

April May 2017

MEDIATOR

**EBENEZER - PITT TOWN CONGREGATION
HAWKESBURY ZONE**

UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA



**Hawkesbury Zone Ministers
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WORSHIP SERVICES

Ebenezer **8.30 am**
Pitt Town **10.00 am**



DATES

- | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|---|
| Sunday | 9 Apr | Palm Sunday Special
8.30am at Ebenezer |
| Tuesday | 11 April | Fellowship
10.00am at Ebenezer |
| Tuesday | 11 April | Lenten Studies at Pitt Town
12.30pm. |
| Thursday | 13 Apr | Maundy Thursday
6.00pm Scots Church Pitt Town |
| Friday | 14 Apr | Good Friday
8.30am Ebenezer and 7.00pm Pitt Town |
| Sunday | 16 April | Easter Sunday
8.30am Ebenezer & 10.00am Pitt Town |
| Sunday | 30 Apr | Ebenezer Sunday School
9.45am to 11.00am |
| Sunday | 7 May | Ebenezer Sunday School
9.45am to 11.00am |
| Sunday | 7 May | Grono Family Reunion
Ebenezer Church pavilion and grounds |
| Tuesday | 16 May | Fellowship
10.00am at Ebenezer |
| Saturday | 20 May | Heritage Day at Ebenezer Church |
| Sunday | 21 May | Ebenezer Sunday School
9.45am to 11.00am |



- FROM THE MINISTER –

Rev. Rodel Palma

Are You Willing to Be a Donkey?

Matthew 21:1-11

I want to reflect on the Palm Sunday based on the gospel of Matthew 21:1-11

Jesus specifically instructs two disciples to appropriate for him a very particular mount, a young donkey colt. Matthew's text even carefully notes the colt's mother, a donkey, and includes her in the procession.

Matthew wants readers to be perfectly aware of the incongruity between the crowd's shouts, the royal processional, and the humble, simple creature of burden upon which Jesus rode.

I did some research about the donkey in Australia.

From Value to Vermin: a history of the donkey in Australia, by Jill Bough History, University of Newcastle, Ourimbah Campus, New South Wales, 2258

Jill.Bough@newcastle.edu.au

<http://publications.rzsns.w.edu.au/doi/pdf/10.7882/AZ.2006.013?code=rzsw-site>

In Jill Bough's article about donkeys, she said "in the annals of Australian exploration and colonization, we hear much of the heroism of the horse, the dogged determination of the camel. Nobody ever proposes a vote of thanks to the modest little moke (donkey)". She also observed that "nobody ever thinks of the donkey as a good Australian". Why was this so? Certainly, it would appear that they were not worthy of more than a cursory mention, at most, in the written histories of Australia.

Was this scant mention evidence that donkeys did not have a significant role to play in colonial Australia? Having read several articles in donkey society magazines by "donkey enthusiasts" wishing to rectify this silence about donkeys, Jill's purpose here, therefore, is to begin to uncover the history of donkeys in Australia and to reveal the roles they played in the settlement and economy of the country. She also considers the valuable role played by donkeys in both WW1 and WW2, and investigates the changing relationships between donkeys and humans during the second part of the twentieth century that resulted in the latter eventually being classed as vermin.

The name derives from the Latin Compton has observed that "The donkey has been not only one of the most abused animals in history". She argues that the history of the donkey is an important part of the complex story of human and animal relationships in Australia.

Throughout the nineteenth century, donkeys were imported into Australia as their qualities, both physiological and in terms of their temperament, became valued more widely. They were brought here because of their adaptability and ability to stand the heat and to work in harsh conditions. Donkeys can withstand a large amount of body evaporation and are versatile foragers. They are hardy, surefooted and cope well with rough tracks, extremes of weather and scant water supplies.

Ernestine Hill noted that the donkey "is the most enduring of all beasts of burden, camel included". Donkeys have a straighter shoulder angle and a hoof more vertical than a horse, their feet are stronger and more pliable and they are able to place their feet with more precision. They have greater strength in their hind quarters than a horse and are the quickest walkers of all draught animals. Many of the donkey drivers believed their donkeys were superior to horses or bullocks. This was not simply because of their obvious physiological attributes, which suited them to the remote areas so well, but also because they were faster than bullocks and had a great deal more staying power than the horse.

