

HALO



December 2023

ST COLUMBA'S CHURCH TARADALE



From the Minister



John says “The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighbourhood.” (John 1:14). I like the idea of Christmas and Christianity being about connecting with God, the idea that God moved into the neighbourhood. I was reminded of my youth when I was “God smart” in that I could win the bible quizzes but not “God connected” in that I wasn’t walking and talking with God—yet that is exactly what Jesus invited the disciples to do.

I listened to a talk on prayer which called prayer “chat”. it suggested that our relationship with God is more about chatting than formal requests or following some formula such as ensuring you say “in Jesus name” at the end of the prayer. They said most of the time when I

talk to God in my mind it is just chat – a conversation with God like I would chat to a close friend or neighbour.

They pointed out that often when we teach about prayer we suggest a helpful formats:

A.C.T.S = Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication.

Or PTS = Please, Thank you and Sorry. Or we use the Lord’s prayer as a structure for our prayers.

This talk reminded me that most of the time I don’t formally structure my prayers – I just chat – so why don’t we teach people just to chat with God.

The idea is that as you are helping someone to chat with God you can give some topics and get them to talk to God in their heads.

Some examples:

- Tell God one thing you love about your family.
- Show God a picture in your mind of one person that makes your heart sink every time you see them. And tell God why that person makes your heart sink.

- Show God a picture of one place you hope your family will take you for your next birthday.
- Tell God the worst scariest fear you have about your future.
- Tell God one thing that you wish you could change about your relationship with Him.

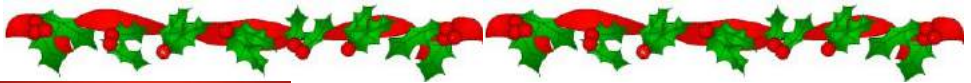
It's as simple as that. find a topic for yourself or ask questions and let them chat. If you are teaching kids to chat they suggested you can even ask them to tell God about the smelliest botty burp they ever smelled. Apparently a five-year-old would find that hysterical and gives them permission to laugh with God.

Chatting and Christmas help us unpick our wrong views of God. Meeting God is not like meeting the Mayor or the school principal, it's like meeting Jesus who was born in a stable, vulnerable and weak. God

is not a busy distant God who doesn't have time for our small stuff – He has bothered to count the hairs on our head and knows our every thought (Ps 139:2). God does life with us – so Prayer is about connecting and walking with Him.

Being comfortable chatting with God also unpicks the idea that God is an angry God who is ready to punish every miss step. We don't want to be noticed by God like that and viewing God like that makes prayer difficult. We do want to be noticed by a God like Jesus who doesn't judge or condemn us but does call us to recognise how sin makes us feel isolated and alone and distant from people and from God. Christmas reminds us that God comes towards us offering gifts of grace and inviting us into relationship and a chance to Chat.

Brett



Sun 10 Dec, 9.30 am *Children's Nativity Play*

Sun 24 Dec, 8.30 pm *Christmas Eve Service*

Mon 25 Dec, 9.30 am *Christmas Day Service*

The King's Speech

My very first Christmas memory is of being in the crowded living room of our 13th century cottage, with family from near and far huddled round the wireless (we never called it a radio!).

On that Christmas Day, young as I was, I sensed that something important was about to happen. As the chimes of Big Ben faded away and the national anthem was played we heard Alvar Lidell sonorously announce, "His Majesty the King." I have no idea what he said, but as the King spoke the expression on each adult face made it clear that whatever it was it was significant.

We were at war and the voice of King George VI brought some much needed assurance and hope.

Throughout that day, in the midst of all our Christmas festivities, one thing remained uppermost in our minds—we had heard the King!

We are living in uncertain times and it feels as if half the world is at war so this Christmas as you think of Bethlehem and angels and shepherds and stables and stars, please remember this above all, that at Bethlehem The King of Kings

spoke and what He said would change the course of history. He said, "JESUS!"!

"God, who at times past has spoken to us by the prophets has, in these last days, spoken to us in His Son." Hebrews 1:1

What has He said?

