



Church on the Hill

Sunday 25 June 2017



Theme: True Confessions
Vicar: Susan Gill
Preacher: Susan Gill
Readings: Psalm 32, James 5:13 – 16, Luke 5:27 - 32

Sentence:

I'm here inviting not those who think they are righteous, those who know they are sinners. I'm inviting them to a changed life, changed inside and out. - Luke 5:32

Prayer for the day:

God of stars and microbes, God of abundance and grace: You know us well, better than we know ourselves. You hear us cry "Gloria!" and "Praise!" And you watch us tear things apart with our words and deeds. You hear us say "Thy will be done" and "use me, O God"

And you watch us do nothing in response to cries for help. You know us, and you love us, and you forgive. Hear us now as we say, "Help us to change; turn us around, Make us more loving and courageous and hopeful." This we pray in Jesus' name. **Amen**

Following Jesus, Building Community

Reflections...



Hate

'Hate' is a very strong word; one I don't like to use if I can help it. Perhaps it is too strong for my purpose just now. However I 'very much dislike' triumphalist Christianity. I dislike it because it is often based on half-truths and because it makes the bulk of us feel guilty when we don't have everything all together.

And seriously, do any of us have it all together? I certainly don't. I struggle with all kinds of things – too many to list here.

One area where triumphal Christianity can do the most damage is in the area of mental health. A superficially victorious faith does violence to those who live with any kind of mental illness (one out of every three or four of us) by minimising or denying the illness and the treatment offered by our health system.

There's a great clip on youtube about the dumb things we say regarding mental health. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bor9xVnblz8> Check it out. It's well worth it. A couple of easier things to describe go like this:

"It's like you're not even trying." Imagine saying that to a paraplegic.

"You take drugs for that?"
"Have you thought about dropping the drugs?"
Would you say that to someone with diabetes?"

As Christians we need to be very careful about suggesting any kind of quick fix for mental illness or for anything really. Certainly God does bring healing; sometimes that healing is instant but more often it is the result of a combination of things including medical advice and treatment. And sometimes healing doesn't come at all. We don't want to add to anyone's turmoil by making people feel guilty when healing is slow or even apparently non-existent.

Here is an excerpt from a letter I recently found:

My faith journey has taken some interesting and difficult turns in the last ten years. My struggle with depression on and off during this time, contributed to a faith crisis and a period

of deep soul-searching, questioning and re-building my faith. During a year of severe clinical depression my life and dreams fell apart around me and I couldn't find God in the pieces. My faith felt like it had shattered into irreparable shards. From my sinking pit of despair I cried out, ranted and raved, pleaded with a God who seemed non-existent. All my former experiences and understanding of God no longer helped.

Hardest of all was coming to terms with my preconceived ideas of how I, as a Christian, should handle this. Mental illness didn't fit anywhere into the picture. Spiritual warfare didn't relieve it, neither did claiming healing in faith. When I couldn't reason, pray or find any hope, I was fighting against accepting that I have an illness which may always be part of my life.

Many of my former doctrines no longer fitted my reality. I found reading others' experiences with mental illness helpful and so began the painful process of accepting myself and my personality instead of rejecting the person God made me to be. This includes my tendency to depression; that it is part of who I am and that it is OK, despite all feelings which tell me it is not! Accepting medication that helps was also part of the recovery...

I gradually began to see that God hadn't deserted me, but had allowed me to feel stripped of the identity I had built up, in order to gain a better understanding of Him and of myself...

I now know and accept ... that I live with an illness that sometimes limits my life but is also a positive part of my faith. I am now more accepting of myself and others, more compassionate, more gracious and more open to the doubts, the mystery and the less black and white areas of Christian faith. My own faith experience is more enriched, and I would encourage others that any perceived 'limitations' can be celebrated and embraced into our faith and who we are, if we are open to working with and accepting our struggles.

...'if we are open to working with and accepting our struggles'. That to me is what genuine Christian faith is about – accepting our own struggles and the struggles of others. There are no quick and easy answers in Christianity; at least

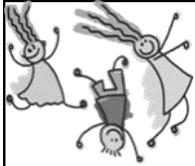
those that are there won't satisfy for long. Triumphant Christianity – bah humbug! What we need, what I need, is relationship; relationship with Jesus and with each other. Relationship that is prepared to wrestle and live with discomfort. Relationship that is honest and can cope with discomfort and uncertainty. Relationship that accepts ourselves and others as we are in the here and now.

