

Word and Light

St John's Anglican Parish, Otumoetai



This month's themes: Lent and volunteering

February 2020

About this Magazine

This Magazine is published approximately once every two months. We hope you enjoy reading it. It is called *Word and Light* because our parish church is dedicated to St John the Evangelist. At the beginning of the Gospel of John, the fourth Gospel in the New Testament, 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. We hope that the words and images in this magazine will bring some light to your life.



Themes for Word and Light in 2020 *the Vicar writes...*

You will see that this edition of our magazine has a theme. A theme helps to provide a focus and gives people ideas for articles. Of course the magazine will only be as good as the contributions people make. Future editions will be published in late March or early April (in time for Easter), June, August, October and December.

The next edition will focus on Easter. The theme will be

Holiday Memories

This could be a holiday you have recently had or one you remember from years gone by. The deadline will be Monday 30 March (at the latest). If you would like to contribute an article (and a picture) or have ideas about themes for future editions please contact Lynda, the Parish Administrator, or Sue, the Vicar. Thank you!

Distributing the Magazine

There may be people who cannot come to church but would like to read this Magazine. Some copies are taken by our pastoral visitors but if you know of anyone else please speak to Lynda in the Parish Office. And if you are willing to help by distributing a few copies please say!

Vicar's Voice

Dear Friends

'A generous person will be enriched, and one who gives water will get water.' *Proverbs 11:25*

We want our lives to matter. It is often the reason we do the things we do. God made each one of us with unique talents, personalities and skills. We get joy and make a difference when we use our God-given talents, gifts and abilities to help others. When we volunteer it is sometimes because we are ready for something new – new for us and new for the team which we are joining. Volunteering can take us in directions we cannot predict.

The articles in this edition of the *Word and Light* illustrate a wide variety of volunteer roles to which people in our parish commit. And they don't include the very many roles people fulfill within the church. So I celebrate and give thanks for your generosity in your community roles *and* the many ways you support the life of our church. Sometimes a parish can feel like a giant hamster wheel. It takes an awful lot of us to get the wheel moving and an awful lot of us to keep it moving!

We may think that we don't have the skills to do what's required. But God doesn't always call the equipped; God equips the called. God used men and women with similar doubts to change the course of history. Moses didn't think he was a leader or speaker, but God worked through Moses to bring Israel out of slavery. David was the youngest (and therefore most insignificant) of all his brothers, but God worked through David and eventually made him a king. Paul used to kill Christians before he saw the light, but he went on to inspire and lead the early Christian church.

I like the phrase – hand in hand in hand. Hand in hand with one another and hand in hand with God. That is volunteering as it should be – open and supportive and vital for our life together.

Sue

Looking Forward

Shrove Tuesday (25 February)

Helpers needed to make pikelets and deliver to church by 9.30am and to prepare and deliver to local businesses and parishioners unable to attend church. Enquiries to Brenda (576 4171).

Ash Wednesday (26 February)

10.00 am Holy Communion with Ashing

7.00 pm Liturgy of Ash Wednesday (with hymns)

Enter the Mystery Meeting (29 February)

4.00 pm *Enter the Mystery* Gathering

Messy Church (8 March)

Lent Reflection: *Life in the Garden* (4, 11, 25 March & 1 April)

Two opportunities to join our Lent Group are available for you to attend – at 11.00 am and at 7.00 pm. Please put your name on the list at the back of church.

Working Bee (14 March)

The last one (in November) was a huge success – great fun and lots of work was done. Put the date in your diary now so we are all smartened up before Easter!

Mothering Sunday (22 March)

Passion Sunday (29 March)

10.00 am *Enter the Mystery* Service followed by the AGM, fun and food.

Palm Sunday (5th April)

Holy Week – services every day except Monday. See upcoming *Newsletters* and the website and the next edition of this magazine.

Easter Day (12th April)

There will be *one* service of the Holy Eucharist at 10.00. It is important that we all worship together on this most significant day of the Christian year.

