

PETE'S PAGE

CHRISTMAS

There is a song going around these last few years which goes "It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas." Here are a few thoughts on Christmas by some well known folk.

"He was created of a mother whom He created. He was carried by hands that He formed. He cried in the manger in wordless infancy. He, the Word, without whom all human eloquence is mute." ~**Augustine**

"How many observe Christ's birthday! How few, His precepts!" ~**Benjamin Franklin**

"Mankind is a great, an immense family... This is proved by what we feel in our hearts at Christmas." ~**Pope John Paul XXIII**

"Christmas is a day of meaning and traditions, a special day spent in the warm circle of family and friends." ~**Margaret Thatcher**

"The Almighty appeared on earth as a helpless human baby, needing to be fed and changed and taught to talk like any other child. The more you think about it, the more staggering it gets. Nothing in fiction is so fantastic as this truth of the Incarnation." ~**J.I. Packer**

"The greatest and most momentous fact which the history of the world records, is the fact of Christ's birth." ~**Charles H. Spurgeon**

"Hark the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new-born king." Peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled! ~Charles Wesley

Who can add to Christmas? The perfect motive is that God so loved the world. The perfect gift is that He gave His only Son. The only requirement is to believe in Him. The reward of faith is that you shall have everlasting life. ~Corrie Ten Boom

I pray that Christmas for you will be all of the above and so much more, may you all be Blessed with the presence of the Christ child this Christmas time, may your homes be filled with joy as we once again celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ...

Peter & Vonnie

THE COLOURS OF CHRISTMAS

GREEN – RED – WHITE – BLUE – SILVER - GOLD

Green = Everlasting Life

Red = The Blood of Jesus Christ

Blue = The Sky from which Angels appeared

White = The Purity of the Virgin Birth

Silver & Gold = God's Rich Blessings

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES

ON THE FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

On this day we bear witness to the light of Christ with all the faithful of every time and place. With Isaiah and Jeremiah, prophets of Israel, we await the promised salvation of the Lord, and look for the coming of the one who will bring justice and righteousness to the earth.

ON THE SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

With John the Baptist, calling from the wilderness, we cry: "Prepare the way of the Lord! Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."

ON THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

With Mary, the mother of Jesus, we magnify the Lord, rejoicing in God our Saviour, for the Mighty One has done great things for us, and holy is God's name.

ON THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

With the writers of the gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, we tell the good news of Jesus Christ, the child of Bethlehem, who came to save us, and is coming again to rule in glory.

ON CHRISTMAS DAY

With choirs of angels, and with all the heavenly host, we sing: "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth, peace and goodwill to all."

**The Word became flesh and lived among us, and we
have seen his glory.
Alleluia!**

TOUCHING THE TONGAS

Dear Friends,

Many thanks for all of your prayers, as well as financial and moral support over this year. It has been a busy year, but wonderful to see the Lord working among the Tongas. ***“The LORD is good; His steadfast love endures forever, and His faithfulness to all generations.”***

In early July, January and I scouted out Kumbu (14km from Siabuwa) for the **Go Challenge Outreach**, and faced great spiritual resistance. The outreach was covered by much prayer, as we had 4 OMers from the trek team, 2 ladies from HPC, 2 Tonga pastors, Cathy, and myself. The first day was spent prayer-walking through the community. Then the next 3 days were spent visiting homes, sharing the gospel. All were amazed at how open and hungry the people were to hear the truth. There were frustrations with the language barriers, the lack of Tonga bibles, and also from seeing the bondage the ladies were in from being in polygamist relationship. As an outcome from the outreach, I have started running a clinic twice a month, taking a number of pastors with me to do the follow-up, to pray for a new bible based church to be planted, and to see people released from spiritual bondages (witchcraft is strong in this area).

In September, 6 Australians and 2 Zimbabweans came to visit. Their main focus was to see how I run my clinics, as they were planning to start up something similar outside of Bulawayo. The 4 nurses worked alongside me and helped where possible. And then Stephen, a practical man, helped paint the window frames, also putting glass into them for the new sewing room. All a great help to me.

