



THE GIFT

By Ian Menzies

Some people are great at choosing gifts.

Where I worked at a large school, every year a group of teachers would be moving school or retiring and they would always be farewelled with a gift.

The task of purchasing these gifts fell to a member of staff whose gift-selection ability was truly amazing.

She 'nailed' each presentation with a gift that was thoughtful, appropriate and inevitably well received.

This talent escapes me. Come Christmas each year and an engulfing fog of blankness and a mild panic would invoke increasing stress as my creative gift lists remained dauntingly blank.

I eventually solved the problem by adopting 'consumables' as my signature gift, and now everyone simply gets home-baked treats. I digress.

Some people have the gift of listening.

Their empathy and interest is priceless. The trap of responding to an opening gambit from another with "That reminds me of when I..." and thereby

turning the conversation to one of their own anecdotes is skilfully and often deliberately avoided.

Some people have the gift of noticing and acting.

They notice the weed in the church garden and pull it out. They notice when someone is unusually quiet and ascertain why.

The point of these gifts lies in the giving. They all involve an interaction with others.

They are a gift to be given with care, concern, even love. A gift of reaching out.

We have all received the gift of life.

Just consider that for a moment, and then consider and acknowledge the giver, our God.

Our God who reached out in love and gave us life itself.

And as our life was given with love, so we need to accept it with love, to live it with love.

To do so is to honour the gift.