

THE WITNESS

Te Kitenga - Te Amorangi O Whakatū



GATHER • GROW • GO



TRUMAN TRACK, PUNAKAIKI

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Kārearea

New Zealand Falcon
Falco novaeseelandiae

Gather, Grow, Go

Creating a culture of reaching, raising and releasing, illustrated by the example of the Kārearea, by Bishop Steve

Capable of flying at speeds up to 200km and catching prey larger than itself, the New Zealand falcon is one of our most spectacular birds. You may recognise it from our \$20 note, know about the Marlborough falcon trust, or been lucky enough to observe them in your time exploring our beautiful region.

The New Zealand falcon is a magpie-sized raptor that feeds predominantly on live prey – either watching from a vantage point and making a fast direct flying attack, or striking and grasping their prey with their feet,

which are equipped with sharp talons. Adapted to hunt within the dense New Zealand forests they are also found in more open habitats such as tussock lands and hill country. More recently they have been discovered breeding in exotic pine plantations. The Kārearea lay their eggs in simple scrapes, meaning they can nest in a variety of locations, from within large trees, to on the ground under small rocky outcrops. A very versatile and adaptable species, our Kārearea once enjoyed a thriving wild population

across New Zealand. Now, unfortunately, they are a threatened species. There are an estimated 5,000 – 8,000 left in New Zealand.

The Kārearea is bold. Adaptive. Nimble. Adventurous. For these reasons we have chosen the Kārearea as a mascot for our Diocesan Vision: Gather, Grow, Go. We seek to be a growing whānau of disciples on the adventure to share Jesus throughout our region and the world. Let's take a look.



GATHER: THE ADAPTIVE HUNTER

The Kārearea can hunt in dense forest, open tussock land and hill country - it is adaptive to a variety of contexts. As people of God, we want to connect people to Jesus across a variety of contexts. We need to be adaptive in our ways of reaching the lost. Our world has changed. The way people connect has changed rapidly. Churches used to be places where people came to us, now the invitation is for us to go to the people. We need to be seeking adaptive ways of gathering the lost: this could include workplaces, cafes, sport or social clubs. People in New Zealand are needing and wanting to hear the gospel, but perhaps not in the way we have done it for the last 30 years. We need to adapt to "hunt in new territory".

When I was growing up in Kenya, we had mango trees all over the place. During the season for harvesting a lot of the young boys would go and get the mangos - you could see the ripe ones hanging off the trees, all lovely and bright yellow. But my friends and I discovered that many people didn't

realise the sweetest mangos are what you see last, hidden right within the bushes. These are the ripest and juiciest and most amazing! We discovered how to find them from within the very thick bushes, so when everyone thought the harvest was over and nothing left to find - that was our time to strike! We would go with a big basket and come back with wonderful, ripe fruit that had been hidden in the bushes. It's the same with the gospel: there is ripe fruit, but we need to adapt to find it. The Kārearea is at risk, and what was once a sustainable population across New Zealand has been declining. When we look at decline in the church we might think we are not making a difference, that people are not caring about the gospel, but it's like the hidden mangos in the tree. When we are adaptive, we can find them. Let us ask God for help to see the fruit around us. In John 4:35, Jesus challenges us to "open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest".

Take a moment to consider: *What are the opportunities God is laying before you to reach those who are not being reached?*



GROW: THE NIMBLE GUARDIAN

The Kārerua is nimble in its breeding habits: it will lay its eggs in a variety of locations – in between clefts in large trees, and on the ground on rocky outcrops. It doesn't need a standard nest and can lay eggs and grow its hatchlings everywhere. We are invited to be a church that is a disciple making movement: intergenerational, with a variety of ways to grow God's people. We are invited to be a church who makes disciples in a variety of contexts, not locked down to programme or a church building. Perhaps this means we "do" church in homes, social clubs, sports centres. All of us can grow and be nimble in our faith. The key is to ask: What is God saying to me? What am I going to do about it? When we find out what we are learning from God and put into action what we are doing about it, we will grow. It is possible to be committed to church services, go along and get input every Sunday, but not grow. We need to hear and respond to what God is saying to us. Across our diocese a number of "huddles" are beginning to emerge. These are not bible studies, rather they focus on connecting *Up*: our relationship to God, *In*: our relationship to other disciples, and *Out*: our relationship to pre-Christians. This process of hearing and responding to what God is asking of us is best done in community, where we can be accountable to each other and report back to each

other. As a diocese, we desire to see young and old in some sort of context where we are being asked and are asking those questions, and growing in our relationship with God. We want to be family. We want everyone to know they belong. We can ask these questions in our alone time with God, or in a small group context – a huddle or home group – but we also have the opportunity to do it in our larger parish context and as a diocesan whānau. Gather to connect and grow. We already have some great opportunities to gather as a diocese: Convergence Camp, Leadership Conference, and regional Equips. There were a lot of comments about the joy and encouragement of Convergence Camp as a place to connect with God and one another. Camp is one of the places you get a real sense of what it means to be whānau together: young and old following Jesus, listening to God, being together, and enjoying His creation and environment. Let's continue to cultivate that whānau. As Paul reminds us in Ephesians 4:15, "Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ".

Ask yourself: Who is one person you can journey with and be asking those questions and reporting back to on a regular basis?



GO: THE FEARLESS FLIER

The image of the fearless flier is about sending and boldness. We are invited on an adventure with God. The Kārerea can reach up to speeds of 200km, and catch prey mid-flight! They are our fastest bird and able to catch prey bigger than themselves. This is bold! Boldness and fearlessness is part of the adventure God is inviting us into. We are not blind-fearless or reckless, rather bold in our conviction of God at work. In John 5:1 Jesus says, "I can only do what I see my father doing". God invites us to dream. He goes before us so we can follow him fearlessly. He invites us to have Kingdom influence wherever we are. God invites us to raise up leaders who are courageous and know they have something to offer.

The idea of being a fearless flier is not so much about position; it is about influence for the kingdom. Our dream is that across all generations we will be raising up leaders with courage,

conviction and boldness to use the gifts God has given them to bring kingdom influence wherever God has placed them. 2 Corinthians 3:12 says "Since we have such a hope, we are very bold". I was very encouraged to see one of our teenagers preaching in one of our congregations recently. Let us be willing to release leaders, to develop a culture where everyone can have a go at developing their gifts. A people where leading is not just for clergy, but all have a place – young and old. I was part of a church in Kenya that was planted through children's ministry. It was called the Children's Church and the whole focus was that the children are the leaders of today. We had kids leading and it was driven by the children with a bit of adult help. Children are the best evangelists – they have such a way of connecting!

I invite people across the diocese not to miss out on identifying, raising and releasing our people to serve in places where God's called them. *Is there anywhere God is inviting you to grow in your boldness?*

“

I can
only do
what I see
my Father
doing

”

Diocesan Family News

People and Changes in our Whānau



MARIE-JEANETTE VAN DER WAL, PICTON MINISTER: We were excited in February to announce the appointment of Marie-Jeanette van der Wal to the full time position of Minister in Charge at Picton, commencing in early May. Marie-Jeanette's journey has been a multi-denominational one coming from a Reformed background originally. She works as a counsellor and is studying towards a BA in Counselling, and has also studied through Dallas Theological Seminary. She is mission-minded with passion and experience of working with those on the edges. She is excited about engaging in new ways with the community and offer hospitality in Christ's name. Married to Hans, a barrister, they have three adult children: Michelle, Saskia England, and Renata.



KINYUA KATHURI, ST STEPHENS MINISTER: It was wonderful to welcome Kinyua, Alice, Kara and Kega at the Installation service of Kinyua at St Stephens, Tahunanui. Kinyua had been Lead Pastor at Ingestre Street Bible Church, Whanganui, for the past few years. His wife Alice worked in a half time role as Associate Pastor. They both have strong academic qualifications. Kinyua has a Masters in Divinity from AIU (Africa International University), where they met and God put a call in their hearts to take the gospel to the West. Together they have two young children: Kara and Kega. Kinyua has experience discipling and raising young Christians into leadership. His emphasis in recent years has been on "transformational gospel-centred preaching".



SPANKY MOORE, PIONEERING MINISTRY ENABLER: We will be welcoming Rev Joshua Mark Moore (Spanky) to the newly created and strategic role of Pioneering Ministry Enabler in our Nelson Diocese. For Spanky this will mark a homecoming to Nelson where he grew up. He is currently a Senior Ecumenical Chaplain at Canterbury University, and a Young Adults Ministry Developer in the diocese of Christchurch. He has a proven record of being able to reach out and make faith connections with young people who are normally outside the reach of the church. His appointment is seen as vital to the outworking of our diocesan vision to develop pathways to discipleship, raising 50 pioneering ministers in 10 years and the planting of new communities of faith (or church planting).



ZANE ELLIOTT, RICHMOND VICAR: We were very pleased to announce the appointment of the Rev. Zane Adam Elliott as Vicar of the parish of Richmond. Zane graduated with a Bachelor of Theology degree from our own BTC in 2019. He is married to Karen and they have two children, William and Amelia. In 2020 they returned as a family from working in the mission field in Jakarta where Zane was Associate Minister and Acting Vicar at All Saints, Jakarta. Prior to this, Zane was Chaplain at the New Zealand Defense Force, Burnham, and served his curacy at St. Matthews, Dunedin. Zane brings a deep love and passion for Jesus and God's word, a commitment to the church and a willingness to connect with the community with an "every member ministry".