As I reflect on Sonja's life (Sonja died on Monday in case you hadn't caught up with that), I am profoundly grateful for her input into my life and the life of our church community. She coped with

physical and mental ill health for decades. Sonja had a really hard life; harder than most of us will ever have, yet live it she did. And to the maximum of her ability – her art, poetry, study, fashion flair, serving heart and uniqueness – have influenced many of us. We are the richer for her life and our relationship with her. Thank you Jesus, please let us encounter and be changed by more people like Sonja!

Learning together in love,

Susan



= KIDS' CHURCH CALENDAR =

Today Sunday 25 June

What does it mean to be a Christian?

Next Sunday 2 July

The Early Church

The toy box and baby change facilities are available anytime at the rear of the Church.

Prayers and offers of help are appreciated. Catherine 022 647 9810

Prayers for the Week

Lord God we pray for the media. They determine what we know about; what takes our focus as we are presented with snippets of information.

And so we pray for the victims and their families of the fire in London, while an estimated 100,000 thousand people starve in South Sudan and Nigeria, Somalia, and Yemen are also in deep distress. Far from the headlines an estimated 20 million people in those four countries are at risk of dying due to a lack of food. It's an on-going humanitarian crises, rather than something that hits the news, and the famine is the direct result of the bloody wars and insurgencies raging in all four countries.

So Lord please help these people so desperate for food and drinkable water. Please send the aid that just might make a difference. And please generate hearts of compassion and integrity within reporters and journalists and the news moguls.

We also pray for those affected by conflict in the volatile Kasai provinces in Central Congo. May there be a thorough international investigation into the government's failure to protect civilians. Please help them do much better with that. We pray for protection the families of the reported 3300 people who have been killed in horrific murders and

Locally we pray for Victory Community Anglican Church and Greg and Jacky Holmes who lead them. Give them wisdom and strength as the work with several in the midst of relational and marital difficulties. Give them hope in you.

We also remember our Catholic friends as they move towards their rch-Diocesan Synod in Wellington. Comfort families who have lost loved ones and friends recently and bless their confirmation candidates who will be confirmed on July 9th. Please equip the leadership, both ordained and lay in their process of becoming one parish.

We continue to pray for Christine as she copes with the reality of life without Allan. Give her the strength to cope with her teaching role as she plans for her return to New Zealand to live.

We also pray for Sonja Vevang's family giving thanks for her life in you, and for the nurture and friendship offered towards her. We particularly remember Albertha, Gwen, Pam, Chris, Lisa, Anne, Ellie, Sonja, and Rachel, asking that your comfort and strength be with them. And we also pray for the staff and residents of Wensley House as they cope with a change of ownership and management.

Amen

This Week...

Monday 26 June

7.00pm Men's Forum (J Klooywyk)
7.30pm Weekly group (K. Peterson)

Tuesday 27 June

10.00am Fortnightly group (M. Silke)
10.00am Fortnightly women's group (B. Page)
7.30pm Fortnightly women's group (S. Frengley)

Wednesday 28 June

10.00am Wednesday Service
10.00am Tea and Talk
1.30pm Afternoon AAW

Thursday 29 June

12.00pm Weekly Study group (W. Wilkinson, J. Lines)
7.00pm Fortnightly group (J. Palmer)
7.30pm Fortnightly group (N. Pritchard)

Sunday 2 July

9.00am Holy Communion*
10.45am Praise on the Hill*

**Morning Tea between services in the Hall*

Coming up...

Saturday 15 July

Book Fair

*For more information about services or groups
contact the office Ph. 544 8844.*

St Albans' Appleby Services 10.30am

Sunday 9 July

Holy Communion

Sunday 23 July

Morning Prayer

If you wish to give financial support to Holy Trinity Church, our bank account number is:
03 0751 0146369 001 Westpac Richmond

Roster for 2 July - Thank you for serving us all!

Leader:	9.00am	J Sardella	10.45am	F Summerfield
Reader:	9.00am	A Heslop, V Matthews	10.45am	TBA
Sidespeople:	9.00am	B Page	10.45am	TBA
Welcomer:	9.00am	G Thomas	10.45am	TBA
Tea:		M Gibson, S Stephens		
Chalice:	9.00am	A Burrough, E Erskine	10.45am	S Stephens, C Ward
Flowers:		D Martin	Crèche:	M Brosnahan

Theme for Next Sunday: TBA

Readings for next Sunday: TBA

Parish Contacts

Vicar	Susan Gill	544 8827	Children's Ministry	Catherine Barak	022 6479810
Priest Assistant	Jean Palmer	544 4275	Friends 'n Fun	Carol Sardella	544 9237
Senior's Ministry	Yvonne Smyth	544 8844	Parish Administrator	David Cowdrey	544 8844
Youth Leader	Antonio Sardella	027 3525598			

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Office Hours

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday

10.00am - 5.30pm

Wednesday 10.00am - 1.00pm