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Editor’s comment
Greetings People of the Way, Penny Purchase emailed suggesting that members of the parish be profiled in short articles. She has encountered many with interesting histories; shortly after I received an article from the Smiths recording Les’ association with Church of the Ascension. Heaven sent! Please if anyone else would like to share a little about themselves feel free to do so. I would be very happy to write it up for you.
Paul’s sermon on Sunday 11th May confirmed an idea that a focus on prayer would be appropriate for this edition.
Mary Davidge. (send material to bmdavidge@gmail.com)

Les Smith’s association with Church of the Ascension
On 11th June Les Smith celebrates the 70th Anniversary of his Baptism in the font of the Parish of Kirby-Hilton, Church of the Ascension. Les,
and a cousin James who is 12 days older, were baptized at the same service by Canon Rogers, on 11th June 1944. He is the last of the 3rd generation of his branch of the Smith family to worship at Church of the Ascension. His Grandfather, James Smith, was a founder member of the church, and his parents: Robert (Bob) and Winnifred (Winnie) Smith, were active worshippers for nearly all their lives, Winnie having been a communicant for over 70 years. Les, his dad, his brother, sister, and his cousins, all had the privilege of having been taught by Miss Daisy Ladds, both at school and at Sunday School. One of Les’ greatest fears, was when Miss Ladds would call him up to read the Scripture in front of the congregation, including all the St Anne’s girls - both the Prep and senior School (In those days there was no chapel at St Anne’s and the girls all worshipped at Church of the Ascension). He had to stand on a wooden margarine box to be able to reach the enormous bible and face the intimidating sea of blue dresses. (He was about 7 years of age at the time.) [Interesting fact: This was before the advent of pews, which replaced the chairs around 1952. These were manufactured in Pietermaritzburg by none other than Reid’s Cabinet Works whose premises were situated in Commercial Rd where the KFC Drive-thru is now].

James Smith was originally a transport rider, and then became the 2nd manager at Townhill Wattle Company which eventually became Garlick Timber Company, and Bob subsequently took over as manager some years later. All 3 generations of the family resided at “The Wattles” which was the original homestead where Hilton Gardens and Garlington Estate have been developed. The company stretched all the way to Otto’s Bluff.

Les also had the privilege of being confirmed in Church of the Ascension on 5 August 1961 by Bishop Vernon, and in 2000 was married to the love of his life and soul-mate Jenni (nee’ Waddington). His twin grand-daughters were also baptized from the same font in 2006.

For the record, he has booked his spot in the Garden of Remembrance at the foot of the cross erected in memory of his brother David who was killed while flying for the NATO Forces in Europe during the Cold War-he was a member of the Royal Canadian Air-force.

Thus the circle of life will be completed when one day Les departs from the church - feet first!
Super-Abundance  Paul Mosdell

The shepherd-sheep relationship is a common metaphor in the Bible. Amongst many other places, it occurs in Psalm 23, one of the best known scriptures “The Lord is my Shepherd...” The metaphor is also found in Ezekiel 36 to describe to Israel how false prophets had led them astray. Jesus uses the theme in John 10 to describe His relationship with His followers. I am sure that you agree that it is not a particularly flattering thing to be called a sheep—they are always looking for new ways to die—but perhaps that is the point. We seem to have an knack for finding and following things that draw us away from God, and rob us of the joy that we are meant to experience in our faith walks. The thief comes only to steal, to kill and to destroy...” (John 10:10a). The lure could be materialistic: trusting in money and ‘things’, or it could be something like substance abuse, bad habits, issues of the ego and so on. What robs your joy?

