

The Leaflet

No. 1067
December 2017





THE SCOTS' CHURCH, MELBOURNE

The First Presbyterian Church in Victoria – Founded 1838

LOCATIONS The Scots' Church, Melbourne, 77 Russell St (cnr Collins St), Melbourne
Assembly Hall Building, Werner Brodbeck Hall, Grnd Flr, 156 Collins St, Melbourne
Assembly Hall Building, Robert White Hall, 1st Flr, 156 Collins St, Melbourne
St Stephens Church, Flemington and Kensington, 26 Norwood St, Flemington

WORSHIP **SUN: 10.00 am Service**, St Stephen's Church
10.30 am Indonesian Service (www.icc-melbourne.org),
Werner Brodbeck Hall
11.00 am Traditional Service, The Scots' Church
5.00 pm Engage City Church Contemp. Service, Robert White Hall
(Crèche and Sunday school are available during all Sunday services.)

TUE: 7.00 pm City Bible Study (CBS), Robert White Hall

WED: 1.00 pm Service, The Scots' Church

THU: 1.00 pm Lunctime Worship and Meeting, Werner Brodbeck Hall
(Prayer requests may be given to the church office during office hours, or to any duty manager at any service.)

MEETINGS **SUN:** 9.15 am Choir practice
WED: 10.30 am PWMU (second Wednesday)
7.30 pm Kirk Session (first Wednesday)
7.30 pm Board of Management (fourth Wednesday, quarterly)

DIRECTORY

Senior Minister	Rev. D.R. Robertosn	9650 9903
Minister, Central Business District	Rev. R.O'Brien	9650 9903
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Minister, St Stephen's, Flemington	Rev. P. Court	9650 9903
Minister, Indonesian Congregation	Rev. C. Tirtha	9650 9903
Director of Music	Mr D. Lawrence OAM	9650 9903
Assistant Organist	Ms R.A. Polo	9650 9903
Organist Emeritus	Mr R. Batterham AO	-
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Church Officer	Mr K. Bowden	9650 9903
Building Officer	Mr R. Holt	9650 9903
Editor, <i>The Leaflet</i>	Miss R. Strother	9650 9903



Welcome to The Scots' Church, Melbourne,
and this edition of our bi-monthly newsletter,

The Leaflet

The Scots' Church Melbourne is a diverse and eclectic body of God's people who come together each week to worship God in a variety of styles and settings.

Beyond our weekly gatherings, we seek to love and serve the Lord by being faithful in our devotion to the Word of God, caring in our fellowship with one another and visitors, and generous in our outreach to the communities in which God has placed us.

We would be delighted to meet you at any of our church services or at any of our other public meetings and functions.

If you want to know more about the Christian faith, the Presbyterian Church, Scots' Church or the range of activities and ministries that we're involved in, please don't hesitate to contact us:

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Senior Minister
The Rev. Douglas Robertson

Dear Friends,

I confess that I have a bit of a love-hate relationship with Christmas. My family will tell you that I struggle every year with the commercialisation and the excess of unnecessary and unwanted gifts. To be honest I probably frequently sound very ungrateful. To lighten the moment, we often joke about my likeness to

Ebenezer Scrooge, from Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol", and I use his catchphrase as my own: "Bah! Humbug!"

And yet I also love so much about the old Christmas traditions. I like the idea of families gathering together, perhaps allowing them, even just for a moment, to forgive and forget a difficult year, or to set aside difficulties in their relationships. I love Christmas dinner, roast turkey with all the trimming, and always over indulge!

I also love singing Christmas Carols. Some of my favourites, of course, take me back to my childhood. "Away in a Manger" was one of the first tunes I learned to play on the recorder at school, and "The First Nowell" was one of very few tunes I've ever been able to play on the piano. I might have forgotten the fingering for them both now, but the tune itself is deeply ingrained and the words too have become part of me.

We had a dear member of our congregation who, in her latter years, was almost completely blind, yet she still sung with gusto every week in church, her sharp mind recalling the words for most hymns without hesitation. Not too many of us could do that with the hymns we sing week by week, but I think most of us could recall most verses of many Christmas Carols. In part that may simply be because of the repetition, but I hope that it also reflects the depth of meaning that the words have for us, and the depth of faith by which we participate in the worship of Almighty God through these words.

We might think of "Away in a Manger" as a children's song, and we might even smile knowingly at the idea that the little Lord Jesus might never cry, but there is profound wisdom in the simple prayer: "Be near me Lord Jesus, I ask thee to stay, close by me for ever, and love me I pray."

Theological perfectionists might dismiss “The First Noel” because it perpetuates the myth that there were three wise men (the Bible doesn’t tell us how many), but who amongst us is not moved by the vision of certain poor shepherds being startled by a choir of angels, and the wise men following a star shining in the east, beyond them far, and all eventually bowing down in the presence of a new born king?

In the midst of all the tinsel and glitter, there is a story that has probably inspired more songs, and it has certainly touched more hearts and shaped more lives, than any other historical event, or person.

The birth of Jesus is worth celebrating and singing about, so please do make every effort to join us for all the services of worship that we provide, and have a very happy and blessed Christmas season.

Douglas

A Christmas Carol

‘A Christmas Carol’ by Charles Dickens was first published in 1843. It tells the story of Ebenezer Scrooge, an old miser visited by the ghost of his former business partner, Jacob Marley, and by the Ghosts of Christmas Past, Present and Yet to Come. This results in Scrooge being transformed into a kinder and gentler man.

Dickens was inspired to write the story after he visited the Field Lane Ragged School, one of a number of establishments for London’s illiterate and half-starved street children. The key theme of the story is the treatment of the poor and the ability of a self-interested man to be transformed into a more sympathetic person. Scholars have queried whether the story is fully secular, or a Christian allegory.

The mid-Victorian revival of the Christmas holiday has been captured in this story. Dickens has been acknowledged as helping to inspire several aspects of Christmas, including family gatherings, seasonal food and drink, and a festive generosity of spirit.



The title page of the first edition of 'A Christmas Carol' by Charles Dickens (Public Domain)

References: Wikipedia: A Christmas Carol. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_Christmas_Carol



Minister, Central Business District
The Rev. Richard O'Brien

Silent Night, Holy Night

A friend of mine, John Musselmanⁱ, sent this piece of research on the writing of the Christmas Carol, Silent Night, Holy Night. Unfortunately, there is no firm documentation about the events surrounding the writing of Silent Night.

Josef Mohr was concerned that he did not have something special for his Christmas Eve midnight service. It was December, 1818.

Two days before Christmas, Mohr was called to visit a dying woman. Night had fallen; it was late when he was returning home. As he came to a ridge overlooking the town, he stopped to reflect. Snow-covered mountains towered above him. In the valley below, a faint, dark outline of the village was barely discernible. From one house, and then another, faint lights glimmered in the dark.

Vast stillness! No televisions blinking and blaring. No cars, trains, or airplanes making their noisy ways to final destinations. No factories working overtime. Not even one seducing neon light inviting villagers to shop.

All was calm.

Suddenly, this good man murmured to himself, "It must have been something like this - that silent, holy night in Bethlehem."

One of those special moments had come. Mohr was powerfully affected. An encounter with the Holy. He stood in still silence.

God's people in the Bible handle these encounters in different ways.

Moses resisted: "I can't speak." Mary, the mother of our Lord, questioned: "How can this be?" Jonah ran. Mohr hurried home.

He sat at his desk and wrote...and wrote...and wrote.

It was very late when he arose for bed; the now-famous carol was finished.

He had stopped his work, as all wise men and women do when God says, "Enough." Can you picture him leaning back in his chair? Perhaps a sense of satisfaction and fullness came over him, or that deep, tranquil state of mind that comes when God makes his presence known. Could it be that he was overcome with joy unspeakable, the kind of joy that Jesus promised the Twelve? Guesswork, all of it! No historical records. No diary. What we do know is that after he penned the final word and the inspired ink began to dry, we are told he read it once...and then again before retiring for the evening. Peering over his shoulder, we notice the first line written in his native tongue: *Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht.*

Silent night, holy night,
 All is calm, all is bright
 Round yon virgin mother and Child.
 Holy Infant so tender and mild,
 Sleep in heavenly peace,
 Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night,
 Shepherds quake at the sight.
 Glories stream from heaven afar,
 Heavenly hosts sing alleluia;
 Christ the Saviour is born!
 Christ the Saviour is born!

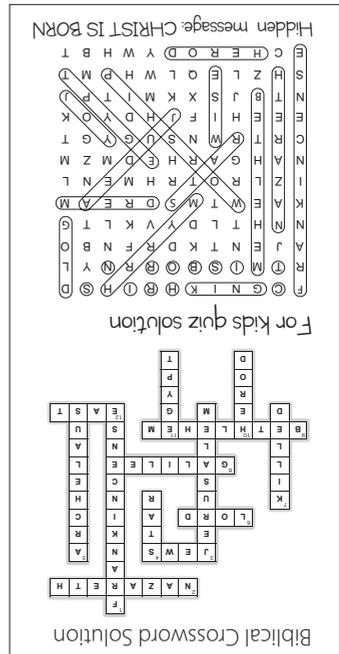
Silent night, holy night,
 Son of God, love's pure light
 Radiant beams from Thy holy face,
 With the dawn of redeeming grace,
 Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth,
 Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.

When he awoke the next morning, he picked up his manuscript, re-read it, and hurried over to see his friend Franz Gruber. As soon as Gruber heard the words, "inner voices seemed to fill his humble quarters with an angelic chorus." He sang it to his wife. Her response was prophetic: "We will die - you and I - but this song will live."

Let us take time this Christmas and ponder the significance of "Christ the Saviour is born!"

Yours sincerely
 Richard and Rosemary O'Brien.

¹Letter from John Musselman to me. Undated. John is the Director of The Jackson Institute.





Assistant Minister

Mr. Greg Matthews

The Celebration of Christmas

Why do you get excited about Christmas? Do you get excited about the food? Do you get excited about meeting up with family you haven't seen for a while? Do you get excited about holidays – road trips and beaches? Do you get excited about receiving gifts? Do you get excited about giving gifts?

