

CONTENTS

Page 1 -
From the
Minister's Desk

Page 2 -
Calendar of
Events

Poem

Reader's
memories

Page 3 -
Lent

Cartoon

Page 4 -
From the Organ
Bench

Altos in SATB
choir

Insert -
Valedictions

Page 5 -
Congratulations

Q & A

Page 6 -
Property Matters

Stamps

Page 7 -
Letter of
appreciation

From
Oberammergau



St Stephens's Uniting Church
197 Macquarie Street, Sydney
office@ssms.org.au

VISION



Lent Edition February 2012
Ph. (02) 9221 1688
Fax: (02) 9230 0316
www.ssms.org.au

FROM THE MINISTER'S DESK

Lent and fasting



Traditionally, Lent has been known as the time of fasting. It is the time we abstain from anything – be it food, drink or any other enjoyments – that helps us to focus on the events of the Easter weekend and hence prepare ourselves to celebrate the Resurrection properly. And one could certainly add: often our celebrations in the church do seem to miss something of the real festivity of feasting.

However, the problem goes much wider than the life of the church. For the society we live in, simply finds the idea of fasting – that is abstinence for the sake of deferred gratification – simply ridiculous.

We live during a time where instant gratification is glorified and pursued. The British group Queen's song "I want it all and I want it now" has become the motto of our culture.

But there is another reason why we find it hard to feast; one that is not unrelated to our inability or unwillingness to fast. We are not only sceptical of abstinence but we are also suspicious of excesses.

Many years ago I saw the movie "City of joy" which was filmed in the Indian city of Calcutta and deals with the lives of the poorest of the poor. The movie ends with a wedding feast for which the father of the bride had to save literally his whole life long. The feast is no careless moment of reckless spending. It is a careful saving for years and years to culminate in this one day.

When I told the story later to other people, they all reacted in the same way: disbelief. No one thought that one day of excess was worth years of struggle. No one believed that it is possible to live for years on the happiness and abundance of one feast.

The well known German tale of *Faust* is structured around Faust's pact with the devil in which he promised the devil his soul if he allows him one moment of one day which is so good that he would wish for it to last forever. In other words, one day by which all the other days are redeemed.

The Christian story tells of such a day. The Christian story teaches that there is one such day, one such feast, in the light of which all the other days receive their worth. That is the day of Easter: the feast of Easter.

However, Easter only follows after Lent. To truly receive the feast, we must be able to embrace the fast as well.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March

2nd – Friday Music –Cyrus Meurant (composer)

2nd- 12 noon-World Day of Prayer at Wesley Mission

3rd –7pm – Concert – Five Cities Brass Concert at St Stephen's

7th- Fellowship Meeting

9th – Friday Music – Texas saxophone Quartet

11th – 2.30pm – Induction of the Rev. Dr Ockert Meyer

16th- Friday Music –Peter Leung (saxophone)

23rd- Friday Music- Colin Noble (piano)

30th- Peter Guy (organ)

April

1st- **Palm Sunday**

4th- Fellowship Meeting - Guest Speaker

6th- **Good Friday, 2pm – Performance of Stainer's "Crucifixion" by combined church choirs.**

8th – **Resurrection (Easter) Sunday**

13th- Friday Music- Victoria Jacono-Gilmovich & the Strelitzia Trio

20th- Friday Music-Alastair Duff-Forbes (violin)

27th- St .Stephen's Fellowship &Handcraft Street Stall
Friday Music – The Rev. Dr Daniel Dries (organ)

May

4th- Alexander Nelson (flute), Patrick Keith (piano)

11th- Conservatorium High School Students

18th- Judith Rough (soprano)

25th- Stacey Yang (organ)

**Note: Mid-week communion service will be
Every TUESDAY**

GOOD FRIDAY: the Third Nocturne

Alone to sacrifice thou goest Lord,
Giving thyself to death whom thou hast slain.
For us thy wretched folk is any word,
Who know that for our sins this is thy pain?

For they are ours, O Lord, our deeds, our
deeds,
Why must thou suffer torture for our sin?
Let our hearts suffer for thy passion, Lord,
That sheer compassion may thy mercy win.

This is that night of tears, the three days'
space,
Sorrow abiding of the eventide,
Until the day break with the risen Christ,
And hearts that sorrowed shall be satisfied.

