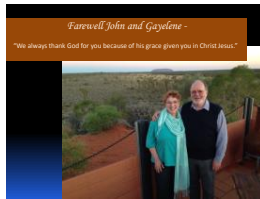


Farewell for Gayelene Harrower  
Sept 2015

Slide #1



*"Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears; I come to farewell Gayelene, not to praise her."*

Oops! Sorry – wrong speech.

Let me begin with two warnings. Firstly, if you are expecting a very formal, respectful farewell speech, you'd better leave now, while you have the chance. Secondly, be very, very careful what

you post on Facebook, because your so-called friends can shamelessly steal your photos and comments and use them for their own purposes! Take this photo, for starters.

Gayelene Harrower and I share the same birthday, so that makes her pretty special right away! I was going to look up a description of personality traits for Pisceans, to highlight how ridiculous such profiles are, because Gayelene and I are quite different; but on reading some, I found lots of similarities after all. A good sense of humour was one of them – which is just as well, really. But also: "Pisceans are lovely, mystical and compassionate beings"; "Pisces women are very captivating and fascinating.

Slide #2



Delicate in structure and behaviour. She is charming, soft and feminine."

Slide #3



Our words and actions have "a dreamy gauziness"; our nature is "smooth and graceful".

"The Piscean woman is a mysterious, sensual mermaid".

These must be right – after all, they're on the internet!

Pisceans are "Extremely weird, but in a good way"; "They are squishy and hardy." Squishy?

usually

"Forgetfulness can also be a bane for the Pisces, even to the point of resembling some forms of insanity." Now hang on a minute!

This is a personal favourite, though: "People born under this zodiac sign are not susceptible to bad luck and unfortunate events, they bring them on themselves by overindulging, laziness and a knack for picking poorly suited partners and friends." Well, I don't know about you, but I reckon Gayelene and I have picked a pretty darn good couple of partners – and a none too shoddy group of friends, as well!

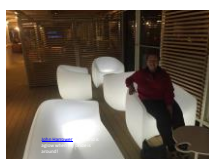
Slide #4



John and Gayelene are a wonderful example to the rest of us of a loving, godly partnership. Despite all the pressures and busyness associated with their many and varied commitments over the past 15 years (and for 30 years before that!), these high school sweethearts

have kept the spark of romance burning. John's description of Gayelene as his 'bride' rather than his 'wife' is a simple, but powerful expression of this and Gayelene's joy over her 'darling John' is always such a blessing to witness.

Slide #5



Posts such as this one on Facebook are a delight to read.

However, I have to acknowledge that for John's entire episcopate here in Tasmania, Gayelene has had to compete for his affections with another woman!

Slide #6



You know who you are, Joan Williams!  
Gayelene has handled this with grace and great forbearance, though.

Not only is Gayelene a loving wife, but she is also a proud and devoted mother and grandmother. She is also wise enough not to put any photos of her family on Facebook, where people such as I can get hold of them. But she does talk about them!

Slide #7



When Gayelene sent this photo to a journalist from “The Examiner”, she described herself as “the little fat granny in the Miss Marple hat”. Gayelene is the sort of grandmother any discerning child would love to have. For starters, she is known to have a ‘dessert first’ policy for children’s meals.

Let’s check a couple of quotes from Facebook: “At a recent Rabbit Show I watched some of the children racing around with fabulous glittery light up sneakers. I really, REALLY would like a pair of adult size light up shoes. (Goes with my eccentric granny persona!)”

And another: “Recently one of our twin grand-daughters from Melbourne spent a week with us. She was taken to Salamanca Market; the Tip Shop at Margate; rode one of the donkeys with a friend; had a friend stay overnight; played with and raced and dressed and walked the ferrets; visited and touched some alpacas; visited ....Alicia's Wabbidashery, where she saw an English Angora rabbit being groomed, shorn and the fleece spun for thread .... among other fun activities. It was a wonderful week! So she returns to school and at the Show and Tell about her holiday and Hobart talks with much enthusiasm about - wait for it- visiting the Tip Shop and the treasures she found there!!! Truly she is her grandmother's granddaughter!!”

Slide #8



Gayelene’s passion for children is not confined to her own family. I’ve never seen her in action in a school classroom, but I can imagine she was an inspiring, creative and exciting teacher. Where I have seen her in action is at the annual Clergy Christmas Party that she and John have held every year since they came to Tasmania.

These gatherings have been very much family focussed and a huge amount of work has gone in to the organization of them. Not only was there the day itself to arrange, but Gayelene bought presents for every child attending, every year.

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#9 Even those who, like our two, have grown into adults, still presents delivered by the ‘rein-donkey’. Providing all those presents was a massive – and extremely generous – undertaking.