There are many things about Christmas that we can be excited about. Yet the one thing that should be impacting our hearts and minds is the birth of Jesus Christ. Why should we be excited about it?

At the centre of our Christmas celebrations is the birth of Jesus Christ. It is a great reason to be excited. After the world was created, mankind fell into sin and under the judgement of God. This sin, and its continuation in all humanity throughout history is the central problem of the bible. But even in the beginning, God already had a plan to save his people. With the birth of Jesus Christ, God's plan finally leaps into action. It changes from being a prophecy of hope to a prophecy being fulfilled.

A holiday doesn't get exciting until you actually start to go. You can do all the planning, you can save money for the trip, you can make bookings, and you can even start deciding what you'll do when you get there. You might feel a little excitement in the planning, but when you finally board that plane, when the holiday actually begins, then the excitement reaches a whole other level.

The birth of Jesus Christ is the moment when the God's plan for salvation was finally put into action. The Son of God, entered this world as a child. The saviour of the world had come. The one who rested in that manger was the one who would save his people from their sins. It's no wonder the angels burst into song because that is certainly something to get excited about.

Greg



Minister, Indonesian Congregation
The Rev. Christian Tirtha

Christmas: A Tapestry of God's Glory

One of my fondest memories is performing in a Sunday school play at our home church back in Bandung, Indonesia. I played an old man who lived in an impoverished area along with a group of street children. Until now I can't recall the storyline. However, what has stuck in my memory all these years is the process they took to age the then much youthful me. Apart from dabbing my hair with baby powder, one teacher had the brilliant idea of rubbing some tooth paste to boot! I must admit once I saw myself in the mirror, it did make doing the acting all the more easier. The hard part came once I got home, when I experienced the unusual tooth paste smell washing out of my hair coupled with the struggle to get the sticky bits out!

People often go through great lengths in order to communicate a message. Generally speaking, the time spent in preparation is proportional to the importance and significance of the message. One could quickly type a short text message to a group of friends for a normal social gathering. However, let's say you're assigned to address a very delicate situation, of which you have no experience, with a mostly unsupportive audience. You'd make sure every element of the communication is rightly researched, worded, and delivered. You'd anticipate every possible objection more.

I have often thought about the incarnation along similar lines. After all, God has indeed communicated his message of judgment and forgiveness through great lengths. The Old Testament history and revelation are God's way of displaying his person and how he expects his people to respond. God is both the ultimate director and main actor; the whole universe is his stage. Repeatedly the Old Testament justifies God's redemptive acts for the purpose of displaying his glory. In setting the stage for the parting of the Red Sea, God declares to Moses, "And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will pursue them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, and the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD" (Exodus 14:4 ESV). Even many centuries after Israel had been constituted into a nation state and at the brink of its eventual exile, God's purpose remains the same, "I am the LORD; that is my name; my glory I give to no other!" (Isaiah

42:8). It is no wonder that one prominent theologian summarized the Bible's message as "God's glory in salvation through judgment."

However, God's revelation in the Old Testament also communicates his ultimate plan. Embodied in the Old Testament history, laws, prophecies, songs, and wisdom sayings is a pointer to a great Someone. One whose coming is said to be from everlasting (Micah 5:2). In other words, this Someone—God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ—has been God's plan from the very beginning.

Unlike our feeble attempt to communicate through words, drama, music, and the like—this time around God's communication is perfect. "Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature" (Hebrews 1:1-3). God has gone through great lengths in preparation for his Son's arrival on earth. In the pages of the Old Testament we see Jesus foreshadowed in God's righteous laws, predicted through God's prophets, prefigured in the history of God's people.

As we approach Christmas this year, I hope that we gain a fresh amazement at the rich tapestry that God has spun. We are the ones who have made a mess of our lives and this world, he is the one who set everything right. He does it, not only through great lengths but also at a great cost, by giving up his own beloved Son. He does that because he has the most important message that mankind could ever hear and receive. Through his incarnation, Jesus is God's clearest and final communication to us: those who call on him receive salvation, and those who refuse him are under judgment. Only those who choose the former can and will sing with the angelic host, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!" (Luke 2:14).

"If God had perceived that our greatest need was economic, He would have sent an economist. If He had perceived that our greatest need was entertainment, He would have sent a comedian or an artist. If God had perceived that our greatest need was political stability, He would have sent us a politician. If He had perceived that our greatest need was health, He would have sent us a doctor. But He perceived that our greatest need involved our sin, our alienation from him, our profound rebellion, our death; and He sent us a Savior." (Donald A. Carson)

Christian



Minister, St Stephen's Flemington

The Rev. Phil Court

Giving us back to our Father

Luke's gospel account of Jesus healing a severely afflicted child is an acted parable that tells us a great deal about God and about ourselves.

The incident occurs immediately after Jesus returns from a mountain prayer-retreat with Peter, James and John; a brief sojourn during which the three disciples witness Jesus' transfiguration into his divine glory.

A man from the waiting crowd cries out to Jesus: "*Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, for he is my only child. And behold, a spirit seizes him, and he suddenly cries out. It convulses him so that he foams at the mouth, and shatters him, and will hardly leave him.*" (Luke 9:38-39 ESV)

Can you feel something of this man's distress; something of his pain? Can you sense the sorrow in his heart? But why is he insisting on bringing the problem to Jesus? Because Jesus is his last hope. "*I begged your disciples to cast it out, but they could not,*" he says in his desperation. (Verse 40)

Now let's see how Jesus uses this heart-rending drama as a parable for our own condition – the sinful and fallen condition that we all inherit as our starting point in life.

We are born in sin, with an inbuilt spirit of rebellion and Godlessness. We cry out in our rebellion against God's will. We are convulsed and crippled by our sinful urges and desires. We foam at the mouth in our pride and our anger. Our good intentions are shattered by our sinful impulses. And in all this, we grieve our heavenly Father's heart. But at no point does that exhaust his love for us. He loves us in spite of ourselves. He loved us from before time. He loves us with a perfect love.

But there is no merely human remedy to our condition. No human device, no human recipe or therapy, no human procedure can cast out our sinful nature.

Only Jesus can deal with the problem of our sin. Only he can be with and bear with the *faithless and twisted generation* (Verse 41a) that we are all part of. And for that to happen, we must be brought to Jesus. "*Bring your son here,*" Jesus says. (Verse 41b)

Now notice how, as the son is in the process of being brought to Jesus, the demon puts up a fight, *throwing him to the ground and convulsing him*. (Verse 42) It is common for people to fight and struggle against the offer of the Gospel. Sometimes this is a sign that the kingdom of God has drawn near, and that the process of our rebirth in Christ is almost upon us.

What Jesus does next is an acted parable of what he does in the regeneration of every believer.

- He rebukes our unclean spirit. That's our sinful disposition.
- He heals us. Our hearts of stone are replaced with hearts of flesh.
- He gives us back to our father. We are returned to our heavenly Father as spiritually healed children of God. (verse 42)

But it comes at a price, an infinite price that only God himself can provide. The price is the life of the very one who heals us. That's why, as everyone is being *astonished at the majesty of God* (verse 43), Jesus says to his disciples: *"Let these words sink into your ears: The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men."* (Verse 44)

All Jesus' work leads to the cross and through the cross to the eternal salvation and the spiritual healing of all who believe in him. May you experience the blessed assurance of knowing that you, too, have been given back to your heavenly Father.

Philip

Rosemary

This lovely herb was traditionally connected with the Virgin Mary, as it was thought to be her favourite plant. It is sometimes called the friendship plant. Known as the remembrance herb, it was used at Christmas as this is the time we remember the birth of Jesus.



Credit: Margalob 2016, Creative Commons



St Stephen's marked its Annual Congregational Meeting on 15 October with this group photo

The Tradition of Holly and Ivy at Christmas

In the Northern Hemisphere, holly (*Ilex sp.*) and ivy (*Hedera helix*) have been used since ancient times as winter decoration. These evergreen plants freshened the air and, during the cold, dark days of winter, reminded people of the coming spring. These plants, amongst others, were also originally used in pre-Christian times to help celebrate the winter solstice festival. Over time both holly and ivy were incorporated by Christians into religious holidays, although ivy was banished for a time due to its ability to grow in the shade, which led to an association with secrecy and ill deeds.

Religious meaning is associated with holly as it represents the crown of thorns that Christ wore prior to his crucifixion. The leaves have sharp points around the edges, and one can easily prick a finger. The berries represent the drops of blood shed by Christ, and the wood is said to be the same as that from which the cross was made.

References: The History of Holly and Ivy. www.altogetherchristmas.com/traditions/hollyandivy.html
Holly, Ivy and Christmas Plants. <https://www.whychristmas.com/customs/hollyandivy.shtml>

The Rev. David Currie writes from London... The Visit that Changes Everything!

Everyone enjoys getting a visit! It might be morning tea with scones and jam with an old school friend, or a weekend barbie with the family, an opportunity to exchange stories over a lovely meal, a chance to catch up on the family news, or it might even be that exhausting visit from the grandchildren!

What has really been encouraging for Gwen and I as we continue to settle into our new church in Highgate is the number of visitors we've had from Scots' Church and Melbourne. Rae was here a few months back and it was great to see her doing so well, to be able to catch up on some of the news, and to hear how our friends were doing. Gwen and I still have very fond memories of Eric Pretty, the Scots' Church elder who assisted me faithfully at every Wednesday

lunchtime service. Imagine how thrilled we were then when his daughter and son-in-law, Judy and Allen, got in touch to say they could spend the last few days of their trip to Europe with us in London, and they actually attended our special service on 29th October for the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. Everyone enjoys getting a visit!

