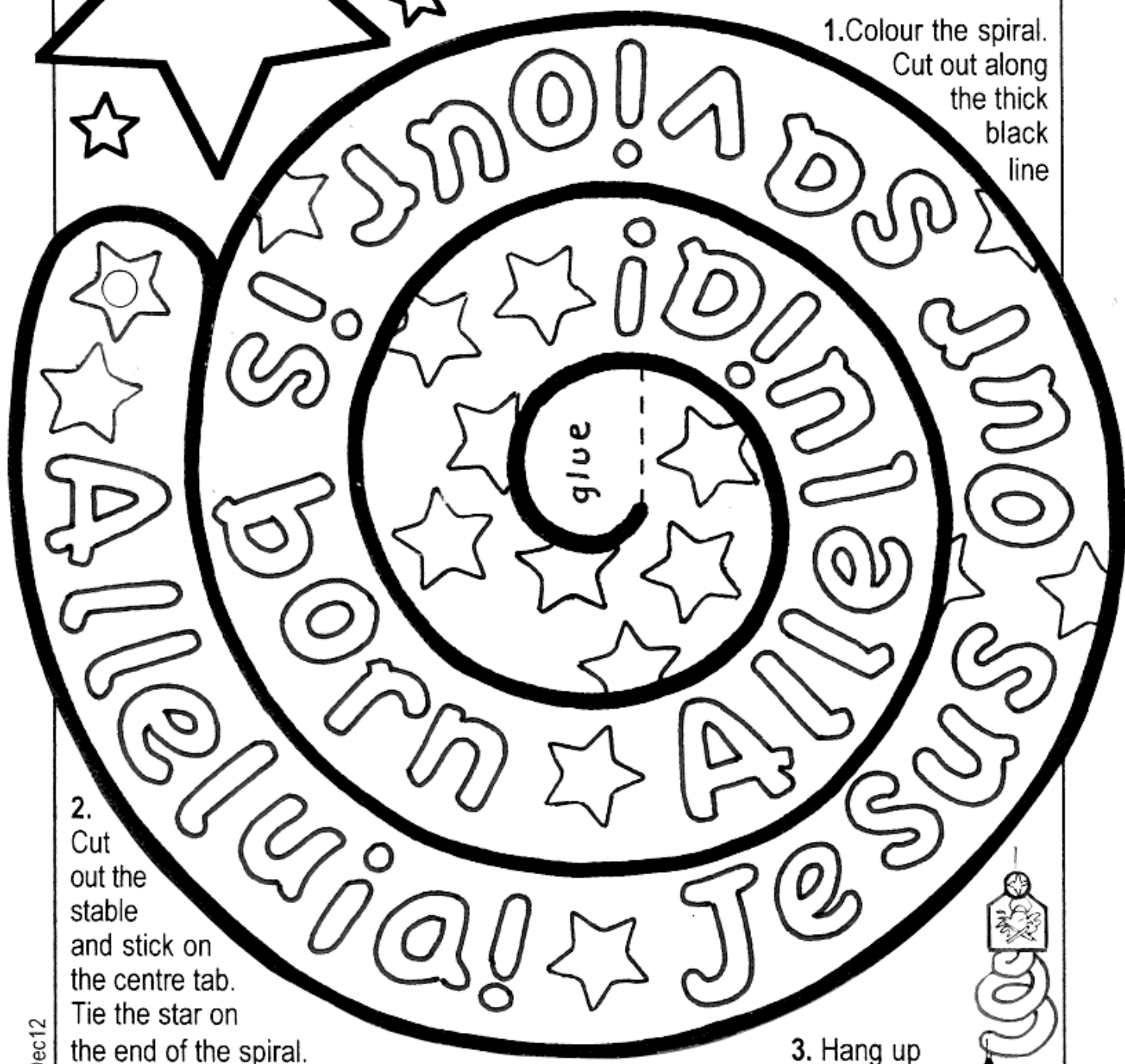
Mouse Makes

"I bring you good news
that will cause
great joy for *all*
the people.
Today in the
town of David
a **Saviour**
has been born
to you; he is
the **Messiah**,
the Lord"

Read:
Luke 1-20



1. Colour the spiral.
Cut out along
the thick
black
line



2. Cut
out the
stable
and stick on
the centre tab.
Tie the star on
the end of the spiral.

3. Hang up



Rosters (December)