Clearly, definitively simply this:

- **I love you** and it is only your sin that has kept us apart. I came to deal with your sin and become your Saviour. Look at the Cross, that is the symbol of my love and the measure of your sin.
- **You need me.** You cannot save yourself. Only the power of my blood can cleanse from all sin and there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby you must be saved. You need my forgiveness, my grace and my indwelling life.
- **I am waiting.** I left the splendour of heaven, lived a perfect life and died to pay the price of your sin. I sent my Spirit to live my eternal life within you. I want to become





your Sin-bearer and take away your sin. I want to be your Saviour and break the power of sin in your life. I want to be your Sovereign and rule your life with righteousness and love. The invitation stands, "Come to me and I will give you rest."

Is there any reason why you should not give your life to Christ today?

The King has spoken and is speaking

still. What will you say to Him?

"We are His people and the sheep of His pasture. Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your heart." Ps 95:7-8 "...the sheep hear His voice and He calls His own sheep by name and He goes before them and they follow Him because they know His voice." John 10:3-4

Duncan Leighton

I No Longer Pray for Peace

On the edge of war, one foot already in,

I no longer pray for peace:
I pray for miracles.

I pray that stone hearts will turn to tenderheartedness,
and evil intentions will turn to mercifulness,
and all the soldiers already deployed
will be snatched out of harm's way,
and the whole world will be astounded onto its knees.

I pray that all the "God talk"
will take bones,

and stand up and shed its cloak of faithlessness,
and walk again in its powerful truth.
I pray that the whole world might sit down together and share its bread and its wine.

Some say there is no hope,
but then I've always applauded the holy fools
who never seem to give up on the scandalousness of our faith:
that we are loved by God.....
that we can truly love one another.

I no longer pray for peace:
I pray for miracles.

**Poem by Ann Weems, a
Presbyterian elder and poet
Written for Ash Wednesday 2003**



Celebrating 19 years of a Christian children's holiday programme at St Columba's

19 years ago we started a holiday programme. Alex Wall began by taking kids a few hours a day for 2/3 days a week about 19 yrs ago. Kirsty Jamieson and Wilma Ennor took over when Alex left. I'm pretty sure it only lasted a short time as Kirsty went off to do her Teachers Training. Brett was very keen for this to be expanded and to become an outreach to the Community, so I stepped up along with my daughter Belinda and her friend Katrina, who were both trained teachers, but had small children so they weren't working. For the next 4 years we ran a programme for children every school holidays, every day from 9-4. It was advertised and run as a Christian programme. We did lots of singing, dancing, arts and crafts mostly based on the Christian programme we were running that week. We went on outings and used the TukiTuki campsite a lot. Cockroaches were rampant in the kitchen which we had to chase away before using the kitchen. We did unspeakable things, that today, would be an absolute no no, like swimming in the river at the TukiTuki, rock pooling at Ahuriri etc. We used to have between 40-50 kids

attend. There were very few holiday programmes back then so very little competition, not like today. We had a lot of fun—but it was exhausting! I was no youngster!

Belinda and I were looking at the photos yesterday and commenting on how many of those kids are now soldiers, sailors, nurses, teachers, one is a doctor and another training to be a doctor, accountants and engineers etc. We sowed the seeds of Gods love in their lives and we pray they remember the lessons we taught them. We had amazing support from the Congregation—Jean Wilson, Pam Watkins, Wilma Ennor, Sheryl Glock, Deneice Marshall, Wendy Gosling, Colleen Pilkington, Arthur Fordice (known as Pops by the kids) then our teenagers, Stefan Slooten, Vincent Polewidhi, John Skelly and Glen Stewart just to name a few. The ladies made morning and afternoon teas and we were blessed by the amazing baking. We had to use the Fish Hall, the main kitchen, plus the Sunday school rooms as the old church was used as the Op shop. We raised funds through Trusts etc and built the kids playground. We also nagged the Board into getting

Kids Friendly Care



176 Gloucester Street, Taradale

Phone 022 643 1691

more toilets built as two toilets for all those kids was just not enough.

After we retired Peter Wooten took over and expanded the programme to facilitate before school and after school—he named it KFC (Kids Friendly Care) joking with the kids that they were Kentucky Fried Children!! He applied to the Ministry of Social Development for funding and it became an OSCAR (Out of School Care and Recreation) programme. He ran KFC for several years, the kids loved him as he was lots of fun. Erin Combrinck took over for a couple of years and now Anna Neil, who is into her 7th year. Well done Anna, you do a great job.

The reason for writing this is

because we need to celebrate the fact that we still have a Christian programme running after 19 years. The numbers are fewer but that's because there are so many programmes for parents to choose from these days. Just because we don't see the kids in Church doesn't mean that they are not learning of the Good News that we have an amazing God who loves them, as they still learn all that from Anna and her team.