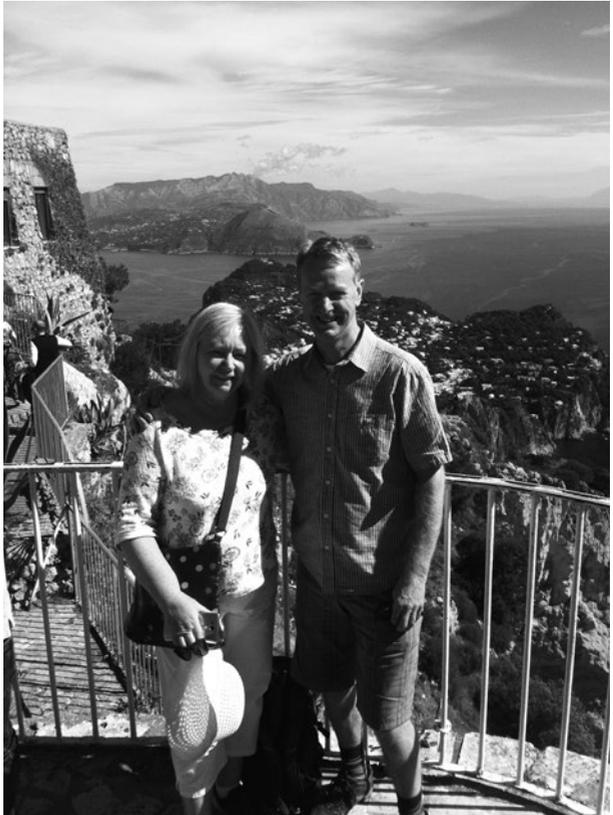
Then, at this time of year, of course, we turn our thoughts to "the visit that changes everything!"

This whole season of Advent helps us focus on a unique event, a visit quite unlike any other - the coming of God's Son, the visit of God to planet earth, the incarnation.



Grandchildren Isla (left) and Finlay as they began their first day respectively at preschool and school

“For unto us a child is born, to us a son is given; and his name will be called ‘Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace’” (Isaiah 9:6). It’s an event of such enormity, such a mind-blowing ‘visit’, that down through the centuries humans have both doubted it, and celebrated it. In churches in London and Melbourne, and all round the world, we trust the words of John in his gospel where he writes - “The true light that enlightens everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world He came to his own home, and his own people received him not. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God ...” (John 3:9 - 12).



David and Gwen enjoying the Isle of Capri, on a recent holiday to Sorrento, Italy

“The visit that changes everything!” We can thank God that, through Christ, we are welcomed into his family. This is the life-changing message it is our privilege to share with others at Christmas, and all year round.

Everyone likes a visit! Gwen and I hope it’s not too long before you can visit us, or we can visit you!

Wishing you God’s rich blessings,

David and Gwen

All Saints' Church, Wittenberg

Sometimes known as the Reformation Memorial Church, and commonly referred to as the Castle Church, All Saints' Church is a Lutheran church in the medieval town of Wittenberg, Germany. On 31st October 1517 Martin Luther posted 'Ninety-five Theses' on the door, this act recognised as the beginning of the German Protestant Reformation. The Castle of Wittenberg rises above the western end of the city centre, and the Castle Church is built right into the fortress as its north wing. In past times, as the church of the palace of the dukes of Saxe-Wittenberg, it also served the town's university as a place of worship.

The first chapel on the site, dedicated to All Saints, dated back to the 1340s. When Frederick III rebuilt the fortress, the new All Saints' Church was erected between 1490 and 1511 in Late Gothic style, again as part of the castle complex as the earlier chapel had been.

The University of Wittenberg was founded in 1502, with All Saints' Church being designated to serve as its chapel in 1507. It quickly became an important worship and academic centre, and students were awarded their doctorates there. The main doors of the church were often used by university staff to pin up notices and messages. When Luther wrote his 'Ninety-five Theses' against the practice of the church at the time in relation to indulgences, he was professor of moral theology at the University of Wittenberg. In addition to posting his theses on the church door, he also enclosed a copy with a letter to the Archbishop of Mainz. The 'Ninety-five Theses' in Latin were quickly reprinted, translated and distributed throughout Germany and Europe.

A tradition of burying academics of the university in the church had been established over time. Martin Luther was buried in All Saints' Church following his death on 18th February 1546. On the tomb, located near the pulpit, are the words: 'Here is buried the body of the Doctor of Sacred Theology, Martin Luther, who died in the year of Christ 1546, on February 18th, in his hometown Eisleben, after having lived for 63 years,



Wittenberg Castle Church after a woodcut by Lucas Cranach the Elder (1509) (Public Domain)



All Saints' Church, showing the apse and steeple (Creative Commons)



The nave of All Saints' Church, with its rib vault ceiling (Creative Commons)

2 months, and 10 days.' Luther's casket rests some 2.4 metres below the floor of the nave.

The original wooden doors were lost when the church was largely destroyed by a fire in 1760, during the Seven Years' War. Some of the stone foundations of the church were the only part of the building to survive the blaze. The church was quickly rebuilt, although many priceless works of art that had been housed there were lost.

In 1858 King Frederick William IV of Saxony ordered commemorative bronze doors to be installed. The doors, which are still in place, are inscribed with the 'Ninety-five Theses' in their original Latin form. The doors themselves weigh 1,000 kilograms, and are attached to the original stonework that survived from the earlier fire.

In 1883, on the occasion of the fourth centenary of Luther's birth, an extensive restoration of All Saints' Church in Neo-Gothic style commenced. This included the installation of the present rib vaulted ceiling and the rebuilding of the 88 metre steeple which was encircled with the quote, 'Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott' ('A mighty fortress is our God'), the title of one of Luther's most famous hymns. The main features of the interior of the church as seen today date back to this period. The

nave is decorated with heraldic emblems, painted designs and bronze medallions of Reformation supporters. There are free-standing statues of Martin Luther and a

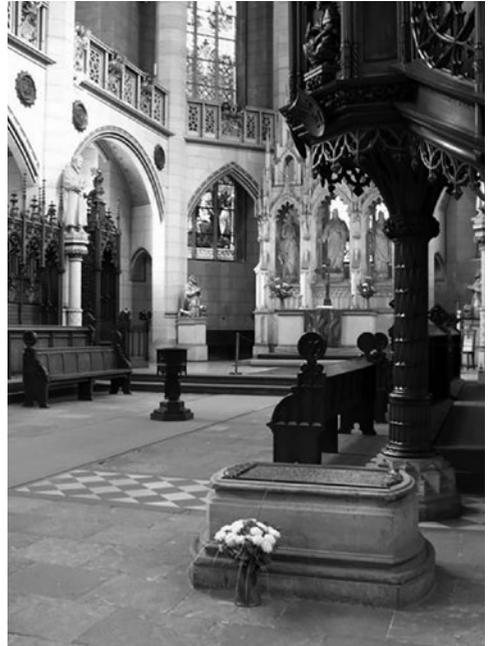
number of other Reformation figures. The interior wooden furnishings also date from the 19th century, including a fine pulpit decorated with the coats of arms of towns associated with Luther. The pipe organ was built in 1863, reconstructed in 1892 and 1935, and then restored to its original design between 1992 and 1994.

The Lutheran Castle Church parish was established in 1949, and in 1983 12 new stained glass windows were installed to commemorate 500 years since Luther's birth. The subjects of these windows are medallions of Reformation figures.

All Saints' Church remains a place of worship today. The adjacent castle houses the town's archives, a museum and a youth hostel. The church has undergone a recent renovation to mark the 500th anniversary of the beginning of the Reformation in 1517. All Saints' Church holds an important place in the historical beginnings of the Reformation that spread rapidly from there.



The beautiful organ of All Saints' Church, restored in 1994 (Creative Commons)



The tombstone of Martin Luther. Credit: Paul T. McCain, English Wikipedia, 2006

References: Castle Church, Lutherstadt Wittenberg. <http://www.welterbe-luther.de/en/luther-memorials/castle-church-lutherstadt-wittenberg>

Sacred Destinations: Castle Church, Wittenberg. www.sacred-destinations.com/germany/wittenberg-castle-church

Wikipedia: All Saints' Church, Wittenberg. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/All_Saints'_Church,_Wittenberg
 Wikipedia:Ninety-five Theses. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ninety-five_Theses

AFL Grand Final Mid-Week Service

The Scots' Church Grand Final Mid-Week Service held on 27th September was once again well supported by members of the congregation and visitors, many wearing their favourite football scarves. The service was conducted by Rev Douglas Robertson with Pastor Sean Heldsinger, Chaplain of St Kilda Football Club, as the guest preacher.



The church fence was colourfully decorated for the occasion

Rev Alistair Macrae, Wesley Church, Lonsdale Street, Melbourne led the congregation in prayer and the Old Testament scripture reading from Genesis 37: 1-11 was read by Jason Smith, Australian Olympic Basketballer in 2000 and 2004.

The music was led by Douglas Lawrence and trumpeter David Farrands with the congregation singing two favourite hymns: *To God be the Glory Guide me, O thou great Jehovah.*

Our guest preacher Pastor Sean Heldsinger in his sermon 'What's your colours?' spoke of his involvement with the players of the St Kilda Football Club which has helped him to bring the Christian message of hope to young men who find themselves under continuous pressure to perform at their highest level. Sean told the congregation the love of God will always offer a way forward whatever circumstances

we face in life. and this is what he has endeavoured to convey to the players as Chaplain of the St Kilda Football Club.

The church was decorated with balloons of the team colours of the two Grand Final sides, Richmond and Adelaide. Blessed with a beautiful sunny day the Sausage Sizzle team worked tirelessly in cooking sausages and providing tea and coffee for the many people who supported our fund raising. Through their hard work they raised \$700 for Sports Chaplaincy Australia. Thank you to Dennis Conradi, Ian Marshall, Margaret Lowe, Lois and Gordon Taylor, Barry and Judith Kilmartin, and Margaret E Lowe for their support for the Grand Final Service.

The Grand Final Service is a special day in the life of Scots' and we look forward to continuing this service in 2018.

Robert Lowe



Rev. Douglas Robertson, Pastor Sean Heldsinger, Robert Lowe and Rev. Alistair Macra

Interview

Murray Hirst

Murray Hirst began work as a bookkeeper at Scots' Church just over five years ago. Since then the position has evolved from Bookkeeper to Accountant, and Murray is a vital member of our office team.

