



The Abbey Church Epistle

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AUGUST 2015

August brings a special festival in our church year – the Festival of Peace. This is the day we pray especially for world peace, that people all over the world will come to realize that we are all one family, and distinctions of creed, race, colour, gender, and all the other illusions that separate and divide people, matter not at all.



God, our Heavenly Father, sees us all as his beloved children, and desires us to live in peace, harmony and love with one another. “Impossible!” I hear someone say, “There has always been war and strife in our 5,000 years of written history, and people won’t change”. But what if, for a moment, we could imagine a world where the strong helped the weak, the rich gave to the poor, and instead of the sounds of conflict and fear, all we could hear was the happy sounds of children all over the world playing and dancing.

Perhaps such a time can only come to this tired old earth of ours when the King of Peace comes once more to us, as He did so long ago as a humble child in a Bethlehem stable. To tell us again the age old truths about loving our neighbour, turning the other cheek, and doing good to all. But even the writings of the sacred scriptures have been taken and twisted by people with very different agendas, to serve a God not of love and peace, but a God of terror and hatred.

In these troubled times, when peace seems to be an utopian illusion, all who worship the God of Love, our Heavenly Father, made known to us in the life of Jesus, must hold firm to the truth revealed by Him – the truth of Love, where the boundaries we perceive as dividing and separating, are really the sacred space where we come together, reach out our hands, and ease another’s burden.

✝ Shalom! Fr George.

BEFORE YOU ACT,
LISTEN
BEFORE YOU REACT,
THINK
BEFORE YOU SPEND,
EARN
BEFORE YOU CRITICIZE,
WAIT
BEFORE YOU PRAY,
FORGIVE
BEFORE YOU QUIT,
TRY

AUGUST



- 2 Sunday Services
- 2 Peace Sunday
- 6 Benediction
- 9 Sunday Services
- 12 Women’s Morning of Prayer
- 15 Pot Luck Dinner & Trivia
- 16 Sunday Services
- 20 Benediction - **cancelled**
- 23 Sunday Services
- 24 The Abbey Church Guild AGM
- 30 Sunday Services

SEPTEMBER (Quick look ahead)

- 6 Father’s Day
- 12 FOTAM Floor Talk
- 13 Church BBQ
- 19 Picnic at Pemberley
- 20 All Souls Sunday
- 21 Museum School Holiday Program—Archaeology (M-F)
- 27 All Saints Sunday
- 28 Museum School Holiday Program—Archaeology (M-F)

HAPPY BIRTHDAY



We extend our well wishes to the congregation members who celebrate their birthday in **August!**

Sunday Services

- 9.30am Holy Communion
- 6.45pm Evensong
- 9.15am Sunday School (1st / 3rd Sun)

A special welcome to all those who are attending our church for the first time.

50 years of Service

Thank you to all those congregation members who shared our 50th Anniversary. The Service was one of thanksgiving for all God's abundant blessings to our Community over the past 50 years. Here's a bit of history you may enjoy!

The Community members arrived here 16 July, 1965 after having moved from Blackheath in the Blue Mountains. Moving into a small farmhouse without ceiling or wall linings, floor coverings, running water, electricity, phone or any other homely comforts was quite a shock for them all, particularly as it was Winter. It was a challenging time for everyone far away from the beauty of the Blue Mountains and its valleys that had been their back yard, to residing on 313 acres of overgrown scrub and thick bush with only forty pounds...

After arriving, the days and years following were filled with a pioneering spirit that equated to something of an endurance test. Removing trees, stumps and picking up roots and sticks became their daily work pattern until some land was eventually cleared to commence farming. God's providence and blessings were always acknowledged as each stage of their simple hardworking lifestyle unfolded.

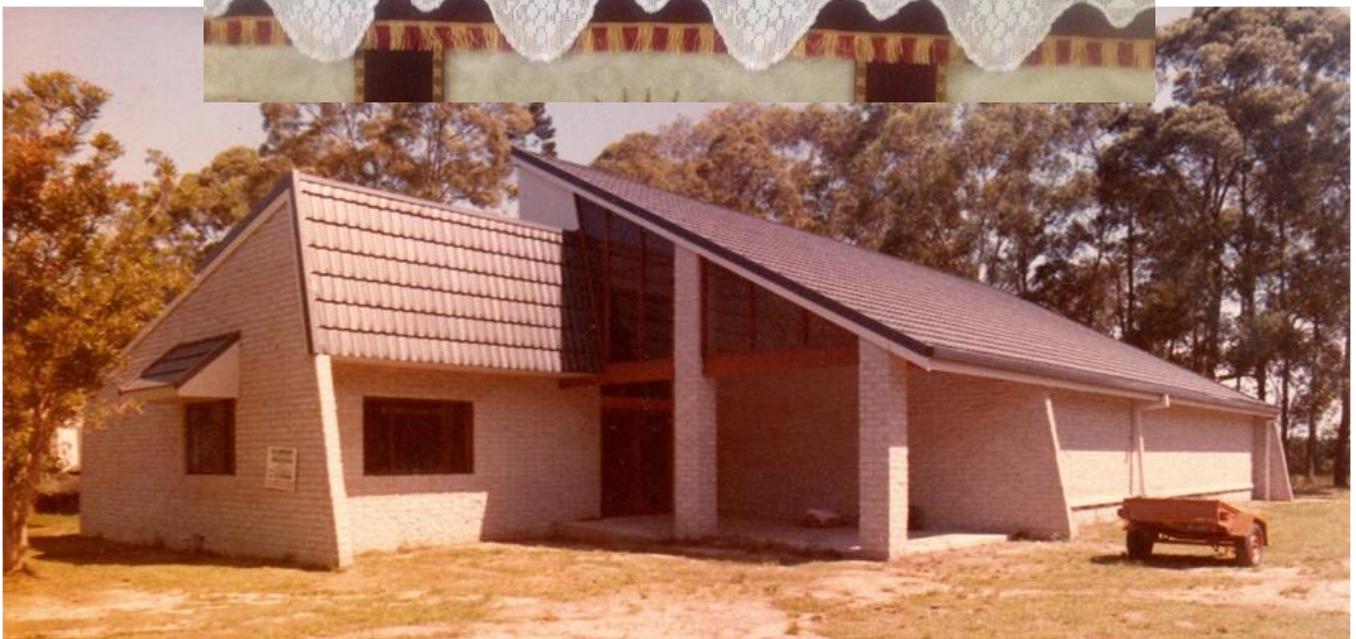
Seed beds for tomatoes were planted using grated kangaroo dung as fertilizer and with the help of the Tomato King in the area Con Iffinger. The harvesting of many successful tomato crops became their livelihood. Over a period of time we farmed pumpkins, zucchinis and sweet potatoes as well.

