

# Word and Light

St John's Anglican Parish, Otumoetai



Sports and Games  
March 2022

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## Themes for Word and Light

The themes for the next edition will be **Easter & Autumn**. Articles on other topics you think may be of interest are also welcome. As ever, please use your imagination – there are many possibilities. We look forward to your contributions. Photos welcome!

Please send your contributions to Lynda, the Parish Administrator, by **7 April**. Remember that, to keep readers' attention, your articles should not be too long (*up to 700 words*). 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

I read a press article a week or so ago that described Covid as the biggest killer of joy in recent times. Maybe you can identify with that as I do. The need to mask, scan in and show vaccine passports has certainly dented the enjoyment and spontaneity of, for example, going into a café or popping into an interesting shop or gallery when pottering about on holiday. And there is, of course, the central issue of concern about keeping free of infection. It is good, therefore, to read the articles in this edition of the Magazine which testify to the pleasure we get from sports, games and other similar pastimes.

When thinking about enjoyment, two passages from the Bible came to mind. The first is Jesus' words 'I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly'. *John 10.10*. The second is from the Book of Ecclesiastes: 'I know that there is nothing better for them than to be happy and enjoy themselves as long as they live; moreover, it is God's gift that all should eat and drink and take pleasure in all their toil'. *Ecclesiastes 3.12-13*. If those words don't seem immediately familiar then you will likely recognise the opening verse of that chapter: 'For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven...'

Ecclesiastes, which tells us about everything having a season, is a little known and under-rated book in the Wisdom section of the Old Testament. The narrator is a nameless person who calls himself 'Teacher'. He was a sage and philosopher probably living in the third century BC when Alexander the Great had made Greek culture dominant and the Jewish people were being stretched by a worldview beyond their experience with no prophets to guide them.

Sometimes, with dry wit perhaps intended to make his students laugh, the Teacher tried to make sense of his world, beginning with the question 'what do you get from your toil?' and concluding that human wisdom cannot work it all out. Unlike some Biblical Wisdom literature which begins with God and reaches conclusions about humans, he examines experience of a rapidly changing world in the light of belief in God. He challenges smug attitudes and is relentlessly intellectually honest.

He questions the meaning of life; why bad things happen to good people; why not just eat drink and be merry? the lack of security that wealth offers; why bother to work when life remains unrelentingly tough? what happens when we die? who listens to the tears of the oppressed and comforts them? how should we live amidst a general air of gloom? how to react to disaster? is this life all there is? if so, why not just live for pleasure? Put simply, is there order in the chaos of our world? These questions are as relevant today as they were all those centuries ago. The Teacher may come across as pessimistic and questioning, but he always refers to God. He spares us simplistic answers and his tenacious faith holds while he puzzles things out.

In a wider context, he observes that everything has a time and a season. One reading of this could be a reassuring assertion that, despite all the change and challenging ideas in his world, life has a rhythm and things are not totally beyond comprehension. The Teacher constantly draws God into the conversation and insists we must not give in to impotent despair but engage with life. He may be pessimistic compared to the rest of the Bible, but we can learn from his conclusion that we should enjoy such happiness as comes our way, value our youth as a time when life is to be enjoyed to the full and be ready for the limitations of old age.

Facing our world at present, we too may feel bewildered. With the Teacher's words in mind, we are challenged to recognise both the value and the limitations of purely human reasoning and never to lose sight of our living hope in Jesus Christ, who himself felt the abandonment of God.

We have not long concluded the Christmas and Epiphany seasons during which we celebrated the incarnation and revelation of the glory of Jesus Christ to whom we turn for hope. Let us then, amid life's sorrows, difficulties and anxieties, give thanks for all the good gifts we have been given and find opportunities for fun and enjoyment. Jesus said 'I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly'.

With every blessing

*Sue (Vicar)*

## ***Winter pastimes***

*by Bob Shaw*

For a small boy the coming of winter held a challenge for one who hated to be confined in the house, no matter how comfortable. When the many ponds in the village froze over, we tested them each day to see if the ice would support the weight of our nailed boots. There was a pond close to my home, Ware Farm, and when it bore my weight without cracking, I ran to call my friends “Ware Ponds bearing!” Soon we made a slide on the slippery surface and spent much of the daylight hours speeding across to the willows on the far side. My father unearthed a pair of boy-size clip-on ice skates from the attic of his old family home in the neighbouring village and I soon learned to skate ungracefully upon the frozen ponds.

