

FBC Devotion Sunday May 3 2020 Luke 4:14-20

Today was to be the day we were to have our 148th Anniversary Service. We were to enjoy the singing of the Lambton Youth Choir, and a sit down meal provided by our Fellowship Committee – sadly it was not to because of the continued presence of coronavirus in our province.

On Church Anniversaries, we think about our Church community, past present and future.

Traditionally this has also been an occasion to think specifically about our place of worship, and give thanks for those who planned and built it and have cared for it.

And today we read in Luke chapter 4 about Jesus going into his local family place of worship, the Synagogue at Nazareth.

"He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue..." (Luke 4:16)

What do we know about the building Jesus first worshipped in? The simple answer is **"not a lot"** And as to who built it and when, we've no idea.

Nazareth was a tiny agricultural village off the main trade routes and guess what – it's never even mentioned in the OT.

The only thing we know for sure about the Nazareth Synagogue is that Jesus of Nazareth stood there and read from the Scriptures and proclaimed the Gospel: What did He preach?

“Good news for the poor, freedom for the captives, sight to the blind, release for the oppressed.”

And that of course is the key issue we should always reflect on at church Anniversary services, no matter what the denominational sign is outside the door.

Is it a place like the Nazareth synagogue on that day of old?

Is it a place where the scriptures are read, and in their reading the voice of Jesus is heard?

Is it a place where we are confronted by the challenge and promise of the Gospel?

As we come to Church Anniversaries, we give thanks for those whose vision brought about a place of worship such as our FBC site on Greenfield Street.

We give thanks how from generation to generation, the Scriptures have indeed been read, the Gospel proclaimed, and lives transformed.

We give thanks for this place where the Risen Christ has stood among us and spoken to his people and proclaimed as He did so many years ago God's coming Kingdom.

It's an amazing milestone for First Baptist to celebrate 148 years of ministry to the town of Petrolia and surrounding community, but may we never forget that it is to us, the present generation, that our forefathers passed the torch. **Let's not let the flame go out!**