

The Messenger

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



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The St Thomas Parish Fair, 18 May 2024

Parish fairs have a rich history dating back centuries, originating in mediæval England. These fairs were initially organised by churches or religious institutions to celebrate the feast day of the patron saint of the parish. Over time, they evolved into community events that combined religious observance with trade, entertainment, and social gatherings.



In England, parish fairs were significant social and economic events. They provided an opportunity for local merchants, craftsmen, and farmers to sell their goods and livestock. People from surrounding areas would often attend, leading to

bustling marketplaces with a wide array of products and activities. Fairs also featured entertainment such as music,

dancing, theatrical performances, and games, making them a focal point of leisure and recreation for communities.

In addition to their economic and social importance, parish fairs played a role in reinforcing community bonds and identity. They offered a chance for people to come together, interact, and celebrate shared traditions and values.



Religious ceremonies and processions remained a central part of many fairs, serving as a reminder of their origins in religious observance.

In New Zealand, the tradition of parish fairs shares similarities with those in England due to historical ties. However, they also reflect the unique cultural influences and demographics of New Zealand society. Parish fairs in New Zealand often incorporate elements of Maori culture alongside more traditional European customs.



Today, parish fairs continue to thrive in both England and New Zealand, although they have been adapted to modern times. While some fairs retain strong religious connections, others have become

more secular in nature, focussing primarily on entertainment, fundraising for community projects, and fostering local commerce. Despite these changes, parish

fairs remain an important part of the cultural fabric of both countries, providing opportunities for community engagement, celebration, and connection.



Our fair had a variety of activities and stalls, from Mr Whippy, to a bouncy castle (the last, courtesy of Kohimarama Presbyterian Church). The Meadowbank Pony Club also set aside a couple of their quieter

horses for people to pat – although practical considerations meant that this had to occur across the street. There was also face-painting, the blowing of bubbles, and a sausage sizzle, in addition to the usual bric a brac. The policeman was a bonus. His sergeant had told him to come over and join us, which he did with great enthusiasm, and to the delight of visitors old and young.



The primary purpose of the fair was to get people onto the grounds and into our building. The secondary purpose was to raise some money for the repairs to our stained glass windows. One of the most encouraging aspects was the number of people who commented how good it was to see us active in this way.

St Thomas has had a long history of fairs, though this year's fair was our first for some years. We were blessed with good weather, and the many fair-goers enjoyed the



companionship of
joining together in our
wonderful building and
grounds. Long may the
tradition of fairs
continue!

Address for Commonwealth Day 2024

Rev'd Dr Noel Cox

President, The Royal Commonwealth Society Auckland
Branch Inc.

Distinguished Guests,

Today, on the auspicious occasion of Commonwealth Day, we gather to reflect upon the remarkable journey of the Commonwealth, tracing its evolution from 1947 to the vibrant tapestry it represents in the present day.

At its core, the Commonwealth is more than just an association of nations; it is a testament to the enduring values of democracy, diversity, and collective progress. Since its inception, the Commonwealth has served as a catalyst for positive change, fostering cooperation and understanding among its diverse member states.

Central to the identity of the Commonwealth is its symbolic Head, a figure who embodies the spirit of unity and service that defines this unique institution. From the early days of the organisation, and for over seven decades, Her late



Majesty Queen Elizabeth II fulfilled this role with grace, dedication, and unwavering commitment. For some eighteen months His Majesty King Charles III has served as Head of the Commonwealth.

As the longest-serving monarch in British history, Her Majesty's reign witnessed the transformation of the

Commonwealth from a post-colonial alliance to a dynamic platform for dialogue and collaboration. Through her leadership, she played a pivotal role in strengthening the bonds of friendship and cooperation among member states.

Under Her Majesty's guidance, the Commonwealth embraced new challenges and opportunities, adapting to the changing needs of its diverse membership. From promoting sustainable development and environmental conservation to championing gender equality and youth empowerment, the Commonwealth remained at the forefront of global efforts to build a more equitable and prosperous world.

Today, as we celebrate the achievements of the Commonwealth, we are reminded of the invaluable contributions of its member states and the countless individuals who have dedicated themselves to its noble cause. From the halls of government to the grassroots level, the Commonwealth has inspired action and inspired hope in communities around the world.



Looking ahead, the Commonwealth faces a new era of challenges and opportunities. As we confront pressing issues such as climate change, economic inequality, and global health crises, the need for collective action has never been greater.

This need has been highlighted for decades by the King, originally as Prince of Wales, and now as King and Head of the Commonwealth.

In this spirit, let us reaffirm our commitment to the principles and values that unite us as members of the Commonwealth family. Let us honour the legacy of those who have come before us and embrace the responsibility to shape a better future for generations to come.

On this Commonwealth Day, let us celebrate our shared heritage, cherish our diversity, and rededicate ourselves to the noble ideals that bind us together as a global community.