Then came the winter snowfall that obliterated both fields, roads and ponds. This was another challenge for a boy, and I set to work to make a sledge. Other boys followed suit and we dragged our sledges to the nearest hill slope and had great fun tobogganing down to fall off in a heap at the bottom. I tried to make a pair of skis from the remains of an old wooden barrel but with no success – they just did not work in the way I had seen in the picture books. I had to wait until while on National Service, I was posted to Bad Harzburg in Germany. Here I had my first taste of skiing, and found a sport that would give me great pleasure for all of my adult life, until I left Switzerland to come to New Zealand in retirement.



There are four forms of winter sports that a large number of people enjoy: down-hill skiing, snowboarding, 'langlauf' or Nordic skiing, and tobogganing. All of these have been a challenge for me and my family. Both our daughters learned to ski at a very early age, taught by their mother, a Swiss Ski School registered instructor. Later they took up snowboarding, and my youngest grandson is a snowboard instructor of repute.

I never tired of taking the lifts to the top of the highest run and skiing down to the village with stops on the way at various mountain restaurants for a cup of 'Kaffe Fertig'. In the winter of 1997/98 I skied from the summit of the Säntis mountain down over the glacier to Engleberg for the last time, before leaving for New Zealand in the summer.



It was not only that downhill held my interest. My post enabled me to work at home, so I abandoned the keyboard during the day to bind on my Nordic langlauf skis and set off across the snow-covered fields. It was absolute bliss to glide across the virgin white landscape, weave a path between the trees, feel the thrill of a long gentle downhill run and breathe the crisp mountain air. It also helped to leave my office and find fresh inspiration for crops to be grown on irrigated land in sub-Saharan Africa, while all around me the air was filled with glittering ice particles.

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## ***Family Games, Sport and Scripture***

*by Sue Genner*

There was a highly competitive sport that became a tradition in our family – well perhaps ‘sport’ is stating it a bit too highly. The game, nevertheless, is violent and competitive. It is played around the table, high cards only – all are dealt out – 4 cards each (the number playing determines how many cards of each suit are played). In the centre of the table is a pile of spoons – one less spoon than there are players. Each play happens synchronously – each player laying a card face down on the table and sliding to the player on the left. When you have 4 matching cards in hand you grab for a spoon – then everyone grabs and one is left without. Slowly the number of players is whittled down with each round until there is one clear winner. In our family it was noisy and fun. It somehow became a ritual that any new boyfriend/girlfriend presented to the family was subjected to, perhaps it was



some kind of character test. If you could survive spoons with us, put up with any minor injuries and remain good tempered you were probably ok.

I have followed the podcast of an ultramarathon athlete and for him, as for many who compete in endurance races, most of the time, they are competing with themselves, wanting to set a personal best. In much of the world of competitive sports winning is emphasised, beating the other person, psyching them out, putting them down. In some well-known sports the winning eventually happens in the courtroom when people are sued for breaking the rules.

There are a few well-known Bible verses which reference sport. Hebrews 12 tells us:

*‘Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith... No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. Therefore, strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees.’*

In case we thought it was about competing with others, the next verses go on: *‘Make level paths for your feet, so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed. Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God.’*

Here in New Zealand sport is an unofficial religion, elite sportspeople are the saints who are venerated, not for their character but for their achievements, for winning and setting records. Scripture invites us to learn from sport and games but the lessons are not the grab-and-s snatch, ‘me-first’ (even in fun) lessons from spoons or the ‘win at all costs’ attitude displayed by some famous (and infamous) sportspeople. The lesson we are invited to learn is about taking our faith journey seriously and committing to God and the journey God invites us on. This race we have embarked on is not a sprint but a marathon and requires endurance and discipline as well as being a source of joy and celebration.

## ***My lifetime of sport?***

*by John Beverly*

I have always been interested in sport. Early on, the family bought a television for my maternal grandfather to watch Test matches – he had had a stroke and was housebound. My brother and I were told not to touch the set as it was temperamental – a lifelong antipathy to technology may have been the result. I enjoyed the cricket coverage and later Wimbledon.