Born in Ivanhoe, Murray grew up in the Heidelberg area. He recalls walking past Scots' Church and the Assembly Hall as a child, and admiring the tranquil environment of the fountain and surrounding areas, set in the busy business district of the city. Murray's father recently reminded him that a great-aunt was a regular member of the congregation many years ago, so he has a family link with Scots' Church.

Murray completed his studies for a degree in accounting at RMIT, then took a position with Telstra. He did not wish to pursue accountancy, so he worked in marketing and administration. However he found that he moved toward the finance area. During his years with Telstra his work entailed a considerable amount of travelling, which he really enjoyed.

In the late 1990s Murray had an opportunity arise to work with a 'Not For Profit' (NFP) organisation at a holistic retreat centre near Byron Bay, in northern New South Wales, as the Director of Finance. He thoroughly enjoyed this, working there for four years. The facility was then sold, and is now a centre for a wellness approach to health, owned by Olivia Newton-John.

Murray's next move was to Virginia, U.S.A., where he worked with a NFP retreat centre in finance and other areas for two years. On returning to Melbourne, he once again worked for NFP organisations, first the Occupational Therapy Association and then the Facility Management Association. At this stage Murray decided to set up his own bookkeeping business; he still has this, although his position at Scots' for three days each week is his main job.

Since coming to Scots' in 2012 Murray has found that the work has become more than a job, and has grown into part of his lifestyle as he has become involved with the people of Scots' Church and all that it stands for. He enjoys working closely with



Murray Hirst

Sebert Ruddock, the Administrator, and with Jim Nuske, the Church Treasurer. Since taking up his position, Murray has introduced a new accounting system and has continued streamlining the process.

Murray and his wife Jo live on the Mornington Peninsula. Murray's father moved to the area and now lives close by, so Murray is able to look after him. Murray is very interested in various types of meditation, which he has studied, and he and Jo have a small meditation group that meets at their home once a week. He is also interested in karate, and is about to go for his black belt. More recently Murray has gained a hypnotherapy qualification and has worked at a community centre in Frankston, helping people to quit smoking. He enjoys working on a 'one to one' basis with people.

Murray and Jo were married at Scots' Church in 2016. In Murray's words:

'In March 2016 I made the important decision of getting married at the Church. My wife, Jo, and I were very honoured to be able to have our ceremony within the Church and the day was very special for the two of us. Jo particularly felt the sacredness of the space and we were very fortunate to have the Rev. David Currie as the minister for the ceremony. The theme for our wedding was "what would love do" and our close friend played a rendition of "Amazing Grace" . Jo's son also sang at the ceremony.'

Our thanks to Murray for his fine work and his commitment to Scots' Church.

Christmas Wreaths

are used to celebrate Advent and Christmas. They are constructed of evergreen plants, representing eternal life through Christ, with the circular shape of the wreath seen to represent God, who has no living or end. Candles are placed in Advent wreaths, with one being lit each Sunday over the period; many also have a central candle, the Christ candle, lit on Christmas Day. Advent wreaths are placed on stands or a table, and Christmas wreaths are hung on doors or walls.

Advent wreaths were first introduced by Lutherans in Germany in the 16th century, with the tradition since adopted by many Christian denominations.

References: Wikipedia: Wreaths. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wreath>



A Christmas wreath on a door in England. Credit: Richard Croft, 2007. Creative Commons



Christmas Greetings from Scots' and St. Stephen's

Alison, Mairi and Duncan join me in sending you all our very best wishes for a happy and safe Christmas season. "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people." [Luke 1:68].

– **Douglas Robertson** –

"Good news from heaven the angels bring,
Glad tidings to the earth they sing:
To us this day a child is given,
To crown us with the joy of heaven."
Martin Luther

Have a blessed Christmas



– **Richard, Rosemary and Emily O'Brien** –

The first Christmas was a delight for "the true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world... to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." [John 1:9, 12]

May this Christmas be a delight for you too as we reflect on the great things that God has done through Jesus Christ.

– **Greg and Haesook Matthews** –

"Man's maker was made man that He, Ruler of the stars, might nurse at His mother's breast; that the Bread might hunger, the Fountain thirst, the Light sleep, the Way be tired on its journey; that Truth might be accused of false witnesses, the Teacher be beaten with whips, the Foundation be suspended on wood; that Strength might grow weak; that the Healer might be wounded; that Life might die." (Augustine of Hippo)

May you have a Christ-centred Christmas 2017 and New Year 2018.

Blessings,

– **Christian, Milka, Carson, Harmony and Leon Tirtha** –





May you celebrate the birth of the Christ child with joy, thankfulness and generosity.

- Philip and Deborah Court -

The Scots' Church office staff are blessed to work in a supportive and loving community. We join in wishing you a peaceful, safe and blessed Christmas, celebrating the birth of our Saviour. May the joy of this birth touch each of us at this special time of the year, and may we in turn share it with all those who are special in our lives.

- Sebert Ruddock -

As we celebrate the miracle of Christmas, rejoicing in the birth of Jesus, may our hearts be filled with love, joy and peace. May the blessings of Christ be with you and all those whom you love both at Christmas and throughout the coming year. Let us give thanks for our many blessings and be mindful of millions of folk, who have nothing.

May 2018 bring greater peace and happiness to the world and reduce the poverty that so many will only ever know.

God bless you one and all.

- Rae Anstee -

A Christmas Greeting from Rev David Currie and Gwen, Highgate Reformed Church, London

Very best wishes and rich blessings to all our friends at Scots' Church, Melbourne. Although I am now working in London, you are never far from our thoughts. The contribution you continue to make to the life of the church and to the city of Melbourne are just outstanding, especially considering the challenging times you have come through this year. Thanks for the love and friendship you shared with us, and continue to share with so many others. May you know peace and joy this Christmas, and wishing you every happiness in 2018!

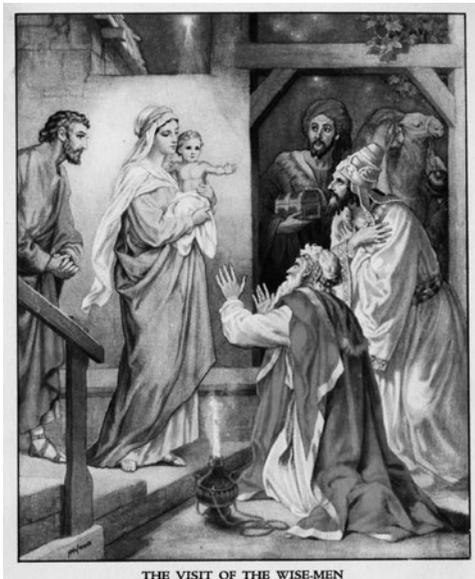
- David and Gwen -



The Three Wise Men

The account of the visit of the wise men to the infant Jesus is found only in the Gospel according to Matthew. The visit of the wise men, also referred to as the Magi, or Three Kings, is described in Matthew 2: 1-12. The time of the visit after Christ's birth is not specified, nor is the number of wise men who visited him in a house, not a stable, where only Mary was named as present. The three gifts presented to Jesus have led to the widespread assumption that there were three visitors. After the account of their visit to Jesus, the wise men are only mentioned once again, briefly in Matthew 2: 16, when they avoided Herod, returning home another way. The star they followed to find Jesus is traditionally known as the 'Star of Bethlehem'.

Although the wise men or Magi are commonly referred to as kings, there is nothing in Matthew's account to imply that they were rulers of any kind. This idea arose from Old Testament prophecies that describe the Messiah being worshipped by kings, for example, in Psalm 72:10. Early readers of Matthew's account elevated the Magi to rulers and by 500 AD the prevalent tradition was that the three were kings. It is of interest to note that this tradition was strongly opposed by John Calvin many centuries later.



'The visit of the wise men' by Heinrich Hoffmann, circa 1900. (Public Domain)

The wise men are not named, however various traditions and legends have identified names for them. In the Western Christian church they are commonly known as: Melchior, a middle-aged Persian scholar; Caspar, an aged Indian scholar; and Balthazar, a young Babylonian scholar. However, the phrase 'from the east' is the only firm information Matthew provides about the region from which the wise men came. The names originated from a Greek manuscript written in

Alexandria about 500 AD and later translated into Latin. Another Greek document from the eighth century, also translated into Latin, continued the tradition and gave additional details. The Eastern Christian church has up to twelve traditional names that differ from those of the west.

The three gifts the wise men brought were identified as gold, frankincense and myrrh. Various interpretations of the symbolism of the gifts have been proposed. The simplest of these is that the gifts were ordinary offerings given to a king: gold as a valuable substance; frankincense as a perfume; and myrrh as an anointing oil. The gifts have also been interpreted as having a spiritual meaning; gold as a symbol of earthly kingship;



The Three Magi, Byzantine mosaic circa 565 AD, in the Basilica of Sant Apollinare Nuova, Ravenna, Italy. Credit: Nina Aldin Thuno, Creative Commons

frankincense indicating deity; and myrrh as an embalming oil and a symbol of death. What happened to these gifts is not mentioned in the Bible, although several traditions have developed, one suggesting that Mary and Joseph used the gold to finance their flight to Egypt with the infant Jesus.

Following the visit of the wise men to Jesus, there are many theories as to their subsequent fate. One story has the three baptised by Thomas on his way to India. Some traditions believe the wise men were later martyred. The Shrine of the Three Kings in Cologne Cathedral, Germany reputedly contains the earthly remains of the three wise men. The bones were discovered by Helen, the mother of Constantine the Great, on her pilgrimage to the Holy Land; she took the remains to the church of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople (modern Istanbul). They were moved to Milan in 344 AD by the Emperor Constantine and finally given to the Archbishop of Cologne in 1164. The shrine which houses the remains of the three wise men is the largest reliquary in the western world and the most artistically significant of the Middle Ages. It was erected between about 1190 and 1220 AD. It rises above the high altar in Cologne Cathedral, and includes gold and silver embossed figures, semi-precious stones and very ornate decoration. Construction of the Cologne Cathedral to house the relics began in the



The Shrine of the Three Kings, Cologne Cathedral. Credit: Welleschik, 2006, Creative Commons



Cologne Cathedral, the largest in northern Europe. Credit: F. Ermert, 2016, Creative Commons

mid-13th century, taking 632 years to complete! It is the largest Gothic church in northern Europe. In 1864 the tomb was opened and the remains of three men were discovered. The bones were wrapped in white silk and returned to the shrine.

