



**St Paul's Presbyterian Church**  
“Partners in God’s Mission of Love”

**NEWSLETTER – December 2023**



**“Do this in remembrance of Me.”**

**Service of Holy Communion**

**Sunday, 3<sup>rd</sup> December at 10:00am. Please accept this as a personal invitation to be present.**



## Contents

Editorial .....	3
From the Parish Clerk .....	4
Moderator: PWANZ Closure Devotion at General Assembly .....	6
Operation Christmas Child.....	8
Pastoral Care: Carol Singing.....	10
Napier Family Centre – 40th Anniversary Celebration .....	12
Care and Share Report .....	13
Parish Register .....	13
Who’s on Keith’s Seat?.....	14
Regular Events.....	16



## Editorial

*Pam Clare*

There has been a common theme running through our quarterly newsletters during this turbulent year, and no, it hasn't been only the impact of Cyclone Gabrielle. Jill McConnochie wrote in March of her sadness that PWANZ, formerly APW (Association of Presbyterian Women) was to cease operation and in June recalled the time that HB Presbyterian served as the National Executive of APW. In September, Marian Eagle provided an update on the distribution of the remaining money left in the Mission Fund upon the winding up of PWANZ.

The General Assembly in October was a fitting opportunity to acknowledge the work of the PWANZ and celebrate its long journey. Our newly inaugurated moderator, Right Rev Rose Luxford prepared a closure devotion for PWANZ, including a personal reflection on its place in her life.

Christmas comes early to the Rudd's household each year and it was an amazing sight viewing the Christmas boxes that Inez puts together each year through Operation Christmas Child, a worldwide Christian organisation. Just let's say that we weren't able to find a place at the dining room table to have morning tea. The shoebox gifts are an expression of God's love to a child. In fact, it may be the only gift the child receives.

Our annual gift service will be held on December 10, and Marion Fell sat down on a shady Keith's Seat (we took the photo in front of the seat) to explain the origin of the gifting of books to the children who attend the early childhood centre, Swinburn House. She also recalled some of the many children who have benefited from our child sponsorship through Save the Children and World Vision.

The Parish Clerk's update gives a useful overview of upcoming services during the season of Advent, the Napier Family Centre has celebrated their 40th year anniversary, and the Pastoral Care team are providing some festive fun and fellowship with carol singing and Christmas afternoon tea on 29<sup>th</sup> November.

## **From the Parish Clerk**

*Lynne Arnold*

Wow, how time races by, over 18 months into our vacancy and a year without an intern. The time has gone by much faster than I had imagined it would.

Thank you to all of you for your support and encouragement.

It has been good to have the preaching in the church covered by such a diverse group of people, and I believe we have all grown through the experience.

The next couple of months are now organised so please mark the following dates in your calendars so you know what will be happening.

**Sunday 3rd December:            10am Communion Service**

(First Sunday of Advent)

**Sunday 10th December:        10am Gift Service**

(when we share gifts with the Napier Family Centre and Swinburn House)

Please Note: There will be one service only that day, at 10.00am. Also make sure you come early that day. We have heard there is a big concert on at the Municipal Theatre so parking in the area will be at a premium and remember the parks in the church grounds are for those with mobility issues.

**Sunday 17th December:            Our two usual services.**

The 10am service will be Rev Ruth Sandiford-Phelan's last service before she leaves to take up a position in Rotorua. We have been very fortunate to have her leading our worship on a regular basis and we will miss her.

**Sunday 24th December: Lessons & Carols Service.**

Our extended family from Trinity will be joining us, and maybe some from St Columba's Taradale

Also, on Sunday 24th December 8.30pm there is a service at St Columba's Taradale that we are invited to attend

**Monday 25th December (Christmas Day): 10.00am Trinity**  
(we are also invited to the St Columba's service at 9.30am)

**Sunday 31st December: 10.00am at Trinity Methodist**

**Sunday 7th January 2024: 10.00am at Trinity Methodist**

**Sunday 14th January** and the rest of the month we will have services at St Paul's with the Trinity family joining us.

Please ask if you are unsure about what is happening on any particular occasion.