DAVID HOLLINGSWORTH, BISHOP'S CHAPLAIN The Ven David Hollingsworth, Bishop's Chaplain and Vicar General retired on 12 March. Bishop Steve has loved working with David and appreciates the immense support he has given to him as a new bishop and his wise, strategic leadership in the diocese for over a decade.

"It has been a rich season for me," David says, "Made so by the support and encouragement of countless people ... Our diocese is in good hands, with a clear sense of direction under God and Bishop Steve now has his new team in place, thanks be to God."



SIMON MARTIN, BISHOP'S CHAPLAIN: Bishop Steve was delighted to announce that the Rev Canon Simon Martin will become Bishop's Chaplain and Vicar General in the Diocese of Nelson, following David's retirement. Simon's skills and experience are needed in the diocese as we enter a new season of growth. He has been part of All Saints family for about 12 years, 9 of those as Vicar. All Saints holds a legacy of raising up leaders who have ended up serving the Diocese in wider role. Mark Chamberlain moved off to the same Chaplain role, Andrew Burgess to his role at Bishopdale College and now Simon. All Saints is indeed a sending Church and embody our vision of Gather, Grow, Go! Thank you Simon and All Saints. Simon intends to start his new role early May.



GLEN ASHWORTH, NATIVITY VICAR: We welcomed the Rev Glen Ashworth and his family into our Marlborough whānau in February. Glen became vicar of St. Aidan's Remuera after a time as a Deacon from 2015. He has a Bachelor of Theology degree and an Honors Degree in Biblical Studies. His background is in education, having a Bachelor of Education degree and having taught three years in Taupo (his home town) as Head of Art at Lake Taupo Christian School. Glen is married to Sarah Jane and they have three young children: Lilly, Finn, and Daisy. Glen describes his ministry style as collaborative/consultative. He sees his main focus being the development of our Christian faith and practice for the work of ministry in all areas of our lives, sharing the gospel in all its fullness.



Who is the Bishop's Ministry Team?

The Bishop's Ministry Team exists to connect, equip and support ministry leaders across the diocese. Our team includes the enablers, but also many incredible people (like Anita and Deborah) who work in ways far beyond their official titles – including event planning, communications and liaison. It is a new season for the BMT, with a lot of fresh faces for you to get to know. We encourage you to reach out to our team members where they can help – to make connections, ask questions, for training, or to talk through a dream God has placed in your heart. We thank God for the people he has brought together and the work he is doing, through our whole whānau, in our Diocese.



BISHOP STEVE MAINA

Bishop



WATIRI MAINA

Pastoral Care Enabler



REV SIMON MARTIN

Bishop's Chaplain



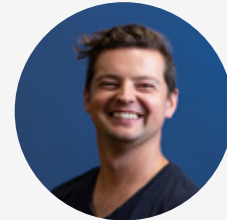
ANNIE FRASER

Diocesan Secretary



LYNDA MOSES

Prayer Ministry Co-Ordinator



REV BRAD WOOD

Youth and Communications
Enabler



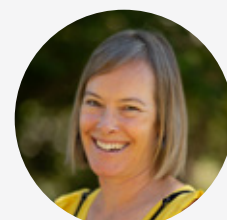
REV DR GRAHAM O'BRIEN

Ministry Education Enabler



NATHAN HUGHES

Social Services/Community
Ministries Enabler



GRETA GREENWOOD

Children and Families Enabler



COURTNAY WILSON

Care for Creation Enabler



SPANKY MOORE

Pioneering Ministry Enabler

ANITA JONES-STILES

PA to Bishop

DEBORAH OLIVER

PA to Secretary

THE SPACE BETWEEN

Learning to leave the gaps, by Courtnay Wilson, Kaikōura

In this Lenten season, I find myself thinking a lot about The Space Between. Have you ever considered that God is often found in the space between things? Of course, God is with us all the time, but unless we allow for the space between, it's difficult to become aware of God's nearness.

Artists know that the space between matters. In Maori art the negative space is as important, or even more important, than positive space. When I took a watercolour painting course last year, the instructor encouraged us to practice drawing by focusing on the space between things; for example, drawing a dining room chair by representing the spaces between the legs.

In New Zealand, we're often in a rush to fill The Space Between, whether it's the space between words because we're uncomfortable with silence, the space between items on our to-do-list because we equate busyness with importance, or the space between on our shelves, filling our homes and lives with more and more stuff that we don't

really need.

The challenge I've set myself this Lenten season is not to rush to fill the space between. Not to rush to grab my phone if I have a spare moment. Not to rush to run an errand if I have an unexpected gap in my day.

**“Unless we
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The biggest challenge has been not to fill the space between meals with snacking. In New Zealand, most people are privileged enough to have three meals a day, with snacking in between. I've come to adore morning and afternoon tea, but our bodies don't often get a chance to experience real hunger anymore. We tend to graze throughout the day, often

mindlessly or out of boredom. We feast daily but hardly ever fast. Without fasting, though, it's hard to really enjoy feasting. Jesus expected his disciples to fast, just as he expected them to give alms and to pray. And fasting has always been an important discipline in the life of the Church. In the Anglican tradition, we have feast days that remind us that feasting and fasting go hand in hand.

I'm giving intermittent fasting a go during Lent. Fasting has not been a big part of my journey as a Christian. Just mention the word and I start feeling hungry. Intermittent fasting is about changing not what you eat but when you eat. The idea is to create an eating window, typically between five and eight hours per day, and to only drink water (or tea/coffee without milk or sugar) outside of that eating window. My eating window opens in the afternoon and ends after dinner. So far I can report increased mental and spiritual clarity, better sleep, and, surprisingly, clearer skin. It seems that so much of our body's energy is directed towards digestion, that when our bodies get a break from having to digest food, a good spring cleaning can happen on a cellular level. Indeed, medical science is now linking intermittent fasting with a range of health benefits. If you'd like to learn more, check out *Eat, Fast, Feast: Heal Your Body* by Nourishing your Soul

by Jay Richards. He explores what we can learn from both modern science and the ancient monastics about fasting.

When my window opens, I notice that I'm more mindful about eating. There's an intentionality that comes with eating when you're not eating all the time. I'm reminded that eating is a holy act, to be done with care, because for any creature to eat, another creature, whether seen or

unseen, must die. We are caught up in a mysterious and holy web of connectedness with other creatures. Food is thus a gift to be savoured one bite at a time.

Regarding what I eat when my window opens, I'm more than ever drawn to whole foods, lots of fruits, veggies, nuts and fish. I'm not a vegetarian, but try to really reduce the amount of meat I eat. I call this "Reducitarianism". It's a helpful term to use in

conversation with vegetarians/vegans and committed carnivores in that it lowers the defences that so easily go up when people talk about food.

In what ways may God be challenging you to keep, rather than fill, the Space Between?

Here's a delicious recipe I'd recommend giving a go:

Baked Haloumi with Chickpeas and Greens

5 mins prep, 20 mins cook. Serves 4

Ingredients:

- 2 x 400g tins chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 400g cherry tomatoes, fresh or canned
- 3 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 100g curly kale – you also could use spinach or other winter greens
- 225g halloumi, sliced 1cm
- 130g fresh pesto
- A handful of fresh basil or herbs to garnish
- Crusty bread, to serve (optional – you could also serve over pasta if you have hungry teens to feed)

Method:

- Preheat the oven to fanbake, 200°C.
- Put the chickpeas and tomatoes in a large baking dish. Drizzle with the vinegar and oil, season and toss to combine.
- Roast for 10 mins or until the tomatoes are starting to soften slightly. Remove from the oven.
- Add the greens to the baking dish and toss gently.
- Top with the haloumi and place under the grill for another 10 mins, or until the haloumi is golden.
- Divide into bowls, top with pesto and scatter with the basil. Great served with crusty bread.

(Note: You should talk to your doctor before trying intermittent fasting if you are over 70, have underlying health conditions, or any history of a disordered relationship with food)



LAKE ANGELUS HUT, ROTOITI

NAME _____

AGE _____ CONTACT _____

Colour for fun or enter our competition! What's the prize? **A \$30 Manna Bookshop voucher!** Anyone is eligible, from toddlers to nonagenarians.

To enter, send your completed masterpiece by mail to: The Anglican Centre, 48 Halifax St, Nelson. Or scan and email it to: comms@nelsonanglican.org.nz

Out of the mouths of babes

A 9 year old boy and 10 year old girl from our Diocesan Whānau share some of their thoughts on Church with Greta Greenwood, our Children and Families Enabler. We will call them Frank (F) and Daisy (D).

How long have you been going to Church? Why do you go to church?

F: I have no idea... 9 years? Because I am a Christian.

D: I think I have been going my entire life... 10 years. Because I like praising God.

Why do you think it's important to go to church?

F: Because you get to be with other people to worship God...

I guess.

D: Because Jesus is very special and I think he deserves being praised.

What do you like about it?

F: Its fun and I enjoy it lots. I like Sunday club because you do fun activities and you get to read the bible.

D: I like going to Sunday club to play some games and read the bible. And I like at the start where we get to sing the songs. I like praising God... Like I said before, I think he deserves it and I know it's for a good reason.

What do you think other people like about it?