Volunteering

OASIS (St John's) Op Shop - volunteers needed!

Volunteers are the backbone of all communities; without them many of the services we take for granted would not be available. Over the past 5 years, I've been involved with the Op Shop as a volunteer, leader and currently in the preparation of the Op Shop roster.

There have been times when the roster has more gaps than people but I'm always 'blown over' by the generosity of our team and we've never closed the doors through lack of committed volunteers.



Being involved with the shop has provided the opportunity to meet and make new friends as well as increasing my awareness of our community. Seeing the enjoyment on people's faces when they find a treasure is well worth the effort. One memorable moment, was when one gentleman asked, 'did we sell bread?'

Having said that, we need the support of more people as our group of volunteers has declined by around 25% particularly as our congregation is ageing or moving to other areas. It only takes 3 hours of your time a week, give volunteering a go, you might be surprised!

Janice Hough

The Op Shop

'Would you be willing to help with this?' How often we hear that question and how often we think 'oh I suppose I could do that'. I guess that is pretty much how many of us become volunteers. It is certainly how I became a member of the team at OASIS, our Op Shop. I am part of the team of four who work there regularly on

Tuesday mornings, and on other days if needed and if I have the time, and I thoroughly enjoy it.



We have a great variety of people coming in, some are regulars looking to see what new stock we have, some are looking for bargains or some hard to find item, some are filling in time and want to chat, some bring in their children or grandchildren after Playgroup.

People tell us we are the best and most friendly Op Shop in town. Our welcoming environment is appreciated as is the fact that we always have a friendly smile and word for our customers. I really do enjoy my time 'Op shopping' as I call it and encourage anyone who is thinking about joining the team to give it a go. 'VOLNTEER' What's missing? Oh yes, it's U!

Another aspect of the Op Shop of course is the contribution it makes to the finances of the Parish. A look at the Budget shows just how important this is.

Diane Sorensen

Breast Cancer Support Tauranga

Did you know breast cancer is the most common cancer for Kiwi women and that one in nine women are affected over their lifetime?

I'm a breast cancer survivor of 17 years. When I had my diagnosis and mastectomy in Palmerston North, there was no support service at all. It was a lonely time and I put my faith in God (of course!).

After returning to Tauranga 11 years ago I was amazed to find the local Support Centre. After the initial connection, I found I could offer my help in many ways. I sew heart shaped cushions which are donated to hospital patients and help with fundraising.





There are many different ways to help from street stalls, assisting at the Hot Pink Walk, the Papamoa Hills Night Walk, the Nude Dude's Swim, Gift wrapping at Bayfair, to mention a few! It's not only great fun but you get to meet such a lovely bunch of people from all walks of life. The girls who run the

organisation are outstanding and I always come away singing after chatting with them.



The sad thing is that I often come across women who've had breast cancer and have either never heard of the Support Group or are too shy to make enquiries.

I revel in being part of their voluntary team and I feel privileged and honoured to be there when needed.

Helen D'Ath

Seasons: Growing Through Grief - Anglican Care

I started to help as a facilitator with the children's grief programme many years ago. Whilst the programme has changed over the years, its purpose has remained: to help our children cope with loss and change – be it from death of a loved one, a parental separation or, as I have found, the loss of a precious pet.

It runs for an hour every week after school during each term. I work as a facilitator with 4 to 6 children of similar ages. Children aged 6 to 18 years can attend.



Today the programme is educational and enables children to realise that others go through “hard times” as well. It teaches them about life changes, feelings, coping skills and strengths to move on.

We have lots of fun during the process and by the end of the term the children are sad the programme has to end. To see how these children grow over the term is so rewarding. For me it is the reason I continue to help each term.

Liss Lloyd

Friends in many places

I have been volunteering at the Salvation Army Family Store since March 2000 – 20 years. I started off pairing shoes and general sorting. I have been volunteering at this store 3 days a week and I have found the people very friendly. The camaraderie is really good and I look forward to my days there.