Playing sport was also an enthusiasm, but somewhat hampered by limited competence. Oh, the humiliation of being almost the last to be picked at school when football sides were sorted out! I was a reasonably competent wicketkeeper but an indifferent batsman – I would have to say batter now. I dreamed of hitting a six straight back over the bowler and breaking a window in the greenhouse over the fence on the border of the school field. Never achieved! Later playing for the Epping Sunday social team I did manage one triumph.

Our ground was small and the pavilion was frankly tatty. Unusually I was captain for the day and our team had quite a few youngsters to make up the numbers. Our visiting opponents were rude about our ground, the pitch, the pavilion and were dismissive of our team. We were bowled out for a lowish total and tea followed. They were rude about the excellent tea laid on by wives and girlfriends – they had gone too far! We also heard talk of polishing us off and disappearing to the pub.

I said to our team let us take up the challenge. We opened the bowling from one end with one of the youngster's pace bowling and from the other with a veteran bowling spin. He completely bamboozled them with four or five spin balls but the others were dead straight rocket-like deliveries. We fielded like demons and didn't drop a catch. We won.! They did not even have the grace to congratulate us.

Later still I was given out lbw by one of our own side umpiring, as was the norm in social cricket, when I thought the ball was several feet outside the leg stump and I was on my way unusually towards a respectable score.

I now play golf – not very well – but generally keep my temper. You need a good sense of humour to play golf. The BBC’s coverage of the British Open – until it all went to pay TV – was excellent and the commentary of Peter Alliss was really witty. Of one notoriously tetchy player who threw a wobbly on one occasion because of a distracting noise when making a shot, Alliss said ‘Oh dear, two butterflies mating in a neighbouring field’.

Sue and I got together through a shared love of hillwalking. It has to be said that I disgraced myself on our first walk (in Snowdonia) by suggesting we take what would have been the wrong path in mist, then failing to help with navigation as I had left my glasses behind and then falling over on a concealed wet rock and damaging my ankle all before making a difficult descent via the aptly named Devil’s Kitchen (above). We made it and have done a great deal of walking since without too many mishaps.



The photograph (left) was taken several years later, by a willing passer-by, on one of our holidays walking in Switzerland.

We have always thought that the outdoor life, much more possible in New Zealand than in the UK, was one for us but it has taken us rather a long time to be able to live here and enjoy it.

## *Is Knucklebones a Sport?*

by Helen DÁth

YES!! At the age of ten, this was the competitive highlight of my life! At every lunch break at school, there was a mad scramble to the cloakroom where we had stashed away a square of old carpet, and the essential knucklebones. Who decided whose set to use, I cannot remember – I guess there were a few arguments there.

I well remember starting off with a set of brightly coloured plastic ones that I had been given for Christmas. Then, after a while, I realised I had access to the ‘real thing’ out in the paddock. I lived on a sheep farm you see! It was pretty easy to find an old carcass and the precious bones lying around. After scrubbing them up, we dyed them with food colouring, and hey presto – the Real, Real Thing!



They were bigger than the bought ones, so some girls complained as you can imagine. (After a few years, the disgusting little metal ones came on the market – they are still there today, \$9 a packet!!)

But we were following in the footsteps of the Ancient Greeks. In those days knucklebones were used for gambling and fortune telling. It is thought that Sophocles, a Greek playwright taught Palamedes knucklebones along with the game we know as checkers, and he in turn taught his fellow Greek soldiers during the Trojan War. Romans also played the game and introduced it to other countries.

*'In the eighteenth century, they used knucklebones as they had been used in ancient times, to forecast the future. In particular, many young women used knucklebones to help them divine the identity of their future husband and/or the time or place when they would first encounter him!'*



The Māori also played in the old days. The games and pastimes of Māori were just as diverse as those of colonial Pākehā.

To play, you place the five knucklebones in the palm of your hand. Gently throw them in the air and quickly turn your hand over, trying to catch as many as you can, on the back of your hand. Same as above, this time pick up four bones, or as many as are left in the pool. Place the five bones in the palm of your hand.

Do you remember the names of some of the 'hands'? Scatters, Dumps, Jingles, Juggles, Horses in the Stable, Through the Tunnel, Thread the Needle, Catching Flies!

We revelled in the competition and vying with each other. However those who have played this ancient game will know the torment and frustration inflicted upon the player.



## ***Mountains and faith: a personal reflection***

*by Sue Beverly*

My fascination with mountains started as a young child. By contrast, I came to the Christian faith relatively late in life. In this article I reflect on what mountains mean to me and, woven into this tapestry, are a few short passages of scripture, by way of illustration.



