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## *Themes for Word and Light*

The theme for the next edition will be **Water**. We look forward to your contributions. Photos welcome! Please send your contributions to Lynda, the Parish Administrator, by **21 April**. Remember that, to keep readers' attention, your articles should not be too long. If you have ideas for future themes, please let us know.

*The Editor has the final say as to the suitability of articles for inclusion.*

## Vicar's Voice

There are some wonderful stories of 'faith in action' recounted in this *Magazine*. This is an appropriate theme for Lent as, especially during this period of the Church year, we are called to reflect on our own lives of faith.



HERE I AM, LORD

Lent starts on Ash Wednesday and lasts until Easter Eve. Lent is a time for reflection, but also for growth in order to enter more deeply into the mystery of Christ. For the Christian, the exercise of discipline and turning to the cross, though it may mean sorrow for sin, is always a joyful acceptance of the goodness and forgiveness of God.

The word Lent comes from the old English word *lencten*, meaning lengthen. It refers to the lengthening of days in spring in the northern hemisphere. Just as the earth sees rebirth and renewal of the plants and flowers during this season, so Lent is a time for Christians to engage in spiritual renewal as preparation for Easter. Lent may not be in our spring here in Aotearoa but we can identify with the idea of rebirth and renewal – the 'lengthening' of our faith and its outworking perhaps.

The season of Lent derives from the ancient Church's period of preparation for those who were to be baptised at the Easter Vigil. That preparation included instruction, fasting, repentance, prayers and special acts of devotion. Today, we use this same period and some of those same practices to prepare for Easter, the Feast of the Resurrection of Christ.

Gradually over the centuries fasting became less rigorous. For most Christians today the fast is marked by a time of abstinence from something 'addictive'. 'Giving something up for Lent' is a token of not being bound or enslaved to material things. I also like to think of Lent as a time to 'take on something'. Often people use time or money in a positive way to take on some extra acts of love and compassion, for charitable giving or for prayer, reading or study. *Ash Wednesday* is a significant day. As Lent begins, we are invited to struggle against everything that leads us away from love of God and neighbour.

As Lent proceeds we focus more and more on the cross, through which love overcomes death. Traditionally on the fourth Sunday in Lent a relaxation from discipline was allowed, simnel cakes were eaten and those in domestic service were allowed time to visit home, hence *Mothering Sunday*.

Lent culminates in *Holy Week* when the final days of Jesus' earthly life are brought to the fore. Every day has a special association and many of the dramatic events are re-enacted in the services. For many Christians, Holy Week is the most moving and enriching week of the whole Church Year for in it we celebrate those events which stand at the heart of our faith, the dying and rising of Jesus our Lord and Saviour.

Please take time to look further on in this Magazine for our events for Lent, Holy Week and Easter.

With every blessing

*Sue (Vicar)*

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***Lo and Behold!*** by Helen DÁth

Some of you readers will be aware of how very difficult it is to find decent rental accommodation these days.

For several months it just so happened I found myself living in uncertainty about my future living arrangements. Why was it that most of my friends were more worried than I was? Some repeatedly hounded me with negativity, and when I replied 'I will be alright, you'll see. I have Faith!!' Then, as you would expect, most looked askance! So, I learned to smile and walk away – actually feeling sorry for them!

When the time came to start looking in earnest for a rental, I had a few worries about references, as I had not rented for nearly a decade, and referees I did have prior to that, had either deceased or disappeared! Then I had a brainwave – actually brought on by Faith! I asked Vicar Sue if she would kindly write me a character reference.



I had already applied for three properties with no definite connection when, all of a sudden, I received the most charming phone call asking me for an interview. It was then I discovered why I had been the chosen one, out of many applicants. In fact, I was the only one interviewed!

It was because the owners of the property are devout Christians and were totally smitten by Vicar Sue's reference!!

So this is how I got my new home. FAITH, absolutely!



### ***Hearing stories of people's lives*** by Frances Ferrabee

Being co-editor of the monthly newsletter at Metlifecare The Avenues requires the knack of not only producing articles of interest but providing information which benefits all residents living in retirement villages (the RVANZ works very hard to benefit residents of NZ retirement villages, eg those on lower incomes now eligible for the annual rates rebate).