So may our hearts have pity on thee, Lord,
That they may sharers of thy glory be:
Heavy with weeping may the three days pass
To win the laughter of thine Easter Day

Peter Abelard (1079-1142)
(French moral philosopher, scholar, poet,
theologian)

CHILDHOOD MEMORIES OF EASTER

I remember the many wonderful hymns and
choruses from our Sunday School days. The
words expressed in sincere language suitable
for children assisted our early understanding of
the Bible's message.

"A man there was in Galilee like no one else
before..." was a hymn I have used while
presenting Easter SRIE assemblies in public
schools.

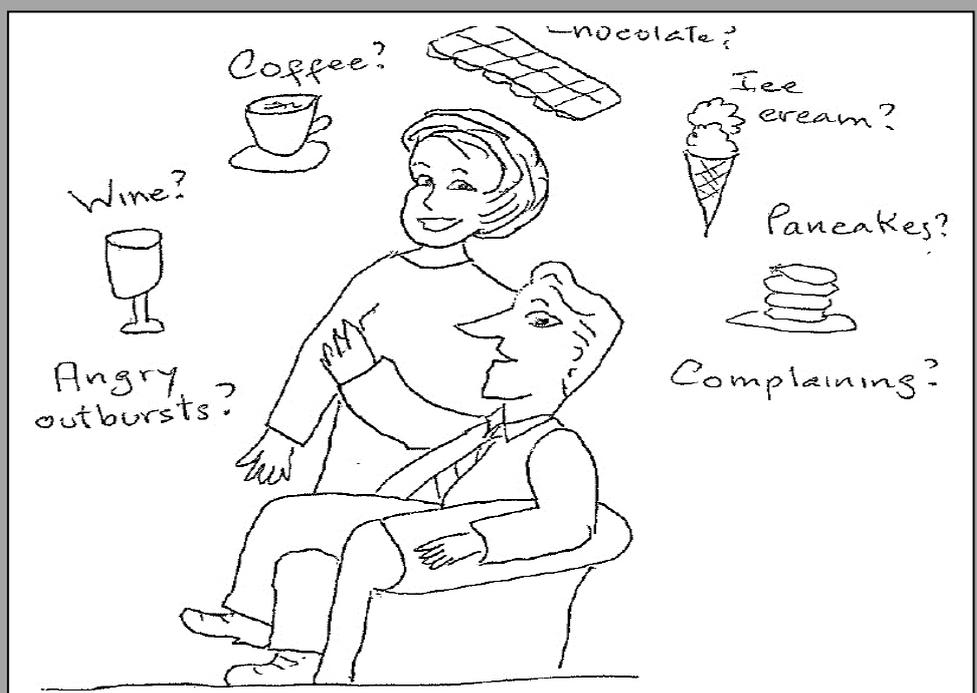
I hope this hymn will be remembered by the
current generation of children when they
reach adulthood.

Robyn Joyce
Friend of St Stephen's

LENT – SOME KNOWN AND SOME NOT–SO-WELL-KNOWN FACTS

- Fasting period of 40 days – the number has many biblical references:
Moses was 40 days on Mt.Sinai
Elijah took 40 days to walk to Mt.Horeb
Noah endured 40 days of rain
The Israelites – wandered 40 years in the wilderness
Jonah prophesied destruction of Nineveh in 40 days
Jesus fasted 40 days in the desert
Traditional belief is that Jesus lay in the tomb for 40 hours
- The Latin term *quadragesima* (40 days) was changed when worship began to be conducted in the vernacular.
Lent simply means 'long' from the German *lens*, and the Dutch *lente* meaning 'long' because in Spring the days get longer in the northern hemisphere.
- Carnival celebrations which precede Lent (associated with the season of fasting) are a last opportunity to be "worldly"!
Mardi Gras in Brazil means "Fat Tuesday", the day before Ash Wednesday when all the foods that are not allowed in Lent are used up.
Eastern Orthodox Churches begin Lent on Ash Monday which is also called 'Clean Monday'
- Holy Week is the last week of Lent.
Thursday of Holy week is called Maundy Thursday from the Latin *Mandatum*, 'commandment'.
Jesus, at the last Passover meal commanded his disciples to love with humility by serving one another.
- Purple is the Liturgical colour symbolizing Penance and Royal dignity.
- The word, Easter originates from *Eostre*, pagan Anglo-Saxon goddess of the sunrise and Spring.
- For Christians in India and other Eastern countries Easter is much more significant than Christmas. Indeed, many Christians prefer to call it Resurrection Day to give it its full meaning, minus eggs and rabbits.