I also help Mum with Sacristan duties in the church and I carry the Cross as Crucifer on the second Sunday of the month. Quite often I help Mum with morning tea after the 10.00 am service. I also greet the parishioners once a month and take up the collection and help Dad count the money. I also help at Messy Church every second month.

Kerryn Harvey

Pillans Point School Readers

As part of my position as Children & Families Enabler, at the time, it was thought it would be a good idea to liaise with our local primary school (Pillans Point) to see if they would like us to visit the school and listen to the 5 and 6 year old children read. The headmaster agreed and after a roster of helpers was drawn-up we began our mission in August 2011. The group flourished as did the children’s reading levels and we have had an ongoing commitment ever since.

There have been as many as 25 volunteers on the roster most of whom are still available. The school and the church have forged a special relationship and it is this 'reaching out' to the community that keeps me going as the organiser.



Friendships have been formed between 'readers' and some meet for coffee afterwards. We have even been voluntary grandparents on 'grandparents day' for children whose grandparents live too far away to be there. The pre-Christmas annual concert held at St John's is greatly looked forward to by children and readers alike and caps off the year for us all.

Brenda Harrison

From Home Guard to Ethiopia & Tauranga

When I was conscripted into Military Service we were told by an old 'sweat', "never volunteer!", but it was too late. I had volunteered as a Boy Scout to help my father in the Home Guard as a 'runner' should the Germans invade and I had volunteered to help with many Young Farmers' projects.



Much later in life I had the opportunity to volunteer to work in Ethiopia to help rehabilitate the agricultural sector following the disastrous drought induced famine in the early 1980s. My family suffered in my three year absence but it was all worthwhile and very rewarding. In the course of my work I met many other volunteers, like the Irish nurses from the organisation GOAL who set up clinics in remote places and provided much needed medical attention. The nuns, priests and Christian brothers I met were also essentially volunteers, they served the indigenous population selflessly under primitive conditions while deriving great spiritual satisfaction from their efforts.

When we retired, and came to live in Matua, Alice and I had time on our hands. We observed that there were many people living alone, widows and widowers. Enjoying the pleasure of conversation over the lunch table ourselves, we conceived the idea of a Lunch Club to bring lonely people together. We did all the basic preparation at home and brought the food to the church hall where, helped by our friends, we served a three course lunch followed by coffee to up to thirty lonely people at a cost of \$8 per person. It was rewarding for all of us who helped to see the happy faces and hear the animated conversation that lasted long after the last cup was drained.

A sailing friend, Wilf Foster, had been a First Officer on a Shaw-Saville ship calling at ports in New Zealand. He enjoyed the facilities provided by the Flying Angels mission. When he set up a Flying Angels mission in Tauranga I was very happy to assist him for many years and enjoyed meeting and helping seafarers from all over the world. Alice was keen to go to the hospital from time to time to take sick folk from the wards to a morning service in the hospital chapel. It is most rewarding to bring people in hospital beds and wheel chairs to this service and observe the comfort it brings to frightened and suffering souls.

Although some might say that we volunteers do this to boost our own selfish egos, I would opine that the satisfaction we derive comes from following the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ, 'to love your neighbour as yourself.'

Bob Shaw

Volunteering with a Passion

After Harold and I retired (me from Pharmacy & Harold from Medical and Pharmacy wholesaling) I looked for further interest in my field. I took the opportunity to join in the first meeting (held at Tauranga Hospital) to form a Hospice. This was a start to 30 years of voluntary work with Waipuna Hospice. The junior doctors' hostel at Tauranga Hospital was given to start the caring - no palliative nursing then just T.L.C provided by volunteers during their stay.

Waipuna Hospice - formerly The Tauranga Day Care Hospice has come a long way in its 30 years - all its achievements would not have been possible without dedicated volunteers. Waipuna Hospice has grown to become one of New Zealand's leading hospices. Over 100 volunteers came together in 1990 to form the incorporated society. In 2010 four volunteers who had supported Waipuna Hospice since its conception received Life Membership - what an honour this was. Last year a special 30-year celebration was held for life members and those involved in its conception. Volunteers, now totaling near to 760, are a vital part of the organisation - having 6 Charity shops to staff plus outside fundraising the call for volunteers is endless.