A few weeks after new residents have settled into their new home, my job is to meet with them and together we create a brief, informative picture of where they have come from and their reasons for moving to a retirement village.

When you are over 70 years of age, and in many cases 80 plus years, if poor health perhaps requires such a move, a huge amount of strength, focus and determination is required – as well as 'persuasion' (either 'for' or 'against') by the 'family'. For some it can be a very happy time and a huge relief, for some people the trauma of giving up their friends and leaving familiar territory and, sadly at this stage in life too, marriage collapses are the reason.

My articles are published only with the consent of the resident, after they check the wording, dates, name places etc. changing things I may not have put correctly. Then there is always the dreaded 'photo' to contend with, and I surprise myself when my wonderful Huawei phone captures stunning photos that they are happy to run with.

An interview needs to be friendly and relaxed, and I am privileged to be part of those people's lives. They are talking to a stranger. I hear of their heartaches, the happiest times in their lives, often emotional because their own life expectancy is nearing an end, necessitating the move. And they have my assurance of absolute confidentiality.

Three new residents moved in just prior to Christmas, so I have three articles to write and complete by mid-February. There is always a certain amount of angst providing 'items of interest' for each monthly Newsletter, and that is when you realise why Christmas comes around so quickly. We remain a resilient team, supporting each other with ideas. We have an awesome Village Manager and care staff, with 24 hour help available.

One thing we retirees have in common – we all bring far too much furniture and 'stuff'. One decision I had made, which after 5 years still makes me raise my eyebrows 'why did I decide not to bring my new car-wash brush, with special bucket and car shampoo'?? Strange decision? The Oasis Op Shop benefited from that donation.



I pray for God's guidance in all things I take on, and I am privileged to be part of St John's, Otumoetai family Magazine.

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### ***Actions of Faith in Ethiopia*** by Bob Shaw

I had never experienced exposure to true faith in action until I found myself in Ethiopia charged with the task of assisting in the rehabilitation of the farming sector after the 1983/85 drought-induced famine, assigned by AGBA.AG to Deutscher Caritasverband to work with the Ethiopian Catholic Secretariat.

Here I met men and women whose whole existence was dominated by their faith and mission. There was Abba Antonius an Eritrean priest who lived a life devoted to his people's survival providing them with the bare necessities of life, food and water.

He tirelessly organized the distribution of food aid to the thousands of famine refugees and the digging of wells wherever water might be found in the dry and barren land. He found time to tell me what crop seed would be needed when the rains returned and helped in the distribution of the varieties I managed to find.

In the dusty Awash plains I met in Mata Hari, an Italian priest Father Rene, who devoted his whole life to the service of the people who lived and worked in the vast sugar plantation there. They were a mix of tribal affiliations gathered from a wide area, divorced from their cultural identity. He brought them together in his church, traveling far and wide on his decrepit motorcycle to minister to them, returning to the bare comfort of his mud walled hut beside the church. He was virtually blind, and everyone took good care to keep out of his way as he puttered around the irrigation canals. His neighbour was Lily, a Canadian nurse, who had left her home in Montreal to minister to the sufferings of the people in that dusty town on the main Addis Abba to Assab highway. These are but two examples of the people devoted in faith to the service of their fellow people.



There was also Sister Celestine in Sodo, who had devoted over forty years of her amazing life to founding schools for girls, a revolutionary concept in sub-Saharan Africa. She lived close by with her novices to Brother Antonius, who built clinics wherever he found a need and kept them serviced with trained staff and medicines.

I can never forget Father Thomas, Brother Simon and Brother Ignatius who had built a church in a remote village in the Mountains of Hararge, and who lived a very simple life devoted to the people of the area both Christian and of the Islamic Faith. Then there is Bishop Woldo of Meki who built a church in the newly designated state capital of Zeki against the will of the communist government and who nearly went to prison for his 'crime' of faith.

Actions of Faith never die as they live on in the good that they do.

## ***Faith is the gift of God*** by Beryl Dent

Faith is one of the seven virtues in the Anglican Church. A mixture of conviction, assurance and trust. This month we are going to be reading St Mark's gospel. In chapter 11 v.22 Jesus tells us 'Have faith in God'. In Ephesians St Paul writes 'For by grace you have been saved through faith: it is the gift of God'. Throughout the Bible faith is one of the most common words.