**What
will you
give up
for Lent?**



FROM THE ORGAN BENCH by Mark Quarmby, Director of Music & Organist

The choir has returned after a well-earned break following a very busy Christmas period when they sang some of the most challenging work they have yet attempted. We have more exciting music planned although in Lent the music is much more subdued until Easter when we will be accompanied by our brass ensemble again.

Following the outstanding success of our Good Friday Concert last year, and by popular request, we will again be performing Stainer's "The Crucifixion". We are most fortunate to have two outstanding soloists, Gavin Lockley (son of our Ruth and Arthur Lockley and a first rate singer and composer) who sang bass last year and Kent McIntosh, a tenor from the Australian Opera (currently singing in 'Turandot'). Come and fill the church with your friends.

Easter will be a grand celebration of the Resurrection with the brass leading the grand Easter hymns. So please make sure you invite all your friends.

There are more exciting developments with the restoration of the organ. In the early 1970s the organ's clarinet stops were removed (61 pieces went missing in the process) and we have been fortunate to find pipes made by the same builder in the same year, in a UK organ which has been sold for spare parts. There are expected to be installed soon. A few weeks ago our organ tuner found some of the missing pipes belonging to the organ's loud trumpet stop. This stop has been missing since the 1970s and was hidden in an unlikely place. Unfortunately, 12 of its 61 pieces can't be located but we hope to have those found, restored and put back along with the missing 12 remade to match. This will be very useful for fanfares, weddings, etc.

During the January school holidays I spent many hours online searching through over a century of old newspapers for information on the musicians and music at St Stephen's. Some of the information is on the church's web site. I have also summarized about 40 years of choir reports from the annual church reports on the web site. I have found the music commissioned by Sir Malcolm Williamson (the first Australian Master of the Queen's Musick) for the Queen's visit to St Stephen's in 1972 and hope that the choir will be able to sing it again. The words are based on Psalm 121.

The Friday Music programme has started for the year. Please come along on Fridays at 1.10pm and bring your friends. One of our regular performers last year won the ABC 'Young Performer's Competition'.

Our brass ensemble made up of members from the 'Five Cities Brass' will be commencing their own concert series at St Stephen's this year. The first concert will be on Saturday, March 3 at 7:30pm. Please come and support this new musical venture.

With so much happening, the church will become your home away from home.

A Guide to the SATB choir

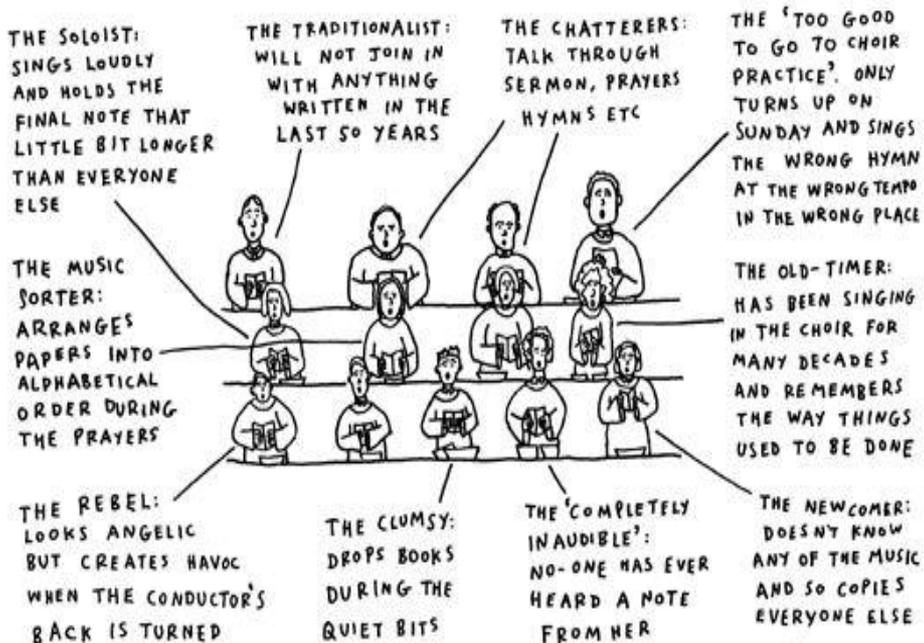
In any choir there are 4 voice parts, each part singing in a different range, prompting jokes.

In the last issue we got an insight into the attitude of sopranos to the others. Here's what the altos think:

THE ALTOS are the salt of the earth – in their opinion, at least. They are unassuming.