## **Moderator: PWANZ Closure Devotion at General Assembly**

*Right Rev Rose Luxford*

Tena koutou katoa, Talofa, Talofa lava, Kia Orana, Malo e lelei, Taloha Ni, Bula Vinaka, Greetings to you all in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I grew up with APW (Association of Presbyterian Women) very much a part of the landscape of my life. My mother belonged to it for years and was President of the Milton group at least twice. Growing up, I remember Mum being involved with meetings, fundraising, preparing devotions, helping people in various ways through the APW group. The women enjoyed the friendships formed, the mission and the values of the group gave them a sense of purpose and fulfilment. They were an enormous help to the running of the church through the various rosters they organised - for flowers, cleaning, morning teas, catering for funerals, and through pastoral work, organising the annual fairs and so on. They were the backbone of the church!

And then in the various churches I have belonged to, the APW groups were well attended and enjoyed by the participants. They were often the 'mission-focussed' part of the church and did an enormous amount to help the communities in which they were based, as well as supporting overseas missions. The fellowship shared was also highly valued.

When I was training for ministry in Dunedin, many APW groups supported students through regular prayer, correspondence, food, furniture, firewood and so on. This was greatly appreciated by the students and helped strengthen the connection with the national church.

Presbyterian women have also been involved at the international level through the Special Consultative Status as a Non-governmental organisation with the United Nations, drawing

attention to the needs, injustices, aspirations and achievements of women around the world. This has been a platform that has been able to effect change and has encouraged those involved with it.

Recently the Fellowship group (previously APW) at our church talked of what the organisation had meant to them. They spoke of how for those who lived on farms in rural areas, it was a wonderful organisation which connected them and saved them from feelings of isolation. They enjoyed meeting up with women from other places through Presbyterial and the annual national conferences. Studies, resources, praying, listening to speakers, supporting missionaries, using their talents, the provision of food and hospitality, learning opportunities were all highly valued.

Each group around the country will have their own memories and I encourage you all to share those at your meetings, in your own contexts, giving value to what has happened in that past and how it has shaped, encouraged and nurtured the women of our church, people in our communities, and our national church as well. As this movement comes to a close, we feel the loss of it, acknowledge our feelings and also know the hope of God who leads us in new directions.



*The induction of the new Moderator Right Rev Rose Luxford and the laying on of hands by past Moderators.*



## Operation Christmas Child

Pam Clare



It's October 24<sup>th</sup> and Christmas shoe box season is well and truly happening in the Rudd household. Looking at Inez's dining room table, I don't think she and Bryan have been sitting down to dinner together for some time.

"I intended to do just five or six boxes this year", Inez explains, "but I didn't stop and it just grew to 25."

Operation Christmas Child is a worldwide operation which

last year surpassed 200 million shoebox gifts collected since it began in 1993, with 50 million children participating in *The Greatest Journey* discipleship programme. They are invited to participate in this programme through the churches that distribute the gifts.

There are over 100 receiving countries worldwide and in 2022, 228,104 shoeboxes packed in Australia and New Zealand went to five countries in the Pacific and Asia, and also to Ukraine.





So how did Inez get involved? In 2007 she was president of Women's Institute which took it on as a project. Since then, she has continued with support and donations from friends and groups, such as her embroidery group, St Paul's Parish Council and St Paul's Care and Share group. The donations contribute towards the \$12.50 (up from \$10) cost for each box to cover the cost of shipping and other project costs.

Each shoebox is gift wrapped, with box and lid covered separately, and labelled to indicate if it is for a boy or girl, and for which age category. It is filled with gifts from the suggested list – a 'WOW' item, (say a ball with a pump or a soft toy), other fun toys (skipping ropes, jigsaws, colouring books, felt pens), hygiene items such as soap and toothbrushes, and school supplies, which Inez says are treasured.



The boxes are then taken to a local drop-off location during National Collection Week between October 23 and November 4. And Inez can put her feet up and Bryan can sit at his dining room table again.