When I was younger, I had two very dear older (and wiser) friends who had for many years been missionaries in India. They taught me what real faith is. They related that they travelled on foot unless someone was passing and offered them transport. On one occasion they had been walking for several days and food and water had run out two days prior. They were tired, hungry and very exhausted. Thinking this was the end of the line as far as their missionary work was going, they sat down on the road and prayed that if they were to continue then they would trust God to intervene. They sat there having faith that their work wasn't finished and eventually heard transport in the distance. An old car arrived and behold food, water and a lift for several miles had arrived. They immediately gave thanks to God for his mercy. Their faith had not been in vain. They carried out their work there for several more years. They both died in New Zealand in the 1990s, very old ladies, but still preaching faith!



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## ***One Man's Vision*** by Brenda Harrison

This is a story of one man's vision to start a Christian College in Tauranga. That man was Graham Preston. I first heard that there was going to be a school when someone came to St John's in the mid 80's to tell the parishioners of what was to happen. A seed was planted and I knew that's what I wanted for my two sons.

When the school opened mid 1988 it had not received registration from the Ministry of Education and people like me who were taking their children out of their present schools were considered to be taking a risk in sending them to Bethlehem College. Before it opened there was a 'Quick Build' to build a classroom block so the 100 children could start school. This was all done by volunteers and took place during the weekend of Cyclone Bola so we had to contend with heavy rain and wind. I was on the catering committee. The photo is of me helping to peel what turned out to be a sack of potatoes.



Bethlehem College was a private school until 1999 when it became integrated with the state system. In order to pay the fees, I established my own business in Cherrywood – Cherrywood Typing Services. I remember one January, when both boys were at high school, I was wondering how I was going to meet my monthly commitment to the school. To my absolute surprise I got a phone call to say my name had come up in a monthly draw where the school pays your fees for you that month. I could hardly believe it – thanks to the Lord.

Although at times it was a struggle financially, we've never regretted the move to the College. Thanks to Graham Preston's vision to establish Bethlehem College; it was truly faith in action.

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### ***Faith stories in Northland*** by *The Reverend Sue Beverly*

'Faith in Action' is a good way of describing the lives of the early Christian missionaries to Aotearoa New Zealand who came here in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. You may well be familiar with their stories and have visited some of the related historical sites. It is hard to imagine the difficulty of the conditions in which they lived and worked. What follows is a necessarily much abbreviated account of a fascinating and complex period of history.

The first area they arrived in was Northland. John and I first visited some of the many related interesting historical sites in 2003. During our holiday in Northland in January this year we revisited some of these places and went to others we had not previously visited.

Like many things at the time, Christianity – in the form of the Church Missionary Society – came to New Zealand via Australia. The CMS began in London in 1799, when a group of Anglicans decided that the Christian gospel should be preached around the world. At that time very few Europeans lived in or even visited New Zealand.

In December 1814, the first missionaries arrived in the Bay of Islands, escorted by the chaplain to the prison colony of New South Wales, Samuel Marsden. The CMS had chosen William Hall, John King and Thomas Kendall for the task. The missionaries established their first mission at Rangihoua, under the protection of Ruatara, the local chief.

For nearly ten years, the CMS's Bay of Islands mission offered Māori training in new ways of gardening and farming and worked on forming good relationships with local people. But this did not convert a single person to Christianity. Henry Williams, who took over as the mission's leader in 1823, focused more on spiritual teaching and demanded that mission members improve their Māori language skills and preach to local tribes. In 1830, the first conversions came.

The Anglican CMS was joined by the Wesleyan Missionary Society (WMS) in 1823 and both groups began extending their operations throughout the country in the 1830s. Catholic missionaries arrived in 1838. In 1828 the WMS set up a new mission station at Māngungu on the Hokianga Harbour. Jean Baptiste Pompallier, a French bishop, founded a Catholic mission close by. In 1839 12 priests and brothers arrived to help.

Missionaries travelled widely on foot and on horseback to preach to Māori. Mission stations were established throughout the country. Missionaries such as Henry Williams became trusted peacemakers during the musket wars between tribes. Henry Williams also led missionary opposition to large-scale colonisation plans by the New Zealand Company. Missionaries promoted the Treaty of Waitangi to protect Māori land ownership. As the number of European settlers

grew and more Māori land was sold, Māori lost their respect for missionaries. When the New Zealand wars broke out some missionaries became chaplains to the government troops.