My grandfather had a passion for mountains, although I don't think he ever climbed any. He used to give me a Swiss mountain calendar every New Year. He often went to Switzerland on holiday and he followed the exploits of the great Alpine adventurers of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He had a modest collection of books written by some those famous mountaineers. I still have them and they make interesting reading. Those explorers were very intrepid to climb, as they did, in challenging conditions with equipment that would seem to us today to be rudimentary.

I have had a love of mountains and hills ever since and have been fortunate to be able to do some serious walking, if not real climbing, in

several counties including the UK, Switzerland, Austria, Norway, Canada, Australia and, of course, New Zealand.

My journey of faith has been a long one with many influences along the way. I was not baptised as a child. My parents had no church involvement. The influences came from other directions. My love of the outdoors and appreciation of the wonders of the created world were significant ingredients in my journey to faith.

In the scriptures, we hear how God met people in the mountains – Moses at Sinai for example. I would not presume to suggest that I have met God in such a way, but it was in the mountains that I first became aware of God’s presence, that I first had a sense of the numinous – that power and presence of divinity.

It was through the time that I spent amongst awesome scenery that I first became conscious of God as creator. God formed the mountains: Amos 4:13 ‘Behold, he who formed the mountains, and created the wind, and has told man what his wish is, who turns blackness into daybreak, and treads upon the high places of the earth – his name is the Lord, the God of hosts.’

It is not just the mountains and hills themselves but the flora and wildlife, the changes in weather, the heat in summer, the snow and ice, the sunrise and sunset, the stars at night. Mountains look different at different times of day, in different lights and at different times of year. There are soft rolling hills and by contrast hard crags and rocks. Sometimes the hills meet the sea. Sometimes, if one is high up, one can be in the clouds or can look down on clouds.



Psalms 104 praises the creator of a perfect world. In v13, after the mention of sky comes the mention of rain: ‘You water the mountains from your lofts; the earth is sated from the fruit of your work.’ In v18 we hear how the mountains were made to be homes for wild animals:

‘the high mountains are for wild goats; the crags are a refuge for rock badgers.’

In the mountains I am aware of the splendour, the grandeur of God’s creation and my very small place in it. But while my part in God’s creation may be small, the exercise, the physical effort of walking heightens my awareness of my own physical nature and the gift of life that God has given me.

Mountains can be dangerous places – there is risk and a need for proper equipment and safety procedures. There is a great sense of satisfaction in completing a hard day’s walking, exhilaration in being up high, excitement in navigation and exploration, sharing the joy with others and in taking in wonderful views.

Mountains are huge in size and somehow incomprehensible. Among them one can ponder life’s big questions, set things in perspective and have the opportunity to reflect. I often find that my mind freewheels when I am walking; inspiration may come to me in relation to something I have been thinking about or some project with which I am engaged. Equally, I can be lost in contemplation and prayer.

In Psalm 148, with wonderful imagery, God is praised by all that God created, from celestial beings to all the world’s rulers and people, including the animate and inanimate such as mountains and trees: ‘Praise the Lord, O you who are on earth, all sea monsters and ocean depths, fire and hail, snow and smoke, storm



wind that executes his command, all mountains and hills, all fruit trees and cedars, all wild and tamed beasts, creeping things and winged birds, all kings and peoples of the earth, all princes of the earth and its judges, youths and maidens alike, old and young together.’

Mountains speak of the nature of God and some of the imagery is wonderful. Psalm 46: ‘God is our refuge and stronghold, a help in trouble, very near. Therefore we are not afraid though the earth reels,

though mountains topple into the sea – its waters rage and foam; in its swell mountains quake.’ This psalm expresses the community’s confidence in God. There is mythological language here going back to Canaanite traditions.

Isaiah chapter 55 is an invitation to redemption, a call to repentance and the trustworthiness of God’s words. As the prophet again calls on the exiles to leave Babylonia, we hear that the Lord’s promise of glorious restoration will be fulfilled ‘yea, you shall leave in joy and be led home secure. Before you mount and hill shall shout aloud, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.’ Wonderful! In the festive celebration, humanity is joined by nature, as everything in creation is brought to wholeness.