Holy Cross Rosters from Sunday 2 December To Sunday 30 December 2012									
Date	Offertory	Reading	Prayers	Comm.	Morning Tea	Altar	Flowers	Sunday Club	Audio Visuals
Sun 02 Dec	Mel & Norm	Betty R	Jill	Betty	Hazel	Sheri	Heather	Jill	Wayne
Sun 09 Dec	Wayne & Betty R	Annette	Beryl	Jill	Joy & Frank	Sheri	Betty	Emma	Peter
Sun 16 Dec	Pat & Betty SG	Tanya	Betty R	Adele	Mike & Adele	Sheri	Sheri	Jill	Mike
Sun 23 Dec	Mel & Norm	Norma	Ken	Ken	Norma & Pat	Sheri	Adele	Holiday	Wayne
Tue 25 Dec	Wayne & Sheri	Peter	Beryl	Jill	Betty R	Sheri	All	Holiday	Peter
Sun 30 Dec	Pat & Betty SG	Barbara	Betty R	Betty	Hazel	Sheri	Joy	Holiday	Mike
Note If you are unable to fulfil your roster duty on your rostered day, please try to find someone to swap with. If you cannot find anyone, please ring Debbie									

St. James The Least Of All

Why church planting only causes trouble

The Rectory
St. James the Least

My dear Nephew Darren

Thank you for coming to talk to our church council about your New Year's programme for church planting. (Though I do wonder: why should a New Year have to have new ideas? We haven't yet used the ideas we had last year.) Anyway, you may have been interested to hear the discussions on the subject after you left early to get your bicycle chain mended. A few folk thought that, in urging us to do some church planting, you were making veiled attacks on our flower arrangers. Others were disappointed you didn't say whether yew or holly would be better for planting in the churchyard.

I must admit, I learned some new facts. I had always thought that sending parishioners to start a new church in another area was simply a way of getting rid of those you found tiresome in your own congregation – even if that would mean I would feel obliged to suggest a good half of our people may find a new vocation.

We did in fact attempt something similar many years ago with a colleague from a neighbouring village. A moment of inattention on my part allowed someone to be elected on to our church council who had ideas for change. As a way of energising church life, he suggested a group from our congregation should be exchanged with an equal number from a neighbouring village. Naturally, I made sure the people sent from our church were the ones I would be greatly relieved to see take an extended holiday. Unfortunately, my clerical colleague spotted the same opportunity. After a disastrous three months, rather like the exchange of spies in a Le Carre novel; both parties stood at either end of the bridge across the stream marking our parish boundaries and swapped parishioners back. Better the devil you know...

Church planting may be all very well for you, when you are surrounded by thousands of people and there are a surfeit of vacant cinemas and pubs to move into. Our congregation are very reluctant to say their prayers in anything built after the Middle Ages – in fact, most of them live as though we are still living in that era. They also see little point in striking up conversations with those in the village they have politely ignored for the last thirty years.

We do, in fact, have a church plant of sorts. Every year we hold our Harvest Supper in a local farmer's barn when those who would otherwise never attend worship come to eat the obligatory hot pot. As I shake their hands when they leave, I do my annual bit for church growth. I say: 'See you again next year.' I always do (see them again at the Harvest Supper, that is), and so it works fine.

Your loving uncle,
Eustace

Rosters (January)

Holy Cross Rosters from Sunday January 6 to Sunday 27 January 2013									
Date	Offertory	Reading	Prayers	Comm.	Morning Tea	Altar	Flowers	Sunday Club	Audio Visuals
Sun 06 Jan	Mel & Norm	Beryl	Ken	Sheri	Joy & Frank	Carole	Heather	Holiday	Wayne
Sun 13 Jan	Wayne & Carole	Pat	Jill	Adele	Mike & Adele	Carole	Christine	Holiday	Peter
Sun 20 Dec	Pat & Betty SG	Mike	Beryl	Ken	Norma & Pat	Carole	Betty	Holiday	Mike
Sun 27 Jan	Mel & Norm	Betty SG	Betty R	Jill	Betty R	Carole	Adele	Holiday	Wayne
Note If you are unable to fulfil your roster duty on your rostered day, please try to find someone to swap with. If you cannot find anyone, please ring Debbie									

◊ THE BAPTISM OF JESUS ◊

Jesus came from Nazareth and was baptised by John in the Jordan.

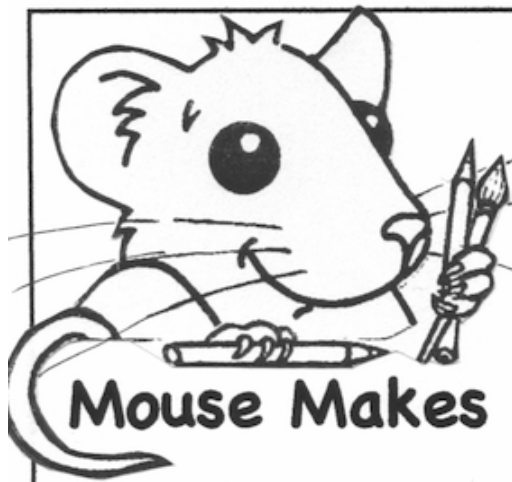
As soon as Jesus came up out of the water, he saw heaven opening and the Spirit coming down on him like a dove.

