

Called home by the great shepherd of the sheep

John Albert Rentsch

11 May 1938 – 12 November 2020



Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Tabor

27 November 2020, 10am

OPENING

In the name of the Father and of the Son † and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

REMINDER OF BAPTISM

As we come here in our grief to farewell John, St Paul comforts us with these words: Don't you know that all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.

HYMN

And Can it Be

LHS 67

1

And can it be, that I should gain
An interest in the Saviour's blood?
Died He for me, who caused His pain -
For me, who Him to death pursued?
Amazing love! how can it be
That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

2

'Tis mystery all! The Immortal dies:
Who can explore His strange design?
In vain the first-born seraph tries
To sound the depths of love divine.
'Tis mercy all! let earth adore,
Let angel minds inquire no more.

3

He left His Father's throne above -
So free, so infinite His grace -
Emptied Himself of all but love,
And bled for Adam's helpless race:
'Tis mercy all, immense and free;
For, O my God, it found out me!

4

No condemnation now I dread:
Jesus, and all in Him, is mine!
Alive in Him, my living head,
And clothed in righteousness divine,
Bold I approach the eternal throne,
And claim the crown, through Christ my own.

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

Our Saviour, Jesus Christ, has destroyed death and brings immortal life through the gospel. Let us remember with thanksgiving what God has done through John.

By the grace of God John was born on the 11th of May 1938, eldest son to Albert and Edna (nee Habel) at Kia Ora private hospital in Hamilton.

Due to a difficult birth, he was baptised by Pastor Minge two days later and spent the first eight weeks of his life in hospital. As a teenager, he publicly confirmed his faith on the 14th of December 1952, under the guidance of Pastor Wiebusch at Tabor Lutheran Church. John was raised at Malanda, the family farm, with his six siblings. He attended Burn Brae Primary School, and later Hamilton High School. On leaving school, he was given his first horse, Minor, and a saddle and started working on the family farm. He was regularly sent to work at his uncle and aunty's farm, Batesworth, which would later become his home. John was a keen rabbitier and snake catcher. The main jobs on the farm were shearing, cleaning the drain and rabbiting. His favourite hobbies included tennis, gardening, completing puzzles (with absolutely no help from his wife), snow skiing, rabbiting, duck shooting, playing 500, measuring the rain and keeping a regular diary.

John was also involved in Luther League, a Lutheran youth group, through which he met his future wife, Annette, introduced by the pastor that would later marry them, Pastor Eckert. They were married in New Zealand, on the 8th of April 1967, at St Martin's Lutheran Church, in Marton. Making their home at

Batesworth, in the “Love Shack”, they begun their brood of children. Their marriage was richly blessed with the arrival of their children, beginning with Rachel, who married Garry Schwarz; followed by James, who married Monica Mibus; Matthew, who married Jane Keiller; Simon, who married Tania Feldt; Christopher, who married Nykoal Bishop; Rebekah (in heaven); and Philip, who married Jennifer Murphy. John was an avid meeting goer, who with his social nature thoroughly enjoyed being involved with many community commitments, including: Captain of North Penshurst Fire Brigade, later Lieutenant of Croxton East Fire Brigade, life member of The Penshurst Show Society, president of The Penshurst Pony Club, Tabor Tennis Club, Neighbourhood Watch and many others.

Being a faithful member of Tabor Lutheran church, he was heavily involved in church life, serving as a Sunday School teacher from the time he was confirmed. He was Superintendent of Tabor Sunday School, and on the school council of Tabor Primary School and Good Shepherd College. John served on many committees including the Cemetery Committee, Christian Growth Committee, Board of Christian Education, and a founding member of the Tabor Male Choir. He thoroughly enjoyed singing in the choir, bringing music to hundreds of events over the years. He enjoyed serving his Lord with Gideons International, starting in 1997. His commitment to the gospel and getting bibles out to people will bear much fruit.