We hear of God’s faithfulness and justice in Psalm 36: ‘O Lord, your faithfulness reaches to heaven; Your steadfastness to the sky; your beneficence is like the high mountains; your justice like the great deep; man and beast you deliver, O Lord’ Though God is worshipped at the Temple, God’s beneficent justice is of cosmic proportions, reaching everywhere.

Psalm 90: ‘O Lord, You have been our refuge in every generation. Before the mountains came into being, before you brought forth the earth and the world, from eternity to eternity you are God.’ God is eternal; God was a refuge even before there was a place of physical habitat. God gave birth to the world. This Psalm goes on to contrast human mortality with God’s eternity.



There is much here for us to reflect upon in terms of the nature of God, the wonders of his creation and our part in God’s creation. But I leave you with one final thought. Mountains generally have significance for people of faith. They feature in stories in many of major religions.

Many sacred texts speak of mountains – apart from our own tradition, Jewish, Hindu, African, Islam for example – it is one thing we have in

common through the faiths. Many mountains in the world have sacred connections – whatever the faith, mountains point to heaven. Here are just a few: Kailash, Agung, Machapuchare, Fuji, Uluru/Ayres Rock.

Perhaps mountains provide an opportunity for bridge building between faiths – we learn more about our own faith but also what we have in common with other faiths.



## ***Good Sport with Sporty the Dog***

*by Judith Davies*

This is a story that I will let five-year old Judy tell. She is being brought up in India in the 1960s.

“Food is a very big deal for me...it fills up a hole inside that feels so empty and lonely.

The day of my brother’s Christening I am left behind. My sister has gone, and she is younger than me. That’s not fair! I must have been naughty. I never know what I do wrong. I am left by myself, with Sporty the dog. He is a black cocker spaniel and we are great pals. The servants were probably told to keep an eye on me, but the Bearer tells me to go and play with the dog. They want to rest. So, I do.

I know I am not meant to go into the dining room, which has been prepared for the guests when they get back. I gingerly open the big door, and look in. Tablecloths cover all the tables, and on them are plates and plates of delicious food. All these plates are covered in fly cloths. It looks magnificent. I open the door a bit more, and then a bit more. Then I let the dog in. Now I am in trouble already. I listen. Sporty waits quietly behind me. There is no sound. There are no screams from the ayah or the bearer. I wait.

I look at the dog for courage. Then I lift the fly cloth on the nearest table. Yum! Yummy! One mouthful of lemon tart squishes all over my lips, and then down my throat. Generously, I hand down the other half to Sporty, who wolfs it down in a second. He looks up at me, drooling. His eyes say, “*Is there any more?*”

I giggle, and then we move freely from place to place, sampling all the delights, until our tummies can't take any more. I sigh, and then we leave, off to find a hiding place to sleep it off. I briefly picture the ayahs' fury, when she finds out. Never mind... I will worry about that later.

*I wonder who will win the cricket match today? The Indians or the team my Daddy is in?*

I like it when he wins, because then he is in a good mood. I drift off to sleep and snuggle close to Sporty."

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## **Sport**

*by Bill Aldridge*

Sport has played a huge part in life for both Linda and me.

Linda comes from a very sporting family, and she excelled in hockey. She played for the Canterbury Hockey Senior Women's team at the age of 15 years and went on to play for the South Island and New Zealand trials. In her time there were no artificial turfs and she played nearly all her hockey in the mud and the freezing cold of Hagley Park in Christchurch. When watching the modern game, she often remarks how much she would have loved to play on the artificial turfs that abound now.

I became interested in sport while living in Kaikoura. In 1956 the Springboks toured New Zealand and there was wall-to-wall coverage of that tour in the newspaper and radio. Following the Springboks tour there were the Olympic Games in Melbourne and I followed them on the radio.

Early in 1957 there was a tour of New Zealand by an Australian A cricket team and I can still recall our headmaster coming into our classroom and turning on the radio and saying to us: "I just want to get the cricket score of Australia playing Canterbury". After school I went home and listened to the cricket and became an avid follower of both rugby and cricket.

In those days rugby was played from April to September and cricket from October to March. We lived close to the Domain in Kaikoura and I made a nuisance of myself by hanging around whenever a game of cricket or rugby was played.

We moved to Christchurch in 1958 and lived close to Lancaster Park which became my second home. Over the years I saw several rugby and cricket games at the venue which became famous in the history of New Zealand sport.