I am indeed honoured to be a part of this wonderful organisation and honoured to be a Life Member. I urge all to support its work in our community - "The most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched - they must be felt with the heart" - Helen Keller.

Beth Wills

Parish Catering

Co-opted by Margaret Shaw on to the catering team in 1999 we, Alice Shaw and Mary Toomer, were appointed as the catering team leaders a year later. It has worked really well with joint leadership along with a great team of assistants. At that time there was a large pool of people willing to assist but over the years that has dwindled due to age and other commitments.



Being on the catering team is a big commitment but very satisfying. Also the catering for funerals is a great help to the Parish finances.

In 2004 we were given permission by Vestry to upgrade the kitchen which

was funded by the Op Shop of the time and the AAW. Cupboards were changed into more practical drawers, the bench levelled, flooring replaced, new appliances purchased and a commercial dishwasher installed thanks to a grant from Green Thistle Trust. Graham Toomer then painted the kitchen and lounge. To celebrate and raise more funds we asked parishioners for recipes and published “Simple Recipes from St John’s Dream Kitchen”. This proved such a success it was later followed by “More Simple recipes” outstripping all our financial expectations.

Funerals are the primary activity of the team but many other Parish events occur which require catering. People’s expectations are changing and requests are now made for platters, vegan, vegetarian and gluten free food.

We are now looking for more people to assist with catering both as team members and team leaders. It is a commitment as there is a lot of preparation before an event and at the event but is rewarded by the wonderful fellowship and satisfaction of a job well done.

Alice Shaw & Mary Toomer

From a newly ordained Deacon!

I have been on the path to ordination since early 2018. This was in response to a slowly growing sense of call over many years. Driving me was a desire to serve. I always had a sense that what I was being called to was part-time and voluntary.

I had done some formal theological study in my 20s and part of my training has involved getting back on the proverbial horse to do more theological study. There was also a separate discernment process and then ongoing spiritual formation and spiritual direction. This culminated in yet another interview around “readiness for ordination” in October last year.

One of the important disciplines has been reflecting on things (life, the world and everything) theologically. I found myself profoundly grateful for all the women who had gone before me and paved the

way. For many of them the journey was extremely challenging just because they were women – I am aware that, in my time, women becoming ordained is now seen as perfectly normal. I wrote this poem with that in mind.

On Approaching my ordination 2019

You walked the hard yards for me
you were the ones told they couldn't do it
“women aren't supposed to be priests”
“it's against the Bible - a sin”
“men must have authority over women”
“you're not welcome”
“when they ordain women - I'll leave the church”
Those were the messages you heard
Bravely you walked your truth, Kia Kaha
You held your head high, trusting in your calling.
you walked a lonely path against the crowd.

Because of you I walk this path
Words of encouragement in my ears
Smiles and hugs greeted the news of my upcoming ordination
Women walk before me, beside me, behind me.
I too have been called and will make my vows.
You fought the battle of prejudice
that is not required of me.

To all my ordained sisters
Thank you for this gift of joy
It is your shoulders which bear me
We are a community of love and justice.
I will walk my truth
I will hold my head high, trusting in my calling
I will walk in your company
Because, for decades,
You walked the hard yards.

Aroha nui

The Reverend Sue Genner

Children and Families Update

As we begin 2020, it is with a sense of gratitude and excitement.

Firstly, the gratitude is for the many consistent volunteers who willingly offer to help with the programmes that involve our children and young people and their families. This is most evident through *Messy Church* where we have our steady team of activity enablers, nourishment providers, administration superstars and prayer army.



However, it is also apparent in such things as the wonderful participation from everyone who attended the “Pop up Nativity” on Christmas Eve.