While the sopranos are screeching away on a high A, altos are forced to sing elaborate sharps and flats and tricks of rhythm, but they are not noticed because the sopranos are singing too loud (and the basses usually are too). They distrust the tenors because they sing in the same range as they do, but think they sound better. Altos like to sing duets with the basses so that they can be heard.

SATB CHOIR



CONGRATULATIONS!

Our special felicitations to **FRONTIER SERVICES** on reaching **100 years of unstinting service** to remote rural communities to give them hope and resilience.

We wish them God's continued guidance into the next 100 years.



Frontier Services
Serving Outback Australia



We express our special joy and congratulations to **David Tagg**, our Assistant Organist who sat for the Associate Diploma in Organ Performance from the Trinity College of Music, London and passed with **Distinction**.

Well Done, David!

ANSWERS OF A STUDENT WHO OBTAINED 0% ON ANOTHER EXAM.

What would you have given him?

Q 1. In which battle did Napoleon die?

A. *His last battle.*

Q 2. Where was the declaration of Independence signed?

A. *At the bottom of the page.*

Q 3. What is the main reason for divorce?

A. *Marriage.*

Q 4. What is the main reason for failure?

A. *Exams.*

Q 5. What can you never eat for breakfast?

A. *Lunch or dinner.*

Q.6 If you throw a red stone into the blue sea, what will it become?

A. *It will become wet.*

Q 7. How can a man go eight days without sleeping?

A. *By sleeping at night.*

Q 8. If you had 3 apples and 4 oranges in one hand and 4 apples and 3 oranges in the other, what would you have?

A. *Very large hands.*

Q.9 If it took 8 men 10 hours to build a wall, how long will it take 4 men?

A. *No time at all. The wall is already built.*

Q.10. How can you lift an elephant with one hand?

A. *You will never find an elephant that has only one hand.*

PROPERTY MATTERS

Yes, property does matter if the number of questions I receive is a measure of interest. The main question is, "When will it be finished?" with reference to the stone restoration on the front façade of the church. In the two years since the scaffold was erected each stone there has now been examined. Many have to be completely replaced, although initially it was planned to do mainly "cosmetic" work. This has added to the completion time and cost. The recent wet weather has further delayed progress. We are hopeful of completing the project by the end of March, and it should look magnificent.

Some of the façade project has been financed by \$50,000 raised through our National Trust appeal. We are very grateful to generous donors from the congregation and friends of St Stephen's. We depend on heritage grants and further donations to carry out conservation work in other parts of the church. Water penetration at the rear of the building and unstable stonework are particular concerns. We applied for heritage funding of \$60,000 to the Federal Department of the Environment. We hope and pray for good news. However, if we are successful, the grant funding will need to be matched dollar for dollar with our own contributions. Further donations to the building conservation appeal will enable work to proceed.

Donations should be sent to the church addressed to *The National Trust of Australia (NSW) St Stephen's Uniting Church Macquarie Street Sydney Conservation Appeal*.

Sheena Wiard
Coordinator, Property Resource Group

STAMPS

If you have noticed a basket marked "stamps" beside the one for Newtown Mission in the foyer, it is a request for used stamps which are getting rarer and rarer because more people correspond by email.

These stamps are taken to the stamp committee of the Uniting Church. They are trimmed, sorted, and sold at Pilgrim House, 2nd Floor, 262 Pitt Street every Tuesday and Friday. Sales in 2011 totalled \$30,000 which was distributed for projects in Uniting Care and Uniting Mission and Education.

Speak to **Florence Bell** for further information on how you can help.



Letters to the Editor

I attended the midnight service on Christmas Eve at St Stephen's.

Features that really impressed me:

- Relatable sermon that, while touching on the well-known story of Christmas, shone a different light on the message which was succinct, yet presented eloquently.
- The music was amazing. The harpist was fantastic.
- The brass quintet and their conductor were sensational and helped to make the whole service extremely enjoyable.
- The choir was also a great stand out for me. I'm not sure of her name, but the lady who sang the solo was truly incredible!
- I liked the way the service, while being formal and traditional, wasn't 'uptight'.
- Considering that this was our first visit to the church, we felt very welcome.

Thank you, St Stephen's

Johann – Visitor from Melbourne

Hallelujah! Overcome, overcome
has the Lord, the power of doom!
Death has not kept him bound
in the dark night of the tomb!
Sing to his glory the holy psalms!
Spread before him the victory palms!
Arise is the Lord!
Praise him joyfully, heavens!
Sing to the victor, earth!
Hallelujah to him
who has risen from death to birth

Praise to you who vanquished death,
you who died at Golgotha!
Praise to you, Saviour of sinners,
you who on the altar of the cross
offered your life for us!
You have bought us for yourself,
we live and die only for you!