The many traditions that surround the visit of the three wise men to the infant Jesus do not detract from the celebration of the nativity; their visit is an important part of the story of the birth of the Messiah. Epiphany, which honours the visit of the wise men to Christ, is celebrated in the Western church on 6th January.

References: Catholic Encyclopedia:

Magi. <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09527a.htm>

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Wikipedia: Biblical Magi. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical_Magi

Wikipedia: Shrine of the Three Kings.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shrines_of_the_Three_Kings

The Star of Bethlehem



The Adoration of the Magi by Giotto di Bondone, in the Scrovegni Chapel. In this 14th century painting the Star of Bethlehem appears as a comet in the sky above the infant Jesus. (Public Domain)

As in the story of the wise men who visited Jesus, the story of the Christmas star appears only in Matthew's account of the nativity. The wise men from the east were inspired by the star to journey to Jerusalem. On arriving they met King Herod of Judea and asked where the king of the Jews had been born. Following a verse from the Old Testament Book of Micah, which was interpreted as a prophecy, Herod directed the wise men to Bethlehem. There the star stopped above the house of Jesus, where the wise men worshipped and presented their gifts to him. They were warned in a dream not to return to Herod, so went back to their

country another way, thus avoiding him.

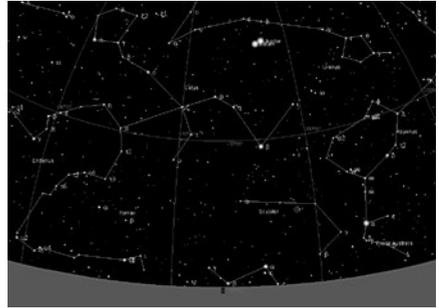
Some modern scholars do not consider the story of the Christmas star to describe an historical event, while others believe the star was a miraculous sign. Over the years astronomers have attempted to link the appearance and movement of the star to unusual astronomical events. Questions around the star of Bethlehem include the fact that Matthew is the only writer of the gospels to record this event. Origen, an accomplished early Christian theologian, argued for a naturalistic explanation, and the debate has continued ever since.

There have been many attempts to explain the presence of the star of Bethlehem by astronomical events of the time. It is thought that the wise men were religious scholars or Magi who studied the stars. They were regarded as both astronomers and astrologers. Anything unusual was considered an omen, so that the 'star' they saw must have been rare and visually spectacular.

Three possibilities have been suggested by astronomers over many years. Firstly, some scholars believe that the 'star' was a comet, as these were traditionally connected with important historical events. Although Halley's Comet had passed by the earth in 11 BC, too early to be considered, there was a record of a bright comet in 5 BC, seen by astronomers in China. It is of interest to note that some scholars date the birth of

Jesus as between 6 and 4 BC, while others suggest it was between 3 and 2 BC, so the earlier date would be feasible for the comet of 5 BC.

A second astronomical explanation is that the 'star' was a conjunction, or gathering of the planets in the night sky, resulting in a bright light. A little background regarding this may be helpful. In a human lifetime all stars remain fixed in their places; they rise and set each night but their positions relative to each other do not change. Unlike the stars, the planets, sun and moon appear to 'wander' through the fixed stars; the word 'planet' comes from the Greek word for 'wandering star'. Because the planets orbit the sun at different speeds and distances, they sometimes appear to approach each other closely, so called 'conjunctions'. One such event occurred between Jupiter, our brightest planet seen from the earth, and Saturn, in 6 BC.



The sky of Jerusalem in late 7 BC, where the planets Jupiter and Saturn can be seen in conjunction as very bright stars near the centre top. (Public Domain)

Finally, an exploding star, or supernova, has been suggested to explain the Christmas star. Such events can be quite spectacular, although rare. However there are no records to indicate the presence of a supernova at the time of Christ's birth.

Although an astronomical explanation of the star of Bethlehem has been quietly debated for many years, there is no simple solution. Various theories that have been proposed are complex. It is also recognised that the wise men were adept astronomers and astrologers who interpreted the movements of stars as well as observing them scientifically. They had probably been observing the night sky for years, waiting for a sign that would foretell the birth of the Messiah.

Questions about the origin of the star of Bethlehem are not the ultimate focus, but rather that the wise men or Magi were chosen to follow the light of the star to the Messiah.

References: BBC News Magazine. 'Star of Bethlehem: The astronomical explanations' by Victoria Gill, 23rd December 2012. <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-20730828>
Christian Answers.Net: What was the Star of Bethlehem? <https://christiananswers.net/q-eden/edn-c0818.html>
The Conversation: 'Can astronomy explain the biblical Star of Bethlehem?'; David A. Weintraub, Vanderbilt University, 24th December 2014. <http://theconversation.com/can-astronomy-explain-the-biblical-star-of-bethlehem-35126>
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Plants of the Bible

Thistle

A number of Hebrew words in the Bible can be translated as 'thistle' or 'thorn'. Thistles are non-woody plants that have many prickles, one of three sorts of 'plant armour', to provide protection for tender young shoots and succulent leaves. Thorns are modified branches; spines are modified leaves; and prickles are sharp projections that may arise from any part of the plant, including leaves, stems and flowers. Prickles are comparable to modified hairs, and are extensions of the outer layer of the stem (cortex), and the dermal tissue (epidermis) of leaves, stems, roots, flowers and fruits or seeds.



The golden thistle growing near the Mediterranean coast in Israel in 2004. (Public Domain)

Thistles are usually annual plants, so they need to have some kind of protection even when tiny, hence the prickles found on very small seedlings. Thorns and spines are most common on trees, shrubs or perennial plants that have a longer life span, and may need protection over many years.

Biblical references to thistles are usually related to symbols of desolation or wilderness. About twenty different words relate to some sort of prickly or thorny plant, with scholars identifying at least five species of thistle to which the Hebrew words refer. The first of many references to thorns and thistles in the Bible is found in Genesis 3:18, where they are related to cursed ground.

Thistles are some of the most common wildflowers in Israel, where they rapidly multiply on any open patch of wasteland or untended farmland. Many are troublesome weeds, competing with crops and interfering with grazing on pastures. The thistle flowers vary between species, with most in shades of pink or purple, but some in bright yellow.

The golden thistle (*Scolymus hispanicus*), one of the many species growing in Israel, is a tall annual or biennial plant with a thick, rigid white stem that branches above. The leaves grow along the length of the stem and are leathery with very spiny lobes. It has heads of yellow flowers and seeds that are tiny nutlets. The golden thistle is a noxious weed found growing on neglected fields and roadside borders over lower altitudes in Israel and elsewhere in the region. Since at least the time of ancient Greece this plant has been known for medicinal and culinary uses. Although it has been cultivated at times, these days most of the plant which is consumed comes from harvesting of wild plants. It is still popular as a food source throughout Spain, where it is usually eaten in spring.

Also found growing in many parts of the world, the golden thistle is classified as a noxious weed in Victoria and New South Wales.

Other species of thistle that occur in the Holy Land include the Syrian thistle, the holy thistle, the globe thistle and the Spanish thistle. The first two of these are annual plants, and are the first in spring to produce tall stems with small spiny leaves. They have pink or white flowers encircled with very spiny short leaves. The globe thistle is perennial, with globular spiny heads of purplish-blue flowers; this thistle commonly grows amongst dwarf shrubs.

Growing on roadsides and in neglected places, the Spanish thistle is distinguishable by its whorl-like leaves that lie flat on the ground throughout winter. Although the young leaves are gathered as pot-herbs in early spring, as the plant comes into flower in the dry, hot weather, the scores of small yellow flower heads have so many spines that the plant is almost untouchable.

References: Flowers in Israel: Thorns and Thistles in the Bible. http://www.flowersinisrael.com/PlantsoftheBible/Thistle_page.htm

Old Dominion University Plant Site: Thistles. <http://ww2.odu.edu/~lmusselm/plant/bible/thistles.php>

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Zohary, Michael. Plants of the Bible, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1982.

St. Andrew's Parish Church, Dundee Scotland

St. Andrew's Parish Church is a congregation of the Church of Scotland within the Presbytery of Dundee. Dundee is situated on the north bank of the Firth of Tay (Tay River) on the east coast of Scotland with history dating back to the 11th century. Scotland's fourth largest city is picturesque and affectionately known as "Bonnie Dundee".

The foundation stone for St Andrew's Parish Church was laid on June 4th 1772. The church was built by the Kirk Session of Dundee, the Nine Incorporated Trades and the Three United Trades. Construction work was completed in two years and the church opened for worship on June 19th 1774. The English translation of the wording on a Roundel at the front of the church reads *"Under the auspices of God, the best and greatest, We, the Presbyterian Ministers, the Incorporations, and the Citizens of Dundee have erected this Church in the Year of Christ 1772"*.

The Trades Banners are placed on permanent display within the Church. The two magnificent stained glass windows, each containing a biblical scene in the centre, were presented by the Trades in 1892 and placed on either side of the pulpit. They serve as a reminder of St Andrew's origins as the *"Trades Kirk"*. The trade emblems in order of precedence Bakers, Shoe-makers, Glovers, Tailors, Bonnetmakers, Fleshers, Hammermen, Weavers, Dyers and then Masons, Wrights and Slaters surround each window.



St. Andrew's Parish Church, Dundee.



The interior of St. Andrew's Parish Church, Dundee in 1943

Twelve collection plates which are still in use were presented by the Trades with each plate bearing the name of the donor trade. There are Trades' Chairs each with an emblem carved on the back specifically to be occupied annually by Conveners and other dignitaries of the Trades during the "Kirkin". The Kirkin takes place in autumn to ensure the link between trades and

church is maintained. Representatives of each Trade process into the Church led by the mace bearer and the Conveners wearing their Chains of Office.