F: The same as me! I reckon they like being there with other

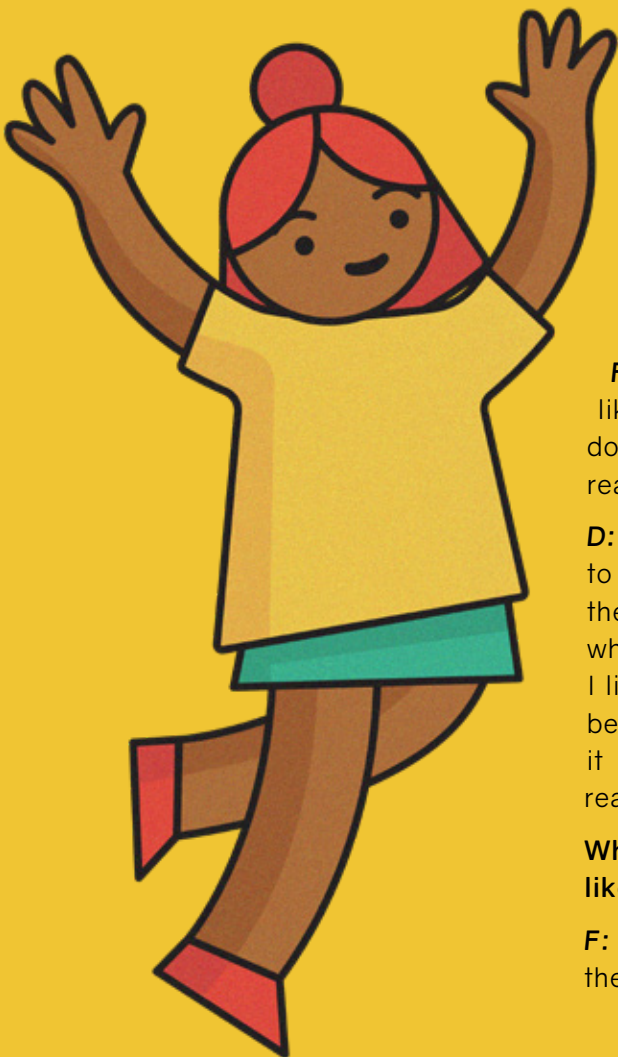
“I like praising God ... I think he deserves it and I know it's for a good reason”

people and having fun and talking about God and stuff.

D: Well, I know my sister likes praising God, I guess and my Mum and Dad have a strong faith and they like to come and praise him too.

What don't you like about church? Why?

F: Nothing... Apart from the fact that it's on a weekend, because



I like not going anywhere on weekends and just relaxing.

D: Maybe sometimes, at Christmas and other times we don't get to go to Sunday club but that's not that bad cause we do different stuff in church.

What do you think would make church better? Why?

F: Maybe it could be on a Wednesday after school? And I think there should be yummiier food!

D: Nothing. I think it's perfect the way it is really... Actually, maybe we could have the biscuits with the sprinkles on top for morning tea!

What do you think God might think about your church?

F: That church is great and He thinks that everybody should go to church so that they can worship Him.

D: I think He enjoys watching how many people come to

praise Him.

What parts do you think He might like/not like?

F: I think He likes the singing and the people being together. I think He doesn't like it that the kids and youth group are in two different groups. I think He would like it better if they were together.

D: I think He likes the bit where we sing songs and when we read from the bible. He might not like the fact that we like the coffee and biscuits so much!

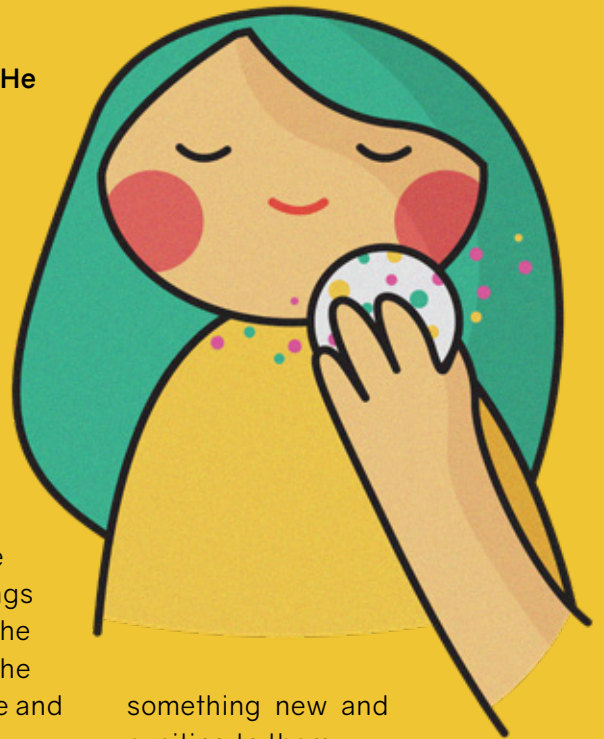
Have you ever invited your friends to church? What did they think?

F: Yes I have. I think they found it

something new and exciting to them.

D: Well I asked Mum if I could invite my friend who used to go to church. I talk to my friends about church. At Easter I told them about the story and they were amazed about the part where Jesus came alive again.... They said "How is that possible?" and I said "Everything with Jesus is possible!"

I haven't told them about the Christmas story yet though, but I think they will be amazed at that one too!





SIMPLY ANGLICAN

A reflection on Anglican roots by Graham O'Brien, Nelson

I wonder what first comes to mind if you are asked about the beginning of the Anglican Church. For many it might be Henry VIII and his desire for a male heir resulting in more than a few marriages, divorces and beheadings.

But the truth is that Christianity has been in the British Isles from about 200AD through people like St Patrick and later Augustine, who became the first Archbishop of Canterbury (the head of the English Church), at the beginning of what is called the medieval period in Western culture.

The word "Anglican" actually means "Anglo/English" so the "Anglican Church" originally meant the Church in England. You might have heard the term "Anglicanism" which now means the global expression of the Christian faith, that follows the Anglican form of worship and structures.

The roots of the Anglican Church, its DNA, is firmly planted in the protestant reformation. This was a time of spiritual renewal that began in the 1300s, and 200 years later produced the Anglican Church. What is so important

for us to understand is that the focus of this renewal movement was the desire for everyone, from farmhand to King, to have a personal relationship with God. How do you develop such a relationship? By reading (or hearing) Scripture for yourself in your own language, because Scripture has the spiritual power to move people to love God and do good as a result. It was, and is, the Gospel of Jesus Christ that has the power to turn people to God and transform lives. The central importance of Scripture is just as real for us today, and it is easy for us to forget just how radical it was to have a Bible in English – so let us not undervalue the Bible we have in our hands. It is also important that we enable others to hear the Bible in their own language so they too can come to know God's amazing love.

**“THE FOCUS OF
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So how did the Anglican Church develop with the Bible at its centre? The answer, developed by Thomas Cranmer in Henry VIII's time, was in our Anglican worship, to have worship with the Bible at its centre.

First, to have an English Bible and a Bible reading plan (we call this a lectionary) so people can hear/read the whole Bible – privately each day and together each week.

Second, a prayer book for daily and Sunday services. Importantly, the words of these worship services are mostly taken from the Bible, so in saying these words we are reciting Scripture.

These services also emphasised the theology of the reformation: for the Bible to be the supreme

authority; for people to be made right with God (justified) by faith alone through God's grace alone – as shown in the cross of Christ; for all people to relate to God personally, meaning an emphasis on the priesthood of all believers and a life lived to the glory of God.

Third, for worship to balance Word (readings and sermon – God's Word proclaimed) and Sacrament (celebrating Holy Communion – God's Word enacted).

Through saying the words of Anglican worship, just as others have done before us, we are being soaked in Scripture that transforms us through the power of the Holy Spirit – that, for me, is at the heart of being Anglican. As we do so, we also need to

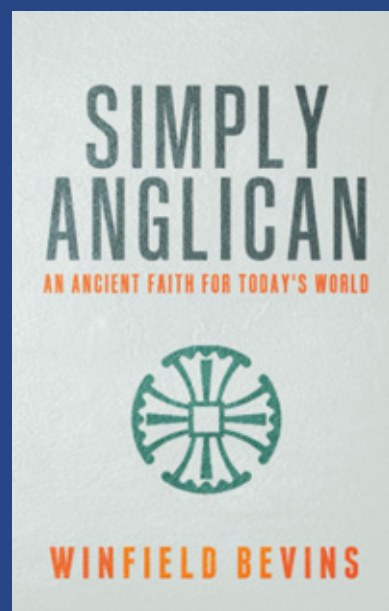
remember that we do not stand alone. Today the Anglican Church is a vibrant, dynamic church that has been embraced by many different cultures and languages around the world.

May we be excited to be part of this movement – an ancient faith that focuses on the importance of Scripture in our lives, and is relevant for today's world as people seek to connect with God with depth and meaning.

Each Parish has recently received a copy of “Simply Anglican” - borrow yours if you want to go deeper into discovering and celebrating our Anglican DNA and why this is important for today's world. This would be a great book to give to anyone who is new to the Anglican Church and is wondering what Anglicanism means. It is also a great refresher for those of us who have been Anglicans for a while, as well as a great resource for small group discussion.

Further Reading:

Ashley Null and John W. Yates III (eds), **Reformation Anglicanism: a vision for today's global communion** (Weaton [Illinois]: Crossway, 2017).