Hallelujah!
Praise, honour, adoration, power and
majesty
to you for ever and ever!

*(Final chorus of the Dramatic
performance of the Passion Play by
the people of the German village of
Oberammergau in 2000 to honour the
promise made to God by their
ancestors to remember Him every 10
years for sparing them from the great
plague in 1633.)*

GOODBYE RITCHIE BLUNT

One of our most “switched-on” members, Ritchie Blunt, died at his home in Wentworth Falls in December a few days before his 89th birthday.

Born in 1922, he was swept up into WWII where he served in the RAAF radar/direction-finding/radio section. Later, in the government post-war training scheme, he studied to be a dentist while living at Wesley college at Sydney University. Over fifteen years he organized dinner parties there for his friends who included a group of scientists and others from Lucas Heights. He liked to base these on the symposiums and mythical figures of ancient Greece.

He bequeathed his ashes for use in the Wesley College gardens.

Sadly, his marriage failed, and his ex-partner predeceased him, leaving three fine daughters and several grandchildren.

He had toiled over a thesis dealing with dentally caused neck-pain and other ailments, for a Master’s degree since the 1990’s, but it was not completed.

Ritchie was loyal to St Stephen’s. He gave eloquent support to the McPheat function in November, 2010 by travelling 2 hours down from Wentworth Falls by train. Physically he was a tottering old man with a stick, taking 6-8cm steps, but mentally, still a motivated dynamo, intent on reaching out for all that God had to offer.

He was unique –like the rest of us- and we are the poorer for his passing.

Alex Norquay

Ritchie was always willing to contribute to *Vision*.

Ed.

NANCY VINE – 1904 – 2011

On 28th December, 2011 family members, staff and residents of James Milson Village, representatives of St Stephen’s who also participated in the service ,friends and acquaintances of all ages bade farewell to our most celebrated centenarian, Nancy Vine who died on 22nd December, 2011 at the age of 107.

Nancy was born in Hong-Kong and had her High School education in Sydney. She trained as a stenographer and worked at Cadbury . She was a good organizer of social events. She used to recall, “Nobody had a lot of money, but we still had a lot of fun.” She lived in a boarding house where she met Will whom she married in 1930, and they had two daughters.

Nancy did a lot of voluntary work for the Red Cross during the war years. She also volunteered to “do the stamps” at St Stephen’s which she joined in 1953 when she and Will moved to Northbridge and set up a milk bar. Even at the retirement village she volunteered to fill up the salt & pepper shakers and fold clothes in the laundry.

She loved to travel, especially to go on cruises. She loved life and often said, “Life is what you make it.”

We thank God for blessing her with a cheerful disposition and a full life.

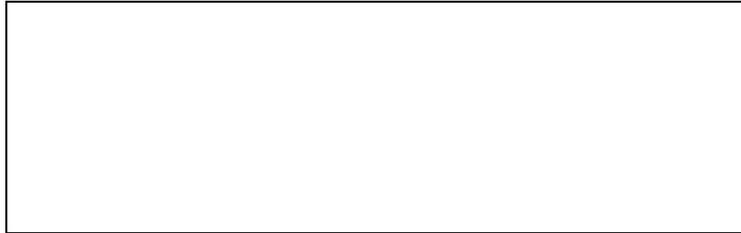
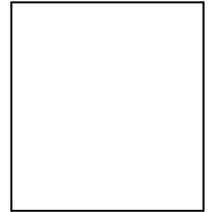
From *Bob Hinds* (Elder)

From Bernice Stewart, Andrew, Doug, David and Margaret

Thank you to those from whom we received expressions of sympathy and support during our bereavement. Your thoughtfulness has been comforting and helpful to our family through this sad time.



If not claimed please return to: St Stephen's
 Uniting Church 197 Macquarie Street,
 Sydney, 2000



St Stephen's Uniting Church

The Editor "VISION"
St. Stephen's Uniting Church
197 Macquarie Street, SYDNEY, NSW 2000

- I do not wish to continue receiving Vision
- Enclosed is my contribution of _____ towards production and/or postage of VISION
 (address your cheque to St Stephen's Uniting Church)
- I would prefer to receive VISION by email – my email address is _____
- Please note my change of address
 Name _____
 Address _____

