



## St Paul's Church, Rondebosch

Parish Newsletter

# CARITAS

**CHRISTMAS 2018**

**... and it will soon be 2019.**

**JOY** - there are angels working among us, real angels. Yes – we see their work, their influence, their strength.

There was a PARTY - WHAT A PARTY!!! And instead of inviting all our old friends and relations, “they” went out into the streets and invited all those pathetic tragic people, damaged, drugged, and all very poor – the vagrants – to a PARTY!!

WHERE WERE THE ANGELS? Angels were with U-TURN people, who did the inviting of 200 street vagrants whom they could identify as regulars and with the workers of the GSCID (Community Improvement people) who also know who is who among the street folk. There were angels among the Police at the police station who got the space ready with balloons and gazebos, music and decorations. The police were there for the party, helping everyone – most of them not in uniform, not frightening people. There were angels who arranged for St Michael's church (R Catholic) to pay for the breyani! I think a special angel was assigned to Lesley who always does the planning, the presents, the packing many weeks in advance.

On that day, St Paul's church folk, the GREAT TEAM, came to work early in the morning – Lesley, Arlene, Mary, Joan, Peter, Rev Reeva and Tyara! It is a lot of work to prepare for so many people and the angels had to work hard to help them, flapping their feathery wings all around the kitchen, supporting them as they carried everything across to the Police Station.

More people came than had been expected. They streamed up through the church grounds to the Police station, bearing their old bags and there just wasn't room for them all! Even some with invitations had to be refused entrance because it was too full. Late-comers at the gates shouted to come in but unfortunately the party could not be stretched any further. What a great morning!

The party began with a fanfare of angels – Gaye and her friend Liz, who are true experts in all things dramatic, inspired their guests, some of them down-and-out toughies, to sing carols. Where intonation failed, enthusiasm abounded. No books were needed because everyone seemed to know most of the words, but there was singing – not exactly in the tones of Westminster Abbey but with a gruff and gusty joy. The angels then inspired a Nativity Play, Gaye and Liz producing shepherd cloaks and other costumes from their wings, drawing the people out to play their parts – Mary and Joseph, shepherds and wise men. It was fun and everyone loved it.

Then Rev Reeva said a lovely grace before the feast. Although the catering had only planned for 170, the angels managed, somehow, to feed over 200 people with delicious breyani, cupcakes (we know the angel who bakes those), cool drinks, sweets and fruit. Every child was given a ball or a soft toy and there were about 60 children.

It was all over before midday. Thank you for all your support and, if you are young, which is about 10 - 60 years old, the angels are whispering in your ear

“join us as a helper next year”

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The stable where the Holy Family were taking refuge for the night had but a small fire which was on the verge of going out. A robin – one of the many small creatures who had come to rejoice at the advent of the Messiah – seeing how cold the infant was, placed himself in front of the weak fire and fanned the flames with his wings. In doing so he burnt his breast which for evermore would be red as a sign of gratitude.

(Kate Atkinson)

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More Christmas presents

## and more angels

### **THANK YOU to**

people in the congregation who have given money to help others who are finding life hard. A pension does not go far these days. There are some people in our parish who, by the time they have paid their rent, have almost nothing left for food. All of them have stories to tell, stories that can break your heart. Lesley Munro is, once again, the main organiser of monthly food parcels for 16 people in this situation. The parcels are mostly given out at Welverdiend where policy has changed and rents have risen.

For Christmas, special gifts are arranged and another half dozen packs were made for other desperate people. This year Gaye Morris has been helping, and she was able to add some vegetables because she went to the market. The usual pack contains, as you probably know, sugar, rice, tea, noodles, a few tins of fish or vegetable, soup powder, toilet paper. For Christmas there are a few extras and a new carrier bag.

Every month Rev Reeva goes to Welverdiend to celebrate the Holy Eucharist and before the service the parcels are handed out. During the past year this has become a wonderful event each month with many people coming to the service, talking to friends, being comforted by the interest shown. Being poor is also being lonely! There is one old lady of 90 who bakes bread and gives it out as presents. It is a privilege to bring such people a bit of comfort.

It is important for all of us in the parish to remember “the poor” who are, surprisingly, so close by to where we live. They are not obvious, like vagrants. The angels are needed here too. Many of us in the congregation are very good about helping this cause – they give money, they bring tins on bring-a-tin-Sunday – so this is to tell you how much your gifts are appreciated.

It is important too to realise that Revd Reeva has opened another area of care in our parish, giving a service which is greatly appreciated.

### **Thank you**

**to all of you who give, sometimes very regularly, for the “needs of others”.  
It is a vital part of the church ministry and greatly appreciated.**

**Pray for families, for God Himself to be central to our homes.**

The relaxation of customs in recent years has led to huge social changes, and a young two-parent family with mother at home is not normal - the strain on parents and children is huge. It is not uncommon for even a schoolchild to consider committing suicide. Worse still, among the poor, the strain of overwork, of weariness, of miserable township living and often dangerous travelling to and from work, brings a disenchantment with living. If you are poor you both have to work to put bread on the table and be able to afford the cost of schooling and this is what our world is like these days. Each family needs its own "manger scene".

The mysterious and wonderful birth in Bethlehem is repeated when Christ is born into the humble stable of the human heart, the in-dwelling of Christ in each of us. We cannot understand the whole of such a miracle, but we can worship Him and incorporate Him into our homes and families – and that is what we pray for.

May GOD BE WITH US – and in us, part of us. What we ingest – or eat - we become. That is the Holy Sacrament, the outward sign of an inward spiritual grace. He is our life. We become part of His Body.

**'Twas Christ the word that spake it  
The same took bread and break it  
And as the Word did make it  
So I believe and take it.'**

(supposedly composed by Elizabeth I while under house arrest in the 1550s. Bodleian Library)

There will be one service on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> December  
at 9 a.m.

because many people will be on holiday.

*A special word of thanks goes to the Stewards and Readers who serve  
so reliably each Sunday. May God bless you all at Christmas.*

**THANK YOU.**

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Contributions received with thanks at the A/C St Paul's, Standard Bank, Rondebosch, 71488928