His cooking skills were minimal to non-existent. There were many a blunder involving whipping cream into butter, and watering down jelly in order to make even more of his favourite dessert, but then having to put it in the freezer in

order for it to set. Morning and afternoon teas were rarely missed - things always went better after a cup of tea. One of his greatest pleasures was having his family around the table for meals.

John enjoyed working on the land, walking amongst his Hereford cattle and Corriedale sheep. With his natural affinity with animals being lifelong, he always kept a milking cow until just two years ago, making butter and cream. His favourite time of the year was shearing. John loved spending time with the shearers, forging friendships that have spanned over 50 years. Once shearing was over he would spend days sorting wool. How fitting it was that on his final day, time was spent working in his woolshed at Batesworth, before his Lord took him home suddenly that evening Thursday 12th of November.

John was dedicated to his Lord, faithful to his wife, and steadfast in his love for his family. He was a man of integrity, honoured and respected by those around him. John was a good steward, generous, an encouraging man, community-minded and loyal, with a cheeky sense of humour. He was always pleasant company, showing a genuine interest in anyone he came into contact with.

John is leaving a heritage and legacy here on earth, especially through his grandchildren; Joel and Christa, Daniel and Zandrea, Sarah and Gideon (van Zyl) and Thomas Schwarz; Jordan, Emma, Leah and Thomas (Mirtschin), Samuel, Joshua, Sophie and Katherine; Amy (in heaven), Jonathan, Lachlan and Gabriella; Edward, Wynn and Drew; Kora and Reuben; Luke, Brooklyn and Joshua. He was also eagerly anticipating the birth of his first great grandchild.

One of John's favourite Bible verses was Deuteronomy 6:4-7:

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up."

He lived his life by these words.

We give thanks to God our Father through Jesus Christ our Lord for our brother John.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

PRAYER

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray.

Eternal God, our heavenly Father: Be with us as we gather here in your presence to take leave of John, and assure us that you are close to us as we mourn. As we hear your promises, help us to trust in them and accept the comfort they offer. As we grieve for John, deepen our faith in your goodness and mercy, so that we may not be trapped in bitterness but be sustained by your peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

PSALM 23

The Lord's my shepherd

LHS 387

1

The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want;
He makes me down to lie
In pastures green: He leadeth me
The quiet waters by.

2

My soul He doth restore again:
And me to walk doth make
Within the paths of righteousness,
E'en for His own name's sake.

3

Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale,
Yet will I fear no ill;
For Thou art with me, and Thy rod
And staff me comfort still.

4

My table Thou hast furnished
In presence of my foes;
My head Thou dost with oil anoint,
And my cup overflows.

5

Goodness and mercy all my life
Shall surely follow me;
And in God's house for evermore
My dwelling-place shall be.

'Scottish Psalter', 1650
Based on Francis Rous, 1641, and others

READING

Ephesians 2:1-10

Samuel Rentsch

Hear the word of the Lord as it is written in Paul's letter to the Ephesians chapter 2 verses 1 to 10.

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ²in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.

³All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. ⁴But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. ⁶And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, ⁷in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. ⁸For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹not by works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

READING

John 10:25-30

Peter Rentsch

Hear the word of the Lord as it is written in the gospel according to Saint John, chapter 10 verses 25 to 30

Jesus answered, "I did tell you, but you do not believe. The works I do in my Father's name testify about me, ²⁶but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. ²⁷My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. ²⁹My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. ³⁰I and the Father are one."

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

1

Rock of ages cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee;
Let the water and the blood,
From Thy riven side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure:
Cleanse me from its guilt and power.

2

Not the labours of my hands
Can fulfil Thy law's demands;
Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears for ever flow,
All for sin could not atone:
Thou must save, and Thou alone.

3

Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling;
Naked, come to Thee for dress;
Helpless, look to Thee for grace;
Foul, I to the fountain fly;
Wash me, Saviour, or I die.

