

St Paul's Presbyterian Church

"Partners in God's Mission of Love"

NEWSLETTER - FEBRUARY 2018



From the Minister's Desk

Partners in God's Mission of Love

I wonder if you have a favourite tree in your life?

A few weeks ago we heard in church of Nathanael (John 1:43-51) who followed Jesus after Jesus saw him under a fig tree. Since then I have heard of significant trees - a swan plant, an apple tree, a pawlonia tree whose low, wide branches gave my children confidence and shelter.

I have been in the bush with an 800 year old matai, enjoyed the beauty and variety of the trees in Anderson Park and recalled the majesty of Tane Mahuta, and my favourite Te Matua Ngahere, gigantic kauri of Waipoua forest. I loved the Moreton Bay Fig in Memorial Square and have vivid memories of an avenue of oak trees in Hanmer Springs and the crunch of acorns under my four year old feet.

What is it that we love about trees? Is it the strength of the trunk as it stands, its branches reaching out or up, the roots connecting strongly to earth? Or is it, especially in this hot humid weather, the cooling shade they offer? Then there is the variety and intricacy of the leaves, the veins, the fruit which we eat and which provides the seeds for the next generation.

In traditional cultures, and in our own front yards, trees are places where people gather - to get to know each other, to make decisions, to offer hospitality. According to Genesis 13:18 the whole nation of Israel comes to birth from the encounter of Abraham with the angels under the Oak Tree at Mamre

There is a story about The Blessed Tree - a tree under which a 12 year old Muhammad, while tending the camels on a caravan, meets a Christian monk, Bahira, who sees in Muhammad the seeds of his greatness. In this story there are many echoes of the story of Abraham.

Traditionally, Buddha found enlightenment under a Bodhi tree, a seedling of which may be the oldest fig tree in the world thriving in Sri Lanka at 2500 years old. Perhaps the age of trees is part of our connection with them. The oldest trees in the world span the whole of written culture - over 4000 years.

Trees are part of our sacred story, symbols of life and peace, places where we see, connect with one another and with creation. Who knows, when we, like Nathanael, may find ourselves known and so encounter God and be moved to prayer.

Lord, when I feel most isolated, most alone, most forgotten today, gently remind me that you see. That you see me. And let me pass that sight on to others. Through Christ.

Sally

Christmas High Tea

Marion Fell, Elder

Christmas High Tea held at St Paul's on Thursday, 30 November, opened for the 60 attendees with some Merry Christmas Carols and Songs by the Ukelele band adorned in true Christmas gear –and head gear!! Many were fascinated with the Art Deco china and fabulously presented scrumptious afternoon tea served by 11 members of “Stitch in Time” group. Dorothy Finlayson and Anne Silson who deserve a special “thank you” for their inspiration, talents leadership and generosity of the group led this festive occasion. The group's final gesture was a wee gift to each (a decorated Christmas Tree cookie!) as many relaxed, happy visitors and members departed.

Lunch Group

Jill McConnochie

The Lunch group will meet at noon on Friday, 2 February at Zeppelin Café in Clive. Please phone Jill, 835 4656. New members welcome.

A Message for New Year

Kerry Marshall

There are two things that spring to mind when I think of New Year's Eve - Hogmanay and New Year Resolutions. The practice of making New Year's resolutions goes back over 3,000 years to the ancient Babylonians. There is just something about the start of a new year that gives us the feeling of a fresh start and a new beginning. In reality, there is no difference between December 31 and January 1 - nothing mystical occurs at midnight on December 31 and the Bible does not speak for or against the concept of New Year's resolutions. However, if a Christian determines to make a New Year's resolution, what kind of resolution should he or she make? Many resolutions are about physical things – losing weight or changing one's lifestyle or gaining advancement. Research also tells us that most of these fail. Perhaps we'd be better off investing in people, those around us and even those we don't know; committing to supporting and encouraging each other. When we invest in another person we give ourselves a gift. We might be able to light their path and in doing so bring light to our lives.