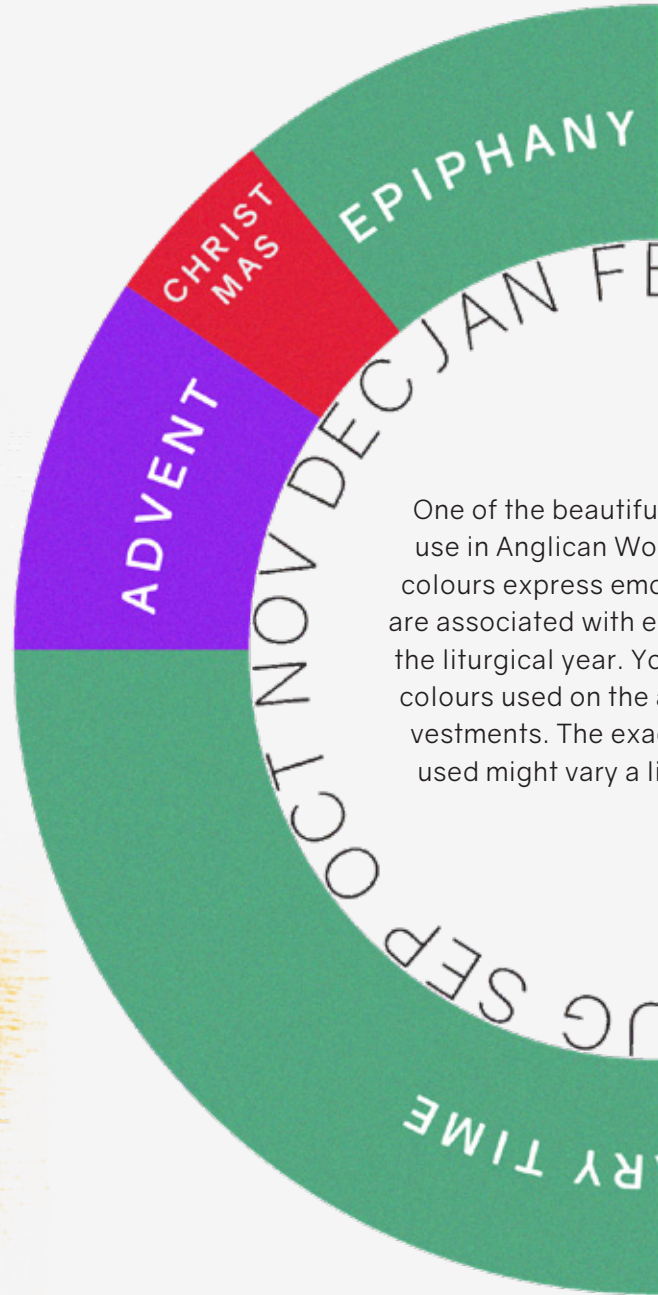


Seasons of the Lit

The colour of Advent and Lent. It is the ancient Royal colour and symbolises sovereignty of Christ. Purple symbolises penance, preparation, penitence, sorrow and repentance.

The colour of Christmas, Epiphany of our Lord, Baptism, Transfiguration Day, Easter, Ascension Day, Trinity Sunday, Thanksgiving Day, and All Saints Day. It symbolises purity, innocence and new birth. White is also used for weddings, baptisms, funerals and special occasions.

Joy and celebration. Symbolises what is precious and valuable and so symbolises majesty, joy and celebration. Metallic gold also symbolises the presence of God. It is most often used with white for the seasons of Christmas and Easter.



Liturgical Calendar



Visual symbols we use in worship is **colour**. The colors and ideas that represent each of the seasons of the year. You might notice these colors on the altar and the priests' vestments. At different times colours are used, and that is ok.

Red is used for Holy Week, (Palm Sunday through to Maundy Thursday), Pentecost, Confirmation, Ordination and Feast Days. Red is indicative of the Holy Spirit and Martyrdom, it signifies blood, action, fire, charity and spiritual awakening. It also references the sun and the joy of life and love.

On Good Friday the cross veiled in sheer black and the altar is bare, with no other decorations or colours. Black symbolises the absolute, constancy, eternity or the womb. It may also denote death and fear.

The colour of Ordinary Time, associated with the time the Church began to grow and spread the Gospel to all nations. It is the period we live our lives when neither in feasting or in penance. It symbolises growth, the breaking of shackles, freedom from bondage, and fertility. In the Christian context, it represents bountifulness, hope, and the victory of life over death.

TE TAONGA O TE REO

The importance of the Māori language by Richard Ellena,
Nelson

Ngā mihi nui ki a koutou.

**Te aroha noa o to tatou Ariki, o
Ihu Karaiti ki a koutou.**

**Greetings to you all and the
grace of our Lord Jesus Christ
be with you.**

Nelson Mandela once said, “If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language - that goes to his heart.”

And Charlemagne is quoted as saying, “To have another language is to possess a second soul.” But I think the quote that inspired me to accept the challenge of writing this article comes from the brilliant movie director, Federico Fellini, who said, “A different language is a different vision of life.”

Over 35 years ago, at St John's College in Auckland, the study of Greek and Hebrew were the standard language options – as they had been throughout the College's history. But in my first year at St John's, a new course in Māori was offered, and only two of us enrolled in it. While Greek

and Hebrew were the obvious choices for those wanting to go deeper into scripture, it seemed that learning Māori was an amazing opportunity for those with a missional heart. Our tutor, an amazing woman of Ngāti Porou (East Cape) descent, gave us “total immersion” – which means essentially that only Maori was spoken from the moment the two of us walked through the door to the time we left. And she had a deep belief that you couldn't learn the language divorced from its culture so she took us outside our comfort zone into the heart of Māori.

By the time I left St John's and headed to my first parish placement in Timaru, I was mildly fluent in conversational Māori and reasonably confident in the more formal Māori of the marae. I carried a licence from the Bishop of Christchurch to serve as curate in the parish of St John's Highfield and a second licence from the Māori Bishop of Aotearoa (Bishop Whakaahui Vercoe) to serve as Missioner to the Māori people of South Canterbury. It

was this second licence that, over the next seven years turned my euro-centric world upside down – hence the importance of the quote from Fellini.

However I was very hesitant in agreeing to write this article for the Witness because, over the past 25–30 years, once I arrived in Blenheim, I had little opportunity to use the language on a daily basis and the fluency has all but disappeared; but not my deep concern for the issues of justice for Māori. So I feel very totally ill-equipped to teach anyone how to speak Māori today. I can simply give one or two personal insights into the language as I experienced it both in my years training in Auckland and then my years working within Tikanga Māori in Timaru and at Arowhenua in Temuka.

**“IF YOU TALK
TO A MAN IN A
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LANGUAGE -
THAT GOES TO
HIS HEART.”**

NELSON MANDELA

My first insight is that the “kaumatua” (the elders) are very encouraging when they see someone sincerely wanting to learn the language (as halting as we might be).

I vividly remember being welcomed on to one of the marae in Māngere for the first time. As the only male in a group of students from St John's it fell to me to give the “whaikōrero” – the formal speech in reply to their formal welcome. I had learned a short speech off-by-heart, rehearsing it over and over – but in the middle of it I had a brain freeze. Four sentences all began with the letter “k” and I totally lost track of where I was and simply mumbled a few words to finish. The other students sang a waiata (song) to conclude, and we then moved into the line to file past and hongī (press noses) with our hosts. As I approached one elderly kaumatua – one of the obvious leaders on the marae – my embarrassment at my failure to deliver, what I hoped would have been a confident whaikōrero, was evident. But this kaumatua gripped my arms tight and gave me an extended hongī. He then took me to one side and shared some words of encouragement and wisdom that I have never forgotten – words that inspired me to keep going.

The second insight is a little more practical and that is to work hard on the pronunciation of the words.

I have been in many situations where a speaker has attempted to be culturally relevant by saying (three times) the simple “tēnā koutou” but an incorrect pronunciation has made it sound artificial.

Some simple guidelines:

a is a short **ah** as in **ark**

e is a short **air** as in **hair**

i is an **ee** as in **meek**

o is a short **or** as in **core**

u is an **oo** as in **boo**

Practice saying these vowels til they become normal.

However that is the easy part. You will notice that Māori is full of double vowels (as in the word koutou). This is where our pronunciation often falls short. The best way to learn the correct pronunciation of these double vowels is to articulate the vowels individually and then run them together. It is important that each vowel is heard in the combination. Too often “koutou” is articulated as “koto” or “kutu.”

So, using koutou as our example, say “oar” and then “oo” and gradually run them together into one sound and that will be the pronunciation of that particular double vowel.

Some are simple (such as “ia,” “ea,” and “oa”) But try it on the following: “ae,” “ai,” “ao” (as in Māori), “au,” “ei,” “eu,” “oi,” “ui,” and “ue.”

This simple exercise will transform your enunciation of this beautiful language.

And then, of course there are those little dashes over the “ē” and the “ā” of tēnā koutou which indicates that each syllable in the word has to have a small stress on it – definitely not the “tenner koto” that we often hear. But that's another story and, with other insights, best left to the next edition of the Witness.

Gratitude Hive

Pleasant words are a honeycomb,
Sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.

