**The naming and circumcision 2023- The best laid plans**

**Best laid plans**

In Jewish tradition circumcision and naming happen at the same time, on the eighth day.

So if baby Jesus were born last Sunday, by tomorrow- Monday he would be back in Jerusalem being circumcised and named (for Jesus- that name would be announced that had been given to him before he was born).

Today there is no mention of the wise guys who will be the focus of the gospel of Matthew next week.

Today in Luke we heard about the adoration of the Christ is by the lowly shepherds.

In some ways the difference between this week, and next, is the difference in focus between Matthew’s and Luke’s accounts.

We also see a very messy timeline. When were the holy family in Bethlehem? For how long? Who came to see them? The answer seems to shift a lot at this time of year, as we try to cram too much in to a tiny of window of celebration.

These are stories of adaptability of the Holy Family, adaptability of the authors of the Gospels to the audiences they were writing for, adaptability of the church as we try to find a path through, and the adaptability of the shepherds and wise guys who come to see the baby. Mary treasurers all the happenings in her heart as the local shepherds come (at the biding of an angel) to worship the Christ child. Who this week is given is name- Jesus.

Most elements of the Christmas and post-Christmas, including the epiphany next week show a lot of chopping and changing.

We know from our own lives that nothing makes God laugh so much as our best laid plans.

**The secret of the list**

I leant a secret about plans and holding them a bit more loosely a few years ago.

Who likes to make a list?

Over Christmas who here was making long lists of everything they had to do?

The list is meant to keep us on track and honest, but it can become a rod for our own backs.

I used to have 5 items in my electronic diary, and they write a list of about 20-40 things per day that needed to happen as well as those core appointments.

The list was designed to lessen my worry, as I knew if I stuck to the plan I would not be vulnerable to being caught out.

But in the end the mega lists were so prescriptive, it was impossible to have any flexibility in my day should I need to tweak my course.

After a couple of years of this I found the secret to the list problem.

Write down a list, not of what you intend to do, but of what you already did in the day.

See how much you have done in a day on reflection.

If you had been given that list at the start of the day it would have seemed unachievable.

But in the rear-view mirror it turns out you were more than up to a great multitude of challenges.

With that adaptability and rear-view achievement in mind and given that this the New Year time is when every channel seems to have a retrospective of the year, I thought I would congratulate you on all that you crammed into 2022.

When I tell you I think you will be shocked at your capacity to twist and turn with all that has unfolded. These are a few of your highlights from last year.

**The year that was**

* Just before the year got started… despite some very alarming messaging from the Diocese around COVID, our Christmas services were well attended. In the early months of 2022, the final touches were happening in our kitchenette- the splashback and details were being finalised.
* While construction had begun, international glass shortages were delaying some aspects of our windows. We were eager to know more.
* By March you had raised $818 through the community lottery for Anglicare.
* We thanked God for the ministry of Peter Fisher over his many years of service.
* We were gathering at the Lent study and having fun at the lawn bowls fund night out.
* We had a huge Lent program that was extremely well attended- especially the stations of the cross service which was a delight.
* We replaced the worn chapel chairs with newer ones from All Saints.
* By the time May came around the parish council discerned a move toward more outreach in the parish and became intentional about discovering what was needed, and what we could do.
* In June you ran the Ukraine Refugee Breakfast, that raise a huge $3,700 and involved the whole Brighton community.
* The Pew Crew who had been removing and vanishing the pews for some time, took a short break and then got back to it so we had fancy varnished pews to match our: new fancy floor, and kitchenette, and sanctuary floor, and narthex.
* By winter it also became clear the Murray diocese was seriously considering the issue of women’s ordination- which I did not ever expect to see.
* By July the parish was thrilled to welcome baby Emerson. We had a huge fundraiser through our apron sales to raise money for the meal, as well as raising $1,500 is win order profits.
* In August we gave thanks to God with the unveiling of our glorious new windows, as well as beginning the trial of the community meal.
* The Friday congregation voted to change their service time to support the meal ministry! We bought more heating for the winter months.
* Anglicare awarded us a grant of $6,700 for our meal project.
* By September we were cleaning out French Hall and preparing for the confirmations.
* Sarah Notridge won a *2022 Community Recognition Award* for all her amazing and selfless volunteer work.
* We combined with BUC for St Francis Day- this year back at our place post-renovations.
* We farewelled Sue and Greg Judd, and commissioned Greg to work on some stations of the cross for our use in 2023.
* The confirmations were a wonderful part of our patronal celebrations in October.
* St Jude’s representatives were elected to a swag of positions in the diocese at Synod 2022 and I was collected Archdeacon at the synod eucharist.
* Some of us went to sessions with the Archbishop of Canterbury in Adelaide.
* A parish family donated $10,000 for refreshing French Hall.
* In November we were delighted at the birth of Soren James Lante.
* The St Jude’s fair was back on the 1st Sat in Nov, and it was a lovely day and raised several thousand more than we had budgeted for. Reverend Sally was ordained Priest- the culmination of a long journey. We collected 11 boxes of toys and 113 hampers for Anglicare- our best ever. Since then you know we had a big Advent program that included a nativity, carols, a devotional journey, a Christmas Community Meal and thousands of dollars’ worth of donations.
* This was the best attended Christmas in my 6.5 years in the parish, seeing 350-400 in the 24 hours between Christmas Eve afternoon and Christmas Day lunch.

If I knew we had to do all that at the start of the year I might have taken long service leave. I would not have thought we could not do all that in 12 months along with a full program in a busy parish.

On the week of the naming and circumcision of Christ we think about the changes required of all involved in the Jesus story- even from the very start.

We have no idea how our plans will change in 2023- given what we remember of 2022- the only thing we know is- there will be change and lots on.

We keep our eyes fixed on the job we have. Give God gory. Gather together and draw strength from each other…. for lives of service.

Lives in which we can share the good news of the vast love of God and be open to adaptation.

TLBWY