



St Paul's Presbyterian Church

"Partners in God's Mission of Love"

NEWSLETTER – DECEMBER 2019



"This do in remembrance of Me."

Services of Holy Communion

Sunday, 1 December 2019 at 9.15, 10.30am and 7pm services

Please accept this as a personal invitation to be present.



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From the Minister's Desk

Partners in God's Mission of Love

Reverend Sally Carter

Hope is Born



What is your favourite part of preparing for Christmas?

Maybe you have a nativity set that you dust off and bring out, or Christmas tree decorations which tell a story, or lights which flicker a reminder of a happier and more just world.

Maybe you look forward to the day when you get to break out your soppy Christmas music CDs or dancing Father Christmases.

Or perhaps the menu is what takes your energy – preparing the food which draws people to the table.

Or the presents you plan for the delight of those you love.

Or maybe, like my dad and sister, you favour the simple approach – a home-made bacon and egg pie and a salad out on the deck of the back.

Or maybe sometimes it is hard to experience this time of year as a season to be jolly at all if it is crowded by sad memories, financial stress or difficult relationships.

But while all these traditions tick over on our streets and in our homes, there is another, bigger story playing out on the cosmic stage. A story of other preparations which bring heaven to earth, divinity into the joy and suffering of humanity.

The season of Advent begins not with carols, tinsel and chocolate calendars, nor with angels and shepherds and babies, but with reminders of the chaos of war, violence, fear and division which confuse and confound us.

For me, this year, I feel more than usually conscious of the chaos which always lurks not far beneath the surface of our human

experience. What does our faith bring to the world in times like this? Can we pause and look for another picture taking shape, or are we drawn deeper into the chaotic spiral we long to escape.

Into the Advent story, and perhaps into ours as well, comes the strange cracked voice of John the Baptist speaking from the wilderness, announcing the coming of a new kingdom. He is the herald of new possibility, the one who announces a new and different reign, a reign of peace in the midst of conflict, light in the midst of darkness, truth in the midst of lies and hope in the midst of despair.

As the weeks of Advent go by, the focus of the drama shifts from the conflicts and natural disasters on the world stage to the lives of individual people dealing with the fears and hopes of being human.

A young unmarried woman, faced with an unexpected pregnancy, her fiancé wondering how he should respond, a priest, struggling to believe in the message of an angel, his wife, also unexpectedly pregnant, scruffy shepherds, Kings from Iran enter the drama, guided by the song of angels and the light of a star.

And then in a stable, in the dark, far from the corridors of power and the machinations of empire, a baby was born; a baby who cried and gurgled like any other and carried the hope of the world on his tiny shoulders.

May hope be born again this Christmas.

All blessings

Sally

Editorial

Rae Wildbore & Pam Clare

By the time you receive this Newsletter, we will be in a time of preparation. Preparation for the season of Advent.

Preparation to celebrate the birth of our beloved Lord and Saviour, Jesus, who by the power of the Holy Spirit, lives in and through each one of us. A truly wonderful gift to mankind.

Our quarterly newsletter publication coincides with our quarterly invitation to the celebration of communion to which everyone is welcome to join on Sunday, 1 December. In thankfulness for the many blessings we enjoy, may we gather in unity to give God the Glory.

We hope you enjoy part one of the article on the history of Miller Memorial Congregational Church. In the next three editions we will publish part two of the Miller Memorial Church, a short history on St. David's and then on St Peter's Presbyterian Churches.

Thank you to all of our contributors; this is your Newsletter and we appreciate receiving your articles. The March Edition closing date will be 17, February 2020 to the Church Office.

"What is most needed in Church?"

Fakaofu, Moderator



"I will build my Church," said Jesus. (Matt 16:18) Jesus himself will build his Church, He references Peter, and maybe to believers - and even to you and I.

What does the Church need? Is it buildings? Is it people? Is it money? Is it land? Is it urban, or is it rural? Is it music?

The truth is that we need a combination of all the above... and much, much more. We, above all, need to focus on Jesus Christ.

We must be prayerful people, individually and collectively. We must study Scripture with a focus on the Word. We must be in tune, on song and be aligned to the Holy Spirit as this is when "something beautiful, something good" takes place.

In our travels to presbyteries, parishes, communities and people, we have seen so much going on. There are challenges, there are struggles, and there are hardships in Church life. Our people - from north to south, west to the east - are giving their all for their Church. I write this message to encourage and support you. Keep on going for the Lord. Trust all you do in the Church to the Holy Spirit. Work together with those around you, as "many hands make light the load".