[Delivered 10th March 2024 in Holy Trinity Cathedral, Parnell]



Book Review

Katherine McIntyre

On a recent Sunday, a sermon preached by our own Fr. John Goodwin, sparked my interest in Saint Julian of Norwich. This trail blazing women wrote the first manuscript in English, at a time when only Latin was permitted I came home from Church and did my research.

Was delighted to find this recently published well researched biography of her life and picked it up at my local library.

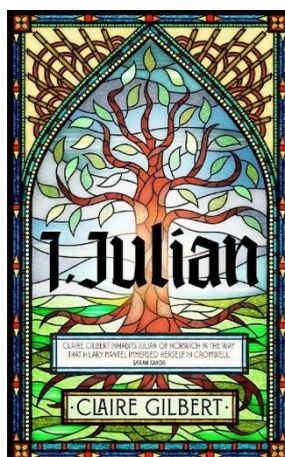
What took me so long to discover one of the most celebrated figures of the Middle Ages. A woman at that!!

A profound thinker and communicator with a compassionate God. A woman after my own heart.

She experienced her revelations in 1373 and put them on paper, while living as an anchoress. She conceived of a loving, merciful and forgiving God at a time when the church was espousing a God of fear.

Well before her time she wrote of God as our Mother.

Although this is a work of fiction, it has been well researched by Claire Gilbert and is an easy read.



"All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well"

Twelfth Night in Shakespeare's Stratford - Canada

Lizzie Samuel

Venturing away from the comforts of home, we embark on a journey that teaches us resilience and bestows upon us the gift of discovery. The allure of foreign lands comes with its share of risks and rewards. Amidst the uncertainty and challenges, there lies the liberating freedom from the identities that once defined us. It's in these moments of exploration that we may stumble upon new joys that make our hearts sing.

Every journey we undertake is a quest for joy, happiness, and peace. It's up to us to seize these moments and return home with a heart brimming with contentment. My holidays are always enriched when I spend quality time with my daughter and grandsons. Together, we savor every moment.

During the Stratford Festival, nestled in Shakespeare's quaint village in the heart of Ontario, Canada, my daughter ensures we never miss a play. Shakespeare's works, renowned worldwide for their exploration of universal themes, resonate deeply with those of us who cherish English Literature. I, too, am captivated by the Bard's plays, a passion ignited during my secondary school days as I eagerly sought out his works.

Imagine my elation when my daughter revealed she had secured tickets to "Twelfth Night" at the Stratford Festival as a Mother's Day surprise. "Twelfth Night," one of Shakespeare's most cherished comedies, perfectly encapsulates the wistful end to the traditional Elizabethan Christmas season, culminating on the twelfth night of yuletide festivities.

In Shakespeare's era, Twelfth Night was a celebration marking the conclusion of the Christmas Season and the onset of Epiphany. Witnessing my favourite play unfold was a joy unparalleled.

Allow me to share a synopsis of this beloved tale:

Duke Orsino of Illyria pines for the elusive Countess Olivia. Meanwhile, Viola, a young woman shipwrecked by a tempest and mourning her brother Sebastian's presumed death, assumes the guise of Cesario and enters Duke Orsino's service. Viola quickly falls for the Duke, yet finds herself reluctantly conveying his love letters to Olivia. Olivia, smitten with the 'page boy,' sends her steward Malvolio with a ring for Cesario, setting off a tangled web of affections.

Olivia's inebriated uncle and his carousing companion, aided by Olivia's maid Maria, concoct a scheme to embarrass Malvolio. A jealous fury over Olivia's affection for Cesario leads to a duel challenge. The plot thickens as Sebastian, who has survived the shipwreck, arrives and is mistaken for Cesario.

The play's spirit, infused with holiday merriment where identities are playfully exchanged across gender and class lines, delves into the nature of desire and the illusions of the heart. In the end, love triumphs over all, and a happy ending ensues for the two star-crossed couples.



Sea Sunday

Noel Cox



On 7th July I preached at the annual Sea Sunday service in Holy Trinity Cathedral, Parnell. As the Port Chaplain, of The Mission to Seafarers Auckland, I had the privilege of representing the Anglican partner in the œcumenical Auckland

International Seafarers Centre, based in Quay Street, the Auckland CBD.

Sea Cadets from TS *Bellona* and TS *Achilles* were present to parade various shipping company flags – including the Tasman Pulp and Paper Company, shown below, and the merchant navy flag.



The service, which was a choral evensong, sung by the cathedral choir, was made particularly memorable this year because it was conducted in semi-darkness. The electrical system of the building had failed during the

morning service, and due to the serious nature of the fault, it had not been repaired by afternoon – the Sea Sunday service was at 5 pm. The service as moved from the usual location in the chancel to the better lit nave – where the 60 or so who attended were somewhat overwhelmed by the largely empty space.