I have had a trip down memory lane and felt very nostalgic. I am grateful for the wonderful community outreach that still exists after all these years.

Pam Thrupp

Jeanette Barker's Holiday

In January an email popped up advertising an Ocean Swim in Fiji. "Wow that sounds like me" I thought. I clicked Interested and back came the details. (It was not a scam, we senior citizens have to be aware of scams my family says.)

Five days, three 1k swims, no worries, Fiji rules in that if you can't make your distance the Life Guards would pick you up and take you to the finish line!

Next move, I'd better not go alone for "health & safety" reasons. So my daughter, Bronwyn, drew the short straw and came with me. We swam the 1k distance together even though she swims much faster than me. In true sportsmanship we moved aside to let faster and younger competitors go past us.

We left Auckland flying Fiji Airways. Bronwyn decided to use a wheelchair for me, a great help, so we whizzed past queues and Security in no time with the airways staff taking over. Arriving in Fiji a bus took us to the Sofitel hotel, very posh! While I'm on transport I had the choice of a wheelchair, walking (as little as possible) shuttle, bus, golf carts, elevator, then ferries and

tender boats - tricky.

Monday after our arrival, relaxed and freshened up, we registered. There were 200 on the tour from many countries like Germany, South Africa, USA, India, even Tokaroa. Then there were introductions and an outline of the programme for the following three days. A wonderful meal followed and entertainment by the Fijians. Bula, bula (Hello or greeting), we were experts on the spot. The Fijians were so friendly with huge smiles and had no qualms about asking how old you were. We were all there for fun, friendship and swimming.

Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday were swimming days. We took a 30 minute ride by ferry to South Sea Island which we swam around. Those doing 1k went just once around, those doing 3k went twice and further out. At the start all swimmers chose where they thought they should be. For



example the faster ones at the front and Bron and I at the back. It was quite choppy, so I was glad Bron was swimming with me. It was a bit difficult to see the marker buoys.

I loved the swim as we were swimming over the coral and also saw various kinds of fish. At the finish Bron helped me walk up the beach and each time someone else came to my other side to also assist, usually a handsome Fijian with the usual big smile. I was spoilt.

A buffet lunch followed, also available were kayaks, snorkel gear and even a massage. Of course lots of socialising. We made friends with people from the different countries. Later we returned to Port Denarau and took the bus back to the hotel. In the evening on a big screen they showed the days events and also the results. We were put in 10 year age groups for the results. I was in the 70+ age group (they didn't have a 80+ group).

Wednesday the special guest on the tour was Shane Gould from Australia who has won Olympic Golds in her competitive days. Shane took a swim clinic that morning in the hotel pool which we all enjoyed. The course today was in the sea by the hotel, marked with



buoys. The day was similar to Tuesday. The sea was calmer so it was an easy swim.

Thursday off on the ferry again and another swim around the island at the Malamala Beach Club. A super resort. The evening at the Sofitel was special. The usual fabulous meal, outdoors, entertainment including a Fijian Fire Dance followed by the Awards ceremony. The over all winner was a 24 year old Australian girl, Taylor, who is a professional ocean swimmer, she even beat the men. Dancing together rounded off the night.

Friday, early breakfast, a farewell song by the waiters just for us and off back to NZ to my normal life with wonderful memories of a special five days with Bronwyn.

Vinaka —Thank you

Jeanette Barker

IN MEMORIAM

In the past few months, two notable trees have been removed from the Church grounds. Cyclone Gabrielle caused the damage to the Melia tree which stood alongside the letterbox. The Melia was planted about a century ago and was a feature of the Church entrance.



The Pohutukawa tree stood tall and proud to the right of the Church

buildings. So tall that it was causing problems with the gutters. It came as a sapling from a Parishioner about 50 years ago. This was in bloom at Christmas time and it has always been a pleasure to use some of the blooms in the Advent wreath for Christmas morning.

Now that these two large trees have been removed from the landscape, the Church buildings become more visible to the passing public. This presents us with another challenge to keep these buildings in good condition as a reflection of our image as a caring Congregation.

Thank you Anne Lanigan for this little piece of history.