In 1854 the CMS decided to phase out its funding for the New Zealand missions. The WMS became the responsibility of the Australasian church in 1855. Catholic missionary work also declined.

On our recent trip we visited these places:

**Kerikeri Mission Station** was established in 1819. Built under the protection of local chiefs who were keen to harness the trade and technology of Europe, Kerikeri Mission Station grew amidst a backdrop of tribal warfare and ever-increasing visits from foreign ships.

At the heart of the Mission Station are two of the country's oldest buildings, the Stone Store and Kemp House. Built in 1832, the



Georgian-style Stone Store was originally a CMS warehouse but assumed various roles including a trading post, library, barracks and boys' school. It also served

as a general store. Kemp House, built in 1821–22 by missionary carpenters and Māori sawyers, is a family home of simple, Georgian design. It has changed little over time, despite bearing witness to many historically significant events.

**Pompallier Mission and Printery** on the waterfront in Russell, (formerly known as Kororareka) was built in 1842. The French-style printery and tannery combines fascinating Māori and Pākehā history and wonderful gardens. The property is very close to the wharf at Russell, infamous as the 'hell-hole of the Pacific' for the drunken and immoral behaviour of visiting seamen.



It was against this colourful backdrop that a group of French Marist Brothers – including Jean Baptiste Pompallier, after whom the property is named – arrived to set up a Catholic Mission in the settlement. Here church texts were translated from Latin to te reo Māori, then printed and bound. The Mission’s original printing press is fully restored to working order and there are displays of other curious printery and tannery equipment.



**Te Waimate Mission**, near Kerikeri, was built in 1832 under the direction of the Reverend Samuel Marsden and using local Māori labour. The Mission preserves missionary, farming and architectural history, as well as stories of important early encounters between Māori and Europeans. The once-extensive mission station was established by the CMS to instruct Māori in European farming techniques while promoting the



Christian way of life. As well as preserving stories of great endeavour, conflict and perseverance, it is a notable early attempt to recreate an English pastoral landscape. It is reached via one of New Zealand’s first roads. In February 1840, the Mission House hosted the second signing of the Treaty of Waitangi. A nearby church and graveyard provide a moving reminder of people who fell in the bloody Northern Wars.



**Māngungu Mission** was established on the shore of the spectacular Hokianga Harbour in 1828 as a Wesleyan Mission station. It is a simple building that looks out over a peaceful scene that belies the sometimes turbulent history of the area. Following lengthy discussions, the largest signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in the country took place here, with over 70 chiefs adding their assent before a crowd of up to 3,000 people. From 1840, the mission house was occupied by the Reverend John Hobbs and his family. The family left Māngungu for Auckland in

1855 and the house was moved to Onehunga where it was used as a Methodist parsonage and then sold to private owners. The mission house was returned to the Māngungu site in the 1970s, restored on behalf of Heritage New Zealand, and opened to visitors in 1977.



All the properties described above are in the care of *Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga*

We also visited the **Rangihoua Heritage Park** on Purerua Peninsula north of Kerikeri. The Park is a wonderfully peaceful place with glorious views and is the site of an important connection between Māori and Pākehā, includes the Marsden Cross and paths, interpretive



signs, an audio tour available on mobile and an open-air visitor centre. The Marsden Cross memorial, erected in 1907, marks where New Zealand's first Christmas Day was celebrated in 1814, led by Christian missionary Samuel Marsden and witnessed by Māori who lived in the

adjacent pā. The day marked the start of New Zealand's first European settlement, a situation that was only made possible because of the protection of powerful Chief Ruatara who had an understanding with, and respect for, Samuel Marsden. Despite Christianity initially not taking off with Māori, history was made at the site of Marsden Cross.

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### ***Maximilian Kolbe: Priest and Martyr***

Maximilian Kolbe was born at Zduńska Wola near Lodz in Poland in 1894. His parents were Franciscan Tertiaries and, beginning his training for ordination in 1907, he joined the Franciscan novitiate in 1910. He studied at Rome but, suffering from tuberculosis, he returned to Poland and became a lecturer in church history.