According to some commentators, donkeys will never give up and will go on pulling until the load is moved, even when the wagon is stuck up to its axles in the sand or mud (Barker 1964; Walker 1973; Wellard 1986).

Donkeys have been of great value and service to humankind throughout history, no more so than in times of war. They have served in both the First and the Second World Wars in vast numbers. (1930-1945)

The donkey is clearly Jesus' own choice of mount for his entrance into Jerusalem. Riding on that humble animal, Jesus both inhabited the words of Zechariah's prophecy and illustrated the dual nature of his messianic identity.

He was King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

But he was also servant of servants, a work horse, helper of helpers.

While he was ushered into Jerusalem with a royal procession, he rode on the steed of the simplest peasant. The back of a donkey doesn't put one up above the heads of others. In fact, sitting on the short-legged animals put the rider pretty much at face-to-face level with a standing crowd. Jesus couldn't impressively ride through a crowd mounted on a donkey. Jesus wants to be on the level of ordinary people. He could only ride in the midst of the crowd, being as much a part of the crush as were all the others.

Church tradition tells us (though none of the gospels report it) that this wasn't Jesus' first donkey ride. Matthew's text doesn't detail how Joseph travelled with Mary to Egypt and back to Nazareth again. Nor does Luke's gospel describe how Mary and Joseph journeyed to Bethlehem. But all of us have in our heads the picture of a pregnant Mary perched on the back of a sturdy donkey. Our mind's eye puts her back on that animal for the escape to Egypt and the homeward trek to Nazareth after Herod had died.

Yet if the mission of the church is to carry Christ into the world, then each of us is called to be a donkey. There's no particular glory in being a donkey. There's only long trails, steep roads, heavy loads, and little or no recognition for a completed job.

But look at what we're carrying. The King of Kings. The Prince of Peace. The Lion of the Tribe of Judah, and the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

You and I are called to be a donkey. Donkeys are known for strong backs and sure feet. Donkeys carry a lot of burdens, and they carry their loads along pathways that are too dangerous for others to walk.

Of course, donkeys are known for one other characteristic: they can be stubborn, obstinate, stiff-necked. From the days of the Hebrews in the wilderness, God's people themselves have often been identified as stiff-necked (Exodus 32:9; 34:9). Perhaps this same stiff-necked quality added to Jesus' choice of the donkey - a stubborn little steed with a mind of its own, even though it would work hard and long. Sound familiar?

So I end my reflection with a question: Will you be a donkey?

Will you carry Christ? Wherever he goes? However, he goes.

Will you walk cliffs? Will you not be afraid of the edges and the extremes? Will you be cliff-walkers who journey the edges between this world and the next, between hate and love, between war and peace?

Will you be humble enough to be a beast of burden? To carry the burdens of others? To carry your cross?

Ever wonder why the donkey is the only animal in the Bible that speaks? Numbers 22:21-39

Karl Bart at his 80th birthday party offered this testimony: "In the Bible there's talk of a donkey, or to be quite correct, an ass. It was allowed to carry Jesus to Jerusalem. If I have achieved anything in this life, then I did so as a relative of the ass who at that time was going his way carrying an important burden. The disciples had said to its owner: 'The Master has need of it.' And so it seems to have pleased God to have used me at this time. Apparently I was permitted to be the ass which was allowed to carry as best I could a better theology a little piece".

(as quoted by John Robert McFarland's Preacher's Workshop called "The Illustration is the Point," The Christian Ministry, January-February, 1988, 21).

Will you be a donkey this Palm Sunday?

Carry Christ to enter into the realm of death and resurrection.

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EASTER SERVICES

Scots Church Pitt Town

Maundy Thursday 6.00pm, 13th April – Shared meal, Tenebrae, Communion

Good Friday 7.00pm, 14th April

Easter Day Worship – 10.00am, 16th April .

Ebenezer Church

Good Friday 8.30am, 14th April

Easter Day Worship 8:30 am, 16th April

CHURCH COUNCIL REPORT - Meeting held 4th April 2017

- The balances of accounts were presented by treasurer Rebecca Andrews. They included ...