The move to Queensland occurred after our original leader died on 4th February, 1965 and Reverend Mother was elected as her successor. This property was purchased, but only after a strange series of circumstances involving letters to and from the Real Estate Agent being lost in the post. The property that was originally being negotiated for purchase was a farm at the base of Crook Neck, one of the Glasshouse Mountains.

The first building that was erected was the Church, built with timber from a demolished fish and chip shop. It was opened for public worship in 1967. A large building to accommodate increasing numbers of young men and women who joined the Confraternity of the Kingdom of Christ was completed in 1974. Father Francis and Reverend Mother became well-known figures in the local area and the Church became a very popular venue for Services, Baptisms, Funerals and Weddings.

In 1983 a small school was established in the now vacant farmhouse and eventually moved to its present campus in 1986. It was in the same year that the Abbey Museum was finally constructed and opened in June. The Community continued our agrarian lifestyle establishing a piggery, beef herd and poultry farm. Currently we run a commercial dairy of one hundred milking cows. The change in St. Michael's has been enormous over the past 50 years with the introduction of many educational programs reaching students far and wide through the Abbey Museum as well as the popular Medieval Festival and Tournament and St. Michael's College and Early Learning Centre.

One thing that has not changed is our dedication and commitment to do God's Work within the wider/local community through providing pastoral care and compassion to those in need. A life of servanthood and acceptance of others and a great faith in God, have been the basis of our Community over all the intervening years. Here are a few photos of the original Church buildings in 1967 and the Abbey Museum just after completion in 1986, and photos of the Church at the recent Sunday service.



THE ABBEY CHURCH GUILD

The Guild raises funds to further the ministry of your church. To keep this little ship sailing, the following information is provided for the month of June: Income \$ 161.40 Expenditure \$ 3102.00.

CHURCH NEWS

- **Weddings/Baptisms/Funerals** - For the month of July we've had 3 Baptisms, 3 Funerals and no Weddings.
- Our dear friend Gail Rutherford is away overseas on a cruise on the Rhine and Danube Rivers concluding at the Black Sea. We wish her a safe and happy time away.
- Is anyone interested in learning to sing some Gregorian Chanting? Tony is available in August to conduct a workshop in the Church for us. Anyone who would like to take this opportunity is asked to let Sr Veronica know so that we can set a date – probably on a Saturday afternoon or Wednesday evening 26 August.
- Have you noticed that the panels of restored stain glass have been returned to the Church and Porchway? We thank those congregation members who have donated money towards the Abbey Museum Conservation Project – a worthwhile contribution for our precious stained glass.
- **RIP Please remember** the following souls of family and friends loved by our congregation members – Gerry Blankenspoor (3/2005), Bill Robertson (4/2004), Sr Monica (4/2002), Kurt Leitner (8/1996), Alida Ruijgrok (9/2013), Sharon Bliss (10/2014), John Duke (12/1975), and Elsie Hubble (28/2008), Graham Cobb (30/1998).
- **Prayers** for Sister Helena, Lindy Whitchurch, Patrick Goos, David Payne, Leni Ruygrok, Glad Cavanagh.
- As you know Sr Helena is residing locally in Sunnymede Nursing home. Our thanks to those congregation members who have visited Sr Helena and brought a little sunshine and love to her life. This month we celebrate St Helena's day on 18th August. In next month's newsletter we will write about her life and the story/legend of her discovering the True Cross.
- **A huge THANK YOU** to all those in our congregation who worked so tirelessly at the two Banquets and Medieval Festival. Your help, support and commitment has not gone unnoticed. May God bless you for your time and effort.
- The painting of the Divine Mother has been restored and is back in its position in the Church. It looks beautiful!



“Wind-powered wings for transportation, solar-powered halos for light...why aren't they using this technology back on Earth?”

Eskimo proverb “Yesterday is ashes: tomorrow wood. Only today does the fire burn brightly.”

We are here, right now, in the middle of today. We have many wonderful memories of the past, and we have hopes for what will happen in the future. But it's today we are living.

I will not let today slip by without living it as fully as I can.