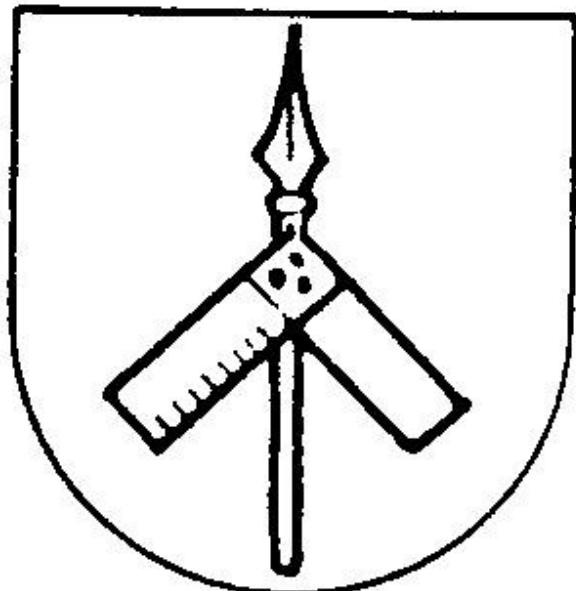


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# ***The Messenger***

**Parish of St Thomas, Tāmaki  
Summer Edition 2024**



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## The Seasons of the church year

Noel Cox

The rhythm of the Church year is an essential aspect of Anglican spirituality, offering a rich tapestry of seasons that guide us through the life of Christ and the history of salvation. These seasons – Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, and Pentecost – are more than just dates on a calendar; they are opportunities for spiritual growth and reflection, each with its own distinct character and focus.

### Advent: A Season of Waiting and Hope

Advent marks the beginning of the Church year, a season of waiting and expectation. It is a time when we prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ, both in the celebration of His birth at Christmas and in anticipation of His second coming. The themes of hope, peace, joy, and love, symbolised by the four Advent candles, remind us to reflect on the darkness in our world and our need for the light of Christ.

9am Eucharist for Second Sunday in Advent ("Hope")

Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> December 2024

9am Eucharist for Third Sunday in Advent ("Joy"), Gaudete Sunday

Friday 20<sup>th</sup> December, 2024

7:00pm Nine Lessons and Carols

Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> December, 2024

9am Eucharist for Fourth Sunday in Advent ("Love")

Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> December, 2024

11:30pm Christmas Eve, Midnight Eucharist

Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> December, 2024

9:00am Christmas Day, Eucharist

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seems to consume you take hold of the peace that is yours in Jesus and be happy.

## A new parishioner

Noel Cox



After two months of parental leave, I'm delighted to share some wonderful news with our parish family. On the 30th of September, a new blessing arrived in the form of Christopher Cox, who I am thrilled to introduce as the newest member of our parish community. Christopher is already bringing joy to his family and will soon brighten our congregation, joining us regularly, of course, as his feeding

schedule permits! A heartfelt thank you goes out to all who have already extended their warm wishes and prayers for Christopher and his family.

Let us continue to welcome him with open arms and keep his journey in our hearts. We look forward to seeing him grow in faith and love within our parish.

## Advent and Christmas Services

Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2024  
9am Eucharist for First Sunday in Advent ("Peace")

Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2024

## Christmas: The Celebration of Christ's Birth

Christmas is a season of joy and celebration, commemorating the birth of Jesus Christ, the Light of the World. It is a time to rejoice in the miracle of the Incarnation – God becoming man to dwell among us. This season invites us to reflect on the humility of Christ's birth and the profound love of God, who sent His Son to save us.

## Epiphany: The Revelation of Christ to the World

Epiphany follows Christmas, a season that celebrates the revelation of Christ to the Gentiles, represented by the visit of the Magi. It reminds us of the universal nature of Christ's mission and the call to spread the Good News to all people. This season challenges us to recognise Christ's presence in the world and in our lives.

## Lent: A Season of Penitence and Reflection

Lent is a solemn season of 40 days, reflecting Jesus' time in the wilderness. It is a period of penitence, fasting, and prayer, where we are called to examine our lives, repent for our sins, and draw closer to God. Lent encourages us to confront the reality of our human frailty and our need for God's grace.

## Easter: The Celebration of Resurrection and New Life

Easter is the most joyful season of the Church year, celebrating the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. It is a time of great rejoicing, as we proclaim the victory of life over death and the promise of eternal life. Easter invites

us to live in the power of the resurrection, experiencing the new life that Christ offers to all who believe in Him.

### Pentecost: The Season of the Holy Spirit and the Church

Pentecost, celebrated 50 days after Easter, marks the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles, empowering them to preach the Gospel. It is considered the birthday of the Church and reminds us of our calling to be Christ's witnesses in the world. The season after Pentecost, often referred to as Ordinary Time, is a time of growth and mission, as we live out the teachings of Christ in our daily lives.



The Church year is a gift, guiding us through the story of our faith and helping us to grow spiritually. Each season invites us into a deeper relationship with God, offering unique opportunities for

reflection, celebration, and transformation. As we journey through the Church year, let us embrace these seasons, allowing them to shape our lives and deepen our faith in Christ.