## **Pastoral Care: Carol Singing**

*Marian Eagle*

In keeping with the upcoming season of goodwill and cheer, our Pastoral Care Team have invited St Paul's parishioners to a Carols and Christmas Afternoon Tea which will be taking place in the Church Lounge on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> November at 2 pm. A list of favourite carols has been compiled, Dorothy will be on the piano, Kerry and Penny will be on the pipes and mince pies are on the menu.

Also, we have recently visited Elmwood House to sing hymns, hoping the familiar music would be of comfort. We were grateful to have Eleanor Holmes organise and lead our singing, and their activities coordinator has encouraged us to visit again.

So, what are some of our favourite carols? We started with the Pastoral Care Team.

### **Penny M:**

My favourite carol is 'Silent Night'. I have always loved it. The tune is instantly recognisable, easy to sing, absolutely beautiful and sounds great on any instrument. It doesn't feel like Christmas until we sing it. A few years ago, RNZ started a programme where people would call in with what they thought was 'The Greatest Song Ever' and they asked Kevin Milne to be the first person to choose one. He said he thought and thought about it for a long time and in the end decided on 'Silent Night'. A wonderful choice I thought.

### **Marian E: ‘**

‘Oh Holy Night’ is a beautiful carol especially when sung by a boy soprano or a choir. Interesting facts: First written in France as a poem in 1843 (Placide Cappeau). Set to music in France in 1946 (Adolpe Adam). Converted to English in 1855. (John Sullivan Dwight). The wording of the third verse made it popular in America by the abolitionists. It has

stood the test of time and is traditionally used in France at the beginning of the Midnight Mass. **Dorothy F** has also chosen ‘Oh Holy Night’. She remembers Eleanor singing this carol at the midnight services. She thought that Eleanor sang so beautifully and looked like an angel in her white dress.

**Margaret G:**

‘O Come All Ye Faithful’ expresses all the lovely Christian ideals. There is so much commercial music heard at Christmas with trite lyrics. This one is meaningful.

**Ella H** (*retired member of the Pastoral Care Team*).

My favourite carol is ‘As with gladness men of old’. “As with gladness men of old, did the guiding star behold, as with joy they hailed its light, leading onwards, beaming bright” I’ve always liked it, it’s a bit different from the others.

**Eleanor H:**

Choosing a Christmas hymn to sing we are spoilt with the wealth of choice and memory. For the past few years, we have been blessed with NZ published hymn books put out by the Hymn Book Trust. They have offered us many songs that have since become favourites to sing. One such hymn with music written by Colin Gibson and the lyrics by Shirley Murray is “Carol our Christmas, our upside-down Christmas”.

**Marion Fell:**

I like the carol ‘Little Donkey’. It reminds me of singing it at Christmas time at St Stephen’s, and it also makes me think of Palm Sunday.



## **Napier Family Centre – 40th Anniversary Celebration**

*Kerry Marshall*

Forty years ago, the vision of the Napier Inner City churches resulted in the establishment of an amazing organisation – the Napier Family Centre. The founding statement “To help is to Love” has remained that guiding principle of the Centre over all those years.

The 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary was celebrated on Oct 27<sup>th</sup> with a function at Thomas Moore church in Onekawa at which the achievements of the Centre were acknowledged by many supporters from the representative parishes and the community. At the conclusion of the AGM which followed the “birthday party” Maxine Boag expressed thanks, on behalf of the Mayor of Napier and Councillors, for the valuable work done by Napier Family Centre in our community.

In the past year the Napier Family achieved many things while providing proactive support in places affected by the February cyclone, building the financial capacity of clients seeking help, and helping many parents with parenting skills.

Some of the numbers are daunting: in the past financial year NFC has helped more than 2,100 families; ran 1,335 sessions for people seeking financial support; delivered 353 kai parcels; dealt with a 120% increase in requests for counselling and achieved a positive financial result.

The ongoing support for Napier Family Centre by St Paul’s will be a vital part of the next 40 years of Napier Family Centre. Thank you.

## Care and Share Report

*Dorothy Finlayson*



The Care and Share afternoon fellowship group recently celebrated Christmas with a luncheon at the Duke of Gloucester. 19 members attended and enjoyed fun and fellowship as well as an enjoyable meal.



