

Diocesan **Update**

22 DECEMBER 2023



Dear Friends,
I pray that as you complete preparations for all of the various things which you have planned for this next week the busyness will not overwhelm.

We so often tend to flop over the line when Christmas arrives, and in some ways this is entirely appropriate. From a holiday and family point of view it is the culmination of a year of work, and the chance to sit and enjoy...but doesn't enjoyment entail a lot of work!

Even spiritually Christmas is an end point of sorts. That little child – Immanuel – God with us is the culmination of God's plan to walk once more with the world God had made. Jesus is the end of all things. Yet this is not fully so. Even as the Christ-child is the end, he is also the beginning. In Jesus God opens up a universe of longing and delight that will not be replicated by our attention to Christmas detail. It is quite something else indeed.

I want to share with you a spoken piece which Hugo Farrant from St George's Trentham gave as part of our Advent observances a couple of weeks ago. Each week we have 'met' a character who was looking forward to Jesus and what he would bring. Hugo made for a great John the Baptist (complete with leather belt) but he also captured something of the inspiring hope for God's future we have set before us. I hope you enjoy it as much as I did!

Your servant in Christ,



Hatt

*From beyond the mists of time my soul is flung
I hear a throng
Of voices raised in song
What is this place with melody strong
Open thy door, make way for John...*

*Open thy ears dear listeners
And hear images of deliverance
From the voice of one crying out in the wilderness*

*Saying "Prepare ye the way of the Lord
Make his paths straight"
First he comes in peace, then with a sword
And his task is great*

*To save every soul from the ruthless night
The one who comes after me will be the way the truth and the life*

*So while I can purify in this river system
The waters of my baptism are mere symbolism
An image - which has a limit
The one who IS coming will baptise with holy spirit*

*Compared to his sanctifying light I am a mere candle
Unworthy to even untie the strap on his sandal
Nevertheless in his wake I'll accept my fate
This prophets head may wind up on Herod's plate*

*But I'll be remembered as a herald to a better state
2000 years on the people gathered will meditate
On the life and death and resurrection from the grave
of the son of man by which the universe was forever changed*

*Forever saved, the only path to the father forever paved
And in faith for the second coming which we await
Which will liberate every soul from that prison
And after all, recall it all starts with a baptism*

...

*The candle is lit, it is advent indeed
By the light of these flames eternal guidance we see
So we can ask and receive
We can find if we seek
Now excuse me I have to return to my time and my creek
I have people to greet
And truth to speak
And lotuses and honey to eat*

Hugo Farrant
St George's Trentham



Bishop Matt & George on leave in January

Bishop Matt will be on annual leave from Christmas and throughout January. He will return to the office on **Monday 5 February 2024**.

For any matters requiring attention during January, you can direct them to Sarah at bishoppa@bendigoanglican.org.au.

Archdeacon George will also be on leave throughout January, returning on **Monday 29 January**.

Any matters for George can be sent to Paula at admin@bendigoanglican.org.au.

Registry Office closure

The Registry Office will close on
Thursday 21 December

A small staff team will return to the office on
Tuesday 2 January

Throughout January the Registry Office will be closed to visitors and have minimal staff.

The phones will remain open for any enquiries, but please be patient.

This allows our small team to take a sufficient break to be refreshed for the year ahead.

For any emergencies call 0429 263 888.