## The Glastonbury Thorn

Noel Cox

The tradition of the Glastonbury Thorn originates from a 13th-century legend. According to this tale, Joseph of

God had created for us. You can do it again. Yes, why not sit down and recapture the beauty of the Sunset or climb to the top of a hill and take in the view. This is the sure way to be happy and discover the more amazing creations.

It is true we all experience feelings of sadness fear anger and anxiety. Some people bottle up their feelings inside and when it escalates trouble begins to brew. Pent-up anger can result in a corrosive feeling of annoyance and irritation towards other people. There are various ways and means of keeping us lively happy and young. We must be cheerful optimistic and positive.

At supermarket queues some people lose their patience and become aggressive. This will make us prone to health problems. One must always switch one's mind to pleasant thoughts, for example, breast cancer patients who have a fighting spirit and think positively live longer than those who give into their diagnosis and start worrying.

As children you must have had lot of energy. If you have lost your spark then you need to re energise your vitality. Eat a high energy food but low in fat. Regular sleep is also essential. Always have confidence and believe in yo urself. It is always good to boost your self-esteem. Remember when you were young you loved company and friendship with friends and fellow workers. Return to those carefree days. Why don't you organise trips or a party with your friends. Outings will not only make you busy and happy but also make you healthy.

There is a saying, laugh and grow fat, but you can also laugh your worries away. Try to be spontaneous and be free and challenge yourself to do the unexpected. Drop everything if a friend comes for any help. That is the challenge you have to face and to be happy. Why don't you day dream and write down your fantasies. So when worry



been simple: 'United in prayer and worship'. She is widely respected in her community for her practical work in support of families, currently being President of Tai Tokerau Maori Women's Welfare League, Ahipara Parengarenga Peria Pastorate Chairperson and Delegate to Tai Tokerau Komiti Tumuaki.

We offer our congratulations to Mrs Norma Evans on her election to her new role, we thank her for taking on this responsibility and look forward to commencing a fresh triennium of opportunity under her leadership to follow in Mary Sumner's footsteps.

## **Laugh Away your blues**

Lizzie Samuel

We are all children of God and children at heart. But as we go through life, the charming naivete and playfulness gets lost in the maize of adult life, we lose the vitality energy and cheerfulness of our youth Why? Living in constant state of tension, anxiety, and stress make us moody and unhealthy. But God created a beautiful world for us to live happily.

As a child you would have been enraped by the beauty of nature the Sun the Moon. the sky the Stars and the Sea

Arimathea, who carried the Holy Grail, arrived in Glastonbury after landing in Somerset with twelve disciples. Following the crucifixion of Jesus, St. Joseph was exiled from his homeland and began a journey of conversion, first travelling to Marseilles, and later, in 63 AD, at the behest of St. Philip, to Glastonbury to spread Christianity among the Britons.

Legend has it that on Christmas morning, Joseph and his companions rested on Wearyall Hill (a name derived from "Wiral" or "Wyrall," as seen on old maps). There, Joseph struck the ground with his staff made of thornwood, which miraculously sprouted and blossomed immediately. It is said that this tree, known as the Holy Thorn, would bloom on Christmas Day every year thereafter.



According to legend, the original tree was cut down by a Puritan soldier in 1653, who was allegedly struck blind by a splinter. Despite the destruction, cuttings from the original tree had been taken, ensuring its survival.

The tradition of sending blooms to the monarch, which had been halted (perhaps surprisingly) by King Charles I, was revived in 1922 when Queen Mary agreed to receive a sprig of the Holy Thorn whenever it bloomed at Christmas. After 1952, the spray was sent directly to Queen Elizabeth II, except the following year, when she was on a Commonwealth tour (in New Zealand) and Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother received it instead.

A tree planted on Wearyall Hill in 1951 to replace the original pre-Civil War tree had its branches cut off in 2010 and was vandalised again the following year. A sapling grafted from a descendant of the pre-1951 tree was planted by the landowners and consecrated but was irreparably damaged within 16 days and removed in 2019.



Thorn's unique characteristic of flowering twice a year, and both suggested origins do not account for the ancient accounts of the tree.

It is possible that the Glastonbury Thorn was originally a unique mutation rather than a true variety. If so, it is remarkable that this peculiarity has been preserved and transmitted to its progeny for over 400 years.

In 1965, Queen Elizabeth II had erected a wooden cross at Glastonbury with the inscription:

"The cross. The symbol of our faith. The gift of Queen Elizabeth II marks a Christian sanctuary so ancient that only legend can record its origin."

Botanists have yet to agree on the true origin of the Glastonbury Thorn. Some suggest it might be related to the Morocco thorn, introduced to England around 1812, or the Siberian thorn, both of which begin to produce shoots in January. However, neither species shares the Glastonbury

## The Mothers' Union

Katherine McIntyre



Members of the Orakei-Kohimarama Mothers Union joined the morning service on August 18th, welcoming three new members. They were Leith Hamilton, Linda Sinclair and Rose Hazlett. The group has been long established in the Eastern Suburbs, supporting the parishes they are in. St Thomas's Church was the venue for the NZ conference last year.



