

Goodness! Is it really another year?

They say that time flies when you are having fun, and if that is true we have been having a complete ball!

We have had the pleasure of the company of eighteen children this year aged 3 – 8, in two sessions each term time Thursday. Claudia began St Matthew's this year so we were really pleased to see her at

the odd session through the year and to have her expertise when preparing for those services that the children led. As a wonderful flow on effect we now have Alice and Elizabeth attending our Sunday services at St. Andrew's in the Paddock as crucifers and junior servers.

Off to town

This year we moved temporarily into town so we were not so cramped and so that the congregation at St. Andrew's could breathe again without tripping over equipment. Our hall planning is now onto the last stage of preparation after a fabulous grant from the Wairarapa Families Anglican Trust in November. Maybe, just maybe, we will be reporting substantial news this time next year about the new hall and consequent move back to the paddock for our Catechesis of the Good Shepherd programme.

Term 4 has been busy with two new children coming to the Level 1 session for pre-schoolers, while one of that group turned 5 and joined the older ones in the combined session at 3.30 pm.

Light a candle

We have a rule in our Atrium – the place where the sessions are conducted – that you are able to light the candles when you turn 8 so this year it was very exciting that Emma, Elizabeth and very soon Alice too, will be able to undertake this important task.

Next year we look forward to having Lucia, Georgia and Darroch turn 8 – luckily we have

candles for Africa so will absorb them into our pyrotechnic group easily! And of course some others will begin school and join our older group. Sebe, Rosie, Samantha and Miela will become these grownup children through the year. There are others who are waiting to turn 3 and we will welcome them when they do. If you know of anyone who may like to bring their children do let them know that they are welcome to sit in on a few sessions and let the children decide if they would like to attend.

Our Catechists

Dan Rodda joined us this year as a Catechist and began his training last term. He along with Barbara Udy and Yvonne Esau, both trained in Level 1, contribute enormously to the programme. This year we have also welcomed Rev'ds Liz Snowsill and Sande Ramage to some sessions. Liz is a trained catechist and teaches RE at Hadlow, it is always a delight to welcome her. Sande has taken the time to teach 'stillness' to some of the children and we hope she will be able to visit again to continue this meditation exercise.

The building of relationships with other groups is, I believe, important and to that end I have visited the RE classes at Hadlow and with the pupils from the Atrium who attend that school, we ran the Pentecost service again this year for the whole school.

Blue robe surprise

It is the odd things that can throw us into a spin and one of those is that children tend to grow, and grow and grow! Robing them for services was looking to become a nightmare of alterations befitting a sweatshop, but a local school suddenly decided to sell off their choir robes and believe it or not they were blue, the right shade of blue, and of a whole variety of sizes. Fantastic!

Calculating Easter

Subjects this term covered polishing up on the Liturgical Calendar, which for the older children also means learning to use the RCL (Revised Common Lectionary), plotting the lunar calendar – so they can calculate when Easter falls, and revisiting the wonderful mysteries carried within the Advent stories. History got a look in too with one of our parents bringing a 2000 year old oil lamp for us to see. It fitted in the palm and no doubt had seen several Roman children upstairs to bed. We wondered if Jesus had had one . . .

Learning about the Eucharist

While the younger ones learned about vestments, colours, geography of the Holy Land and

Prophets, the older ones had the presentation of the Eucharistic Presence - international version, followed by the Synthesis of the Eucharist. As one of the additional 'works' we taught them to make origami Japanese figures – great fun! Toward the end of the term a parishioner came and showed us how to light and use a thurible so Elizabeth will be putting her learning into action at the Christmas Eve service at St. Andrew's in the Paddock. Interesting to consider that Zechariah was a censor at the temple, married to an Elizabeth and they were the parents of John the Baptist.

Jesse Tree

For the first time we have put up a Christmas tree in the Atrium and the children are making decorations with Jesse tree symbols. We are reading the stories of those people through until the end of the year. How to make 3-D stars has been an add-on and my apologies in advance for what I think might end up in some of the homes close to the number God promised Abraham descendants!

Next year

Next year's programme will begin on February 10th and new presentations will build on those done this year plus, I'm sure, things we haven't even begun to imagine!