The organ was built in 1921 in memory of those church members who died in World War 1. Upstairs there is a belfry which contains the keyboard that controls the peal of bells. The current repertoire of tunes range from traditional hymns, Scottish tunes such as Bonnie Dundee and interestingly Waltzing Matilda.

Some other interesting aspects inside the Church are:

- Numerous other stained glass windows
- A memorial to Tay Division Royal Engineers (Volunteer) Submarine Miners (disbanded in 1907)
- The communion table gifted in 1917
- The lectern gifted in 1924
- The pulpit light dedicated by the Rev. T. J. Bunting in 1942
- A pulpit fall, in harmony with the design of the stained glass windows, dedicated by the Rev. Ian Petrie in 1993
- A mahogany casket containing the names of church members who fell in both World Wars
- A baptismal font, a gift from the congregation in 1963

Some interesting aspects seen from outside the Church are:

- Three of the original bells in use from 1774 to 1950
- The gates and a parapet wall and railing installed in 1821
- The clock, replaced in 1867, and spire surmounted by a Wyvern (mythical beast)
- Flowering cherry trees
- A garden of remembrance
- The steeple housing a carillon.

An octagonal shaped building, built in 1777 and claimed to be one of the oldest ecclesiastical buildings in Dundee, stands next to St Andrew's Parish Church. This building was erected by the Glasite Movement which was formed by John Glas who broke away from the Church of Scotland. John Glas moved to Dundee and formed a church that aligned to the original scriptural churches. Sunday services were hours long. He introduced the practice of a common meal on Sunday. Soup known as "kail" was served to the congregation during the break between morning and afternoon services. His church became known as "*The Kail Kirk*".

St. Andrew's Parish Church lost all its buildings, except the Church, when the Wellgate complex next door underwent re-development. To compensate, Dundee Corporation gave the Glasite building to St Andrew's Parish Church with a sum of money for its restoration. The restoration included a new suite of halls incorporating the restored Glasite Church and the cloisters that link the Church into the building complex.

Some of the Glasite items on display in the Glasite hall are:

- Two pewter communion cups and salver bearing the date 1730
- A sundial confirmed as 1725
- Hand written and printed books
- Precentor's pipe used to give note for singing
- An hourglass used to time sermons
- A wooden spoon and knives and ladle relating to the serving and eating of kail.

In addition, the cloisters house displays of artefacts pertaining to the Kail Kirk dating back to 1772. They also provide an additional display area for Convenors of the trades.

Sixteen Ministers have been appointed since 1775. The current Minister is the Rev. Dr. Janet Foggie, the first female minister to be appointed to St. Andrew's Parish Church.

Scots' Church members Caroline and Leesa Allinson visited St. Andrew's Parish Church during their recent trip to Scotland. Caroline's mother was from Dundee and a member of the church from 1938 to 1945. Her mother, a VAD nurse with the British Army and her father of the Royal Australian Air Force were married in the church in June 1943 by the Rev. Thomas Bunting.

Caroline and Leesa participated in a Sunday Church Service and shared fellowship over a cup of tea after the service. They are very appreciative of the kindness and generosity shown in the provision of a brief tour, the church magazine, information leaflets and photographs which have informed the writing of this article.

Caroline Allinson



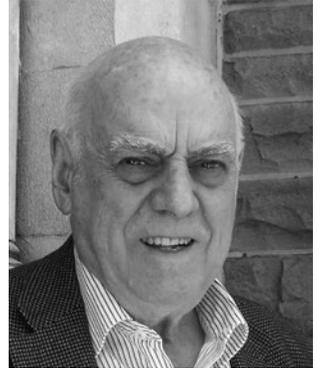
St. Andrew's Parish Church interior in 2015

Interview

Gregory Hamilton

Gregory Albion Hamilton (Greg), the eldest son of Lorna Grace (nee Wilson) and Albion Allan Hamilton, was born at Bethesda Hospital, Richmond, Victoria. He subsequently had three younger brothers: Rodney George, and twins Daryl Allan and Gary John.

Greg's parents were married at the Spensley Street Methodist Church, Clifton Hill. At that time his father lived in Clifton Hill and his mother in North Fitzroy, both with their families. Their marriage was delayed by some three years as Greg's father was out of work during the depression and would not marry his mother until he could properly provide for her. During the depression he worked for his keep for a cousin in a small gold mine in Whroo, Central Victoria.



Gregory Hamilton

Both families were devout Methodists. On Greg's father's maternal side the family (Williams and Martin) were Cornish and originally came from Greenbottom, Kenwyn, Cornwall. They were miners, emigrating to Burra, South Australia and later moving to Maryborough, Victoria, where they settled. Throughout the years they worked as gold miners and managers. Greg's father was born and educated in Maryborough. He was a carpenter and joiner by trade. The family later moved to Clifton Hill.

The youngest of six children, Greg's mother was born in Benalla Hospital. She was eleven years younger than the fifth child, a brother, and her earliest playmates were her own nephews and nieces. The family lived on a small farm at Tatong, later moving to Geelong. Greg's maternal grandfather, George Wilson, migrated to Australia with his family when he was two years old. The family was Presbyterian. His maternal grandmother was a Methodist, and very active in the church, especially the choir. One of his maternal uncles, George Lancelot, a member of the 57th Battalion, fought at Gallipoli and later on the Western Front. He enlisted at 18 and died at Avoca, aged 43. Records state that 'his demise was caused by indisposition due to war service'. As a mark of respect the Avoca-Barkly football match to be played that day was delayed until later in the afternoon.

Greg grew up in Thornbury, attending Wales Street State School for his primary education. He recalls receiving a medal and a bag of lollies in 1945, to commemorate the end of World War II. His secondary education was undertaken at Northcote High School. All his brothers followed the same educational path.

As Greg and his brothers grew up their lives revolved around Thornbury Baptist Church which was quite close to their home. Greg was secretary of the Sunday school for some years and was involved with the tennis club as well as numerous other activities. Although they were active in the church none of the family actually became Baptists as they had been christened Methodists. Greg attended the church from the age of four until he went to Bendigo as a teacher. In talking to the Rev. Dr. Geoff Blackburn years later, he learned that, many years earlier Geoff had preached at Thornbury whilst training for the ministry, and he knew many of the families with whom Greg had grown up. Greg's first contact with Scots' Church was at this time as some of the young people from Thornbury would occasionally travel to the city for the evening service.

For all of his working life Greg was employed by the Victorian Education Department. He spent three years training as a student teacher, 20 years as a teacher and 20 years as a principal of schools. He attended Melbourne Teachers' College, Carlton, obtaining his Trained Primary Teachers' Certificate after two years, completing another year's study to obtain the Trained Teacher Librarians' Certificate. As a student he was paid £7 and 6½ pence a week. They were the days of duffel coats, desert boots and the new espresso coffee machines. The central business district was within walking distance and life was good. The Librarians' Certificate was a somewhat new qualification introduced to facilitate the teaching of the new Social Studies Course, with an emphasis on learning by research rather than copying straight from a blackboard. Hence the need for primary school libraries and teacher-librarians to run them.

After completing his training Greg was posted to Bendigo, where he opened the first primary school library in that city at Camp Hill Primary School, opening a second library at Gravel Hill Primary School two years later. Promotion to Fawkner East Primary School followed two years after this, where Greg taught grade four students. Again after two years Greg was appointed to the Education Department's Recruitment Branch, consisting of himself and the teacher in charge. Equipped with a government car they visited every high school in Victoria, together with many Catholic secondary schools and independent schools, where they addressed senior students and interviewed them for teaching bursaries. Two years after this he returned to schools as a teacher-librarian, and later to classroom teaching. One reason for this change was to begin university studies.

After completing a couple of subjects at night, Greg was granted study leave and went on to gain a Bachelor of Arts, majoring in economics and economic history, at the University of Melbourne. He was very fortunate to have the Professor of Economic History, Geoffrey Blainey, not only as a lecturer but also as a tutor; a very enriching experience indeed. Following this Greg completed, at night, his Bachelor of Education at Monash University. He joined the Australian College of Education (later Educators) at about this time.

During this period he met Lydia, a trained infant school teacher who later held the position of school principal. They began attending services at Scots' Church, where they were married in 1973 by the Rev. Gordon Powell. Some years later their only child, a daughter, Naomi, was baptised there by the Rev. Ray Russell.

In 1980 Greg was appointed to Bayswater North Primary School as a Principal B and a year later was promoted to Birmingham Primary School, Mount Evelyn, as a Principal A, the top position in the school situation at the time. Six years later he transferred closer to the city to Ruskin Park Primary School, Croydon, retiring from there after 13 years' service in 2000. As a principal Greg became very involved with the Victorian Primary Principals' Association (V.P.P.A., later V.P.A.). While at Birmingham Greg had been appointed acting Senior Education Officer, the new name for inspector of schools. For several months he worked from the regional office in Ferntree Gully, assessing teachers and looking after a group of a dozen or so schools. However the office environment did not suit him so he returned to Birmingham and continued his V.P.P.A. interests. He joined the executive and eventually spent two years as president of the V.P.P.A.; this was a difficult time as he was still working as a school principal. For some years he was heavily involved in industrial matters. He is a Life Member of that organisation.

During his years with the Education Department Greg witnessed many significant changes. The three divisions: primary; secondary; and technical were replaced by State-wide regions headed up by regional directors. The hierarchical system of teacher placements and promotion was slowly replaced by school-based selection panels. School committees became school councils and there were major changes in classroom practices and teacher training. All these, and other changes, added to the workload of principals and their organisations.

Greg enjoyed his years with the Education Department although, at times, it could be extremely difficult and demanding. He had an interesting, varied and satisfying career, for which he is thankful. In his retirement he left this behind and got on with the next stage of his life. He has a variety of interests including long-standing membership of

the local historical society. He is interested in miniatures, such as doll's houses and associated items. He is also a member of the Needlework Tool Collectors Society of Australia, of which Lydia is National Secretary; this society supports the preservation and collecting of these items, and encourages the study of related social history. The family is a major part of the lives of Greg and Lydia, and their two delightful granddaughters have enriched them to a degree that they would not have believed possible.