Part of living the Christian life is the art of listening to our Shepherd’s voice. This is not a simple thing because there are many voices out there. Which one belongs to Jesus? It is interesting that He says in this passage of scripture that His sheep identify His voice and follow Him; they will not follow the wrong voice (cf John 10vv3, 4). If this is so then where does it all go wrong? Well, firstly we are all sinners and fall short of God’s glory (Rom 3: 23), so we will all have times of straying. I don’t think that the passage means that we are not His sheep anymore if we stray. To the contrary, in another ‘sheep’ metaphor it is implied that, in a radical show of love, in a hypothetical flock of 100 sheep, He will leave the 99 sheep behind to find one that is lost. To understand the passage, we need to realise that Jesus is addressing the Pharisees, notorious for the burden they placed on people to follow all sorts of petty “laws” in order to not inadvertently break the Law (Torah). Theirs was a distracting voice for the people of Israel, leading them off track, like sheep. One thing I do think we need to consider in this passage is the need for discernment though. This, I believe, is the
key to hearing His voice. Sheep are trained to follow a particular voice or whistle. It doesn’t just happen. Similarly, we need to attune ourselves to the voice of Christ. The biggest enemy to hearing His voice today might well be that we are too busy and rushed to stop and listen. Jesus says in John 10: 10b “I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly”. The English word “abundantly” doesn’t fully capture the phrase. One scholar has suggested it be translated “super-abundantly”. It is a life of quality and depth. Note, it is not simply about life eternal that Jesus is speaking, though that is important. This is about experiencing, here and now, the life that God has ordained for us. If we want to share in this super-abundant life, then we need to start with our prayer life. It is in the quiet moments spent with Him that we begin to tune in to His frequency. We learn to identify His voice. This passage is a call back to routine, daily prayer spent in the presence of God!

John 10: 1-10 how will we know your voice?

amidst the din of a thousand others
drumming their noise into our ears,
jumping fences, crashing parties,
sneaking in when the gate's ajar,
here; just try this, it's what you need,
with this, success is guaranteed...
and then leaving us, fox-quick hungrier than before,
somehow sold-out, depleted flattened, fleeced and cheated,

how will we know your voice?

it holds the breath of all beginnings, fills the cup with love outpouring,
binds the broken, finds the lost, feeds the hungry, pays the cost,
a still, small voice that dampens storms ageless and timeless, since life's dawn,
"The Importance of Prayer" Colossians 1:9-15  Rev. B Goettsche

I want to observe some lessons about prayer that will help us to fellowship with the Father. We look at verses 9, 10 of the first chapter of Paul's letter to the Colossians:

"For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way."

Three times in the first ten verses of this letter the Apostle Paul has told the Colossians that he is praying for them. He tells them he is thanking God for them and that his prayers on their behalf are unceasing.

What is Prayer? The simple answer is this: prayer is talking with God. We pray when we open our heart to the Almighty. Too many people feel that prayer is a certain sound - Shakespearean English, rich in theological terminology often loud. Others feel prayer is something that takes place in a certain place or with a certain posture. But none of those things are requirements for true prayer. In fact, you can sound holy and not be doing anything other than talking to yourself.
Howard Hendricks tells of a young man who met Christ after many years of life in the world. When he went to his first prayer meeting people were getting up and uttering flowery (and maybe showy) prayers. Finally, he stood to pray and said, "Lord, this is Mel. I'm not sure whether you remember me or not - I met you last Tuesday night. I just wanted to say - well - Thank-you for changing my life." The simplicity and honesty of that prayer brought tears to the eyes of many. I suspect it brought a smile to the face of the Father, as well. True prayer is honest, humble and personal.

Why pray?

• It is a great privilege. We have been invited to talk with the one who put the stars in place, to seek counsel from the Lord who is truth and wisdom; to sit down with the One who knows all things. Conversation is a part of any vital and growing relationship. We sometimes measure the quality of a marriage relationship by how well the couples communicate. The same is true for our relationship with the Father.

• We should pray because we are in a fierce battle. We are told that "our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms." (Eph. 6:10). When we neglect prayer, we go into battle unarmed. Jesus found it necessary to pray. If he did not feel he could face the battle in his own strength neither should we.

• Prayer is a deterrent to sin in our lives. In the quiet times of private, honest prayer God exposes the rationalizations and the excuses that we use to cater to sin. In prayer God holds a mirror up to our lives so we can see the way we really are and repent.

• Prayer makes a difference. Circumstances change when people pray. Diseases are sometimes healed, strength is imparted, guidance is given, hearts are softened, needs are met. I also know that when I pray, I am changed.