What do Scots do to celebrate Hogmanay? Scotland has its own unique set of traditions when it comes to New Year's Eve and New Year's Day festivities. Hogmanay is the Scottish word for the last day of the year and has become synonymous with New Year's celebrations. But unlike in other parts of the world, these festivities are not limited to one night. Celebrations on Hogmanay usually continue into New Year's Day and sometimes even January 2, which is a bank holiday in Scotland. Knowing Scottish history is the key to understanding Hogmanay traditions. Historians believe it originated from a winter solstice festival brought by the Vikings, for whom the passing of the shortest day was a cause for celebration, given how far north they lived. These Viking influences mixed with existing pagan traditions to form things like the dramatic torch processions through Edinburgh and other Scottish cities.

Another tradition which remains popular today also dates back to this period. “First-footing” is the idea of welcoming the first visitor of the new year, who usually brings gifts of whisky, shortbread and a lump of coal. But, in order to bring luck, the visitor needs to be a tall, dark male – deriving from the Viking superstition that blond strangers arriving at your door were a bad omen.

In later centuries, Christmas was banned in Scotland for hundreds of years after the split in the church because protestant rulers associated the dates with Catholicism. Many were forced to work over the period, meaning they couldn't celebrate with their families and until the New Year. This is where the idea of exchanging presents or “handselling” on Hogmanay came from – although this has now died out.

Many older people will recall the tradition of cleaning the house before the big day. A strong tradition of Hogmanay in modern Scotland, and throughout the world, is partying and welcoming old pals and strangers alike to symbolically greet the new dawn that a fresh year brings. At my stage in life staying up until midnight is hard enough let alone making it through to dawn. A ritual which has become famous throughout the world is that of linking arms to sing Robert Burns' famous poem Auld Lang Syne. As we farewell 2017 and welcome in 2018 tonight what is your hope for 2018, what is it that you will be looking forward to?

160th Anniversary of St Paul's

Pam Clare

It does not seem long since we celebrated our 150th anniversary, but 2018 marks 160 years since the founding of St Paul's. "The First Century of St Paul's Presbyterian Church 1858 - 1958" states: "It was on 9th January of the year 1858 A.D. that a decision was made for the erection in Napier of a Presbyterian Church edifice to be called St Paul's. This, therefore, is the official date from which the one hundredth anniversary is reckoned". However the original church wasn't built until 1861, with notification received in September 1858 that the Rev Peter Barclay from Aberdeen had been selected by the Colonial Committee of the Free Church of Scotland as the first minister for Hawke's Bay to come to Ahuriri and Port Napier. Fund raising and a subscription list was already underway for the building of the church, and a second subscription list was opened to obtain funds to build a minister's residence. Despite there being no more than 280 Presbyterians in the whole district, the manse in Spencer Road, and named Marybank for Mrs Barclay, was completed for the minister's family who arrived on 6 June 1859.

At first daily services were held by the Rev Barclay in Mr Marshall's schoolroom on the corner of Hastings and Tennyson Streets, with the HB Herald reporting on the 19 November, 1859, that "an excellent site for a church was obtained from Mr Henry Tiffin contiguous to his residence in Tennyson Street". Building commenced in October 1859, and although not completed until December 1861, St Paul's was open for service for the first time on Sunday 16 June of that year. An excerpt from the HB Herald of 3 December stated that: "The Presbyterian Church has been used for five months but has now been completed. There is comfortable accommodation for 150 persons. There is no debt on the church because of subscriptions received from the township, the country, and the proceeds of the bazaar. Sadly, this building was destroyed by fire in 1929. When interviewed by the Napier Courier during preparations for the 150th anniversary in 2008, church archivist Bruce McConnochie recounted how the history of St Paul's had been rather a hot one. "The first beautiful church was burned down in 1929, then the fire after the earthquake in 1931 burned all the woodwork of its equally magnificent brick replacement just eight days before it was due to be dedicated. In 1997 the bell tower caught fire, then in 2007 the old Sunday School building was burnt. Renovations to extend the building in 1958 saw the pulpit moved from the Marine Parade end of the church to the other. The pipe organ installed in 1935, was left in situ which explains its position at the back of the church".

Check out the photos beside the rear door of the vestibule of the twelve ministers who have served our parish since 1858. Long serving ministers have included the Rev J A Asher, 35 years until 1935, Rev Ron Hay, 1957 until 1981, and Rev Colin English from 1982 to 2010. And already 7 years has passed since we welcomed Sally as our minister in January 2011. The Grace said at the 150th anniversary dinner by Bruce McConnochie, office bearer for 51 years, and his granddaughter Grace.