Eben from Wycliff, who is living with his family in Botswana and working among the San people, came to talk to the Tonga pastors about Bible translation. It was a very interesting 3 days and gave us much more insight as to what it will take to translate the Bible.

PRAY

- Continue praying for Chief Siabuwa’s salvation
- Ongoing translation of the oral bible
- Medical work, wisdom, strength and my faith to see the Lord work miracles

Tonga pastors, that they will remain united and work together for the extension of the Lord’s kingdom. **BLESSINGS FROM VICKY**



CONFIRMATION CLASS 2014

Kurt and Kendra Platen; Lauren Reid; Katie + Nicci Maberly;
Erin Lorimer; Joanna Whitin; Chiara Semilia; Michelle Duffield;
Ashleigh Craig; Megan Bath

A wonderful , enthusiastic class to teach - with inquisitive minds
and burning desire to dig deep !

We pray that they continue to be shining lights and an example to
their contemporaries.

A couple of the girls are already helping out with Sunday school
(From Emma Suddens)

OUR NEW PRAYER ROOM

God is so good, we now have a delightful little room, set apart, especially for the purpose of prayer. It is at the back of the church next to our Memorial Garden. Our Prayer Room is a place where we can come together or on our own to pray to God and to hear from God. The Prayer Room will be open from 6 a.m. until 6 p.m. every day. Of course we realise that as God's children we can pray wherever we are (at home, in the church, out walking, or driving etc.) but this Prayer Room has been prepared especially for YOU. We know that when we make a stand for God with fellow Christians, we bring acknowledgement, glory and honour to His Name.

On Friday mornings at 9 a.m. we specifically come together to sing, worship and pray for :-

Our Nation.

God has called His believing people to continuous, sacrificial prayer for the needs of Zimbabwe. It is our commitment to pray for every facet and event that God brings to our minds for our country.

Our Church.

We pray for God's church on earth, and here in Zimbabwe and especially Highlands Presbyterian and all the activities that go on here at Highlands. We look to God for the love, joy and peace He can bring. We pray for God's church to grow, for those suffering in any way and for any topic God puts on our hearts.

Our whole world.

Our families.

Friday mornings from 9 a.m. to about 10.30 a.m. have become very special to the people who pray. Why don't you come and join us? Jesus said ***“Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there I am in the midst. “***

Dear Church

We want to take this opportunity to express our delight for all that God has done through us, His Church, so far in 2014, built on the foundation of all He's done in the past years. We wonder just how much we can trust Him for?

We realize that we have not been very good or consistent at communication, and especially about finances – please forgive us for this.

At HPC we consider that there are General Funds, and Projects. General Funds come from the gifts and offering made during our services, and income from weddings, funerals etc. General Funds cover our running costs and keep us going as a Church. They cover wages, utilities and administration, security etc. From our General Funds we also give at least 20% to ministries and needs outside of HPC, and we further fund our own ministries within HPC.

Projects, like the Gazebo, are paid for through fund raising events and gifts given for such specific purpose. As an example, the Chancel and our new carpets etc were paid for entirely from a single donation given expressly for this. The Gazebo was in fact paid for entirely by a single family as they felt so led by God. All of us and so many have been so blessed by such generosity and our beautiful facilities. The Siabuwa Community Centre is another project some are being led by God to support, above and beyond their monthly offerings at HPC.

General maintenance and repairs are also covered out of General Funds. Refurbishing our toilets in order to comply to municipal regulations, and to simply give us more adequate facilities and allow for wheelchair access, should also come from General Funds, but we've done some fund raising to help as well.

At the beginning of every year, your leadership prepares a budget as to how we expect the year might go financially. We consider normal accounting type budgeting etc, but we pay more specific attention to all that we believe God wants for us to do, and that we in faith must trust Him for. So far in 2014 God has done so much more than we trusted Him for, and we are just ahead of budget – and that's our amazing generous God blessing His Children, you and me.

