

Anglican Parish of Warracknabeal

Warracknabeal, Areegra, Minyip, Hopetoun, Brim

Epiphany
02 January 2022

Happy New Year Everyone!

I hope that it will be a good year ahead for you - no matter what circumstances befall us - those within our control and especially those circumstances that life throws at us beyond our control - and they WILL come and challenge us and make us grow and rely on God in a new way, an old way or give us a new perspective on the Divine and the mortals that surround us.

The 'new year' really does offer us a fresh start, a chance to give 2022 a 'red-hot-go' with some renewed vigour? I hope so.

Amidst our grief/s - the daily disappointments, the loss of loved ones, the inability or risk of travelling, the world in chaos - there is much wisdom that has been passed on through the generations about casting a vision for yourself at this time of year ... resetting goals; re-evaluating what is important to you; and, where do we each need to grow to enhance our general wellbeing and emotional, spiritual and physical health. I am going to invite you to reflect on the following questions:

What have you learnt from 2021?

What will you be glad to leave behind?

What attitude or skill or virtue will you carry with you into 2022 - and how will you plan to develop it to enable your wellbeing in the year ahead?

What are 3 x goals you would like to achieve in 2022?

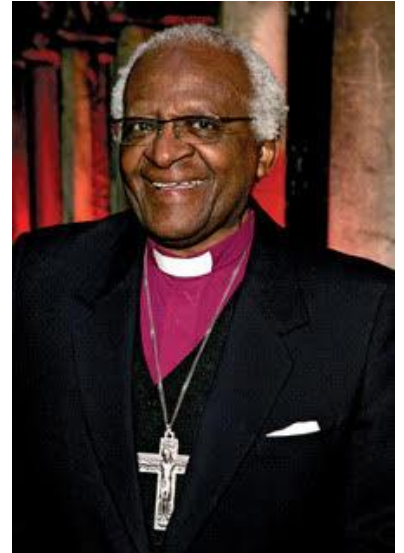
In what way would you like to be able to enhance the life of our faith community in the parish?

There are a bucket load of other questions you might like to ask for reflection over the next few weeks. And of course, if you want to have a chat - get in touch and we can arrange a time to explore extra tools and some answers that you feel will suit where you are at and how you would like to go about getting the most out of 2022.

In the last week, the world has lost an important ambassador for the oppressed and less fortunate in Archbishop Desmond Tutu. His tireless reminder to leaders around the world, that truth must never be swept under the carpet - and when

advocating for others 'the truth' can be liberating and has the power to completely transform people's lives.

Tutu's forthrightness and conviction - was not always a palatable message for us to hear. His leadership as chair on the 'Truth and Reconciliation Commission' in South Africa was an extra-ordinary process for trying to enable healing and a return to wholeness for a broken and fractured country.



"Forgiving and being reconciled to our enemies or our loved ones are not about pretending that things are other than they are. It is not about patting one another on the back and turning a blind eye to the wrong. True reconciliation exposes the awfulness, the abuse, the hurt, the truth. It could even sometimes make things worse. It is a risky undertaking but in the end it is worthwhile, because in the end only an honest confrontation with reality can bring real healing. Superficial reconciliation can bring only superficial healing." [Tutu]

Despite Tutu's skills and leadership - there still seems so much pain and need for reconciliation, redemption and regeneration in South Africa. But we don't have to get the binoculars out to see the harm of inequality in society. The month of January will bring with it our own country's struggle with black and white equality - and the discrepancies in health-care, land ownership, and simple respect (or the lack of it) I feel embarrassed about. Despite the effort of many ... we still have much to learn: speaking our own country's truth is difficult (and complicated) and I sense we have a long way to walk together with our respective cultures before genuine healing is possible.

"We are made for goodness. We are made for love. We are made for friendliness. We are made for togetherness. We are made for all of the beautiful things that you and I know. We are made to tell the world that there are no outsiders. All are welcome: black, white, red, yellow, rich, poor, educated, not educated, male, female, gay, straight, all, all, all.