Although Greg and Lydia had attended Scots' Church over many years, it was only in retirement that they were able to attend on a more regular basis. They officially became members after the Turnbull Trust ministry of the Very Rev. Dr. Trevor Morrow. Greg served on the Board of Management for six years, and he and Lydia were members of the Outreach Committee for some years. He attended home fellowship groups conducted firstly by Alf Miller, and then at the home of Jessie and the Rev. Dr. Geoff Blackburn. Greg and Lydia also served on the week-day welcome desk roster for several years, as well as being involved in a variety of other activities. Greg enjoys being rostered on 'meet and greet' duties on Sunday morning, as well as reading the scripture lessons, which he hopes in some small way helps to enhance the worship service. For the last four years he has been a member of the Social Services Committee of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria and is currently serving as secretary. This Committee acts as the Board for Kirkbrae Presbyterian Homes, Kilsyth. On several occasions Greg has been invited to put his name forward for consideration as an elder, declining this as he believes that, in accepting this position he would severely compromise his views of the role of women in the church and in society in general.

We thank Greg and Lydia for the major contribution they have made to the church and to the wider community, in the sphere of education and beyond.



The Social Services Committee, of which Greg is Secretary, acts as the Board for Kirkbrae Presbyterian Homes (pictured here). Credit: ACM Productions Real Estate

Cities of the Bibles

Gerasa (Modern Jerash)

Although the city of Gerasa was not named in the Bible, there are references to the inhabitants of the city, 'the country of the Gerasenes', in Mark 5:1 and Luke 8:26 and 37. The biblical city of Gerasa is now a thriving modern city known as Jerash in Jordan, and is located 48 kilometres north of the capital, Amman.



The apse, Church of St. Gerasius. Credit: J.P. Taylor, 2007. (Creative Commons)

There is evidence of human settlement on the site of Gerasa dating back to the Neolithic period (7500 to 5500 BC), and indication of settlement in the Bronze Age (3200 BC to 1200 BC). Ancient Greek inscriptions from the city as well as literary sources indicate that the city was founded by Alexander the Great in 331 BC. It grew to a considerable size in Hellenistic times. Following the Roman conquest in 63 BC Gerasa and the surrounding land was annexed to the Roman province of Syria, and later became one of the cities of the Decapolis (a group of ten cities on the eastern frontier of the Roman Empire). In 90 AD it was absorbed into the Roman province of Arabia. As a provincial agricultural, mining and caravan town Gerasa flourished, remaining relatively prosperous until the seventh century AD.

In the middle of the eighth century large parts of Gerasa were destroyed by an earthquake, with wars, turmoil and subsequent earthquakes contributing to further destruction. After a period of use during the Crusades, it was largely deserted until the 16th century, when a small hamlet was recorded as existing on the site.

Modern Jerash has developed dramatically in the last century, and has a population of over 50,000. The ancient ruins adjacent to the modern city comprise the second most popular tourist attraction in Jordan, closely behind the ruins of Petra.



The Roman city of Gerasa with modern Jerash in the distance. Credit: Bernard Gagnon, 2010. (Creative Commons)



The Arch of Hadrian, built about 130 AD. Credit: AZurfrog, 2013. (Creative Commons)

Gerasa is considered one of the largest and most well preserved sites of Roman architecture outside Italy. The spectacular ruins include a triumphal arch built by the Emperor Hadrian about 130 AD. The central gate was only used for important visitors, and there were niches for statues at each side. The Temple of Artemis was built in the second century AD, with columns 12 metres high still standing. The hippodrome, which dates from the same period, seated 15,000 spectators and was designed for races and contests. There were also three theatres. The main thoroughfare of the city was flanked by more than 500 Corinthian and Ionic columns, about 75 of which remain in place. There is still evidence of the city wall, four kilometres in length and three metres thick and fortified by towers, with eight entrance gates. The city had an abundant supply of water as there were several springs inside its walls and close by.

There is abundant evidence of early Christians at Gerasa. At least 13 churches are known, seven of these from the time of the Emperor Justinian, who reigned from 527 to 565 AD. Some of these were built on earlier pagan temples, and one is superimposed on a Jewish synagogue. Almost all the churches can be dated, and some excellent mosaics have been excavated. A cathedral was built in the fourth century. Many inscriptions indicate a strong presence of Christianity in the city.

Excavation and restoration of the ancient city of Gerasa has been almost constant since the 1920s, and the site continues to yield new discoveries.

References: Bible Places: Gerasa. <https://www.bibleplaces.com/gerasa/>

International Standard Bible Encyclopedia Online: Gerasa; Gerasenes. <http://www.internationalstandardbible.com/G/gerasa-gerasenes.html>

Ministry Magazine: Gerasa – A City of Christ's Time, by Walter F. Specht. <https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/1958/02/with-paul-in-athens>

The Princeton Encyclopedia of Classical Sites: Gerasa (Jerash) Jordan. <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.04.0006:entry=gerasa>

Wikipedia: Jerash. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jerash>

Australian Christmas Carols

Many will be familiar with at least some of the delightful Australian Christmas Carols with lyrics written by John Wheeler and set to music by William G. James. Although he wrote many compositions for voice, choir and piano, James' most enduring pieces are his 15 Australian Christmas Carols, published in three sets. The first set of five carols, published by Chappell and Co. Ltd. in 1948 included: The Three Drovers; The Silver Stars are in the Sky; Christmas Day; Carol of the Birds; and Christmas Bush for his Adorning. The second and third sets, each with another five carols, were released six years later. All the carols were composed for four-part mixed voices. A fourth set was written in the 1970s and given to the Wayside Chapel, King's Cross, Sydney, but has since disappeared.



Victorian Christmas Bush (Prostanthera lasianthos), Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne, 2008 (Creative Commons)

The Christmas carols were readily taken up by church choirs and amateur singers, and were sung everywhere, including overseas. Well-known English conductor Thornton Lofthouse had heard the carols when on a tour of Australia in 1957, and on his return to England he included a performance of the first set in his annual concert of Christmas carols at St. Paul's Cathedral, London, in the presence of Queen Elizabeth. A music critic of 'The Times', London, wrote of the carols that they were 'not only delightful in themselves but proved ... how vital the carol tradition has become since its revival a century ago.' He continued, '... here we had the Australian summer and the distinctive fauna of the other hemisphere mixing with the age-old imagery of nativity, lullaby, and angels to make true carols, fresh in sense and sentiment yet declaring the old Evangel, new branches on the universal tree.' (Quoted in Tunley). The Australian Christmas Carols continue to be included in many carol services, where they are much enjoyed.

William Garnet James was born in Ballarat in Victoria, in 1892. He studied piano at the Melbourne University Conservatorium of Music, graduating in 1912. He then went overseas to study piano in London and Brussels. He was rejected for active service in World War I, working in London for the British Red Cross Society. He made his public debut as a pianist in 1915 with the Queen's Hall Orchestra. Returning to Australia

in 1923 he subsequently took a teaching position at the Melbourne University Conservatorium. He joined the Australian Broadcasting Company, the forerunner of the Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC) in the late 1920s and became the first Director of Music of the ABC in 1931, holding the position until his retirement in 1957. He continued to compose songs after he retired. James died in Sydney in 1977, aged 84 years.

The lyrics for the Australian Christmas Carols were written by ABC colleague and script writer John Wheeler. He also provided texts for many other composers during his long period with the ABC.

The third set of Australian Christmas Carols includes this note from the publishers, Chappell and Co. Ltd.

‘In writing these “AUSTRALIAN CHRISTMAS CAROLS,” William G. James and John Wheeler have presented in a new setting, and for the people of this New Land, a very old story.

It is not suggested that these Carols should take the place of those which have come to us from the Old World. Familiar from childhood, they will always remain a cherished possession.

But the Carols of the Old World owe much to the local background of the countries which produced them, and it is surely fitting, therefore, that we should have our own Australian Carols, with their own local colour.’

For those who are not familiar with these carols, we include two verses of a carol from the first set: Christmas Bush for His Adorning.

All the bells are gaily ringing.
Birds in every tree are singing;
Let us in the golden weather,
Gather Christmas Bush together.

Christ is born! The angels thunder
Thro’ the Heav’ns their tale of wonder,
While we pluck for His adorning
Christmas Bush this hallow’d morning.

References: Australian Dictionary of Biography: William Garnet James (1892-1977). <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/james-william-garnet-billy-10611>

Tunley, David. William James and the beginning of modern musical Australia, Australian Music Centre, 2007.

Wheeler, J. and W. G. James. Five Australian Christmas Carols. First, Second and Third Sets, Chappell & Co. Ltd. Sydney and London (1948 – 1954).

Wikipedia: William G. James. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_G._James

Word search

Matthew Chapter 10

Find the words in the grid. When you are done, the unused letters in the grid will spell out a hidden message. Pick them out from left to right, top line to bottom line. Words can go horizontally, vertically and diagonally in all eight directions. (Solution on page 4)



F	C	G	N	I	K	H	R	I	H	S	D
R	T	M	I	S	B	O	R	R	N	Y	L
A	J	E	N	T	K	D	R	F	N	B	O
N	N	H	T	L	D	Y	V	K	L	T	G
K	A	E	W	T	M	S	D	R	E	A	M
I	Z	L	R	O	T	R	H	M	E	N	L
N	A	H	G	A	R	H	E	D	M	Z	M
C	R	T	R	W	N	S	U	G	Y	G	T
E	E	E	H	I	F	J	H	D	Y	O	K
N	T	B	J	S	X	K	M	I	T	P	J
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E	C	H	E	R	O	D	Y	W	H	B	T

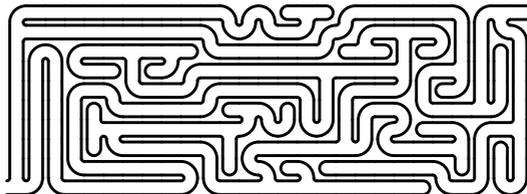
The words to find ...