Proverbs 16:24

Something
I think God
wants me
to know

Someone who
was kind
to me today

Something I
like in nature

Something I
love to eat

A special thing
I've learned
this year

Someone
who loves
me and
makes me
happy

An activity
I love to do

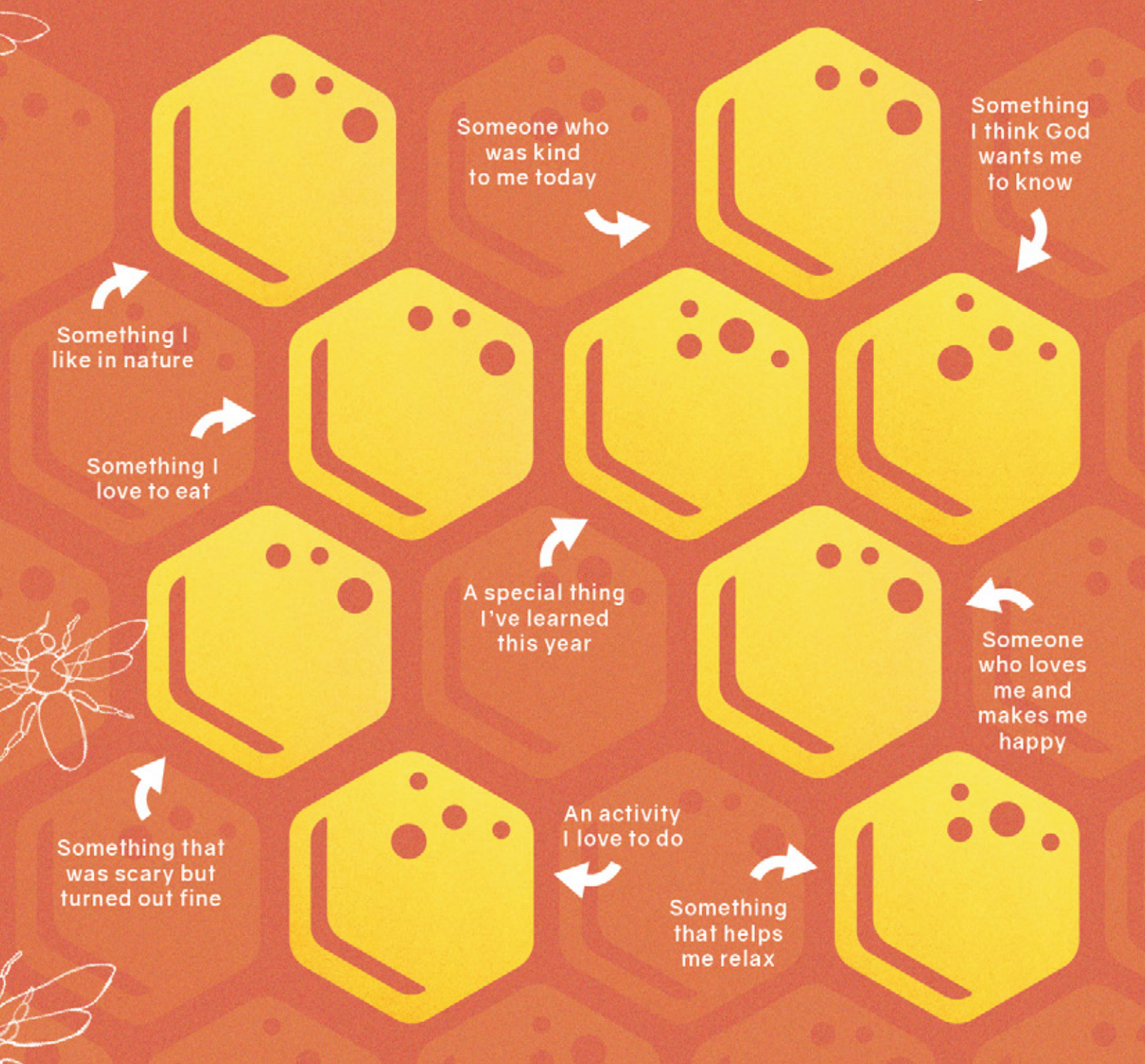
Something that
was scary but
turned out fine

Something
that helps
me relax

Thankfulness is a powerful way to keep a healthy perspective on life, and it has the mysterious benefit of making us happier people!

1 Thessalonians 5:18 says "Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you".

Find somewhere to sit down, and fill in the honeycomb with things you're grateful for. We've got matching sides for you to fill in and talk about together with someone you love.



I've been reading...

THE RUTHLESS ELIMINATION OF HURRY

John Mark Comer

Review by Brad Wood

My phone has been turned off for 24 hours for the first time in four years. If you had asked me four months ago whether I was in control of my phone usage, I probably would have said “yes”, but now I’m reconsidering that answer. I feel like a confession is in order. Kia ora, my name is Brad Wood and I am addicted to my phone.

So how does my addiction to my phone impact my walk with Jesus? Does it even matter at all? For me, my phone is about work, efficiency and connection. It means I can do things ten times faster, be fifty times more efficient

and connect with hundreds of people instantly. My phone symbolises a lifestyle of hurry. A lifestyle in which I am plugged in 100% of my waking hours. Is this what it means to follow Jesus in 2021? Is this what it means to follow the God who says “come to me all who are heavy laden, and I will give you rest”? After reading John Mark Comer’s book *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*, I have decided that it does not. This book has had a significant impact on the way I view my walk with Jesus. The most notable difference is what defines weekly sabbath rest for me. My goal this year is to have a weekly sabbath where I get to enjoy the rest Jesus promises me and my family. This means turning my phone off and staying away from social media once a week for 24 hours.

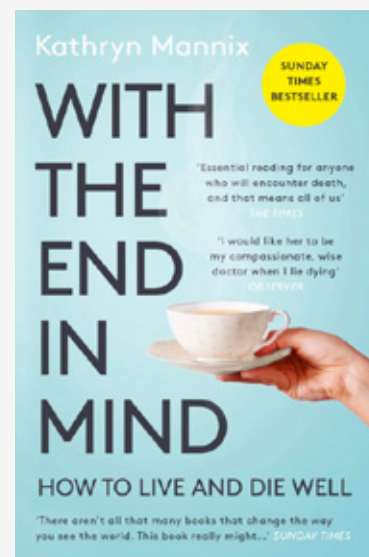
So, if you see me logged into Facebook on a Sunday, you have my permission to call me a stinking sabbath breaker and that I should be playing with my kids Trixie and Zee.

WITH THE END IN MIND

Kathryn Mannix

Review by Tim Mora

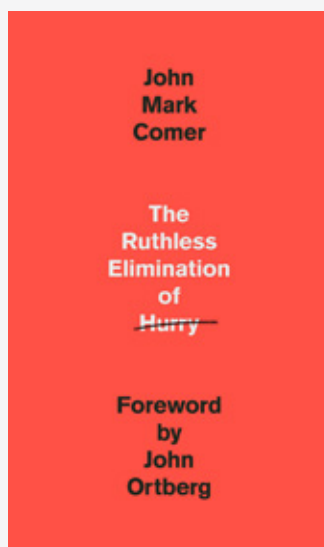
With the End in Mind is one of the most compelling books I have read on death and dying in a long time and one that I recommend every pastor and indeed person should read because death is



something we all have to face, whether from a pastoral or a personal place of being.

Kathryn notes that in our modern world people rarely die at home anymore and most end up in hospitals where the focus is more on preserving life than enabling a dignified and comfortable departure. Consequently we have lost our understanding of how the dying process actually occurs and misinterpret symptoms as signs of suffering and pain when often they are not. Similarly we have also lost our ability in many cases to know how to engage with the dying as families. We struggle to know what to talk about, how to say the D word, and so often what should be a very meaningful time becomes quite uncomfortable and sad.

Through a series of stories of



people who have died and how they and their families handled the dying process she teaches us that the dying process is nothing to be feared and instead can be a very significant time in a family's life as they farewell a much loved member, talking about what is important, reminiscing and not shirking the hard stuff.

From personal experience I can say I totally agree with her views. My Dad passed away from lymphoma in the hospital. He was dying, nothing could be done to save him and yet they persisted (and we knew no better) with taking bloods, chemo briefly and feeding him hope all in an effort to prolong something that could not be prevented. Consequently Dad did not have time to really prepare for death, to ask questions, to talk meaningfully as he could have with family. For my mother it was the opposite. Diagnosed with ovarian cancer she was opened up and it was discovered nothing could be done, she had days, at most a week to live. Immediately plans were made to transfer her to the local hospice where she lived for three weeks before passing away peacefully, comfortably, surrounded by family who spent time reminiscing, chatting, laughing, talking about the hard stuff. The contrast was incredible and neither I nor my mother would have cut short those three weeks. They were too precious.

So I strongly recommend people read Kathryn's book and watch

her videos on YouTube. It will help your pastoral ministry and be of benefit as you farewell your own loved ones.

AGAINST THE ODDS

Kevin Ward

Review by Nathan Hughes

Apart from All Black biographies, it is rare to come across a published homegrown 'success' story. For anyone interested in church leadership, *Against the Odds: Murray Robertson & Spreydon Baptist Church* by Kevin Ward is a success story of the best kind.

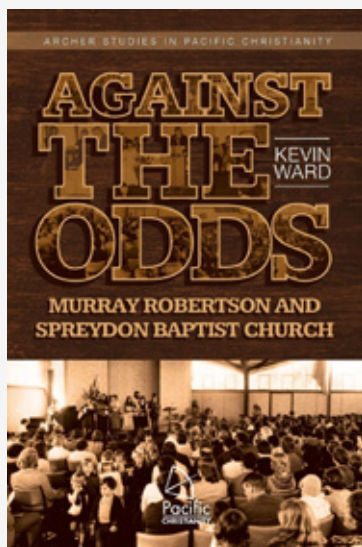
In 1968 Murray Robertson took over the leadership of a small elderly Christchurch congregation. The forty years that follow (yes, he remains there 40 years!) must surely be one of the most remarkable stories of

the church in New Zealand.