However, my favourite moment at Lancaster Park was watching Peter Snell setting new World Records for the 800 metres and 880 yards in 1962. Snell was phenomenal to watch, and, on this day, he broke the records by about 1.5 seconds and those times stood as World Records for several years.



I played a bit of rugby, but cricket was my real passion, and I had several years playing with, and against, many wonderful people.

Linda and I encouraged our children to play sport and there were times when we had 5 children playing at 5 different venues which took some juggling to get to and from. However, we don't believe it was wasted time as they all reached representative levels in their chosen sports learning a lot of life skills on the way. Even now they all keep themselves fit and active, as do our grandchildren.

The advent of Sky Sport has been a treat for us to be able to view live sport world-wide. The Australian Open men's tennis final recently saw Linda sitting up until 4am watching.

I have been fortunate to have Linda as keen on sport as myself and now we are privileged to be able to watch our grandchildren taking part in their chosen sports – cricket, hockey, football, rugby, cross



country running, triathlons, cycling, surf lifesaving, netball, water polo, wrestling, baseball, volleyball, basketball.... the list goes on!!

Linda and I started playing golf croquet 2 years ago – we have enjoyed the companionship of others and the chance to satisfy our competitive natures despite declaring we are playing purely for fun!!!

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## ***The Race***

*by Judith Davies*

As a child, the skill of swimming came easily. At three to four years of age I would dive into the community swimming pool, and swim underwater to wherever I pleased. It was effortless, but I practised over and over again, because I enjoyed it.

However, once I went to school, I found I had no such aptitude for other sports. Running was definitely a race where I wouldn't win... and most likely would come last. School Sports meant being in the egg and spoon race, the sack race or the three-legged race!

Imagine my horror when I read what Paul says in I Corinthians 9 v 24:



“Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training.”

Ohh! I only turned up on the day. There was no training involved as far as I was concerned. I knew that I would be beaten anyway, so what was the point? I was slightly relieved when I read further,

“They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.”

Challenging! This is spiritual training, and eternity that Paul is talking about here. I wonder what kind of training he is talking about? How do I run this race? How do I train?

My mind drifts off. I suppose going to church or having some fellowship is discipline and training. Reading the bible regularly and praying in my closet, where no-one else can see me. That's training. What else? I search the Bible and find this verse in Galatians, also written by Paul;

Galatians 5 v7

“You were running well: who hindered you from obeying the truth?”

Ah! This means I can be distracted. I might want to please *people* rather than God. I might start chasing material blessings to make me feel better. Oh dear!

Hebrews 12v1

“Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which easily entangles, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.”

We have an audience cheering us on! That comforts me. But I do get entangled with guilt and anxiety sometimes... and feel like giving up. I must endure! I will endure! I can, because Jesus endured sin and shame for me on the cross, taking my punishment. Just so I can win the prize, like He did.

Hebrews 12v2

“Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of the faith, who for the joy set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and sat down at the right hand of God.”

I started this race when I was five and a half years old. This is a marathon, plus, plus, plus. So many distractions... and so many disappointments, and opposition. How can I do it? Only with the strength that God Himself gives me, that's how. It is all about Him, and not about me. That makes me feel better. Now I can fly to my destination if I am supercharged by the Holy Spirit, but hold on! The

main thing is for me to complete the race, even if I have to crawl there. I want to say at the end of my life, like Paul:

2 Timothy 4v7

“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.”

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## *Games and Sports*

*by Shelley Varnam*

Considering New Zealand has such a small population in comparison to the rest of the world, we certainly rank high in sports and games achievement when it comes to international competition. We are a proud sporting nation, competing in everything from big ticket team events such as cricket, hockey, rugby, yachting, basketball and netball etc, through to the individual pursuits of athletics, equestrian, golfing, swimming, sailing, squash, shotput, discus, sheep shearing and motor racing, to name a few. An endless line of notable New Zealanders compete at world level, breaking records and achieving magnificent results. A case in point is our current team of athletes who not only competed with the world best at the recent Beijing Winter Olympics, but also won medals. The sheer number of successful women and men in our country who have, quietly or otherwise, achieved great heights in sport and games is mind blowing.

One of the first documented competitions a Kiwi entered was the British A.A.A. (then virtually the world) championships in 1886.

**Godfrey B. Shaw** was third in the A.A.A. 120 yard hurdles. He later returned to England and won the title four successive times, from 1893 to 1896. He failed by 0.2 sec (then the smallest margin recognised) to equal the world record, but in 1891 he ran the 440-yard hurdles in 57.2 sec, a world best. Our sporting prowess was born! From then on New Zealanders have been on the world stage thrilling us with their talents.