Ebenezer Pitt Town Parish	\$12,413.46	Ebenezer Church Maintenance	11,967.22
Ebenezer Church	14,729.97	Ebenezer Church Cemetery	41,743.54

- Payments confirmed included:

Parish Account	\$	Church Shop Account	\$
Stipend & Supply Ministry – Feb	6,260	Transfer to Parish – Feb 2017	2,500
Stipend & Supply - March	6,260	Transfer to Parish – Mar 2017	2,500
G&W Bathrooms	17,594	Donation – Cottage Bathroom	17,594
Electricity rewiring – PT 2nd Hall	1,606	Cemetery Trust Account	
Mitronics - Photocopier	7,933	Donation to parish - Photocopier	7,933

- Shop Helpers' Lunch** – unfortunately the 23rd March lunch had to be postponed. Lunches are planned for 13th July and 7th December.
- Rodel Palma and Geoff Stevenson** have been having conversations with Bethany South from the Presbyterian Pastoral Relations Committee regarding providing a quiet space with reflective music, medication ... once a week in Ebenezer Church and on occasions when large numbers are expected on site.
- An Ebenezer **Autumn newsletter** has been delivered to homes in Ebenezer and Sackville North and a Pitt Town newsletter to its community.
- Manager of the **Ebenezer Church Facebook** site Jennifer Turnbull presented a summary of the responses to her postings which are brief and often include a single photo. The number of responses is encouraging.
- Rev. Sharon Cutts** has been appointed to assist at Pitt Town and Riverstone Uniting in developing community connections. A meeting with Sharon Cutts is to take place soon.
- Property – Pitt Town:** Electrical wiring has been replaced in the second hall.
- Cottage bathroom** is complete except for painting which has been commenced.
- Colour photocopier:** The copier has now been installed. We thank the Cemetery Trust for meeting this expense.
- To date **14 weddings** have been booked for 2017.



With changes taking place to the society in which we live we do not know what the church will look like in future years. Under our Hawkesbury Zone arrangement it is part of our Zone leaders' responsibility to bring forth ideas and also to engage us with people outside of our congregation and zone who, from the outside looking in, can see what we do, our strengths, ... and suggest ways we can build upon them. We may not agree with them all but let's keep an open mind, discuss them and see if we can make some of them work.

We do know that many people find Ebenezer Church and grounds to be a peaceful place and this has recently been the focus of discussion of Rodel and Geoff with Bethany South. Their ideas are below. Ted

Promoting Ebenezer as a place of Peace and Pilgrimage

Conversations with Bethany South of Wentworthville Uniting Church, Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee and a trained spiritual director

The purpose of any proposal is to promote Ebenezer as a place of peace and pilgrimage by:

- Making the historical and spiritual significance of Ebenezer more widely known, both within and outside the church
- Encouraging people who visit to stay longer
- Encouraging people who visit to return again.

Things we've talked about already:

- **Labyrinth** – creating a labyrinth from natural materials (stone/rock/timber - sourced locally?) It is a spiritual tool that is accessible to people of all faiths and none, individuals and groups. World Labyrinth Day is in May so it is quite topical at present.
- Promoting Ebenezer within the PNP (Presbytery), and to organisations like Eremos, as a venue for **Day Retreats** for groups.
- Promoting Ebenezer within the PNP, and elsewhere, as a place for **personal Time Out** [DIY day retreat]
- **Providing music**, and/or an introduction to meditation, in the church weekly and on occasions when large numbers of visitors are expected on site eg Spring Market Day, group lunch bookings

Some new ideas:

- Making a focal point of the **large rock garden** and naming it The Garden of Paradise/Gethsemane/Resurrection. Include some wood carved signs as such. This could be a focal point and theme for Retreats.
- **Creating an outdoor chapel** – Donna mentioned that there had been one outdoor wedding at Ebenezer.
- **Commissioning/exhibiting sculptures** in the grounds – an outdoor Stations of the Cross type exhibition or permanent sculpture

**Report of the Parramatta-Nepean Presbytery (PNP)
Meeting at Blacktown Uniting Church
on Sat., 11th February, 2017 at 9:30am**

Opened with worship and the commissioning of interim Chairperson, Rev. Geoff Stevenson, and interim Presbytery Minister, Susan Phalen.

The minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed and Geoff prayed for the leaders of our Zones. **What's Happening in Mission Zones and Congregations** was discussed.