- Bethlehem
- Dream
- Egypt
- Frankincense
- Gold
- Herod
- Joy
- Judea
- King
- Myrrh
- Nazareth
- Star
- Wise
- Worship

www.WordSearchMaker.com

Amazing maze

Help the wise men follow the star to the infant Jesus.



In Memoriam



Daisy Margaret HAYDEN (nee Garlick)

14 February 1920 – 2 September 2017

Daisy Margaret was born on 14th February 1920 to Edward and Daisy Garlick. She had an older brother Edward (deceased in 1973) and three younger siblings, all of whom died soon after birth.

Daisy grew up in Newport, attending Newport Primary School, then going on to Williamstown High School. After completing her secondary education Daisy worked at T&G in the city. The family worshipped at North Williamstown Presbyterian Church, and it was there that she met Sidney Hayden. The pair announced their engagement about the time that war broke out and when Sid joined the RAAF he was posted overseas. Many letters were written back and forth during the period of Sid's active service. Daisy and Sid were married at North Williamstown Presbyterian Church after the war had ended and Sid returned home. Initially they lived with Daisy's parents while their home was being built in Newport. Daisy and Sid had two children, Heather and John.

When a Home Mission Presbyterian Church was planted at Newport the family worshipped there. Daisy and Sid together provided meals and hospitality for the many visiting preachers who came to take the morning and evening services. Daisy worked hard in the church, on cleaning and flower rosters, also providing suppers and teas. She was a deaconess and an active member of the Ladies Guild. Daisy also supported many charities.

When the local Presbyterian Church voted to join the Uniting Church, Daisy and Sid joined Scots' Church, where they made many wonderful friends. Daisy joined the PWMU, and supported Sid in his role as Session Clerk over many years. A highlight for Daisy was the visit of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II to Scots' church in 1981, when she attended a Sunday morning service, and Daisy and Sid met the Queen in person.

As the years passed, Daisy's health deteriorated. Sadly Sid died in 2003. When Daisy was no longer well enough to manage alone she moved in with her daughter Heather

and husband Kelvin, until she required more care than they were able to manage. She settled into care and was most appreciative of all that the Arcare staff were able to provide for her. Daisy died on 2nd September 2017.

A thanksgiving service to honour Daisy's life was held at Scots' Church on 11th September.

Our deepest sympathy is extended to Heather and John, their families and to Daisy's many friends.



Ronald Gardner

1 March 1932 – 23 September 2017

Although Ron did not share much of his background, his childhood years were troubled and he did not have an easy life as an adult. However he consistently spoke of his faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.

Friends Graeme and Norman, from the Sacred Heart Mission, St. Kilda, attended the thanksgiving service for Ron, together with Carmel from Pastoral Care at the Mission. Graeme participated in the service, speaking of Ron as someone who became very much part of the family at 'the ranch'. He enjoyed conversation with his friends, and demonstrated a caring attitude for his fellow man. Graeme said that it had been a pleasure to know Ron.

Ron attended services at Scots' Church faithfully over many years, even when it must have become a challenge to manage it at times. Members of the Pastoral Care Committee visited Ron over recent years, providing support for him. Committee member Lauris Murnane was sorry that she was unable to attend Ron's funeral service, and wrote of Ron:

'I always spoke to Ron at church when he was able to attend. When this was no longer possible, due to his decreased mobility, I visited him regularly at the Sacred Heart Hostel St. Kilda, always taking two packets of Tim Tams (his comment – could I afford them?). When these became too hard to bite I swapped to Chocolate Royals (2 packets) which we shared around with other residents.

On one of my last visits Ron hummed, 'There is a green hill far away...' so I asked him if he would like a hymn book. Ken gave me a slightly damaged one for Ron and the next time I visited I opened it at 380 and we sang the first verse. Ron, a man of few words, commented, 'A lovely singing voice you have got!' I was pleased he could still be humorous.

My visit on Friday afternoon 22nd September, with the usual two packets of Chocolate Royals, was my last – he ate two. He died during that night – I hope feeling content and not forgotten.'

Ron died on 23rd September 2017. A Thanksgiving Service to honour Ron's life was held at Scots' Church on 19th October.

Our sincere condolences to Ron's many friends.

Indonesian Christian Church (ICC) Baptism and Membership

On Sunday 29 October, along with celebrating the 500th year of the Protestant Reformation, we rejoiced as we officially welcomed new members, as well as baptising several adults and an infant. May every congregation at ICC continue to carry the Reformation fire and spirit, to be reformed by the Word of God.



Top (L-R): Christopher Salangka, Ingrid Inthe, Nitalia Slamet (mother of Alicia), Royany Gozali, Victoria Christiana, Elisa Lie, Fransiska Seanny, Yonathan Santoso, Rev Christian Tirtha, Elie Cung**

Bottom (L-R): Stephan Saragi, Ezra Zephania, Christopher Homann (and Alicia), Jennifer Lie, Pricilia Theoswin, Dr Sen Sendjaya, Andy Sentosa**

*Not pictured: Debora Rotua, Yoga Prima, Yonathan Panjaitan, and Rina Soebroto.
members of the ICC Core Committee

Christmas in Bethlehem

Thousands of Christians make a pilgrimage to Bethlehem each year, to celebrate the birth of Jesus. Christmas in Bethlehem is celebrated over quite a long period as various denominations, including Roman Catholics, Protestants, Greek Orthodox, Ethiopians, Armenians and others, differ in their customs and also in the day they observe the birth of Jesus. Most Christian processions pass through Manger Square, a large plaza situated outside the Church of the Nativity. Services are held there and in the nearby Catholic Church of St. Catherine.



Christmas in Manger Square, 2004. Credit: Footballkickit at English Wikipedia

The Church of the Nativity was built in 327 AD by Constantine the Great and his mother Helena, over the site of the traditional birthplace of Jesus. It was destroyed by fire and rebuilt in the sixth century by the Emperor Justinian, and has had a number of additions since then. It is listed as a World Heritage Site.



The interior of the Church of the Nativity, Bethlehem (Public Domain)

The main Basilica of the Nativity is maintained by the Greek Orthodox Church in Jerusalem, and is administered jointly with the Roman Catholic, Armenian Apostolic and Syriac Orthodox Church authorities. The design of the church is in the form of a typical Roman basilica with five aisles and an apse. The adjoining Church of St. Catherine is built in Gothic revival style. The Grotto of the Nativity, an underground cave within the basilica, marks the site where Jesus' birth is said to have taken place.

Large crowds gather in Manger Square on Christmas Eve to sing Christmas carols. Protestant churches have services in the Church of the Nativity, or in the Shepherds' Fields close by.

References: Christmas in Bethlehem: Customs, Traditions & Celebrations. <http://www.indobase.com/holidays/christmas/world/christmas-in-bethlehem.html>

Sacred Destinations: Christmas in Bethlehem. <http://www.sacred-destinations.com/israel/bethlehem-christmas>

Wikipedia: Church of the Nativity. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_of_the_Nativity

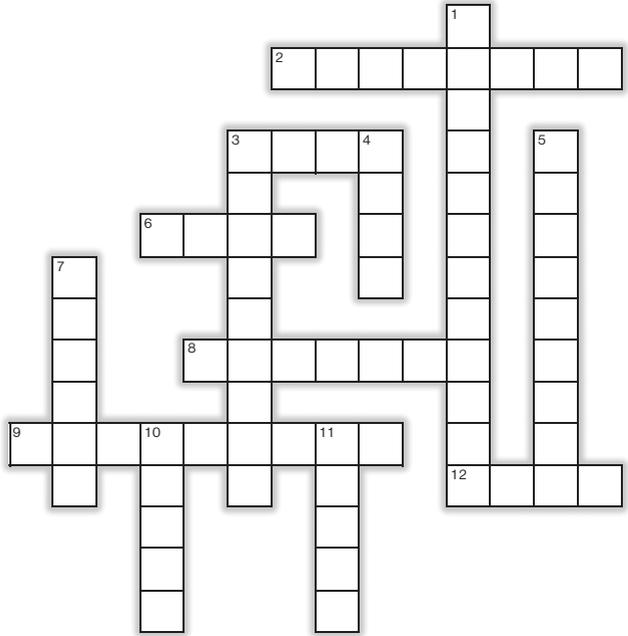
Biblical Crossword

Matthew Chapter 2

Solution on page 4.

Across

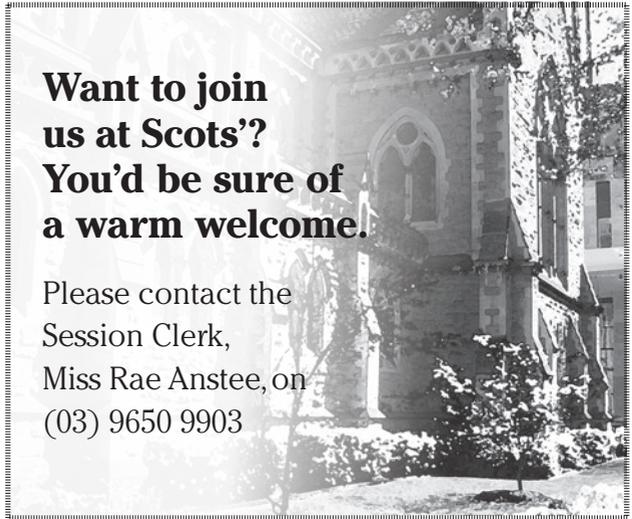
2. In what town did Jesus and his family settle?
3. The wise men inquired about the king of the _____.
6. Who appeared to Joseph in a dream?
8. To what district did Joseph, Mary and Jesus go on their return?
9. In what city was Jesus born?
12. From what direction did the wise men come?



EclipseCrossword.com

Down

1. The wise men brought gifts of gold, myrrh and _____.
3. To what city did the wise men come?
4. What guided the wise men?
5. Who ruled after Herod died?
7. What happened to boys in the region under two years?
10. Who was the king of Judea when Jesus was born?
11. To what country did Jesus and his parents flee?



Design and layout by Allardice. Printing by Bambra.