We have however noted quite a serious down turn in income over September and October. We fully appreciate the economic pressure of Zimbabwe, and it may then be surprising to some all the work being done at HPC, but please remember that we plan ahead in faith as God leads us, and we are also always mindful of our responsibility to the next generations and keeping our facilities in as good a state as we inherited them. There is also the unexpected! So please don't think that because of all that's going on the coffers are overflowing - we encourage you all to please continue supporting HPC in your participation and prayers and giving.

HPC is increasingly being such a blessing to so many as God blesses us. Thank you for your incredible generosity and faith – let us not grow weary of doing good (Gal 6:9), for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. And let us finish the race of 2014 even better than we started. And we look so forward to all that God has for us in 2015 and beyond.

Prepared with the richest of blessing on you all.

Your HPC Leadership

THANKS

The CWF (Christian Women's Fellowship) would like to thank Shepherd and his team for their hard work and willingness to cooperate in our monthly breakfasts – always helpful and cheerful. May God bless you all in 2015.

THE JEWISH WEDDING IN THE TIME OF JESUS

People did not exactly “fall in love” in the old days, marriages were more normally set up and executed according to a plan that fitted the needs of the whole society of Jews. When a young man saw the girl he wanted he consulted with his father about the idea of marrying her. When the bridegroom’s father approved of the choice, the young man would go to the bride’s house and speak with her father.

At the bride’s house the young man would do three very important things in connection with their wedding. **He would make a covenant with the bride – an actual contract. He would drink a cup of wine with her, which sealed the covenant; and finally he would pay a price for her.**

After the groom had made a covenant, drunk the cup, and paid the price, he would make a little speech to the bride. You see he was going to leave her for a long time and go back to his father’s house. He was going to build a bridal chamber for her, a place where they would have their first coming together in marriage – what we call the honeymoon today. Before he left he would tell her, “I go to prepare a place for you”.

The bride did not worry as that was the point of the cup and the price. The young man would always return no matter how long it took him to build the bridal chamber. He had paid for his bride, and he was certainly going to collect what he paid for. **The bridegroom would be away as long as it took him to finish the chamber and have it approved by his father.** It had to be beautiful – she would not want to greet her husband in just any place so it took a lot of hard work on the part of the bridegroom to build a first class bridal chamber and it had to be right to gain the approval of his father. **If anyone were to ask the bridegroom, during the year or so that he was engaged in the building process, when he would be getting married, he would say, “I don’t know, only my father knows”.** Sure enough, he could not go back and claim his bride until his father approved the chamber and said that the time was right.

What would the bride be doing all this time? **She waited and she waited with dignity. She would wear her veil whenever she went out, in order that some other young man wouldn’t try to initiate a contract with her. She was now called, ‘set apart’, ‘consecrated,’ ‘bought with a price.’** In effect she was no longer her own person,

but an individual contracted to her bridegroom. She conducted herself with due respect for her agreement with the groom. Certainly she never kept company with any other young man, and she used her time to think about married life and to prepare herself for it. As she gathered her trousseau, she always waited, being home every night, especially as time went on. **She certainly did not want to be caught away from home when the bridegroom came. The tradition was that he would come at night, even at midnight, and try to take her by surprise.**

Yes it was a kind of abduction. The Jewish brides were “stolen” out of their houses. **The bride would be waiting with her bridesmaids and her sisters and whoever she wanted to take part in the wedding party with her, and they would all have oil in their lamps in case the groom did choose to come at night. As time went on, they were ready to go every night. And suddenly, one night the bridegroom would come. The customs was that when the groom’s party was close enough to the home of the bride to be heard, they would shout; and when the bride heard that shout, she knew she was as good as married.** The young man would lead the party towards the groom’s father’s house and as they went they would make a lot of noise with their laughing and merriment. People knew there was a wedding going on in the old days when they heard those young people laughing in the street in the night.