In November 2013, Gayelene posted the following: “Just spent most of yesterday and this afternoon (with Gill Briggs) sorting out and wrapping the Christmas presents for the Anglican Clergy and Families Christmas Party. Apart from the movie tickets for each child, their other gifts and those for all the adults, are bought from January up to May each year. (Then my timetable means other things!) Some last minute phone calls were made to several parents to check that I was up-to-date with children's recent interests. Most I have kept up with -but they do grow up and change! After 13 years now I think at last it has come down to a fine art! Have spent some hours tonight reviewing purchases for gifts for Party No. 14!”

Slide #10



I’ve mentioned the donkeys a few times now. Gayelene is an

honorary life member, and has been the Tasmanian representative, of the Good Samaritan Donkey Sanctuary in NSW. Many of her donkeys were rescued from abusive or neglectful owners. But she didn't have them just as pets.

Gayelene's great passion and gift is evangelism. She is constantly coming up with new and innovative ideas for getting the gospel message of Jesus Christ out into the world. The donkeys were one of many ways she did this. Just as there's no such thing as a free lunch, so Gayelene's free donkey rides at all sorts of church and community events would come with a leaflet, linking the donkeys to Jesus' ministry. Christmas, Easter and Anzac Day events were ideal for this, but Gayelene and her donkeys travelled all around the State to support evangelistic events.

Slide #11



Kingston.

One proviso was that, if the donkeys were coming to an activity that included a church service, then they were to attend as well. They even came in here. Thankfully, they were very well behaved and house trained! I hope the new owners have been warned that, sadly, there are several donkey graves at the property in

But the donkeys were only one of many of Gayelene's evangelistic ministries. These included:

Slide #12



morning and bought 2 coloured hob kits! .... I am really happy!! (One can never have too many ferrets - nor donkeys!!) ." I'm not sure whether John agreed with that sentiment or not.

Ferrets. In January 2013, Gayelene wrote: "Had wonderful time at Zest Anglican Camp. .... Kids loved the ferrets - as always- and they behaved perfectly for about 2 and a half hours of being raced, dressed up, walked on their leads and just being cuddled. Realised I need more ferrets in the working team so went off next

Slide #13



British Giant' model kits!). Ferrets and rabbits would seem to be a risky combination, but they were kept well apart. They were also given preferential treatment over their people.

There were also rabbits – both New Zealand White meat rabbits and, more recently, British Giant show rabbits. Gayelene's rabbits won a goodly number of prizes at shows, including Australian British Giant Champion last year, and she raised a lot of money for Christian missions selling British Giant kits (that is, 'kits' as in baby rabbits, not 'make your own

During the heat wave in January 2013, Gayelene wrote: "Everyone survived the heat here. We have just bought 2 new fans today because the fans we had were all in the rabbitry keeping the rabbits cool - and we had to try to sleep without fans! The ferrets got out of the bath where they were keeping cool and re-arranged the contents of the bathroom cupboard: everything over the floor! It's just as well I love them as much as I do!"

Slide #14



As far as I can tell, the only freeloaders amongst Gayelene's menagerie, who didn't have a public ministry, were the dogs. Even the chooks laid eggs.

But I'm sure the dogs have a valuable ministry at home! Gayelene has taken the two dogs and six ferrets to Melbourne – I hope she has understanding neighbours!



Slide #15 You could never accuse Gayelene of being lazy or of wasting time.

As if all the above wasn't time-consuming enough, Gayelene also threw herself into recycling Greeting cards, for resale.

Slide #16



And thinking of recycling, we mustn't forget how Gayelene mobilized folk all around the State to collect cans for recycling, to fund the donkey ministry.

When John and I were in Armidale Diocese, tales were told of a previous Bishop's wife, Mrs Moyes, who used to visit the rectories wearing white gloves – and she would run her finger along surfaces, checking for dust. Praise the Lord that Gayelene isn't like that!

My mother grew up viewing bishops and their wives with reverence and awe. Our children have grown up associating bishop's wives with donkeys, ferrets and empty beer cans!

It is such a blessing to have a bishop's wife – and bishop – who is a down to earth, real, approachable person; and whose love and enthusiasm for Jesus is evident in every part of her life.

Slide #17



I've learnt a lot from Gayelene over the time we've been in Tasmania together: not only how to spit cherry stones, but also how to be more diligent and fervent in prayer and how to look for opportunities to 'chat' about God. You've been a real inspiration and encouragement to many of us. We love you and we're really,

really going to miss you and John!

Let me finish with a cartoon that I also lifted from Gayelene's Facebook page, which expresses her attitude to life rather well.

Slide #18



God bless you both!