After suffering a severe illness, he resolved to publish a magazine for Christian readers and this soon gained a huge circulation. Soon his community was producing daily and weekly journals. After the Nazi invasion of Poland, Kolbe was arrested as an 'intellectual' and taken to Auschwitz in May 1941. There he continued his priestly ministry, secretly celebrating the Eucharist.

In the midst of the death camp's unimaginable daily horrors, he worked to encourage his fellow prisoners by setting an example of faith and hope. One day a prisoner escaped and, in order to bring an end to any future similar plans, the guards decided to punish 10 inmates of cellblock 14 by condemning them to death by starvation in an underground bunker. One of the ten began to weep and cried out 'My poor wife and children! I will never see them again!' At that moment Maximilian Kolbe calmly and purposefully stepped forward.



'I wish to die for that man. I am old; he has a wife and children'. Such an unusual offer surprised the deputy commandant, who asked Kolbe to identify himself. His response was simple and direct: 'I am a Catholic priest'. The commandant agreed to grant the request.

In the dank, crowded underground bunker with the other men, Maximilian Kolbe continued to set an example of faith and hope, leading them in prayer, singing hymns and encouraging them to focus on the promises of Christ. After they had been starved and deprived of water for two weeks, only Kolbe remained alive. The guards wanted the bunker emptied, so they gave Kolbe a lethal injection of phenol. He is said to have raised his left arm and calmly waited for the deadly injection. He died on 14 August.

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### ***The Gospel of Mark*** by the Reverend Sue Genner

Each year in the Lectionary of readings we concentrate on one of the three Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke); the Gospel of John is read at special times and seasons every year. This year its the year of Mark.

Mark's Gospel had rough treatment from theologians and Bible scholars for centuries. Because it was shorter than the other Gospels and used some 'rough and ready' Greek it was felt to be inferior. Perhaps Mark had written a 'condensed book' version of the Gospel (it was originally thought he'd got his version from Matthew). In recent years this theory has undergone a complete reversal. It is now believed that Mark was the first Gospel to be written and that both Matthew and Luke used it as source material when compiling their Gospels. While it is acknowledged that Mark's Greek is not as pretty as the other writers, there is now huge respect for Mark as a writer in the way he compiled these stories and cleverly structured this Gospel.

Where did Mark get his information? It may well have been from Peter and his sermons. This suggestion goes back to the early church fathers of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. If Mark is the 'John Mark' referred to in Acts then it was to Mark's house that Peter went when he was released from prison in Acts 12 so their association goes back a long way. Mark was called the 'interpreter of Peter' and it was believed that Mark recorded his Gospel shortly after the death of Peter in Rome.

None of the Gospels state who their writer is. That information generally came from the early church writings attributing it to particular writers. Mark states that he is writing a 'Gospel' from the outset and this left later scholars scrambling – what is a 'Gospel'? Current consensus has it that a Gospel is a type of ancient biography (and there were similarities to other ancient biographies in Greco-Roman literature). These Gospels however are also characterised by a strongly evangelical purpose – they are written to engage us in a response of faith and the first verse of Mark makes no bones about it 'the beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.'

Mark doesn't contain a birth narrative – unlike in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, we hear nothing about Jesus' early life from Mark. Mark's account of the resurrection is also confusing. If you look at your Bibles, there seems to be disagreement about where the Gospel



A voice cries in the wilderness:  
Prepare a way for the Lord,  
make his paths straight.

Mark 1: 3

of Mark ends depending on whether one looks at the earlier or later manuscripts. The early version ends quite abruptly. Was this Mark's intention? Did he never finish it? Did the ending get lost?

Mark's Gospel has its own style – it is vigorous and action-packed. We meet various groups of characters along the way and see how they respond to Jesus. This draws us into the story. Do I see myself as one of those characters? Are there other ways of responding to Jesus?