When they reached the bridal chamber the bride and groom would go into the bridal chamber while the wedding party waited outside. There would be a large gathering of friends and guests awaiting the couple. Everyone would wait until the bridegroom would tell a trusted friend through the door that the marriage was consummated and then the celebrating would start. **The next time the guests would see the bride, at the end of seven days, she would have her veil off and would be a wife, not a bride. They would go on celebrating for seven days and sometimes they would run out of wine and have to get more.**

At the end of seven days of celebration the bride and groom would come out, now husband and wife. Then there would be a grand marriage supper – what we now call the reception. Everyone would congratulate the couple and it would be a scene of wonderful joy. Finally the new couple would leave to take up residence in the husband’s house. **He would have prepared a place for them to live, his own “kingdom”.**

(Taken from “An Israeli love story by Zola Levitt.)

FROM THE EDITOR'S PEN

All of us at the Grapevine would like to take this opportunity to wish all our readers a God-filled and blessed Christmas.

When Solomon became king, God asked him what he wanted most as a king. The King James Bible says he asked for 'wisdom'; my NIV Bible says he asked for 'discernment' – but the translation I like best is from my Message Bible, where it says Solomon asked for a 'God-listening heart'. In this new year ahead may we all have a 'God-listening' heart.

We feel that the following verses are God's promise for us all in 2015:

“Do not be afraid, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name, you are mine. Should you pass through the sea, I will be with you; or through rivers, they will not swallow you up. Should you walk through fire you will not be scorched, and the flames will not burn you. For I am Yahweh, your God – the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour.”

(Isaiah 43”2)

Love and blessings from Mary-Ann, Isabel and Richard.

***For to us a child is born
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called
Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.'***

(Isa 9:6)

A beautiful summer's day
for our Car Boot Sale on
25th October



HOW WELL DO YO KNOW YOUR BIBLE? (No 3)

CHRISTMAS EDITION

1. Jesus was descended directly from Abraham. Do you know the number of generations from Abraham to Joseph (Jesus' earthly father)?
2. Who are the 5 women named in Christ's genealogy?
3. Where, in the Old Testament, is the prophesy of where the Messiah was to be born?
4. Where, in the Old Testament, is the prophesy that Jesus would be born of a virgin?
5. Can you name the parents of John the Baptist?
6. How did Mary know that her child would be so special?
7. How was Jesus named?
8. Do you know the meaning of Christ's name "Immanuel"?
9. Why did Joseph and Mary move from Nazareth to Bethlehem, thus fulfilling the prophesy that Jesus would be born there?
10. Why was Jesus born in a stable?
11. How did the shepherds hear about the birth of Jesus?
12. A stunning event happened after the angel spoke to the shepherds. Do you know what this was?
13. Who told King Herod about the birth of Jesus?
14. What was the first thing Herod did?
15. What did Herod tell the 3 wise men?
16. What guided the 3 wise men to Israel to seek Jesus?

17. What were the 3 gifts presented to Jesus by the 3 wise men?
18. How did the 3 wise men know that they should not go back and see Herod?
19. When baby Jesus was brought to the temple the first time, who was the man who recognised Him as the promised Messiah?
20. Do you know on which day a Jewish baby is circumcised?

WEDDINGS

FUNERALS

THE HISTORY OF CHRISTMAS CAROLS

Carols were first sung in Europe thousands of years ago, but these were not Christmas Carols. They were pagan songs, sung at the Winter Solstice celebrations as people danced round stone circles the word 'carol' actually means dance or a song of praise and joy!

Early Christians took over the pagan solstice celebrations for Christmas and gave people Christian songs to sing instead of pagan ones. In AD129 A Roman Bishop wrote a song called 'Angel's Hymn' and another famous early Christian hymn was written in 760AD. Unfortunately, the early carols were all sung in Latin and the ordinary people couldn't understand them. This was changed by St. Francis of Assisi when, in 1223, he started his Nativity Plays in Italy. The actors sang songs or 'canticles' that told the story during the plays. These songs were usually in a language that the audience could understand and join in! The new carols spread to France, Spain, Germany and other European countries. The earliest carol, like this, was written in 1410. Sadly only a very small fragment of it still exists. Most carols from this time and the Elizabethan period were loosely based on the Christmas story and were seen as entertaining rather than religious songs. They were usually sung in homes rather than in churches!