What to pray?
One of the most instructive parts of our text is in noticing what Paul asks on behalf of the Colossians. He is concerned for their spiritual growth.

His first request is this: I ask that "God fill you with the knowledge of His will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding." Paul's primary concern is not for physical health, material prosperity, effective witnessing, or a greater experience of spiritual gifts. Paul's first and primary concern is that the Colossians come to love and understand God and submit to His will.

When Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane He sought to submit to the will of the Father. Many of us have turned this around. We spend our time pleading with God that my will would be done, we want him to see the wisdom of our desires. Some even state that praying, "Thy will be done" is a weak prayer. All I can say is "tell that to Jesus."

We come to understand God's will as we come to understand God. In our marriage relationships we very often can tell you what our spouse will say to a certain request because we have come to understand our mate. We know what they like and don't like. The same is true of God.

We understand his plan and purpose in life as we come to know Him in the Bible, through prayer and through our obedience. Paul prays that the Colossians would not be satisfied with a superficial relationship with God. He prays that they would continue to build a relationship with Him until they understand what God is doing and why.

Paul also prays that they might have the power to do God's will. In verse 10 we read that Paul prayed that they might understand "in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please Him in every way." Paul is not praying just that we might be more knowledgeable but that we might learn more about God so that we will live more faithfully before Him. As one wise person said, "you can be a master of theology and a failure at living."
Paul is seeking balance in the lives of these young Christians. He prays that they might understand . . . and when they have understood, that they might live on the basis of that understanding.

How different is the content of this prayer from the prayers we often pray? When we pray for others are we "aiming low?" Are we neglecting the greater things? Are we focusing on the temporary and neglecting the eternal? Dare we spend all our time focusing on the body and no time focusing on the soul?

Overcoming Obstacles to Prayer

- One of the biggest obstacles to prayer is our schedules. We say we have a hard time finding time to pray. We need our sleep in the morning so we can function during the day. We are busy in family activities after our work. We stay up late because we need to finish our work for the next day. We want to pray, we say, but we don't have time. Let me ask you some pointed questions. Do you stop to eat each day, to wash, to read the paper or watch the news? Do you have time to watch the big game on television or to take a nap or to exercise? Which of these is more important than building your relationship with the Father?

- If we are honest, many of us would admit that one of the greatest obstacles to prayer is the difficulty that we have in concentrating. We start out in prayer but then our minds begin to wander. It seems futile, so we stop praying. Pray at a time when you are most mentally alert. Pause to remember who you are talking to. The more important we believe the conversation to be the more attention we give it.

- Set aside a time for prayer. Get up early. Block off a certain time. Find a quiet place. Give prayer priority in your schedule.

- Discuss your life with the Father. Too many times we "do our prayers" and then move on. We have taken care of our guilt but we have never really touched the throne. So, make your prayer
time personal. Talk honestly about your struggles, your fears, your calendar. Listen carefully.

- Use the Word of God as a starting point. Read through a passage of Scripture and then apply that scripture to your life. When you read a command to "forgive others" ask God to help you release the bitterness and the hurt that makes you resist that command. When you read about the importance of "thinking pure thoughts" confess the areas where your thinking is polluted and ask God for help to think better. This practice will help you focus on the deeper issues rather than the superficial.

- Keep a prayer list. Make a list of the people you pray for. Be specific. What needs do you want to help carry for another. When someone asks you to pray for them add them to your list. Then make it a point to contact these people and tell them you are praying for them daily. This is important because the next time you are tempted to omit your time of prayer you will remember that you told someone you were praying for them and in your desire to be faithful you will make time to pray.

- Take time to notice God's answers to prayer. God answers in many ways. Sometimes he gives us what we expected, or he answers in unexpected ways or removes a burden or gives strength to endure the burden. Sometimes he provides the things we want or changes our wants by teaching us to be content. Sometimes he answers right away at other times he waits until we are ready. Notice the answers. When you notice thank him.

- Read books on prayer and the biographies of people who prayed. Don't do this instead of praying, do it as an encouragement to prayer. These books and resources remind us of the things the Devil hopes we forget. They will spur us on.