Geoff and Susan spoke about **Disaster Recovery Chaplaincy**. "When things go wrong, who cares for the carer?" We know what we do in a flood/bushfire but what happens when a crisis hits our congregation? When crises happen our ministers are called upon to act for the community but they, themselves, are part of the community, and so need some help. This is when a Peer Support Team comes in. The numbers on Synod are low, so need some more people to be trained for this fine work. Philippians 4:13-14 --- ***"I can do all this through Him who gives me strength. Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles."***

Future Structure of Presbytery to Re-Invigorate Vision 2055: Interim report to PNP – To develop a vibrant Christ-centred UC in PNP in all its diversity. Missional Transformation – there is a need for cultural change. A costed proposal will be presented to the May meeting. At the meeting the position proposals will be in place. Consideration that congregations may need to increase their levies to PNP. More people are needed for these positions. The South West Sector is coming ahead.

Uniting: An information session on Foster Care was presented by Bernadette Ahern. In Burnside there are 18 000 children in out-of-home care (includes grandparents). Children come into Foster Care because they are at risk (mental health issues, parental illness/disability, child disability). Foster Care provide a place of safety, stability, security; meeting children's needs (physical and mental). Foster Carers need to have a good, stable home-life and meet the daily needs and nurturing of the child. Carers need patience, understanding and empathy. There are challenges and changing dynamics by bringing a foster child into the home.

Church Engagement presented by Jorge Rebolledo. Christ invites us to serve Humanity. We are there to build a bridge between the Corporate Role and the Uniting Church.

LifeLine Macarthur Update – in NSW there are 15 centres (9 belong to the UC; 2 in PNP); How should Lifeline fit into the PNP (to be discussed at the May meeting)? Lifeline Macarthur answers 3000 calls per month (largest call centre in NSW).

John Cutts' position was affirmed in his role in PNP. **Lay Presidency at the Sacraments** for 2017 were confirmed.

Next Meeting: Sat., 20th May, 2017 at 9:30am (Quaker's Hill UC)

Jennifer Turnbull

Presbytery Representative jenniferturnbull@ebenezerchurch.org.au

A message from Geoff Stevenson re Fairtrade tea, coffee and chocolate



Hi All,

At our various Lenten Discussions we have talked about Fairtrade tea, coffee and chocolate. Jill Clarke from Windsor sent me the email below that speaks specifically about chocolate at Easter and recommends stores who supply ethical chocolate brands with certification from either Fairtrade, Rainforest Alliance or UTZ. Can I commend these products and companies for any Easter Chocolate purchases.

Also the researchers at Windsor have suggested that Tradewinds can provide supplies of Fairtrade tea and coffee (beans and instant) products for churches to use and to provide for members to buy for their own use. These products are ethical and look after the producers, the environment and the local villages.

Our discussions around the themes of the Beatitudes have called us to live justly/righteously and this is one easy way to do it. Can I encourage all our churches to take up Fairtrade or UTZ or Rainforest Alliance products for use in our churches. It will make a huge difference to many people's lives.

Grace and Peace, Geoff

And a later message

Today, **Kmart** and **Target** joined **Aldi**, **Coles**, **Haigh's**, **Woolworths** and **Big W** with the release of their Sustainable Cocoa Policy. In their policy they acknowledge that the chocolate industry faces 'significant sustainable development challenges, including extreme poverty and widely-reported incidences of child labour and human trafficking.'

A huge thank you to the activists who have been part of the campaign asking supermarkets and department stores to release 2020 targets.

A huge thank you to these stores in joining the movement to end human trafficking. We have needed to print more thank you cards, so why not order some to take shopping and give to store staff and managers.





2017 Heritage Festival Event:

**Australia's oldest church,
Ebenezer Church**

Sat 20th May 2017

11am to 2.30pm

This event includes a talk on the church history, a two-course lunch and walk-and-talks in the colonial graveyard, to the historic tree, riverside beach and quarry.

Cost: \$30 adults, \$15 children.

Bookings essential. 02 4579 9235. tedbrill@bigpond.com

Advertised nationally through the Australian Heritage Festival website, in 2016 the 60 places for this event were filled one month prior to the day. In addition to sharing our history and heritage property, the event will be a good fund raiser. Please keep the date in mind as much help will be needed.