Doing it differently – together

I was asked to contribute something for Halo this year as we head into the season of advent, when I sat down to write I was reminded of my childhood, with hot Christmas roast meals which would envy any snowy British winter kitchen. The fact it was over 30 degrees didn't seem to matter as "that was how we did Christmas" and so a traditional hot roasted meal was had by all packed around a dining table inside. I love that now we have so many different

ways of celebrating that meal together, walking in the hills, curries, BBQs, cold salads on a beach, or those celebrating the week before or after with friends and family instead of 25th December.

2023 has been a tough year for Hawkes Bay but we have also come together in new and powerful ways. We have had lots of new experiences which have brought us

together and we have listened to different ways of sharing the message of God from some amazing people who have joined with us here at St Columba's. We have shared our buildings this year with EIT which was a great way to realise there is more we have in common than we know (especially the love of a good coffee!).



What has been my guide this year has been the message: "what unites us is stronger than what divides us". This unity of the church community is on my mind as we embark on another summer holiday season in Hawkes Bay. I spoke about this recently at a Session meeting with us all being on Team Jesus, and I find such encouragement in the people in our church who are changing our world daily in ways I would never have thought of which is really inspiring. Sometimes this is the challenge of being the body of Christ, we have been gifted in different ways, we might need to let

others shine some days, and we work best together.

Last year Brett used the theme of "The Best Christmas Ever" which was a great end to that year and as this year comes to an end it's a good time to reflect and celebrate our St Columba's 2023. We have enjoyed services, morning teas, fundraisers, music, our children, performances, speakers, meals, meetings, each other and so much more which remind us why we come together. Together we get a wider perspective and refresh our energy in our church community. For me 2023 is also the year where we came together a bit more with the other churches in Hawkes Bay as well. This has been another good opportunity to reflect on what we have in common rather than the distances and differences that separate us, it has also allowed us to build new relationships with others that love the Lord.

Earlier this year I was asked what makes church different from any other group who do good things and meet regularly – I think this is something we need to keep in our minds as a church. We do this with a purpose that is not just ours, but one we have in common with so

many others and is powerful. I look around our church and see many ways of thinking and doing and I love that variety, the good ideas I would never have come up with! We are the body but not all of us are hands or feet (or preachers!). Some of us are gifted in different

ways but we are each gifted. So, as we head towards a new year and a new season lets think more about what we have in common with one another rather than our differences and how we can work together in new ways to make 2024 amazing.

Joanne Magill

Agape Group

Do you want to join a group to read the Bible? What a question that Joes Polehwidhi put to me, of course we all want to read and understand the Bible, it is our guide and teaching tool.

I said no!!

Somehow the Spirit disagreed with me and gently pushed me so that sometime later I said OK.

What a great decision, five days a week we individually read the three versus for the day then simply send an email saying "done", the responses are added to a spread sheet so that all in the group are aware how each is doing, simple.

If you wish to question, understand or comment on what you have read simply add that in your email, others will respond with their understanding and encouragement.

In this way we are all encouraged and committed to reading and

understanding His word.

I'm not the most disciplined person, (those who know me stop laughing) but in this I have not missed a day and have increased my understanding of the New Testament plus feel a closeness with the others in the group, which also includes members in America.

As its communication is email based location is irrelevant.

So I give thanks for the push Joes and then God gave me to say yes, and would encourage everyone to say yes to joining and yes to committing to reading the Bible in a systematic way every day.

What does Agape Mean? In the New Testament it's the Fatherly love of God for humans, as well as the human reciprocal love of God.

God bless us all and encourage us to read His word.

Ron Sim

Message from Christian Lovelink



As always, we thank those who have given items, money, time and services to Christian Lovelink. We could not operate without your support, and we are deeply grateful, as are the families who receive the help. Many would face even more hardship without your generosity. We thank you on their behalf.

Christian Lovelink is keen to increase the number of people that know about us and how we work. If you, your organisation, your community group, or church would like to know more about us, please contact the office on 027 532 2611. We are happy to do a presentation to your group (big or small). Just contact our Operations Manager, Ian Jones, to arrange a suitable day and time.

Statistics

Year to date Jan to Sept 2023

Families assisted	746
Items distributed	10,264
Volunteer hours	7,320

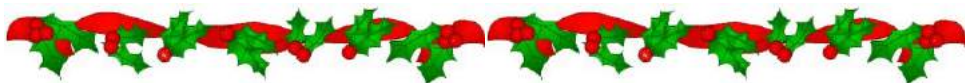
Snapshot of items distributed

Blankets/duvets	882	Beds	580
Small Electrical	107	Sheets	1386
Large whiteware	124	Towels	961

FLOOD



To date Christian Lovelink has assisted 78 families, with requests from a further 10 families who are waiting to move back into their homes. The main area of assistance continues to be the provision of beds and bed linen. We have provided 150 new beds to families affected by the flood. Many thanks to all the organisations, churches, businesses, and individuals who have supported us to make this possible. It is appreciated.