Thankful we come to you Lord of the ages.

Thankful for those who pioneered the Christian faith in this community.

Help us to remember that the present grows out of the past. No age stands isolated and alone, but it stands upon the foundation of all that went before.

With gratitude we acknowledge our sister churches in the inner city and the friendly relations we enjoy with them.

May this evening be a time for reminiscing and enjoying the company of each other.

As we partake of this meal we give thanks for the food and those who have prepared and will serve it.

We appreciate, too that we don't have dishes to do when this function comes to a close!

Amen

Environmentally Speaking

Isabel Morgan

Recently I was speaking with friends in Auckland. They live in Milford, and often go for a walk on the beach. After a recent 'weather event' in Auckland, they went for a walk along Milford beach and were disappointed to find the beach littered with plastic 'beads'. If these little horrors have been phased out, it does not mean that our seas are clear of them. For years to come they will almost certainly continue rolling around the world, and in so doing they will kill untold thousands of birds, fish, and other marine creatures. The problem of plastic in our oceans continues to haunt me. The question of plastic in our world haunts me. A nephew and I were talking recently about this, and we were pondering a world without useful, versatile, dangerous plastic.

Think of the former grocery stores – not a shred of plastic in site. But cloth bags, hessian bags, brown paper bags, packets that could be opened so that the grocer could show the contents, tins of biscuits to be weighed to what you wanted (or could afford!). Have we become conscious of germs and contamination that everything must be tightly sealed? And we become a society that must have bar codes on almost everything? So if you go past a certain point something starts beeping, saying, "not paid for!" Plastics can be made from certain plant material. But we need that land to feed the world. So what do we do about plastic?

Parish Register

Rae Wildbore

Elder Emeritus

On Sunday, 3 December, Donald Tucker was made an Elder Emeritus in recognition of his long and faithful service as an Elder to St Paul's.

Funerals

Noel Ernest Lyons on 17 December 2017

Ian Alexander Noble on 29 December 2017

Nancy Irene Walters on 30 December 2017

We extend our loving sympathy to the families of Noel, Ian and Nancy

March Newsletter

Please forward items for the March Newsletter to the Parish Office (stpaulsnapier@gmail.com) by Monday, 19 February 2018.

Muse of the Month

Provided by Stan Mulder

Brains of older people are slow because they know so much. People do not decline mentally with age, it just takes them longer to recall facts because they have more information in their brains, scientists believe. Much like a computer struggles as the hard drive gets full, so too, do humans take longer to access information when their brains are full. Researchers say this slowing down process is not the same as cognitive decline. The human brain works slower in old age, said Dr Michael Ramscar, but only because we have stored more information over time. The brains of older people do not get weak. On the contrary, they simply know more. Also, older people often go to another room to get something and when they get there, they stand there wondering what they came for. It is NOT a memory problem, it is nature's way of making older people do more exercise. So there. Now when I reach for a word or a name, I won't excuse myself by saying "I'm having a senior moment". Now I'll say, "My disk is full". I have more friends I should send this to, but right now I can't remember their names.



This newsletter was delivered by..... phone.....

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

February 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2 Noon Lunch group Zeppelin Café, Clive	3 9am Praying together
4 Worship 10.30, 7pm 9.30 Choir practice	5	6 7pm Session	7 1.30pm '500' Cards	8	9	10 9am Praying together
11 Worship 9.15,10.30 9.30 Choir practice	12	13 9am Jitterbugs 6pm Fireside	14 1.30pm '500' Cards	15	16	17 9am Praying together Church Art Deco Event – all day
18 Worship 9.15,10.30 Art Deco 9.30 Choir practice	19	20 9am Jitterbugs 7pm BOM	21 1.30pm '500' Cards 7pm Lent Service	22	23	24 9am Praying together in the lounge
25 Worship 9.15,10.30 9.30 Choir practice	26	27 9am Jitterbugs	28 1.30pm Afternoon Fellowship			

Reminder that evening services are now held on the first Sunday of the month only.