We all belong to this family, this human family, God's family." [Tutu]

May the 'Season of Revelation (Epiphany)' enlighten your minds, hearts and homes as we seek God's Light, experience God's Life, and try to follow in the manner of God's Love. Happy New Year! Every blessing, Rev James



Prayer in the Parish

In the Parish & Beyond:

- +Garry;
- For all who are away from family;
- the people of Myanmar; South Africa;
- For our those who have inhabited our lands for thousands of years, their culture and recognition;
- For those in hospital;
- Max Young
- For those grieving loved ones;
- For those in pain – through isolation, dis-ease of any kind, or living with depression;

Community:

- For all small business in the region;
- For all those feeling hopeful; lonely;
- For safe travel and all on holidays;
-

Years Mind: Mona Payne, Ian Robertson, Sheila Potter, John Wood

Service Times Jan/Feb

Epiphany – 02 Jan 2022

10.30am – HC

Baptism of Our Lord – 09 Jan 2022

9.30am & 5.00pm Warracknabeal
11.00am Areegra

Epiphany 2 – 16 Jan 2022

9.30am & 5.00pm Warracknabeal

Epiphany 3 – 23 Jan 2022

9.30am & 5.00pm Warracknabeal

Epiphany 4 – 30 Jan 2022

10.30am Warracknabeal

Epiphany 5 – 06 Feb 2022

9.30am & 5.00pm Warracknabeal
6.00pm SHINE Youth Group

*“Do your little bit of good
where you are; it's those little
bits of good put together that
overwhelm the world.”*

Desmond Tutu



A Revelation of Heaven on Earth

The Centre for Action and Contemplation teacher Brian McLaren, illustrates how one of the Bible's most challenging books—Revelation—can be a source of wisdom and hope for us today:

There's a beautiful visionary scene at the end of the Book of Revelation that is as relevant today as it was in the first century. It doesn't picture us being evacuated from Earth to heaven as many assume. It pictures a New Jerusalem descending from heaven to Earth [see Revelation, chapter 21].

This new city doesn't need a temple because God's presence is felt everywhere. It doesn't need sun or moon because the light of Christ illuminates it from within. Its gates are never shut, and it welcomes people from around the world to receive the treasures it offers and bring the treasures they can offer. From the center of the city, from God's own throne, a river flows—a river of life or aliveness. Along its banks grows the Tree of Life. All of this, of course, evokes the original creation story and echoes God's own words in Revelation: "Behold! I'm making all things new!"

Rather than giving its original readers and hearers a coded blueprint of the future, Revelation gave them visionary insight into their present situation. It told them that the story of God's work in history has never been about escaping Earth and going up to heaven. It has always been about God descending to dwell among us. . . . God wasn't a distant, terrifying monster waiting for vengeance at the end of the universe. God was descending among us here and now, making the tree of true aliveness available for all. [1]

Earlier in the year, Richard shared the shocking hopefulness of the Bible's apocalyptic literature:

God puts us in a world of passing things where everything changes and nothing - the remains the same. The only thing that doesn't change is change itself. It's a hard lesson to learn. It helps us appreciate that everything is a gift. We didn't create it. We don't deserve it. It will not last, but while we breathe it in, we can enjoy it, and know that it is another moment of God, another moment of life. People who take this moment seriously take every moment seriously, and those are the people who are ready for heaven. [2]

Brian offers this final encouragement:

What was true for Revelation's original audience is true for us today. Whatever madman is in power, whatever chaos is breaking out, whatever danger threatens, the river of life is flowing now. The Tree of Life is bearing fruit now. True aliveness is available now. That's why Revelation ends with the sound of a single word echoing through the universe. That word is not *Wait!* Nor is it *Not Yet!* or *Someday!* It is a word of invitation, welcome, reception, hospitality, and possibility. It is a word not of ending, but of new beginning. That one word is *Come!* The Spirit says it to us. We echo it back. Together with the Spirit, we say it to everyone who is willing. *Come!* [3]

[1] Brian D. McLaren, *We Make the Road by Walking: A Year-Long Quest for Spiritual Formation, Reorientation, and Activation* (Jericho Books: 2015), 256-257.

[2] Adapted from Richard Rohr, "The End of Worlds," homily, November 15, 2015.

[3] McLaren, 257.