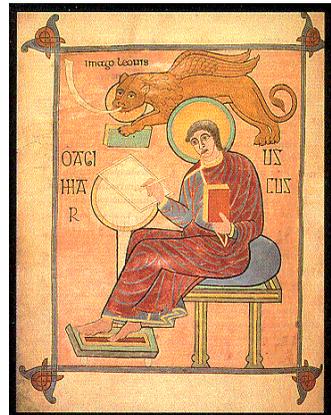
After reading the whole Gospel together in Lent, we will have another session where we will explore an overview of this Gospel. We can address some of the above questions as well as others and our own responses to this writing and its subject Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

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### *St Mark the Evangelist: an image and a poem*

25<sup>th</sup> April is the feast day of St Mark the Evangelist. The image here is from the Lindisfarne Gospels. Accompanying it is a sonnet by Malcolm Guite, a contemporary British priest and poet, one of four sonnets he has written on each of the four evangelists and published in his book *Sounding the Seasons*. For each of these sonnets he has meditated on the traditional association of each of the evangelists with one of the 'four living creatures' round the throne, and how that helps us to focus on the particular gifts and emphasis of that Gospel writer. Mark is the lion. There is a power, a dynamic a swiftness of pace in Mark's Gospel – his favourite word is 'immediately' – and that suits the lion. His Gospel starts in the wilderness and that suits it too.

But the great paradox in Mark is that the Gospel writer who shows us Christ at his most decisive, powerful, startling and leonine is also the one who shows us how he deliberately entered into suffering and passion, the great 'doer' letting things be done unto him.



## Mark

A wingèd lion, swift, immediate  
Mark is the gospel of the sudden shift  
From first to last, from grand to intimate,  
From strength to weakness, and from debt to gift,  
From a wide desert's haunted emptiness  
To a close city's fervid atmosphere,  
From a voice crying in the wilderness  
To angels in an empty sepulcher.  
And Christ makes the most sudden shift of all;  
From swift action as a strong Messiah  
Casting the very demons back to hell  
To slow pain, and death as a pariah.  
We see our Saviour's life and death unmade  
And flee his tomb dumbfounded and afraid.



## ***Reading the Bible Aloud*** by *The Reverend Sue Genner*

Reading scripture aloud is a very ancient practice – for thousands of years that was how most people consumed it. It is only in recent centuries, with the invention of the printing press and the increase in literacy, that reading scripture silently and alone has become common practice among Christians. Scripture was written to be read aloud and listened to. The first mention of reading the scripture aloud occurs on Mount Sinai as described in Exodus 24:7 *'Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it aloud to the people. Again they all responded, "We will do everything the Lord has commanded. We will obey."*. The Hebrew scriptures contain many accounts of scripture being read aloud publicly. Jesus announced his mission in the context of the public reading of scripture in Luke 4. In the Epistles the writer encourages Timothy to devote himself to the public reading of scripture (I Tim 4:13). Reading and listening to scripture helps to form our identity as the people of God.

In our worship services we have multiple readings from scripture each week. Our lectionary is a treasure but this exposure to scripture is somewhat piecemeal. Many of the books in scripture were designed to

be read at one sitting. All the epistles that were written to first century churches were probably designed to be read aloud at one sitting. It is likely the messenger who brought the copy of the letter then performed it in the context of church worship. We receive quite a different impression by reading the work as a whole. This year we have arranged to read the whole Gospel of Mark in one sitting together. Come and experience this ancient practice, you may never experience this gospel in the same way again.



### ***Feeling of Pride*** by Hazel Genner

My husband I have always been very proud of our 4 children and what they have achieved in their lives, and here is an example of why we felt particularly proud of one of our daughters. After completing her General Nursing training, our daughter Robin decided to further her knowledge of Midwifery, and she had heard that the best training course was in England. So off she went to Nottingham, where she was accepted in a year-long course in midwifery. She really enjoyed this training, and then decided she would like to work in a Third World country, so offered her services to Tear Fund for a position in such a country. She was offered work the little village of Thiet in southern Sudan (before the country was divided into between the North and the South).

After her first 6 months, Robin was granted a fortnight's holiday, and this is when my husband, Bill, and I travelled to Kenya to meet her. After spending an enjoyable time with her there, we flew back to Sudan, and then boarded a very small, 6-passenger plane to Thiet. Here we landed on a grassy airstrip, surrounded by welcoming local Dinka people, and so Bill and I felt we were transported into another world. Thiet and the surrounding countryside was the home of the Dinka Tribe – a proud people who were very tall, slender, and dark-skinned, with short close-cropped black hair. They lived in small mud huts with thatched roofs, and on each side of the 'main street' large Kapok trees grew, and consequently fluffy bunches of kapok were always floating around. The surgery where Robin and four other nurses worked, was a small, basic building of concrete blocks, to which

hundreds of Dinka people walked, often long distances, for their treatment. There were no doctors at this clinic, and the nurses' work was attending to ulcers and other wounds, treating for various tropical diseases, helping when necessary with births, and taking care of babies and children. I couldn't help comparing how little help these mothers needed to give birth, and how much we mothers in the Western world require at such times! The babies were so sweet, and when I went with Robin late one evening, as she was checking that all was well with various patients, I was quite touched to see these little babies soundly sleeping while still on their mother's breast.