Against the Odds documents the leadership challenges Murray and the Spreydon team encounter as they navigate a journey through the charismatic renewal (70s and 80s), establish area congregations (80s and 90s) and community ministries, and then grow into a seeker sensitive megachurch (90s, 00s).

Spreydon's story is not just one of growth. *Against the Odds* gives one the impression of a leader who adamantly refuses to put up with church structures that do not facilitate the work of mission. All this of course amid a backdrop of growing Kiwi secularisation and church decline.

Murray's ability to learn, innovate, and contextualise while mainly firmly committed to orthodoxy, mission and biblical truth is inspiring and this story has many lessons for those with ears to hear.





Reefton

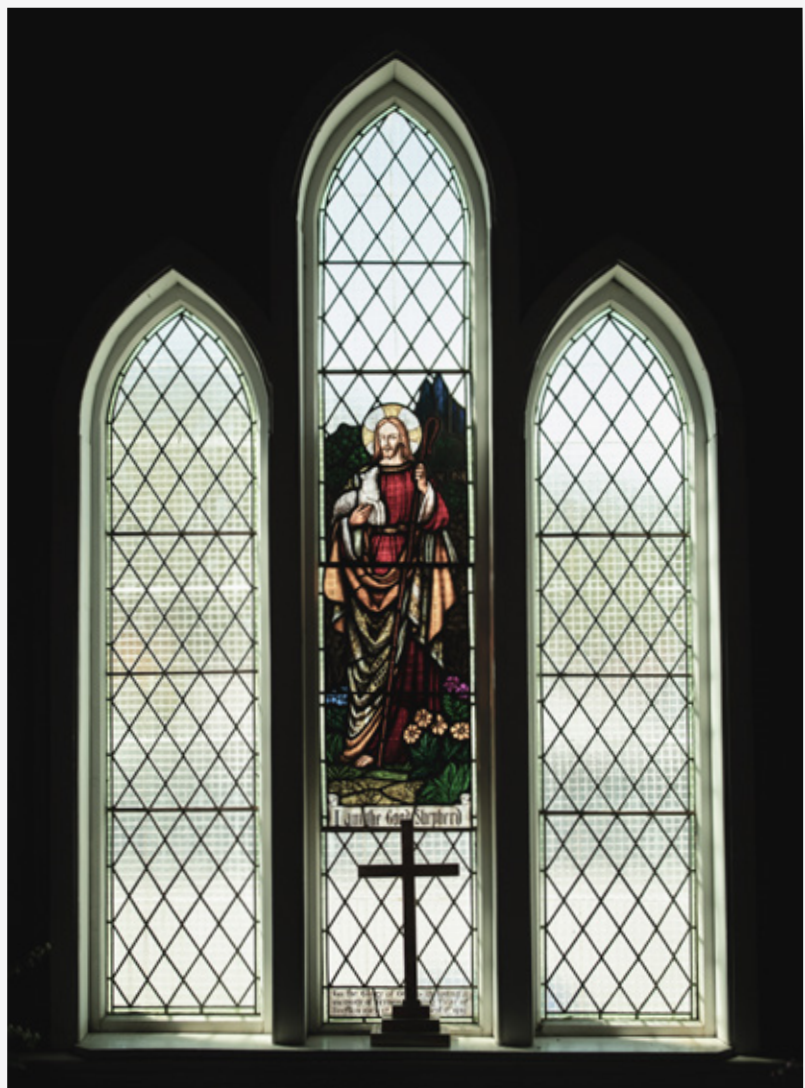
Reefton's claim to fame is that it is "the Town of Light" – the first town to have a public supply of electricity, in 1888, before even London and New York, and the first to switch to electric street lighting in the Southern Hemisphere.

The day we visit, Reefton is enveloped by a deep blue sky above us and a thick blanket of bush on the surrounding hills. Across the Inangahua river, rising from the hill, stands a striking, large, white, cross overseeing the area. It's lunchtime on a Monday, the main street is quietly humming, and we stop to catch up with Di Griffin, the retired vicar of St Stephens. Reefton and the Grey Valley is a rural parish, serving a community made up largely of farmers and miners. The parish may be small in population, but covers an area from just south of Murchison, to Berlins in the west, Maruia in the east and Jacksons (on the Arthurs Pass route) to the south. Here's Di:

"Reefton is very aware and supportive of its heritage. Incredibly so. Paul Thomas came to Reefton in the late 1990s and applied for funding to smarten up the town. They repainted all the main buildings in historical fashion and it has spread with

a ripple effect. The style has encouraged a number of artisans to Reefton – painters, sculptors, photographers, you name it! We also have a thriving community who love the outdoors. Reefton boasts some of the best mountain bike and walking tracks in New Zealand, as well as a great skate park! Business opportunities have really expanded, especially

since we had fibre broadband installed. We often get visitors come through town, some to visit St Stephens because their grandparents were married in the church or a relative lived here. So often visitors comment that they can't believe how vibrant Reefton is looking. The town really has picked itself up – it really is the town of opportunity.



“There’s no place like the West Coast to raise a family”

My journey to Reefton began as I lived in Westport and raised three girls there. As my girls grew up on the West Coast they couldn't wait to get away, but now they look back and think that there is no place like the West Coast to raise a family – the towns are so small that everybody knows everybody, so no one can get away with anything! I eventually left Westport and moved to Nelson. It was there that I got back into church in a big way and began my studies at Bishopdale Theological College, graduating with a Bachelor of Ministry. At the time, Bishop Richard was thinking about where to place me and he said to me, “Do you think you could live in Reefton?” and I said to him “Of course!” It had always been

my intention to move back to the West Coast.

Our church, St Stephens, is a grade two heritage building. The foundation stone was laid in 1877 and in February 1878 it was officially opened. The church organ was purchased in 1909 from Beggs in Christchurch. There were hundreds of these that came to New Zealand and Australia and St Stephens in Reefton is one of only two churches in New Zealand which still has one in use. We're very proud of our little pipe organ.

We are definitely not 'high' church. Our worship is based on the Anglican Prayerbook, but very loosely. There aren't many children in our local churches, even though we have a local


Catholic primary school. So there is huge potential for someone who is gifted with children to come into Reefton and do something cross-denominational. It's the same situation for youth, there is no programme here for them. There is huge potential for there to be something created for them.”

Come, join the adventure!

Matthew 9:37: Then He said to His disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest.”

If you feel God might be calling you to see Reefton, “the Town of Light,” illuminate the light of Christ, we'd love to hear from you.



The background is a dark blue-grey color, decorated with various autumn-themed silhouettes in shades of brown and orange. These include maple leaves, acorns, and other leaf shapes scattered across the entire page.

Give thanks to
the Lord, for

He is good,

His love endures

forever.

Psalm 107:1



Convergence 2021

**A reflection on her learnings from Convergence by
Jaimee MacDonell, Nelson**

The week leading up to Convergence was one fraught with questions of my own self-worth. I'm sure many can relate to the pressure society puts on people to seem outwardly put together. Often the smiles we wear are a mask we put on to portray the life we wish we had, instead of confronting the trials and emotions we are faced with and allowing others to see the reality of our situation.

I was filled with questions and

struggling to find the right answers. God is incredible; He is all-powerful and all-knowing. Psalm 147 vs. 4 "He determines the number of the stars and calls them each by name."

So why do I matter to Him? Why do I matter to anyone?

I came to know and love Jesus a few years ago, and it is remarkable to look back and see the journey He has taken me on. I have changed and grown through the experiences I have

had and given my life over to Him to mould me into the person I need to be. I struggle with the idea of not having control over who I might become and how I might get there. Despite the love that I have for Him, it is easy to let the enemy into my thoughts and allow Him to make me question my faith. Do I love Jesus? I can answer that without question – yes. But does He love me and why? Why do I matter amongst the billions of other people on this earth? What makes me special or necessary?

Convergence Camp came at the perfect moment for me.

It's a time to gather together to worship and fellowship with others who feel the same way

about God and who want to spread his Gospel. It is also about learning and digging deeper into His word and His love. Where else can you strike up a conversation with someone washing their dishes next to you about Jesus and your faith and feel encouraged and uplifted afterwards?

The camp is an opportunity to connect with others in our church community who you might not have met before or who you want to know better. It is also an exciting way to get out and enjoy camping, the beach, meeting new friends and all that the amazing Kaiteriteri area has to offer. The children's programmes that are held during the sessions are a wonderful way for kids to make friends, learn about God and have a lot of fun.

Wesley Smith from Aspire Church was our first speaker and in the



first session he focused on the importance of relying on the Holy Spirit instead of our own strength. This is a fundamental characteristic of faith. His objective was to help us realise that we aren't designed to walk through our Faith journey without God's grace and empowerment using the analogy of the two trees in the garden in Genesis 2:8. The tree of life represents choosing God's way and leaning in to Him in times of trouble versus the tree

of knowledge where you choose to go your own way and overcome trials through your own effort.

One tree focuses on what you can do and the other on what Jesus has done. When you are wrestling with the enemy in whatever form he has taken, do you take your troubles to the Lord and rest knowing that He is there: "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future'" (Jeremiah 29:11) or do you battle the enemy on your own, expecting the outcome to be victorious.

