**JANUARY PEW SHEETS**

**A New Year**

Bill Pugh

365 days! New classes at school, new friends, new teachers, new pages, new books. New subjects, new ways of discovering and learning. So much to look forward to Easter, holiday times, and more. A full active year. There is plenty of time, plenty of years, when we are young. For senior citizens, time seems so short, where have all the years gone? Our bodies are not young any more, some aches and pains. We want to make the most of what we have left by the grace of God. Tempus fugit, time flies, were philosophical sentiments of the Roman poet, Virgil. Oldies understand that Jesus had a different way. He did not count the days, in fact he did not have many. He said, “I have come that you might have life, life in all its fullness.” Each year we have days, hours and minutes, to keep us busy, but for the Christian, life is over and above calendar measurement, it is a call to a new way of living every day, and extending to life eternal. Here and now we begin that experience by loving and serving Jesus every day. A happy new year with all the riches and blessings of the new life!

**Reflection:**

The Psalmist had some special advice for a new year”, Lord, teach how short life is that we might become wise.”(Psalm 90:12)
And the promise of Jesus to the faithful. “Come, you that are blessed by my Father! Come and possess the Kingdom which has been prepared for you ever since the creation of the world.”(Matthew 25:34).

**Copy book style**

Bill Pugh

Some of us remember learning to write. Carefully formed words, practice, keeping to the lines. Blotting paper, and inkwells in a wooden desk. Compare writing now. Our chemist has to ring one of our doctors to make sure the script is what he thinks it is! Our friend Doug was a respected teacher for many years in the technical system. A talented artist, skilled with his hands, and a beautiful writer. He insists on hand written letters. Carefully formed, worth keeping, a pleasure to read. He could send emails but he prefers to write his considered thoughts by hand. His writing tells me something about his wonderful Christian character. In his Letter to Thessalonians, Paul ends his message with these words, “With my own hand I write this: Greetings from Paul. This is the way I sign every letter, this is how I write this.” Paul writes as he lives, full of encouragement, and teaching for his readers. His faith and love for them shine through in every word. His personal hand writing says much. It is a personal guarantee. His way of saying, “Yours sincerely, Paul.”

**Reflection:**

How does my communicating of the Gospel measure up to the high standards of Paul?

Could I write in copy book style like Doug, in my very best hand writing, these words of Paul, “I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God for the salvation of every one who believes.” And hand deliver, or post it many times, as my personal word of mission?

**Doing things together again**

Geoff Serpell

A reading from my “Friendship Book” relates an Arab proverb declaring “All people are but the teeth of a comb”!! This prompted my memory of a comb missing a few teeth, so perhaps that proverb meant we were easily detached.

A comb must face up to a head of tangled hair, but it gets the job done; those tangles are untangled, the unruly is brought to order. Each tooth on the comb does its bit.

May we be more like the teeth of a comb? It is not such a glamorous description. But if it means standing side by side with our brothers and sisters to face a possible disaster, or get a job done that would be impossible for any of us on our own, then let us accept that.

**Reflection:**

What a wonderful prospect we have in the New Year 2021, to work together to do the Lord’s work safely and in and with His love

**The Sunday School Anniversary**Bill Pugh

Some of us oldies remember those special Sundays when we celebrated the Sunday school Anniversary. For us it was 3pm in the afternoon when we usually had Sunday School. Not in the Church but in the Hall. Seats brought in from the Church, chairs from other places. Getting ready for a packed house. Mums, dads, grandparents, aunts, uncles and neighbours came. We had practised and rehearsed joyous hymns and songs of praise. We were ready to lift the roof. Often we had a visiting speaker, a returned missionary, or a sporting hero, who is a Christian. Afternoon tea followed.

There was something about those occasions. Looking back they were not only days of marvellous fellowship, but missionary outreach. People came invited, some with no connection to our church or knowing anything much about our faith. They came to support the kids. In those hearty songs and the message of the speaker there was proclamation of the Gospel. What a message in the singing of, “Jesus loves me, this I know”. I wonder if some of those experiences influenced an outsider to come and be part of the Church.

**Reflection:**

Pray for the outreach of your church through Messy Church and every opportunity for mission. Use of our facilities by Men’s Shed, dancing and gymnastics classes help to advertise our presence. Maybe an invitation to a special service would be an opening?

**The Lord’s Prayer**

Bill Pugh

When taking Anzac and Remembrance Day services chaplains have been asked to use the 1662 version. Most people know it. This saves confusion with other versions. Many of us know the old version from childhood. We know it by heart. But is repetition enough? Jesus was asked by his friends how to pray and He taught them what we know as the Lord’s Prayer. Many prayers were just empty phrases and words uttered to impress others with personal piety. His Father was not impressed. Jesus gives them the perfect pattern for all prayer, His prayer, or the Lord’s Prayer. He shows his friends the way to praise, make requests, confess wrongs and ask forgiveness, help and strength, from our Heavenly Father (Read Matthew 9 verses 9 to 13).

**Reflection:**

Spend some time looking at Jesus teaching on prayer. Take each of the phrases, one at a time, and reflect on its message. Maybe suggest a study group at Church to look at the Lord’s Prayer in depth? There are many references to Jesus and prayer in the gospels. These are helpful in Bible Study .