What's on in Dec 2023, Jan and Feb 2024



Sunday	3 December	9.30am	Communion Service
Sunday	10 December	9.30am	Children's Nativity Play
		1.30pm	Patoka Church Service
Tuesday	12 December	10.30am	Tuesday Church Service
Sunday	17 December	9.30am	Church Service
Sunday	24 December	9.30am	Church Service
		8.30pm	Christmas Eve Service
Monday	25 December	9.30am	Christmas Day Service
Sunday	31 December	9.30am	Church Service
Sunday	7 January	9.30am	Church Service
Sunday	14 January	9.30am	Church Service
		1.30pm	Patoka Church Service
Thursday	18 January	7.00pm	Board of Managers Meeting
Sunday	21 January	9.30am	Church Service
Thursday	25 January	7.00pm	Session Meeting
Sunday	28 January	9.30am	Family Service
Sunday	4 February	9.30am	Church Service
Sunday	11 February	9.30am	Church Service
		1.30pm	Patoka Church Service
Tuesday	13 February	10.30am	Tuesday Church Service
Thursday	15 February	7.00pm	Board of Managers Meeting
Sunday	18 February	9.30am	Church Service
Thursday	22 February	7.00pm	Session Meeting
Sunday	25 February	9.30am	Family Service

Regular Events

Tuesdays	Op Shop open Contact: 844 5004	10.00am - 4.00pm
	Tuesday Church Service 2nd Tuesday of the month	10.30am - 11.30am
	House Group Contact: Colin Zachan 844 8050	7.00pm
	House Group @ Church Contact: Brett Walker 844 2256	7.00pm - 8.30pm
	Women's Fellowship meeting 4th Tuesday of the month	7.30pm
Wednesdays	Mainly Music Contact: Karen Jensen 021 069 5909	9.30am - 10.30am
	House Group @ Church Contact: Brett Walker 844 2256	10.15am
	Op Shop open Contact: 844 5004	10.00am - 4.00pm
	Craft Group 1st Wednesday of the month Contact: Ruth Stoddart 844 2336	7.00pm
Thursdays	Mainly Music Contact: Karen Jensen 021 069 5909	9.30am - 10.30am
	Op Shop open Contact: 844 5004	10.00am - 4.00pm
	Board of Managers meeting 3rd Thursday of the month	7.00pm
	Session meeting 4th Thursday of the month	7.00pm
Fridays	Massive Bible Study Contact: Steve Demetrius 027 698 4048	6.00pm - 7.00pm
	Massive Youth Group Contact: Steve Demetrius 027 698 4048	7.00pm - 9.00pm
Sundays	Kool Kids Contact: Pam Thrupp 027 429 6305	9.30am- 10.30am

St Columba's Elders

Session Clerk: Joanne Magill

Rev Brett Walker	027 408 3658
Joanne Magill	022 687 9130
Joes Polehwidhi	021 215 8729
Jon Read	027 236 1314
Claire Smith	027 678 8849
Stefan Steyn	027 436 1708
Barry Thrupp	021 0269 8370
Pam Thrupp	027 429 6305
Keith Woodcock	027 449 5948
Colin Zachan	844 8050



Pastoral Care

Rev Brett Walker	027 408 3658
Inger Slooten	844 9070
Sarah Atley	845 3448
Esther Woodcock	844 1424

Board of Managers

Treasurer: Wim Slooten

Rev Brett Walker	027 408 3658
Steve Magill	022 687 9131
Tracey Shadbolt	027 278 0780
Edward Smith	844 6324
Ron Sim	843 9980
Wim Slooten	021 550 305
Mark Stoddard	021 076 3089
Anne Tristram	021 118 6516
David Walker	022 140 3961

Children's Programmes

Kool Kids

Pam Thrupp
027 429 6305

Youth Group

Steve Demetrius
027 698 4048

Kids Friendly Care

Anna Neil
022 643 1691

Mainly Music

Karen Jensen
021 069 5909