When Oliver Cromwell and the Puritans came to power in England in 1647, the celebration of Christmas and the singing of carols was stopped. However, the carols survived as people sang them in secret. So carols remained mainly unsung until Victorian times when many orchestras and choirs were being set up in the cities of England and people wanted Christmas songs to sing, so carols once again became popular.

DID YOU KNOW....

In Colonial America there were no Christmas celebrations. As recently as 100 years or so ago, such observances were declared illegal in many parts of the United States, being defined as pagan and a reproach to the Lord. In Puritan Massachusetts, anyone caught observing Christmas was obliged to pay a fine. Connecticut also enacted a law forbidding the celebration of Christmas and the baking of mincemeat pies.

(taken from the internet "The Traditions of Christmas)

DID YOU KNOW?



Locusts migrate in swarms as thick as 80 million locusts per square kilometre [0.4 sq.mi.]. Yet they avoid colliding with one another. What is their secret?

Behind each of a locust's two compound eyes is a motion-sensitive neuron called the lobula giant movement detector (LGMD). When a collision appears imminent, these neurons send messages to the wings and legs, prompting the locust to act quickly. In fact, its reaction is five times faster than the blink of an eye.

Inspired by the locust's eyes and neurons, scientists have developed a computerized system that allows a mobile robot to detect and avoid approaching objects, without the need for complicated radar or infrared detectors. Researchers are applying this technology to vehicles, giving them a fast and accurate warning system that could reduce collisions. "There's so much to learn from such a simple insect as the locust," says Prof. Shigang Yue at the University of Lincoln in the U.K.



**NO WAY COULD THIS
SOPHISTICATED
TECHNOLOGY HAVE JUST
EVOLVED BY ACCIDENT!!**

**A 'HIGH FIVE' FOR OUR GOD
THE CREATOR!!**



I THINK THAT YOU HAVE SOME SERIOUS FAITH ISSUES

A class of small boys were performing the Christmas play:

"Is there any room for us in your inn?" asked Joseph.

"No room at all," said the small inn-keeper firmly, and then suddenly appalled at such lack of hospitality – "But you can come in for a cup of tea."

A son of 17 is threatening to elope if his parents don't approve his marriage to a 16 year old girl. So finally they give in. When they got to the part in the ceremony where the boy repeats after the minister: "with all my worldly goods, I thee endow," the mother turns to the father and whispers, "there goes his bicycle!"

MOSES AND THE RED SEA

Nine-year-old Joey was asked by his mother what he had learned in Sunday School.

"Well, Mom, our teacher told us how God sent Moses behind enemy lines on a rescue mission to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. When he got to the Red Sea, he had his army build a pontoon bridge and all the people walked across safely. Then he radioed headquarters for reinforcements. They sent bombers to blow up the bridge and all the Israelites were saved."

"Now, Joey, is that really what your teacher taught you?" his Mother asked.

"Well, no, Mom, but, if I told it the way the teacher did, you'd never believe it!"

THE MARKET PLACE



Only 30 minutes from Harare along Enterprise Road, Mwanga Lodge offers overnight accommodation at Bally Vaughan Game Park. There are 6 individual A-frame lodges overlooking a game-filled plain. Meals of the finest cuisine are served in a spacious dining room, and the adjacent comfortable lounge offers a panoramic view of African wildlife and beauty. An experienced guide will personally escort you as you view the 24 species of wild animals. Elephant rides are a highlight of your stay! Canoeing and fishing are also offered. The tariff is inclusive of all these activities and full board.

We also offer Day Safaris (if required, we can transport you to and from Harare). The day begins at 9.30a.m. with a visit to the bird and game sanctuary; tea and scones are served on a granite kopje and, again, elephant rides are a must! Then enjoy a leisurely canoe trip down the Mubvinsi River culminating in a game drive. The safari ends at approximately 4.30p.m. A perfect day and an experience of a lifetime!

Email gamepark@mango.zw for more information.