Our group will meet again in February, and all are welcome to join us in the Church lounge, from 1.30pm on the third Monday of each month.

### Parish Register

*Joan Leonie Thompson who died at the age of 88 years on 13th October 2023. Joan's farewell was held at St Paul's Church, Napier on Monday 19th October 2023 at 10.30am.*

*Our loving sympathies go to Joan's family.*



## Who's on Keith's Seat?

Well, it's Marion Fell.

One of the many gifts that St Stephen's Parish brought with them when they joined with St Paul's in 2006 was their contribution to the annual gift service, held every December. As is our custom at this time of year, we give gifts to children of families receiving support from the Napier Family Centre by choosing a tag from the table in the foyer, buying a



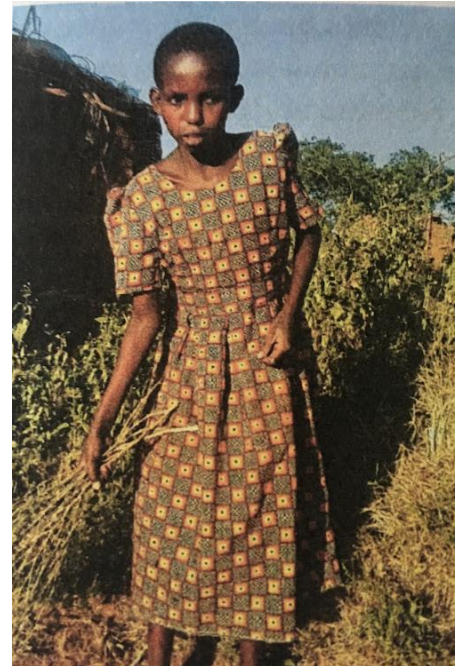
gift for the age of the child and returning it to church in time for the gift service. Representatives from the NFC attend the Christmas themed service and are presented with boxes of gifts to distribute to families for gift wrapping.

Marion introduced St Paul's to a St Stephen's gifting tradition, of annually providing gifts of books to the children of Swinburn House, an early childhood centre first set up in the Miller Room in the hall at St Peter's Church, which later became St Stephen's. Marion knew Heather Turner, one of the early childhood teachers, and her support for the new venture continued when the early childhood centre moved to their own building, Swinburn House, in Pirimai.

Marion's interest in children's literacy led to her setting up the gifting of books to the pre-school children to continue the connection with St Stephen's, and when they joined with St Paul's, this Christmas project continued. Over past years, says Marion, our association with and generous support of Swinburn House, which now operates under the umbrella of Birthright Hawkes Bay Child & Family Services, has allowed Christmas book gifts to be gladly received by these preschool children.

Marion also instigated the monthly retiring offering for World Vision and for Save the Children, another initiative that began at St Stephen's and was transferred to and supported by St Paul's.

Our sponsored World Vision child, Everen Jacob who lives near Lilongwe, the capital city of Malawi, featured in our September 2021 newsletter. She has received sponsorship from St Paul's since the age of five.



Marion has been reflecting on some of the many children who have been sponsored over the years through Save the Children. The very first, Fikret Umar, from Turkey, was sponsored from 1975 until 1993 when he turned 21 and graduated from the technical university. A highlight when Marion and Barry visited Turkey in 1990 was meeting him and his mother at the Save the Children Centre in Istanbul.

The support and donations with our monthly collections for Child sponsorship for World Vision and Save the Children are such a wonderful outreach appreciated by recipients we support.

## **Regular Events**

**Care and Share:** Held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month from 1:30pm in the Church Lounge (February – November)

**Lunch group** meets monthly on the 1<sup>st</sup> Friday of each month at noon for food and fellowship at various venues around the city

**Jitterbugs** Pre-school Music and Movement each Tuesday from 9am (during the school term).

**Napier Repair Café:** Held at Asher Hall on the last Saturday of every month from February to November, 11.30am to 2.30pm.

## **March 2024 Newsletter**

The closing date for contributions to the December newsletter will be **Monday 26th February 2024**. Please forward articles to **Pam** at [pamclare@xtra.co.nz](mailto:pamclare@xtra.co.nz) or **Bridget** at the church office. Details below.

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