The men, both young and older, tended their cattle, often having to drive them many miles away to find food for them. To us these animals looked very bony – not bonny and well-fed like those on our NZ dairy farm! The old, white-haired men and the women children remained in the village – and it was great to see the children running around, laughing and enjoying their basic playthings. The women did all the work around the village, preparing and cooking all the meals, tending to their gardens, and often walking for miles to collect water. They were so cheerful and friendly, and the nurses, plus Bill and I when we were there, were invited into some of their homes to take tea with them. What an amazing experience this peep into the lives of these people was for Bill and I! We have always treasured our time in Sudan, and felt so proud of our daughter and the work she was doing with the Dinka people.

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***Look who visited Playgroup  
at Christmas!***



## ***Kia Ora my name is Debbie***

My name is Debbie-Lee Handforth, I am the new Community Activities Coordinator for this wonderful parish.

What does the position entail you may ask? Well, here's a light summary of what I do: my main task is to run and coordinate our awesome Golden Age Programme.

I am in a support role for our Play Group Facilitator Fiona, which includes learning to run the Play Group should Fiona be unable to attend, ensuring we comply with legislative, curriculum and certification



requirements for the Ministry of Education. In the future I hope to research and develop more programmes for our older community with the help from Vicar Sue and our leadership team. I am sure that we as a parish will come up with some fabulous ideas!

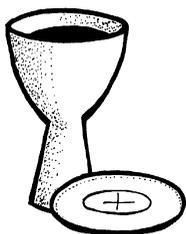
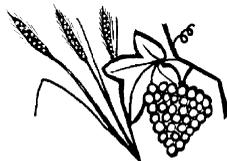
Here is a little about myself born and raised here in Tauranga Moana, my links are to Ngāti Rangi and Ngāti Ranginui, with a strong Scottish and Irish connect through my maternal mother's side. Our family grew up with strong faith and we attended St Mary's Catholic school in 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue. I have four beautiful daughters and two spoiled rotten granddaughters. A sincere love of people and animals has led me to being a late bloomer school-wise, going back to gain a degree in Social Work, soon to be completed in the next few years. Who ever said an old dog can't learn new tricks, just watch this old dog! We can achieve anything we set our mind to. Please feel free to seek me out and introduce yourself, I would love to get to know you all and meet all my lovely new whānau!

## **'Do this in remembrance of me'**

*A reflection on bread and wine by the Vicar*

*Jesus took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood." Luke 22:19-20 (NRSV)*

It begins with Jesus on the night before he died at the Last Supper with his disciples. It is about the grace of God and how we connect heaven and the ordinary things of life. Bread and wine – 'fruits of the earth and work of human hands' – these gifts speak of a need for **holy collaboration**, something both human and divine.



There are many things that could be said about the Holy Eucharist and the moment, at the heart of the service, when we take the consecrated bread and wine in Holy Communion. This article reflects on some aspects of the mystery of the Eucharist, a mystery which touches the life of the world.

Jesus' request to 'do this in remembrance of me' is one which Christians have tried to honour ever since. But over time, and with use, taking, breaking and sharing bread together has changed. Through the centuries and across different cultures, the attempt to 'do this in remembrance' has been experienced and understood in different ways.

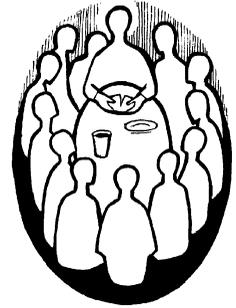
Some might say that when Jesus gave his disciples the bread and wine and asked them to do this in remembrance of him, he could not have had in mind what we do and say in our churches today. This may well be true, but it should not worry us. Gifts given in love and appreciation often mean much more in the hands of those who have received them than the gift-giver could ever have imagined or intended. If we give a gift that, with the passing of time, becomes valued and treasured we are unlikely to be offended if it isn't used in quite the way we intended. It may be so with Jesus' gift of bread and wine.