And a voice came from heaven:

"You are my own dear Son.

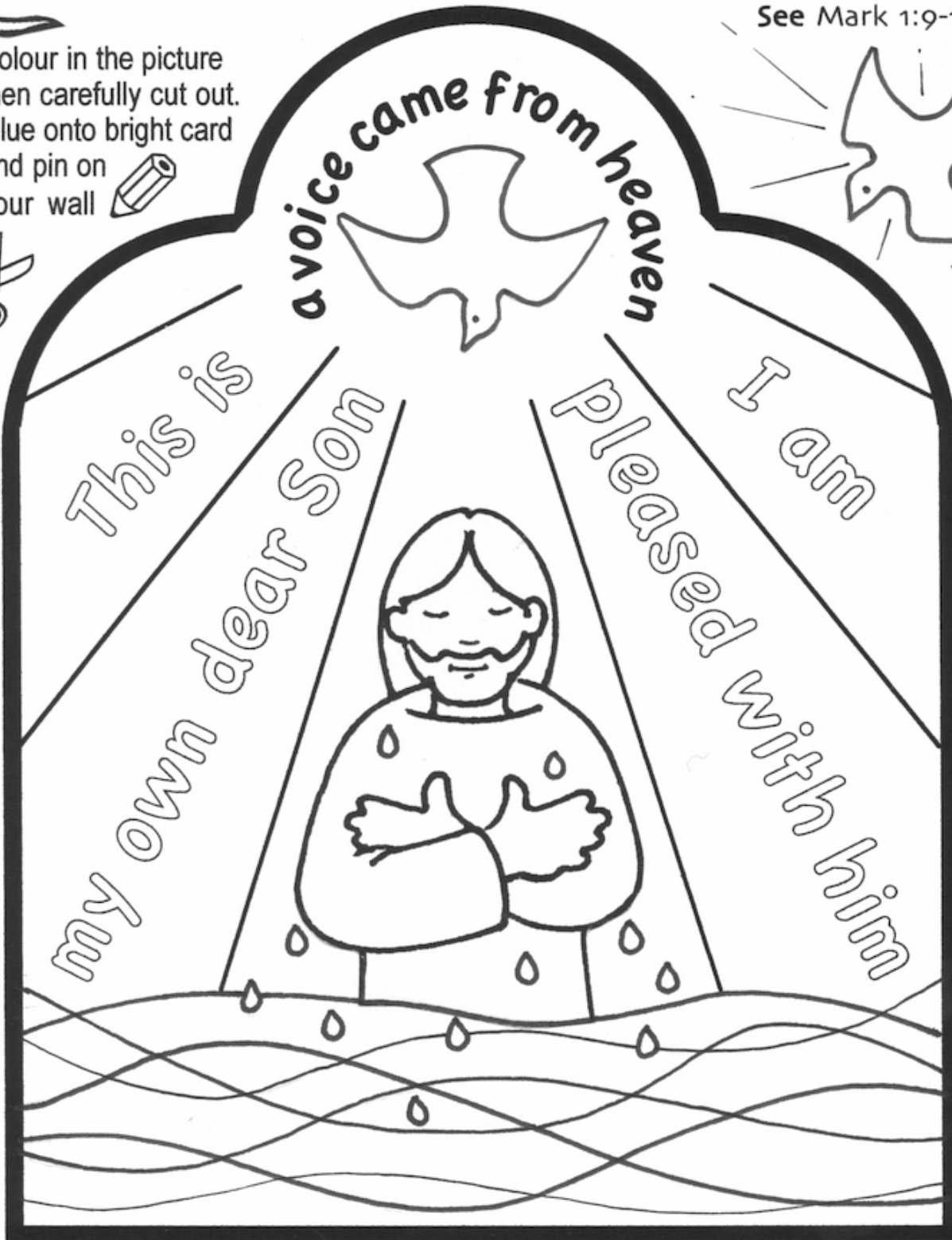
I am pleased with you"

See Mark 1:9-11



Mouse Makes

Colour in the picture
then carefully cut out.
Glue onto bright card
and pin on
your wall





Church of the Holy Cross Melville

KIDSPLUS+ HOLIDAY CLUB



You are invited to come along to a Holiday Club where children will have a great time singing songs, creating crafts, playing games and listening to bible stories. We're looking forward to sharing this exciting event with children and parents in our neighbourhood.

We hope you will join us at SonQuest Rainforest.

When: Wednesday 30 January 2013

Time: 9.30am Registration
10.00am—1.00pm Activities
1.00pm Sausage Sizzle with parents

Place: Church of the Holy Cross
Cnr McLean St & Coleman Cres
Melville

For children in school – Kindy to Year 2

Please register your interest to
The Reverend Debbie May
08 9330 1550 or 0417 178 688
Email: revd.debbie@gmail.com