**Ebenezer Uniting Church
Sunday School**



On the first, third and fifth Sundays of each month
but not during school holidays
From 9:45am until 11am in the pavilion of the church

Term 2: 30th April, 7th & 21st May, 4th & 18th June

Contact Jennifer Turnbull - 0419 270 710 - for more details

BAPTISMS

Ebenezer

16th March	Sophia Ellis Blewitt
23rd March	Jack Thomas Lane
2nd April	Owen Basil Hodges



EBENEZER STEWARDS



Apr	9	Coral Taylor
	16	Sue Brill
	23	Joan Batchelor
	30	Dawn Case
May	7	Coral Taylor
	14	Sue Brill
	21	Joan Batchelor
	28	Dawn Case
Jun	4	Coral



- ❖ *A visiting group from Leura commented on the quality of our homemade scones. On that occasion they had been made by Joan Batchelor. The visitors were not Leura Probus, not Leura Uniting Church , ... they were ... Leura CWA. Now that's a compliment!*
- ❖ *One Saturday earlier this year shop helper Margaret Hartas answered the shop phone. The caller was making an inquiry regarding a proposed visit by the Ku-ring-gai Historical Society. "My name is Peter Falconer, but you wouldn't know me," he said. "I should know you. I was a bridesmaid at your wedding!" replied Margaret. The wedding was held in 1961.*

READERS

Apr	9	Jennifer Turnbull	Ken Moore
	14	Ted Brill	Louise Ommundson
	16	Ted Brill	Rebecca Andrews
	23		Pam Powe
	30	Jennifer Turnbull	Kevin Offord
May	7	Ted Brill	Ken Moore
	14	Jennifer Turnbull	Louise Ommundson
	21	Ted Brill	Pam Powe
	28	Jennifer Turnbull	Rebecca Andrews
Jun	4	Robyn Peek	Kevin Offord

LECTIONARY



<i>Date</i>	<i>1st Reading</i>	<i>Psalm</i>	<i>2nd Reading</i>	<i>Gospel</i>
<i>April</i> 9	<u>Isaiah 50:</u> <u>4-9 a</u>	<u>Psalm 31:</u> <u>9-16</u>	<u>Philippians 2:</u> <u>5-11</u>	<u>Matthew</u> <u>26:14 - 27:66</u> <u>or Matthew</u> <u>27: 11-54</u>
14 <i>Good</i> <i>Friday</i>	<u>Isaiah 52:13</u> <u>- 53:12</u>	<u>Psalm 22</u>	<u>Hebrews 10:</u> <u>16-25</u> or <u>Hebrews 4:</u> <u>14-16; 5: 5-9</u>	<u>John 18:</u> <u>1 - 19:42</u>
16 <i>Easter</i> <i>Sunday</i>	<u>Acts 10: 34-</u> <u>43</u> <u>or Jeremiah</u> <u>31:1-6</u>	<u>Psalm 118:</u> <u>1-2, 14-24</u>	<u>Colossians 3:</u> <u>1-4</u> <u>or Acts 10: 34-</u> <u>43</u>	<u>John 20:1-18</u> <u>or Matthew</u> <u>28: 1-10</u>
23	<u>Acts 2: 14a,</u> <u>22-32</u>	<u>Psalm 16</u>	<u>1 Peter 1: 3-9</u>	<u>John 20: 19-31</u>
30	<u>Acts 2: 14a,</u> <u>36-41</u>	<u>Psalm 116:</u> <u>1-4, 12-19</u>	<u>1 Peter 1: 17-</u> <u>23</u>	<u>Luke 24: 13-35</u>
May 7	<u>Acts 2: 42-47</u>	<u>Psalm 23</u>	<u>1 Peter 2: 19-</u> <u>25</u>	<u>John 10: 1-10</u>
14	<u>Acts 7: 55-60</u>	<u>Psalm 31:</u> <u>1-5, 15-16</u>	<u>1 Peter 2: 2-10</u>	<u>John 14: 1-14</u>
21	<u>Acts 17: 22-</u> <u>31</u>	<u>Psalm 66:</u> <u>8-20</u>	<u>1 Peter 3: 13-</u> <u>22</u>	<u>John 14: 15-21</u>
28	<u>Acts 1: 6-14</u>	<u>Psalm 68:</u> <u>1-10, 32-35</u>	<u>1 Peter 4: 12-</u> <u>14; 5: 6-11</u>	<u>1 Peter 4: 12-</u> <u>14; 5: 6-11</u>