4

While I draw this fleeting breath,
When my eyelids close in death,
When I soar to worlds unknown,
See Thee on Thy judgement throne:
Rock of ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee.

Augustus Montague Toplady (1740-1778), alt.

APOSTLES' CREED

In the face of death, let us confess our faith in the living God, and say the Apostles' Creed.

I believe in God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God, the Father almighty, from thence he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic* church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

** or: Christian; 'catholic' here means 'universal'*

PRAYERS - LORD, HAVE MERCY

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

PRAYER

Let us pray. As we pray, respond to each prayer with the words

Lord, hear the voice of your sheep,
as we cry to you for help.

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

CONCLUSION - TRANSITIONAL BLESSING

The Lord watch over you, as you go out and as you come in †, now and forever.

Amen.

RECESSION

In the sure hope of the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come, we take the body of our brother in Christ to its last resting place.

Let us go in peace.

In the name of the Lord.

The minister and the pallbearers take their places at the coffin.

HYMN

Be still and know that I am God

LHS 885

Be still and know that I am God,
be still and know that I am God,
be still and know that I am God.

I am the Lord who makes you whole,
I am the Lord who makes you whole,
I am the Lord who makes you whole.

Commit your way unto the Lord,
commit your way unto the Lord,
commit your way unto the Lord.

Author Unknown

Based on Ps. 46:10: Exod. 15:26: Ps 37:5

Officiating Minister	Sam Modra	
Organist	David Schultz	
Carpark	Alaister Rentsch	Wayne Schild
Amplifier	Tara Modra	Daniel Schild
Ushers	Lachlan Rentsch	William Rentsch
	Nathan Rentsch	Edwin Rentsch
Bell	Valance Huf	
Pall Bearers	Rachel Schwarz	James Rentsch
	Matthew Rentsch	Simon Rentsch
	Christopher Rentsch	Phillip Rentsch



My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.
John 10:27

Hymns from Lutheran Hymnal with Supplement, 1989, Lutheran Publishing house,
Adelaide, printed with permission.

AT THE GRAVE

PEACE

The peace of the Lord be with you.

Amen.

INTRODUCTION

We are all born weak and helpless. All lead the same short, troubled life. We grow and wither as quickly as flowers; we disappear like shadows.

In the midst of life we are in death. To whom can we go for help, but to you, Lord God, though you are rightly displeased because of our sins? And yet, Lord God Almighty, most holy and most merciful Saviour, deliver us from the bitterness of eternal death. You know the secrets of our hearts; mercifully hear us, most worthy judge eternal; keep us, at our last hour, in the consolation of your love.

Amen.

WORD OF COMFORT

Our Lord says: I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.

LOWERING OF COFFIN - COMMITTAL

Since almighty God, our heavenly Father, in his gracious wisdom has called John from this life, we commit his body to the ground: earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust. Dust we are and to dust we shall return. But we know that as Christ was the first to rise from the dead, he will raise up our mortal bodies to be like his in glory. We commend John to the Lord †, trusting in his infinite mercy. Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!

Amen.

GLORY TO GOD

Glory to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, who has created, redeemed, and sanctified John, body and soul.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, our good shepherd: As you have remembered John, who has passed through the valley of the shadow of death, be with Annette, and all who mourn for him in their loneliness. Comfort them in their sorrow. Heal their hurt. Restore their happiness and guide them on your way. Refresh us with your goodness and bring us at last into your eternal home, where we will feast together at your table; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen

LORD'S PRAYER

Lord Jesus, remember us, and help us to pray the prayer you have taught us.

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

BLESSING

The God of peace, who brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, equip you by the blood of the eternal covenant with everything good, so that you may do his will, working in you what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ †; to whom be glory now and forever.

Amen.

DISMISSAL

Christ has risen.

He has risen indeed.

Go in the peace of the Lord.

Amen.



Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.
Revelation 3:20 (NIV)