Countless people have received Jesus' gift and shared or handed it on to others adding his or her own layers of thankfulness and meaning. It continues to be a complex and lively process of practice and reflection. Together with much faith, prayer and love, this process has brought us from Jesus' command at the Last Supper to what we do and say in church today.

### ***Past, present and future...***

The word 'Eucharist' means 'thanksgiving'. We gather round the altar to re-enact what Christ did with his disciples at the Last Supper. We listen afresh to Christ's words which thank and praise God and ask us to do this in remembrance of him.

But the Greek word used for remembrance, *anamnesis*, implies much more than a mere recalling of an event from the distant past. Rather, it is the re-enactment of the past in the present, which itself influences the future. We gather around the altar to share in the memory of Christ's suffering and resurrection, but in doing so we bring the past to life and integrate it into our present experience.



We believe what Christ said. We believe that when we remember and act on his words, Jesus is present. This is a precious moment.

The bread and wine which have been brought forward to represent our life and work now become for us the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. He is present, as he said he would be, and is a reminder of God's unending promise. This moment reminds us of the importance of every single person in God's eyes and it brings into focus just how precious is the whole of God's world.

At the heart of the Eucharist is Holy Communion. When we share in this sacred meal we share in the life of Christ. We experience God's great desire to come to us and be one with us. Grain and grapes have been crushed to make the bread and wine for our communion. Jesus was also crushed for our communion; he was crushed and crucified on the cross so the power of God's love for all could be shown.

Human beings belong to each other and have the same source of life flowing through them. And yet we are also separate and unique individuals. Holy Communion does not avoid this tension, but acts it out: breaking into pieces something that once was whole. In the jagged edges of the bread broken by the priest, we can see our sense of incompleteness. And we are asked to receive the bread in our outstretched hands, a most moving gesture of acceptance. Our essential separateness is powerfully expressed in the breaking of the bread. But it can be touched with hope and healing when we recognise



that every single fragment is an indispensable part of the whole.

It is as if Jesus is telling us that the kind of wholeness and unity

which he knows with the Father was something we, too, can know. The gift he gave us was a symbolic wholeness broken into pieces and shared. The invitation is to discover that completeness and unity again as we learn how to re-member; putting our fragments together to make the whole. United as Christ's Body we can then go out 'to love and serve the Lord'.

### ***EVENTS FOR LENT: dates for your diary***

**Ash Wednesday:** Our main service will be held at **7pm** on **17 February**. This service, which marks the beginning of Lent, is an important observance in the church year. This full service of the Eucharist will include hymns and the imposition of ashes.

**Mark's Gospel:** a complete reading of this, our Gospel for the year, will take place on **Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> February** at **3pm**. This will be followed later in Lent by discussion opportunities.

**Losing and Grieving:** a reflective and practical workshop with Alister Hendery. **Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> February** from **10.30am until 3.30pm**. This is for anyone who wishes to reflect on their own experiences of loss and for people who want to support others who grieve. A simple lunch will be provided.

**Mark's Gospel:** a discussion opportunity (whether or not you heard the complete reading) on **Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> March** at **11am or 7pm**.

## **HOLY WEEK and EASTER Services**

Sunday 28 <sup>th</sup> March	<b>Palm Sunday</b> 8.30 am and 10.00 am
Tuesday 30 <sup>th</sup> March	Reflection, prayer and Taizé music
Thursday 1 <sup>st</sup> April	Liturgy of <b>Maundy Thursday</b> 7.00 pm
Friday 2 <sup>nd</sup> April	Liturgy of <b>Good Friday</b> 2.00 pm
Saturday 3 <sup>rd</sup> April	Service of Light for <b>Holy Saturday</b> 7.00 pm
Sunday 4 <sup>th</sup> April	Holy Eucharist for <b>Easter Day</b> 10.00 am

## **About this Magazine**

This Magazine is called *Word and Light* because our parish church is dedicated to St John the Evangelist. At the beginning of the Gospel of John there are many powerful images. Two of these are *Word* and *Light* and they are woven together. Jesus as the *Word* of God echoes the story of creation. Jesus, the *Light* of the World, is the one who shines in the darkness.



## **Contact Us**

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