I am so grateful to all those who continue to support our Ministry to Children and Families, whether through visible actions or through prayer.

My gratitude also extends to Rev’d Geoff Crawshaw for his support and leadership in 2019 and I am excited about the year ahead under the leadership and guidance of Rev’d Sue Beverly.

This year *Messy Church* will continue on the second Sunday of each month (except in April when it will be the first Sunday due to Easter). Our *Messy Church* program continues to be an important space for many to experience the Gospel and our *Messy Church* congregation regularly reaches numbers in the 50s, which is very encouraging.

We will also begin a programme in 2020 called *Enter the Mystery* for our young people. This programme will include our school holiday outings, some all-age worship services in which our young people will be involved (as we started last year) and some other gatherings, where we can continue some learning, have some fun and eat together on a Saturday afternoon.

Thank you in anticipation for your continued support in 2020.

Angela Stensness

Walking (and talking) on Mondays

Most Mondays of the year I leave home in Te Puke and head out to battle the traffic to get to (what I call) 'Monday Church' by 9.00 am. So what is this Monday commitment I don't want to miss. More than 10 years ago Cherie wanted to go for a walk but didn't want to go on her own and so a decision was made to meet at the church on Monday for a walk (to get bums off seats!) followed by a cuppa at the nearby cafe. Over the years the meeting places have changed to accommodate numbers and we now meet opposite Briscoes at 9am for a walk and at about 10.00 am at *The Raft* for a chat (photo above).



We recently had a lively, laughing discussion about what this weekly get together means to each one of us and I want to share the comments with you.

- ✓ An important group started by Cherie over 10 years ago. Enjoyed by all.
- ✓ A good way to start the week. A good way for a newcomer to get to know people. I like that anyone can come - even those who don't walk.
- ✓ A good time to catch up with folks and news of their daily lives.
- ✓ What a great start to the week, walking with so many people from St John's.
- ✓ It doesn't matter really where we go (unless it's very windy). We are chatting away so intently we hardly register where we are walking!
- ✓ It's a good fellowship and catching up with what people have been up to.

- ✓ We joined the walking group for the friendly and happy group of people. We talk and laugh about all subjects. A very pleasant group.
- ✓ 10 years of fellowship in the walky talky group.
- ✓ Love coming to walking group. Bit of exercise, nice coffee and, best of all, camaraderie with a great group of people.
- ✓ There's always something to celebrate. (Birthdays, anniversaries etc)
- ✓ We come to have a laugh. We share sad stuff too.
- ✓ It's been a life-saver for me since my husband died.
- ✓ Friendship, Fastwalking, Fun, Food.
- ✓ I come for coffee so I can see my friends.
- ✓ We meet near church but we don't talk in depth. And we don't have to get dressed up!
- ✓ You're allowed to talk here - not in church! (*Vicar: you can at morning tea after the service!*)
- ✓ We come to eat cake! Any excuse to eat cake. That's why we're all so slim and trim!

We had a special celebration Morning Tea in *The Atrium* just before Christmas (photo below).



So if you would like to walk, walk and talk or simply talk join us at 9.00 am on a Monday - and eat cake! You are very welcome.

Anne Le'ota

Lent Reflection

Encouragement for the Journey - Rev Alf Taylor; Greetings Fellow Traveller

New Year 2020, what better time to pause, become quiet and reflect awhile. To assist us on the way, I found an article in the Huffington Post (on-line newspaper) on the 5 Spiritual Practices of Ageing Well by a Buddhist Writer, Lewis Richmond. His five headings, which are: Gratitude, Generosity, Reframing, Curiosity and Flexibility.

Gratitude: It is surprising how our mood changes when we become grateful for our lives. Meister Eckhart has a delightful quote: 'if we could only say one prayer it would be thank you'. Often we take for granted that which is familiar and present, take for example, our water and electricity supply, Gratitude is being thankful for what is, not what we don't have.