As a child of the sixties, growing up via the country school system, I was extremely lucky to participate in many types of sports and games. Back then physical education and sport was deemed a normal part of

everyday life. School days and on weekends we were always playing something. Please explain why is it that the younger you are, the earlier your game starts! I will never forget freezing winter mornings in the Waikato, frost and fog abounding, shivering on the side-lines at sparrows in a flimsy outfit, waiting to start whichever game it was I was playing at the time. Never a fast runner, or a natural athlete, I did manage to win a three-legged race with my best friend one sports day – only because she happened to be the fastest runner at school and literally carried me along with her!

In today's world there is a huge array of sports. You can join in anything from the simplest of athletics such as walking or running, through to the extreme sports of wingsuit flying (terrifying) or free climbing sheer mountain cliffs (absolutely nuts!) and everything in between. The world is literally your oyster when it comes to choice. I've been glued to the winter Olympics, heart in mouth, watching the amazing display of physical feats – the techniques, the speed, the courage and the grace these young people have in accomplishing their dreams is amazing! Wow! Watching **Zoi Sadowski-Synnott** snowboarding and winning her medals brought tears to my eyes.



Board games, card games and, with advances in technology, the popularity of computer games has grown substantially. Some of these have their own competitions, as I'm sure do many other sports I have not thought of or mentioned. When you think about 'games' we might have a world champion in, Scrabble doesn't automatically spring to mind – not mine anyway. However, New Zealander **Nigel Richards** has several times been world champion in recent years! Who knew...!



As a nation we should all be so proud of our sporting and games men and women. From Godfrey B. Shaw through to the lovely Zoi, they all

deserve the greatest respect for their tenacity, determination, and sheer bloody mindedness. All these sporting heroes and heroines literally sweat blood and tears to keep New Zealand at the forefront of world competition. They bring us so much enjoyment, and whether we are watching in the flesh or being a couch potato, there is never a prouder moment than when one of our own is standing on a podium representing Aotearoa!

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## PARISH PROJECTS COMMUNITY ACTIVITY *SENIOR CHEF*

St John's Anglican Church, Ōtūmoetai is excited to announce the commencement of our **Senior Chef** cooking program for older adults (designed by Pegasus Health in Canterbury).

Senior Chef is an 8-week cooking class where you can learn, or improve on, your practical food and nutrition skills. It's a social, informative and hands-on class, focused on cooking for one or two people. And it's FREE thanks to funding from Anglican Care Waiapu.

For people experiencing isolation, lack of confidence or motivation in producing their own meals, the program is designed to connect our community as well as build skills through providing advice on food budgeting, shopping, planning, prepping, and cooking basic meals for one. The Ōtūmoetai program starts on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> April and runs for a term of 8 weeks.

For further information regarding the classes please contact Shelley Varnam, Community Activities Coordinator (phone 027 7143534) or email [communityactivities.otumoetai@waiapu.com](mailto:communityactivities.otumoetai@waiapu.com)



## ***Lent Conversations: Comfort in the Wilderness***

Over three weekly sessions we will explore the help that God offered to God's people at a particular time in their history when they were in great need of comfort. We can learn a lot about what this comfort is like from the words of Isaiah 40. This is the same God who wants to comfort us today in all our difficulties, stresses and anxieties. There are five aspects to this:



1. Embracing comfort: what comfort is and what kind of comfort God seeks to offer those who are in need.
2. Stepping out: the theme of the wilderness as a place not only of unhappiness but also of comfort.
3. Becoming messengers: the possibility that God wants us to become messengers of comfort, even when we need that comfort for ourselves.
4. Encountering God: God as creator and the message of hope that simply encountering God can give us.
5. Receiving fresh strength: what it might feel like to have God's strength in our lives.

**Dates: Wednesdays: 9<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2022**

**Time: 7.00 pm via Zoom**

**If you wish to attend, please let us know**

There are handouts for each session which, for greatest benefit, participants will need in advance. For this reason, we ask that people register either on the list at the back of church or by emailing the Parish Office via [admin.otumoetai@waiapu.com](mailto:admin.otumoetai@waiapu.com)

If you are not able to use Zoom and are interested, please speak to the Vicar.

## ***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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