Remember the humble beginnings with home groups. Every gathering, community, or church has a specific need. So, whatever is working well for you and your people, keep going. Keep on doing church. The little you have, entrust all to God.

In a perfect world, we would be working collaboratively across and within our churches. Imagine if a parish in the north needed urgent funding to bring their building up to the required earthquake standard... and a parish from the east rescues them. Imagine if a parish in the south needed people to teach, lead and administer, and folks from the west step up. Helping each other in our deepest needs would make a tremendous change to our Church. But it is not a perfect world. We keep battling on and all the signs call us to confront our dwindling membership in faith and love.

I believe we must help each other. Work in our church courts, be involved in our missions, and if we have funds held for a rainy day, it's been bucketing down for a while. I believe we should utilise resources where there is need and where there are possibilities. I urge and encourage our able men and women to come forward to meet the need for more trained ministers. Fuel the fires in each of our local faith communities. The fire of the

Holy Spirit calls every day. Be led by the Advocate, the Helper. We need the power of God to continue moving among us.

"Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit," says the Lord. (Zec 4:6)

Miller memorial Congregational Church (Part 1)

Anne Silson

As a result of the Congregational Church Extension Scheme adopted by the National Church Union in Auckland in 1894, the Rev Henry Miller resigned from his church in Onehunga and moved to Napier at the end of November 1894. On 6 December, a meeting was held in his home. Seven people attended and a decision was made to start services on Sunday, 16 December in the old Gaiety Theatre. Six months later, a church fellowship was formed with 28 members. The church building, in the Gothic style of architecture, was first owned by the Free Methodists and was then used by the Salvation Army who had also used it for their first service in Napier. It is interesting that when the church was bought, it was moved from Shakespeare Road to Carlyle Street and two hundred pounds was spent on renovations.

Mr Miller was well known for his eloquence and for his temperance work and it is recorded that during his time in Napier, five public houses were closed. At the time of this death, he was a member of the licensing committee. He passed away suddenly in 1904 at the age of 46 and his loss was felt throughout the country. On Sunday, 11 June 1905, a marble memorial was unveiled to perpetuate his memory and on 17 November 1912, the church was dedicated the Miller Memorial Congregational Church – the actual words used by the Hon George Fowlds at this service were:

"To the Glory of God our Father by whose favour we are here; to the honour of Jesus Christ; to the praise of the Holy Spirit, and in loving

memory of the late Rev HWJ Miller, our first Minister, we dedicate this Church. For worship in prayer and praise; for the ministry of the Word; for the celebrating of the sacraments, we dedicate this Church. For the comfort of those who mourn; for the strength of those who are tempted; for help in right living; for the salvation of men, we dedicate this Church as a tribute of gratitude and love to him, who by the Grace of God was enabled to form this Christian fellowship, we, the people of this congregation, dedicating ourselves anew, dedicate this Church in memory of our First Minister and in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost"

Ministers following were the Reverends McNaughton, Hodge (the harvest and spring festivals were started during his ministry 1912-23), Gardner Miller, de Lisle (the pipe organ was purchased and the 1931 earthquake took place); Burgess, Ward, Gordon and McMeikan.

It was during the last two ministries that there was so much talk of church union and the Congregational Union looked to move toward this union instead of waiting for further discussion. Therefore, when Murray McMeikan accepted a call to the Pacific Island Church in Tokoroa in 1968, the Napier church decided to merge. It was seen at the time that this would foresee a national merger.

Because of the feeling of family and our caring for one another, we decided we should all move to the one church regardless of area. The move to the then St Peter's, the youngest Presbyterian church in Napier, was seen as a challenge in that we could prove to be a more effective witness in the new suburbs of Napier – we had workers and there was plenty of work to do.

To be continued in the next newsletter.

Gratiarum actio = act of thanks = saying grace

Kerry Marshall

Recently Sally talked about the custom of saying grace before a meal, when people of all different cultures and religions, throughout history, have paused before a meal in order to express gratitude for the nourishment food provides. Not only do we thank God for the food, it also helps us appreciate the great communal effort that goes into growing, harvesting, and preparing each ingredient.

One grace that is often shared is "For what we are about to receive may the Lord make us truly thankful, Amen"

Several people shared their memories of graces. Sarah shared the The Selkirk Grace: "Some hae meat and canna eat, And some wad eat that want it; But we hae meat, and we can eat, Sae let the Lord be thankit."