Generosity: No matter our age, we can still be generous, not speaking here of money, rather offering simple acts of kindness, a phone call, a letter, email or text, or just giving of our time and that essential word of encouragement. When we are generous, we discover that the world does not revolve around us; there are others also on the journey of life.

Reframing: How are we looking at our life, is it through negative spectacles or through positive spectacles which always offer us opportunities for hope and life. When things happen to us and they do, we can choose to explore different ways of giving meaning to those events, which will assist us to change the negative view to a positive one.

Curiosity: In life we may become narrow in focus, we have our interests and close friends and it may become increasingly more difficult to start new interests and friendships. However, when we adopt a spirit of curiosity, we realise there are other ways of seeing and doing we become open to wonder and mystery.

Flexibility: Have you heard the expression: 'I am too old to change.' If we accept this, it is like having our feet in concrete shoes, we

become stuck, unable to move and we slowly stagnate. Being flexible in attitude, we develop an openness to discover, to appreciate wonder and mystery, and our life becomes interesting and alive.

Peace on our individual pathways in the living of our days.

(Thanks to Isabel Mordecai for finding this for our magazine)



Keep smiling! Some light relief...

An American decided to write a book about famous churches around the world. So he bought a plane ticket and took a trip to Orlando, thinking that he would start by working his way across the USA from South to North.

On his first day he was in a church taking photographs when he noticed a Golden telephone mounted on the wall with a sign that read '\$10,000 per call'. The American, intrigued, asked a priest who was strolling by what the telephone was used for. The priest said that it was a direct line to heaven and that for \$10,000 you could talk to God. The American thanked the priest and went on his way.

Next stop was in Atlanta. There, at a very large cathedral, he saw the same looking golden telephone with the same sign under it. He wondered if this was the same kind of telephone he saw in Orlando and he asked a nearby nun what its purpose was. She told him that it was a direct line to heaven and that for \$10,000 he could talk to God. 'O.K., thank you,' said the American. He then travelled all across America, Europe, England, Japan, Australia. In every church he saw the same looking golden telephone with the same '\$US10,000 per call' sign under it.

The American decided to travel to New Zealand to see if New Zealanders had the same phone. He arrived at Auckland, in New Zealand and again, in the first church he entered, there was the same looking golden telephone, but this time the sign under it read '40 cents per call.' The American was surprised so he asked the priest about the sign.

'Father, I've travelled all over the world and I've seen this same golden telephone in many Churches. I'm told that it is a direct line to Heaven, but in all of them price was \$10,000 per call. Why is it so cheap here?' The priest smiled and answered 'You're in Tauranga, New Zealand now. This is Heaven, so it's a local call'.

Innocence is priceless

One Sunday morning, the pastor noticed little Alex standing in the foyer of the church staring up at a large plaque. It was covered with names and small American flags mounted on either side of it. The six-year old had been staring at the plaque for some time so the pastor walked up, stood beside the little boy and said quietly, 'Good morning Alex. 'Good morning Pastor,' he replied, still focused on the plaque. 'Pastor, what is this?' The pastor said, 'Well son, it's a memorial to all the young men and women who died in the service.' Soberly, they just stood together, staring at the large plaque. Finally, little Alex's voice, barely audible and trembling with fear asked, 'which service, the 8:15 or the 10:30?'



A note about Sunday service times

Our usual pattern is to have two services on a Sunday: 8.30 & 10.00.

We depart from this pattern as follows:

- ∴ From Christmas Day until early February, we have one service only at 9.00.
- ∴ Outside this summer period, when we have a special occasion we have one service only at 10.00. Examples are: Easter Sunday, *Enter the Mystery* or if we have a special guest. This later time is because these services mostly take place in the seasons of the year when the mornings are darker and they also involve families and other people who find it difficult to arrive at church at an earlier time.

Parish Contacts

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Home Communion and Pastoral Visits

If you are house-bound and would like Home Communion and/or a pastoral visit please contact the Vicar, The Reverend Sue Beverly, or leave a message with Lynda in the Parish Office.