What I desire is not that you feel guilty about your lack of a prayer life. I want you to feel hungry for a greater prayer life. I want to "spur you on." I want you to come to see prayer not as a duty but as a privilege. I want you to pray not because of our battle with the Devil, or because of the pain of those around you. I want you to pray because of the sweetness that comes from spending time with the Father.
An excellent resource of prayers for every conceivable occasion, (particularly when we don't know how or what to pray) is The Book of a Thousand Prayers compiled by Angela Ashwin. First published in 1996 by Marshall Pickering ISBN 0-551-02865-3. From the back page: Prayer is God’s gift to us, a banquet of good things to feed our inner life, as we respond to the invitation to his feast of peace, forgiveness, challenge & love.

Lord through weariness, hurt, frustration, anger and despair, Through disaster on the news, through headaches and depression, I am still yours.

Calm my troubled heart, give me peace. O Lord, calm the waves of my heart, calm its tempests! Calm my soul O Lord so that You, the Divine, can act in me, so that You Lord God, can repose in me. Let Your peace cover me.

Yes, Father in heaven, often have we found that the world cannot give us peace.
Help us to both know and feel Your peace;
let us know the truth of Your promise:
that the whole world may not be able to take away Your peace.

I do not understand, but I believe that you are here
In the dark places of human life,
And that nothing can take me out of Your hands.

From the depths of my despair I call to you
O Lord hear my voice.

Dear Lord I hold up my despair, anger, frustration,
I hold up all my weakness to Your strength,
my failure to Your faithfulness,
my sinfulness to Your perfection,
my loneliness to Your compassion,
my little pains to Your great agony on the Cross.

I pray that You will cleanse me, strengthen me, and hide me,
so that, in all ways, my life may be lived as you would have it lived,
without cowardice and for you alone.

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**Prayers adapted from a leaflet by Dr Bill Houston**
(these were used on 7\(^{th}\) May preceding the elections)

- Pray for Justice - God is concerned about injustice
  Is 5:22, Deut 16:19
- Pray for Integrity – God condemns bribery & corruption
  Ex 23:8, Ecc 7:7, Amos 5:12
• Pray for Fair Trade – God detests crooked business dealings
  Amos 8:4 - 8, Micah 6:11, Proverbs 20:10
• Pray for the Poor – God protects the poor & vulnerable
  Ex 22:22 - 23  Prov 31:8 – 9
• Pray for Peace – God hates violence
  Mal 2:16
• Pray for Refugees – God cares about refugees & immigrants
  Lev 19: 33 – 34
• Pray for Servant Leaders – God wants leaders with a heart to serve others
  Mark 10:42
• Pray for Creation Stewardship – God requires responsible stewardship of creation
  Gen 1:26
• Pray for Repentance – God invites everyone to turn to him
  Mark 1:14  Luke 11:32  2 Chronicles:34
• Pray for the Church – God’s usual, but not exclusive, way of working in the world is through his church. Some leaders have let God down through abuse of power, cosying up to influential people, sexual immorality, financial irregularities & neglecting the poor. In these instances we are no different from the world.  
  Matt 5: 13 – 14

It could be that our very acts of religious piety such as prayer, offerings & worship offend the Lord because our actions betray what God has called us to be

PARISH NEWS

DEATHS:
09 May 2014 Deirdere McQuade
FAREWELL:
This month we said farewell to the Ilett family who have moved to the Cape.

NEWCOMERS:
Nadine & Alan Daugherty
Emma Daugherty
Phillip & Marysu Pretorius

Quiz Evening  Friday 20 June 2014
Come and join us for a fun evening with our Quiz Masters, Rupert & Des Rencken.

Time: 18h30
Place: Church hall
Cost: Donations
To Bring: A sharp mind
To Win: There will be lots of prizes to win.

We will provide soup for dinner with pudding. There will be a light bar available. Please book at the church office as we have limited seats.

Looking forward to a fun filled evening again.

Should you be able to help with catering or kitchen duty please contact Frances Brombacher on 0836577460

OFFICE HOURS: Monday – Friday 9h00 – 13h00
The Church is open week days from 07h00 - 16h00

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