This session convicted me to be more reliant on prayer when my emotions threaten to get the better of me, and to be assured that the only voice I should be focusing on is the one that is building me up, not bringing me down. I am guilty of trying to control the narrative and only giving myself over in part. I want God to change me and my life,



but there are still things that I cling to and allow to shift my focus – like the voice inside me that tells me not to step out of my comfort zone because I'm not good enough, that I don't matter.

One tree focuses on getting God's approval, the other on receiving God's love. I felt as if the message had been written for me alone as I grappled with the enormity of what God was revealing to me. How difficult is it to relinquish the control in your life? John 14:15 says "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." When I am feeling low, I let my internal struggle take over and overwhelm me to the point where this spills out into other areas of

"The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is upon me, for the Lord has anointed me to bring good news"

ISAIAH 61:1

my life – into the words I speak to my children, into the relationship I have with my husband and into the effort I put into what needs to be done; and then the guilt I feel for allowing that to happen tends to make the cycle repeat itself. How do I break that cycle? That was the focal point of our next session with Wes.

How we can apply this to our own

lives? When we accept Christ as our Saviour we invite the Holy Spirit to dwell within us, but do we call on the Holy Spirit to remain upon us?

"And I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptize with the Holy





Spirit" (John 1:33).

"The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is upon me, for the Lord has anointed me to bring good news" (Isaiah 61:1).

Wes pointed out that we need to create an environment where the Holy Spirit can abide and endure within us. Only the Spirit of God can change the heart. In order to let this happen, we need to make sure He is welcome, acknowledge His presence and minister to others. When I start to recognise the feelings of self-loathing or unworthiness growing inside me do I expect the Holy Spirit to act or do I call upon Him to help me through my battle?

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths" (Proverbs 3:5-6).

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by

prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-7).

"We need to create an environment where the Holy Spirit can abide and endure within us"

"Cast your burden on the Lord, and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved" (Psalm 55:22).

The Bible has so many verses of encouragement and instructions on what we need to do when we

are challenged. I am so accustomed to handling difficulties my own way and it will take time for me to break that habit, but I have committed myself to the task of calling on the Spirit to abide within me and upon me. There is no quick fix but I believe that, as it says in the Word in Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

The three tools Wes emphasised were to:

- Make sure He is welcome
- Acknowledge His presence and regularly check in with the Holy Spirit, and to
- Minister to others. Use your gifts to bless others.

Unfortunately I missed the evening session with Alistair Simmons who spoke on prophecy and the power that holds. His work in this ministry is inspiring and it was evident that the message he brought touched many hearts. It is so important that churches regularly and zealously work together to keep the dialogue open between different denominations.

Bishop Steve Maina's message on Sunday morning was entitled "God's Grace in Darkness."

God does not promise us a life without trials. His promise is that we will never be alone through them.

"When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk



through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you" (Isaiah 43:2).

What a fitting end to the wrestling and struggling I had been going through in my own mind. I was not alone in my wandering through the wilderness. God allows us to go through trials and pain to strengthen us so that we will learn how to put our trust in Him and Him alone.

Steve emphasised that we should never think that God has turned His back on us. When we begin to doubt God's goodness, we begin to doubt His power and stop going to Him for help. Trials deliver God's blessings. It is never easy to hear that our lives are not meant to be easy, but try looking at it from this

perspective: during Bishop Steve's ordination service the Bishop of Nairobi Chapel, Kenya said "If you haven't met the devil recently, you're probably walking in the same direction, but if you're living counter-cultural to the purposes of the evil one, you will meet often and you will be persecuted."

"In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" (2 Timothy 3:12). How incredibly confronting and yet powerful to know that although our struggles are certain, God is always there.

Steve alluded to the growth of a plant and the importance of its roots; if a plant is deeply rooted in good soil, the strength of the sun will not make it wilt and die.

However, a plant with roots in rocky, unyielding soil will perish. Therefore if we are deeply rooted in our faith, the trials sent to test us will not break us but help us to grow and become more fruitful. I am determined to find the joy in the darkness and discern what it is that God wants me to "prune" in my life.

"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect" (Romans 12:2).





STALWARTS OF FAITH

The story of Alison Brice from Church of the Nativity, Blenheim, by Rosemary Francis

In April 1964 Alison and her husband crammed their four year old son and a four month old baby into their old Morris E series car, along with a carry cot, a pram, several suit cases, household goods and a boxed cat (who yowled all the way over Cook Strait in a very new Aramoana ferry) to a town called Blenheim. Knowing no one there, Alison thanked God for a neighbour who attended Nativity Church.

On Sunday she took Michael to Sunday school. It was the fine brick building we still use, with old wooden buildings behind it. One of these, the Sunday School, was tiered with 6 rows of little wooden chairs. She was met by the superintendent Miss Viggars, a dear old lady who had been teaching for many years. All her children enjoyed their Sunday school years, especially the end of year Christmas nativity

play. Her youngest son sang "Oh Christmas Tree" so sweetly, but with no microphone, his grandma didn't recognise his solo performance.

The first service Alison attended, the church was full of strangers and all the women wore hats! She had recently returned from England, where hats had been declared not essential, so she reckons her bare head started a new Kiwi trend!

She started going to the evening service, as babies and toddlers were not welcome in the morning service. After the service Mrs Kirkham invited people to the old vicarage, a two storey wooden building after the 1880s style, for supper and a singalong.

Outside the old church, along Seymour Street, were two tennis courts. Alison regretted she was unable to join the tennis club because babies were unwelcome, and her husband worked. But one Saturday she was asked to fill in as they were one short. Although she hadn't played tennis for 15 years, Alison managed a win in the 3rd set. Later the tennis club folded and one court became the present Nativity car park and the other one was grassed. As a teacher at Blenheim school Alison took a softball team each week to play on that grassed area until the Nativity Courts retirement villas were built. During her first term on vestry,

it was she who chose the name "Nativity Courts."

Alison's church involvement started when Rev. Ron Taylor encouraged her to become a lay reader at the 8 am service. She has since served as leader of AAW (Anglican Association of Women), organised several fund-raising fairs, and facilitated Bible College courses. She has arranged several Parish dinners including the 75th Anniversary; and was also on the committee organising Nativity's 100 years celebrations.

This stalwart parishioner has served on Vestry for 25+ years, including frequently being the secretary. Alison has also been a Synod representative and diocesan nominator, a Junior Church teacher, and assistant in rest home services. She is now a chaplain to the elderly, which includes visiting, serving Holy Communion, and being responsible for pastoral care to five retirement homes through a team of Nativity volunteers.

Alison is back on vestry and is on the Building Committee responsible for major upgrades in Nativity Church as we seek to be a light to our community. She is looking forward to the improvements to the hall and kitchen, followed by compulsory earthquake-strengthening the church.

I asked Alison for some special memories to share, and her

highlights included the first Nativity event she attended. It was the 50th Anniversary dinner which was held in a hangar at Woodbourne. It was a sit-down dinner with ham and salad. There were also big celebrations most decades. She enjoyed fairs, dinners, auctions and games evenings; and parish camps at Rotoiti and Kiwi Ranch.

Alison recalls the biggest upset when a group of St Christopher's worshippers decided they wanted to become a parish separate from Nativity. "It was my first term on vestry and it was a sad experience with much pain and harsh words," she said. Alison remembers speaking in favour of the split because as a teacher, Schools had just been through a huge educational upheaval where administration was given to individual schools and it seemed to be working. With the benefit of hindsight, Blenheim has benefitted from two parishes which both had room to grow.

Alison recalls all vicars since Rev Kirkham. Each brought different ideas and leadership and made good contributions to Nativity. The one who stands out in recent times is Rev Richard Ellena who became Bishop of Nelson. "I was honoured to nominate Richard from the Marlborough Deanery because I had a strong message from God that Richard was His chosen one; which proved to be the case," said Alison.

"One funny incident that happened at the Parish camp at Lake Rotoiti was the service on Sunday morning. Richard was outstanding for using drama in his services, and this morning at the lake he decided to take his boat out on the lake for the service. Unfortunately the bung had not been replaced in the boat so the service that day was even more dramatic than he planned! That camp was a great way to get to know our new young vicar and his family and I still have good memories of it and sharing the joy of Nativity family fun."

Asked what advice she would give young Christians, Alison replied "live with God, bring all your wants and desires to God, trust God. Work for your dreams and don't give up. Then, when you are my age you will look back and see how good God has been to you."

“

Live with God, bring all your wants and desires to God, trust God. Work for your dreams and don't give up. Then, when you are my age you will look back and see how good God has been to you.

”

ALISON BRICE



WITNESSES

An exposition into art with Peter Wetherall, Māwhera

The Church of San Michelle in Carmignano, Italy houses a tender masterpiece; Pontormo's painting of the Visitation between Mary, the mother of Jesus, and her cousin Elizabeth. The Gospel of Luke 1:39-45 tells us that soon after the Annunciation, Mary travelled to visit with her cousin Elizabeth, who was herself pregnant with John the Baptist. When Elizabeth hears Mary's greeting, the baby John leaps in Elizabeth's womb and, filled with the Holy Spirit, she rejoices in God's great salvation.

The first thing we notice about this work of art are the vivid, jewel like colours that Pontormo uses to draw us into the painting. The bodies are sculptured in pinks and oranges and greens. The robes billow and roll, like clouds.

We are soon drawn to the beautifully tender gestures shared between Mary on the left and Elizabeth on the right. Their arms intertwine and their eyes lock in gazes of great tenderness and beauty.