The congregation had been issued with candles as they entered the cathedral, and these were lit by myself and the cathedral precentor, the Rev'd Ivica Gregurec, during the Magnificat. As many candles as possible were lit around the crossing including the lectern, so that the readers could see what they were reading. As the service progressed, so it got darker. When it was time for my sermon,



the darkness had largely enveloped the cathedral, and it was nearly impossible for me to read my notes – even with the aid of my own small taper candle, dripping hot wax onto my hand as I spoke. Fortunately I didn't need my notes except as an aide memoire for the scripture passages I needed. I couldn't resist starting with a reference to the "very dark and stormy night" on which we were gathered.

I'd have to say it was one of the most atmospheric services I have ever attended!

A Lucky Escape!

Lizzie Samuel

On my recent flight from Auckland to Toronto, I encountered an experience that was both fascinating and startling. I'd like to recount this tale to you.

Los Angeles Airport, with its sprawling grandeur, is a place I typically avoid during my travels to Canada. The reason is

simple: the transit involves an extensive walk post-immigration, followed by a shuttle bus ride to reach the main terminal for my connecting flight to Toronto. However, on this occasion, I found myself in transit at LA.

After completing the necessary formalities, I waited for the shuttle bus. Soon enough, a mini shuttle arrived, and we all boarded swiftly. The driver, a woman, took my luggage and casually placed it on a bench right behind her seat. As I settled into my seat at the back of the bus, weary from the journey, I glanced forward and—to my utter shock—saw a woman walking off the bus with my bag in hand!

In a state of disbelief yet with a quick wit, I raised my voice, “That’s my bag! What are you doing?” A fellow passenger also cried out in support. The thief, caught in the act, dropped the bag and fled. Given the open road, pursuit would have been futile. Had I hesitated for even a minute, I would have lost my bag, which held all my essentials—my medication, laptop, a change of clothes, and some gifts.

Stunned by the turn of events, I took a moment to collect myself. Once I did, I couldn’t help but express my gratitude, “Thank you, Lord, for your ever-present protection!” Was this not a miracle? I truly believe it was.

A brief note on a profound question

Noel Cox

The belief that Jesus had to die for our sins is central to Christian theology and can be understood through several key concepts that are rooted in the Bible and Christian tradition:

1. The Concept of Sin:

According to the Bible, sin is any action, thought, or attitude that goes against God's will and laws. It separates humans from God and leads to spiritual death. Romans 3:23 says, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

2. The Need for Atonement:

The Old Testament describes how sin required atonement, often through animal sacrifices, to restore the relationship between God and humans. Leviticus 17:11 explains, "For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life."

3. Jesus as the Perfect Sacrifice:

Christians believe that Jesus, being sinless and fully divine, was the only one who could serve as a perfect sacrifice to atone for the sins of humanity. John 1:29 refers to Jesus as "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world."

4. Substitutionary Atonement:

This doctrine suggests that Jesus took on the punishment that humanity deserved for their sins. By dying on the cross, He satisfied God's justice while demonstrating God's love and mercy. Isaiah 53:5 prophesied this: "But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed."

5. Reconciliation with God:

Jesus' death and resurrection are believed to reconcile humanity with God, offering forgiveness and the promise of eternal life to those who believe in Him. 2 Corinthians 5:18-19 states, "All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of

reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them."

6. Fulfilment of Prophecy and God's Plan:

Christians believe that Jesus' sacrificial death was part of God's plan for salvation, fulfilling prophecies and demonstrating God's ultimate plan for redemption.

Acts 2:23 explains, "This man was handed over to you by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross."

Jesus' death is seen as necessary in Christian theology because it addresses the problem of sin, fulfills the requirements of justice, and provides a means for humans to be reconciled with God. This belief is foundational to Christian faith, emphasizing both God's justice and His profound love for humanity.

Parish of St Thomas Tāmaki

Telephone 521-2697

Email: stthomastamaki@gmail.com

Website: www.stthomastamaki.org.nz

Priest in Charge: Rev'd Dr Noel Cox
telephone 020-4079-4554 email noel.cox34@gmail.com

Priest's Warden: John Miller
telephone 528-4433/027-224-0693
email jmiller@pl.net

Peoples' Warden: Leith Hamilton
telephone 021-170-7972
email leithalix@xtra.co.nz

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Handel Alexander's Feast

including his Harp concerto in Bb (Op 4 #6)

Gina Sanders
Iain Tetley
Andrew Conley

Jessica Kim - Harp
Directed by Robert Howell



Saturday 17 August, 3pm
Pitt St Methodist Church
Auckland

Sunday 18 August, 3pm
St Andrew's Church
Pukekohe

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but large in production of its amazing choral sound!"*

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