

Vine Church, Wynyard

Pontus Bramberg

5th Sunday after Trinity, AD 2023

On the topic of planting seeds, I would like to share the story of my own coming to faith. I grew up in a family mostly consisting of 'cultural Christians'; we identified as broadly Lutheran and I was christened as an infant but didn't really practice any faith apart from attending church on major holidays, like Easter or Christmas, and significant family events, like christenings and weddings. There was however one member of my extended family with a lively faith, my grandmother on my father's side, who was a lay worker at a church for several years. She was, and remains, a friendly lady who was trained as (and married to) a teacher. I was about thirteen years old when I started actively practicing my faith and I wouldn't really say I had a hugely 'in-your-face' conversion experience but I was very inspired particularly by the writings of the reformers; what these heroes of the faith wrote nearly five centuries ago inspired me but of course the Almighty had given me the free gift and grace of faith in Him. After a few years I felt a strong call to personally reaffirm the vows made at my baptism and to mark my trust in God by being confirmed, which I was on St Stephen's Day (that is to say Boxing Day) in 2016. So, why did I mention my grandmother earlier? The reason for that is that she had been praying for the conversion of myself and my family (as she does to this day, now joined by myself) and that she had been 'planting seeds' of faith from when I was a small child. Although it was God who chose me to have faith in Him he also chose my grandmother to be part of this multiplication of the kingdom of God through her prayers and actions. After coming to faith, I have found myself changed in many ways by the hope of salvation. Chiefly, I have experienced a great sense of purpose in the knowledge that God is calling me to be His disciple. As I continued to grow in faith, I became progressively more comfortable with prayer and started trusting in Christ more and more. I have since grown to trust in God's purpose for myself and the world and dedicated myself to the freedom that comes from obedience to God and an openness to the Holy Spirit. I believe there is no real path to freedom and joy apart from that found in the salvation which God offers to the faithful.