We then realize that there are two witnesses to this scene, for standing behind Mary and

Elizabeth are two onlookers, who look directly out of the picture at us, fixing us with their gaze, asking us: "What does all this mean?" It is only when we look closer that we realize that these two onlookers are, in fact, also Mary and Elizabeth. This adds great psychological depth to the painting for the participants, who act out the joyful event of the coming of the Lord Jesus, look out at us and ask for a response.

Then we remember that in this painting there is a fifth witness, the, as yet, unborn baby, John the Baptist. What is his response to the good news of the coming birth of the baby Jesus? He leaps for joy! For John knows the destiny of this child, later he proclaims: "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:28).

God chooses wonderfully when He chooses His witnesses. Who is the first person to hear of the incarnation of the Son of God? A humble young woman named Mary. Who is the first person to hear of the resurrection of the glorified Son of God? A humbled young woman named Mary.

While this painting is not of the crucifixion of Jesus or His taking down from the cross, it does speak to us as we come into the season of Easter. For it is about witnesses. We are reminded that witnessing to Jesus often carries a cost. As Mary later cradles the baby Jesus, she is told that her own soul will be pierced with a sword (Luke 2:34-35) and she later witnesses the crucifixion of her Son. John the Baptist, the forceful proclaimer of the coming Kingdom, will later pay with his own life for that witness (Matthew 14:8-10).

Considering the true meaning of Easter always begins as an internal journey. We cannot fully understand the depths of God's mercy and love in the act of the crucifixion but there is great reward in trying to. Just as Mary and Elizabeth do in this painting we, as Christians, look towards each other with our precious inner knowledge that we serve a Saviour who is compassionate and who promises us a future. But Mary and Elizabeth also look outwards: to a hurting and broken world.

The salvation won on the cross by Jesus is perfect and complete - except for our witness to it.

God chooses His witnesses wonderfully. He chose you.

The Heart of

I WILL TAKE AWAY YOUR STONY HEART AND GIVE YOU A

Rosemary Francis, of Blenheim, shares a reflection on The Heart. All surgery, and the discovery of a deep

ROSE FRANCIS: My family have all died from heart problems; grandparents, parents and two brothers who died quite young. Then my husband developed serious heart issues. I became well acquainted with the Cardiac Unit and the great work they do. On one visit to Christchurch Hospital, there were six desperately ill men in the Cardiac Ward waiting for a death, and hoping it would not be their own. "What does it feel like, knowing that for you to live, someone else has to die?" I asked. He lay back against the pillows, his face almost as white as the bed linen. "I am already praying for that person," he whispered breathlessly. "And I'll pray for him every day for the rest of my life."

I glanced around the ward of mostly middle-aged men who were hoping for a suitable donor heart to be found before it was too late, Christmas and New Year are good times for organ donations, they tell me; when many young people are involved in serious road accidents. Healthy hearts from brain-dead young adult donors are the most likely to be successful as transplants. Many

of these become available from vehicle accidents in the festive season.

How would you feel having a new heart beating in your chest, knowing that it had come from a dead person? Surely, life would take on a whole new level of significance, responsibility and indebtedness to the one who had died, so that your life could be renewed! Even so, however advanced surgical skills become, organ transplants can still only extend the life of the human recipient for limited period of time.

The Bible speaks of another death which brings unlimited life to the recipient's heart and soul. When Jesus Christ died as a substitute for the sinfulness of all people, He gave us the opportunity to receive eternal life! But, just as a person waiting for a new heart has to accept the gift of a donor organ, so we have to accept the gift offered by God's Son.

How do we achieve this? Essentially, three distinct steps are involved. The first is to recognise our shortcomings and confess them to God. The second

is to accept that Jesus died so that we may be forgiven by His Father. Thirdly, we need to make Him Lord of our lives and tell others about Him.

The result - suddenly there's a new meaning and deeper purpose in our life. This is the real renewal, the change from 'waiting for death' to 'Living new life' What's more, this abundant life takes us through to eternity.

There's no better time to receive this gift than at Easter time!

The Cross is the heart of Easter.

The Lord says "I will take away your stony heart and give you a heart of flesh, and I will put my spirit in you" (Ezekiel 36:26).

"A heart at peace gives life to the body" (Proverbs 14:13).

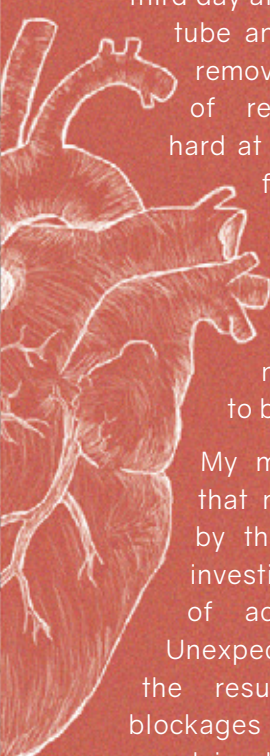
God blessed Rosemary and her husband with a further decade of happy life together, which they spent in his service.



f the Matter

A HEART OF FLESH, AND I WILL PUT MY SPIRIT IN YOU.

ongside is her late husband's testimony of recovery from open-heart surgery and her understanding of Jesus' suffering.



GEOFF FRANCIS: It was the third day after surgery. The drain tube and catheter had been removed, and the challenge of recovery was hitting hard at my confidence in the future. Several weeks earlier, an oncologist had diagnosed a large, aggressive malignant tumour in my bladder which had to be removed promptly.

My mental adjustment to that news was interrupted by the results of another investigation into the onset of acute breathlessness. Unexpected, (for me,) the results showed severe blockages of the arteries supplying blood to my muscles; and it could not be dealt with by angioplasty. This put a new dimension on the risk of anaesthesia, and the information had come to hand only just in time!

The options at that stage were stark and uncompromising – urgent heart surgery, or a premature death fighting for breath. Unless of course, the

cancer took me first. After much prayer, my wife Rose and I decided that God's hand was in this, and that repairing the heart damage should take priority. So, arrangements were made.

A patient going into theatre for open heart surgery is not aware of the tools of trade about to be used – the circular saw and expanding clamps to crack open the ribcage, or the mechanical pump which takes over the functions of heart and lungs. But the after-effects of such surgery cannot be ignored!

Lying there in drug-fogged pain in the sterile hospital, I started thinking about how I should use the anticipated extension of life in ways which would honour God. I found myself with a heightening awareness of the agony which Jesus must have suffered during His last hours of life as he hung on a cruel cross.

The protestations of abused muscles, cut flesh and heart palpitations were hard enough for me to deal with, even with pain-relief medications. By contrast, Jesus had endured scourging, and had rejected any relief in

sipping drugged vinegar. He had been jerked upwards, attached to a rough wooden cross, by nails hammered through his hands and feet, ripping his flesh. There, in the humiliation of his nakedness, he was surrounded by the mocking taunts of those who hated him, and wanted him to die.

What a difference in our circumstances! In my case, a scalpel had been used to heal a defective heart and extend life. For Him, a Roman soldier's spear through his heart ensured that He was dead. I was surrounded by loving members of my family, and skilled nurses. For Him, the gradual approach of death, and the realization that His heavenly Father had abandoned Him. Now I understood why water as well as blood flowed from His side. Quite simply, it accumulates in the chest cavity during severe trauma, adding to the difficulty of breathing. He was in the prime of life, while I was nearing the end of mine.

Yet it is His heart, the broken one, which counts. It is Jesus who offers salvation to all who are willing to accept Him as Saviour and Lord. I commend Him to you.

The background of the page is a light cream color, decorated with various abstract, hand-drawn shapes in blue, orange, red, and grey. These shapes include circles, wavy lines, zig-zags, and stylized human figures, creating a playful and artistic atmosphere.

WONDER

Wonderful God
So awesome in power
Creator, Redeemer
From Him do not cower.

Made for His purpose
And formed for His love
You're watched and cheered on
By your Father above.

His love he has shown
In the gift of His Son
To die on a cross
A great victory He's won

Over sin's cruel hold
That bound us in fear -
Now through His great mercy
We all can draw near.

FUL GOD

Believe that He loves you
Only wanting your best
Just reach out and trust Him
With joy you'll be blessed

As into His great arms
Of love you can fall
Then rise up forgiven
And healed, to stand tall.

So give Him your praise
Lift high His dear name.
Give hope to the poor
And health to the lame.

Your purpose for living
To speak out His praise
The power of His greatness
And wonders of His grace.



MAMAKU GROVE, TAKAKA

Credits

EDITOR'S NOTE

Tēna koutou,

Praise God for this opportunity to share stories with our diocesan whanau through the Witness. We hope you find encouragement through the pages of this magazine. The ideas and opinions in these articles are those of the authors and may not be the official view of the Diocese, but through them we pray God speaks to you. We are so thankful to all of those who have been generous with their time and gifts and contributed articles to this edition of the Witness. If you have feedback, ideas or a submission for future issues, we would love to hear from you.

Arohanui,

Claudia Wood

CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Petra Oomen

CONTENT

Bishop Steve Maina	Nathan Hughes
Rev Courtnay Wilson	Rev Diane Griffin
Greta Greenwood	Jaimee MacDonell
Rev Dr Graham O'Brien	Rosemary Francis
Bishop Richard Ellena	Geoff Francis
Rev Brad Wood	Peter Wetherall
Ven Tim Mora	Jackie Simmons



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