Dorothy told us about the following grace, passed down from her paternal family:

God Bless this food upon these dishes
As thou didst bless the loaves and fishes.
And as the sugar in our tea
May we all be stirred by Thee. Amen

In our Boys Brigade days, and at church camps, we often sang:
For life and health and daily food, we give you thanks o Lord;
For fellowship and all things good, we praise thy name o Lord.
Amen.

Everyone uses Google in this day and age and entering the phrase "saying grace" in that search engine brings up more than 150,000 references.

The "Philmont Grace" (named after the Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico) or the "Wilderness Grace" can be found in use wherever a troop has gone to Philmont, but is most common in the Western half of the United States. It goes: "For food, for

raiment, for life, for opportunities, for friendship and fellowship, we thank thee, O Lord."

According to Google in some cases different blessings are said depending on the type of food being eaten.

In Judaism the categories are: (i) Bread, (ii) fruits that grow on a tree, (iii) fruits/vegetables that do not grow on a tree, (iv) derivatives of the five grains (except for bread, which has its own blessing), (v) derivatives of grapes and (vi) everything else.

Did you know that there is a Presbyterian Grace Before Meat: "Gracious God, we have sinned against Thee, and are unworthy of Thy mercy; pardon our sins, and bless these mercies for our use, and help us to eat and drink to Thy glory, for Christ's sake, Amen" and a Presbyterian Grace After Meat: "Blessed God, in Thee we live, move and have our being; make us thankful for Thy mercies; and as we live by Thy providence, help us to live to Thy praise looking and waiting for a better life with Thyself above, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen."

On the simplest level, saying grace means offering thanksgiving—grace comes from the Latin *gratiarum actio*, "act of thanks." To say grace before meals is, among other things, to remember that it was the hearts and hands of many people, not my credit card, that provided my meal.

Care and Share

Dorothy Finlayson

Our group is increasing in size. For the last three meetings we entertained up to fifteen people per meeting. It's fun and the fellowship is very special. We concentrated on a theme and it was most interesting especially as everyone was able to contribute if they wanted to. The December theme was Christmas and always a very special and meaningful time.

Did you know Care and Share supports a group of the month and for two months we supported either the Napier Family Centre or the SPCA. Our sales table and the December meeting gave donations to Save the Children. We added Candy Canes to all the books donated to Swinburn house.

Our February meeting is starting 2020 with an Art Deco Fashion parade so join us if you can. Meetings are the third Monday each month February to November. Christmas greetings to you all.

Environmentally Speaking

Isabel Morgan

Forest and Bird have set the date for N Z to be pest free. Is this possible? Yes, it is possible; we will all need to be very strong minded and keep to the task. The last pest will be the hardest to catch, by then the last pest will have learnt a few tricks to keep himself safe, but it is possible. But what about the pests that swim their way here? When Richard Henry realised that a mustelid had reached his precious island in Fiordland, he was devastated. So much so that he left Fiordland behind him. NZ will always be a haven for unwanted creatures, some of which are very small. Let battle commence!

Parish Register

Rae Wildbore

Funerals

Bill Cowley died on 17 August

Bryan Pearson died on 30 September

Sam Bristow died on 21 October

Roger Schofield died on 26 October

We extend our loving sympathy to the family.

Regular Events

- **Sunday Services:** 9:15am and 10:30am services each Sunday and 7pm evening service on the 2nd Sunday of the month (NB: 9:15am service not held on statutory holidays)
- **Care and Share:** 3rd Mondays from 1:30 until done in the church lounge (February – October)
- **Fireside group** meet on the 2nd Tuesday each month at 7.30pm in the lounge (February to November)
- **Cards 500:** 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 5th Wednesdays at 1.30pm in the 3rd office
- **Lunch group** meets monthly on the 1st Friday at noon for food and fellowship at various venues around the city
- **Choir** meets each Sunday at 9.30am in the church
- **Jitterbugs Pre-school Music and Movement** each Tuesday from 9am (during the school term)

Upcoming Events

	December
8 th	Gifting Service
22 nd	9:15 & 10:30am Lessons and Carols Service
24 th	9:30pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
25 th	9:30am Christmas Day Family Service
29 th	10am service followed by morning tea
	January
	No 9:15am Sunday Services during January
	February
	Nil at the time of printing

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Please feel free to phone me with any questions or if you would like a visit.