Hot off the Press – Election of new Provincial President Mothers Union Aotearoa and Polynesia.



As a Mothers' Union member for over 50 years, Norma brings a deep knowledge of the organisation to the role. She writes that for her, the Mothers' Union mission has

The Church has a vital role in helping to resolve differences of opinion. The historic episcopate, grounded in apostolic succession, provides a source of continuity and authority that can help guide the faithful. When disputes arise, we should look to our bishops and other Church leaders, who are entrusted with the responsibility of teaching and upholding the faith.

Moreover, the practice of common prayer is central to Anglican identity. The Book of Common Prayer (and our own newer New Zealand Prayer Book) are not merely collections of liturgies but a profound expression of our shared beliefs. By participating in common worship, we reaffirm our unity in Christ and our commitment to the teachings of the Church.



As we navigate differences of opinion within the Church, let us be guided by the wisdom of our tradition. By grounding ourselves in Scripture, Tradition, and Reason, and by approaching one another with charity, we can maintain the unity of the Church while faithfully discerning God's will.

In the words of Augustine, "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity." As Anglicans, let us embrace this principle, trusting that by doing so, we will reflect the love and truth of Christ in all we do.

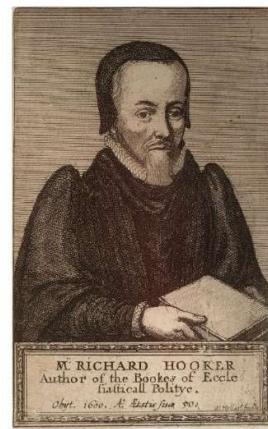
As we navigate differences of opinion within the Church, let us be guided by the wisdom of our tradition. By grounding ourselves in Scripture, Tradition, and Reason, and by approaching one another with charity, we can maintain the unity of the Church while faithfully discerning God's will.

## How to deal with differences of opinion

Noel Cox

In the life of any church, differences of opinion are bound to arise, particularly on matters of theology and morality. These disagreements can be challenging, but they also offer opportunities for growth and deepening our understanding of the faith. As Anglicans, we are blessed with a rich tradition that provides guidance on how to approach such differences in a way that honours God and preserves the unity of the Church.

The Anglican tradition, as articulated by Richard Hooker and other key figures such as Thomas Cranmer and Lancelot Andrewes, places a strong emphasis on the harmonious interplay of Scripture, Tradition, and Reason. These three pillars provide a framework for engaging with difficult questions and discerning God's will.



Scripture remains our ultimate authority, the foundation upon which all our beliefs rest. Yet, as Hooker pointed out, Scripture does not exist in isolation. It is interpreted through the lens of tradition – the accumulated wisdom of the Church across the ages – and Reason, which

enables us to apply the teachings of Scripture to new and complex situations.

When differences arise, particularly on theological or moral issues, our first step should always be to seek understanding through these three sources. What does Scripture say? How has the Church historically understood and applied this teaching? And how can we reason through these teachings in our contemporary context?



Richard Hooker's concept of the "via media," or middle way, is particularly relevant when navigating disagreements. Hooker advocated for a balanced approach that avoids extremes, holding firmly to the essentials of the faith while allowing for diversity in matters that are not central to salvation. This principle encourages us to focus on what unites us – our shared faith in Christ – while approaching differences with humility and grace.

Thomas Cranmer, the architect of the Book of Common Prayer, understood the importance of common worship as a means of maintaining unity. Cranmer's liturgies were designed to bring together a diverse body of believers, focusing on shared practices and common prayers that express the core beliefs of the Christian faith. In times of disagreement, returning to our common worship can remind us of the deeper unity we share as members of the Body of Christ.

The Church Fathers, too, offer valuable insights. Augustine's teaching on charity is particularly pertinent: "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity." This principle underscores the need to distinguish between core doctrines, where unity is essential, and secondary matters, where diversity of opinion can be

tolerated. However, in all things, we are called to act with love, seeking to build up the Church rather than divide it.

In our contemporary setting, we continue to face complex theological and moral questions. When disagreements arise, whether on issues like human sexuality, social justice, or doctrinal matters, it is crucial to approach these discussions with the wisdom of our tradition. We can approach it this way:

1. **Grounding in Scripture:** Begin by seeking what the Bible says about the issue at hand. Scripture offers clear guidance on many matters, and where it does not speak directly, it provides principles that can guide our understanding.

2. **Engaging with Tradition:** Reflect on how the Church, both in its early years and throughout history, has interpreted and applied Scripture. The teachings of the Church Fathers, as well as the insights of the Orthodox and Catholic traditions, can provide valuable perspectives that are often consistent with Anglican thought.



3. **Using Reason:** Consider how these teachings apply in today's context. Reason helps us navigate the complexities of modern life, ensuring that our application of Scripture and Tradition is thoughtful and faithful to the truth.

In situations where differences persist, a pastoral approach is essential. This means engaging with others respectfully, listening carefully, and speaking with humility. We must remember that every person is made in the image of God and that our ultimate goal is to build one another up in love.