FLAT FOR SALE IN AVONDALE

2 large bedrooms, spacious kitchen with walk-in pantry. There is an enclosed veranda and fully carpeted. The flat is upstairs in a block of eight surrounded by a well maintained garden.

If interested please call **497553**

ANSWERS TO THE CHRISTMAS QUIZ

1. 42 (14 from Abraham to David; 14 from David to the exile in Babylon, 14 from the exile to Jesus) (Matt. 1:17)
2. Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, Bathsheba (widow of Uriah) and of course, Mary. (Matt. 1)
3. Micah 5:2
4. Isaiah 7:14
5. Elizabeth and Zechariah (Luke 1:5-7)
6. The angel Gabriel appeared and told her (Luke 1:31-33)
7. An angel appeared to Joseph to tell him Mary would have a son who must be called Jesus. (Matt. 1:20-21)
8. 'God with us' (Matt. 1:23)
9. The Roman Emperor ordered a census to be taken. The people had to be counted in the villages where they were born. (Luke 2:1-5)
10. There was no room at the inn. (Luke 2:7)
11. An angel appeared to them and told them. (Luke 2:8-12)
12. A heavenly host appeared, singing & praising God. (Lk 2:13-14)
13. The 3 wise men. (Matt. 2:1-2)
14. Asked the chief priests where Christ was to be born. (Matt. 2:3-6)
15. To go to Bethlehem and to report back to him. (Matt. 2:7-8)
16. A star in the east, which they followed in order to worship Jesus. (Matt. 2:2)
17. Gold, frankincense and myrrh. (Matt. 2:11)
18. They were warned in a dream. (Matt.2:12)
19. Simeon (Luke 2:25-32)
20. The eighth day of his life. (Luke 2:21).

A very blessed Christmas to you all – from Denise Penman.

ANSWERED PRAYER

During the minister's prayer one Sunday, there was a loud whistle from one of the back pews. Tommy's mother was horrified. She pinched him into silence and, after church, asked, "Tommy, whatever made you do such a thing?" Tommy answered soberly, "I asked God to teach me to whistle, and He did!"

TO ALL THOSE BORN IN THE 1940's, 50's, and 60's

1. We had no childproof lids on medicine bottles, doors or cabinets and when we rode our bikes, we had no helmets.
2. We rode in cars with no seat belts or air bags.
3. Take away food was limited to fish and chips, no pizza shops, McDonalds , KFC, Subway or Nandos.
4. Even though all the shops closed at 6.00pm and didn't open on a Sunday, somehow we didn't starve to death!
5. We shared one soft drink with four friends, from one bottle and NO ONE actually died from this.
6. We could collect old drink bottles and cash them in at the corner store and buy Toffees, Gobstoppers and Bubble Gum.
7. We weren't overweight because..... WE WERE ALWAYS OUTSIDE PLAYING!!
8. We would spend hours building our go-carts out of old prams and then ride down the hill, only to find out we forgot the brakes.
9. We did not have Playstations, Nintendo Wii , no video games, no colour TV, no mobile phones, no personal computers, no Internet or Internet chat rooms.....WE HAD FRIENDS and we went outside and found them!
10. We fell out of trees, got cut, broke bones and teeth and there were no lawsuits from these accidents.
11. Only girls had pierced ears!
12. We were given air guns and catapults for our 10th birthdays.
13. Mum didn't have to go to work to help dad make ends meet because we didn't need to keep up with the Jones's!
14. Not everyone made the rugby/football/cricket/netball team. Those who didn't had to learn to deal with disappointment. Imagine that!! Getting into the team was based on MERIT
15. Our teachers used to hit us with canes and gym shoes and throw the blackboard rubber at us if they thought we weren't concentrating.
16. We can string sentences together and spell and have proper conversations because of a good, solid three R's education.
17. Our parents would tell us to ask a stranger to help us cross the road.
18. The idea of a parent bailing us out if we broke the law was unheard of. They actually sided with the law!

We had freedom, failure, success and responsibility, and we learned HOW TO DEAL WITH IT ALL!

And YOU are one of them! CONGRATULATIONS!

KIDS' PAGE