

Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa  
New Zealand

ST NINIAN'S PARISH NEWS

MARCH 2024



This magazine was delivered by:

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## **What's Been Happening?**

Recent deaths: We have sent sympathy cards to the families of Rev William (Bill) Wallace and Rev. Loyal Gibson, both Methodist ministers.

Bill Wallace had led worship at St Ninian's occasionally, many years ago. He was a prolific hymn writer and we have many of his hymns in our red book. Bill was living at Wesley Care. Margaret Wallace, one of our recent organists, was Bill's first wife.

Loyal Gibson, was the father of Dawn Ferguson (wife of Rob Ferguson, a previous minister here). After his wife died he lived with Dawn and Rob until Rob became ill. Loyal then moved into Wesley Care in Christchurch.

Birthday wishes to Betty Deyell who recently turned 96, and to Betty Abbott who celebrated her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday in Dunedin.

A Working Bee was held on 15<sup>th</sup> January. We were delighted with the number of people who came along to help. An inventory was taken of our plant so that we can start to cull the furniture, cups and saucers etc that may be superfluous when we demolish the hall. Records of church business were moved into some of the storage space in the vestry. We hired a rug doctor and cleaned the carpets in the lounges. In between showers Kelvin managed to get the brick building spouting cleaned. Windows were cleaned. Thanks to those who came.

The Living Waters worship group are trialing using the church building from 10.45 a.m to 12.15p.m each Sunday. They then go to the Puriri Lounge for refreshments. They have erected a volleyball net on one of the tennis courts for their young people.

Office Hours: The office will be open only on Friday mornings, from 8.30 a.m to 12 noon. Contact the office by email please. Appointments can be made for someone to be present at other times if necessary.

Ministry Settlement Board and Standing Committee have met with a minister who may be interested in a part-time position at St Ninian's. The person is committed elsewhere until July. We need to consider our financial commitments to the redevelopment in the near future. Some early expenses will need to be carried by St Ninian's until full payment for the land sales goes through. A motion was passed that we advise the potential minister that we are interested in pursuing this further, and that at our June Standing Committee meeting we will come to a decision about what we would like to negotiate. Everyone felt very positive about our interaction.

### **Easter Services**

24th March Palm Sunday 9.30am  
28th March Maundy Thursday, 7pm in the lounge  
29th March Good Friday 9.30am  
31st March Easter Sunday 9.30am

### **Presbyterian Support Upper South Island Community Relations Coordinator**

Megan Waddington has advised that she is moving on from this role. She writes: "It is with some sadness that I am writing to confirm I will be leaving my role as Community Relations Coordinator at Presbyterian Support, with my last day being Thursday 28th March. I recently completed my Level 4 Certificate in Health and Wellbeing and have decided to pursue a new career within the social service sector. I have genuinely loved working at PSUSI over the last seven years, and it was through seeing the positive changes our staff have made within the lives of others, that first encouraged me to study and work within this field. I wish to thank you for your support over the past few years and look forward to introducing you to our new Donor and Community Relations Coordinator in due course. Thank you for the privilege of working with you all and I pray God blesses you and keeps you well."

## Sunflowers

After the Spring worship service that Jane and Hugh Catto led, they gave everyone a packet containing sunflower seeds. Most people planted them and were pleasantly surprised at the huge plants that grew and also the colours. Some were traditional yellow, but others were a reddish brown. O'Malleys measured their plant at 2.1 metres, McKeachie had a plant with 42 heads. It grew so tall and heavy that eventually the stalk split, and the plant collapsed onto a nearby bush. It was a lovely idea and brought a lot of pleasure: a great talking point. Unfortunately, Hugh said theirs didn't grow well.



## Summer Servants- Martin Stewart

I thought I would write a little something for the ones who might be working or attending to things in our churches during the January summer break. Kia ora! I'm trying to keep my head down after a few weeks off, and I am finding myself massively distracted by the heat, the associated lack of sleep, and all the things that didn't get done last week! Is it like that for you? I figure that January might be the one

month a year where we allow a bit of inefficiency and a choice to work with the rhythms of summer rather than against them. To relax. To waste time. And to glory in it. Last Sunday I attended worship at Trinity Timaru with my mother – it was her 88th birthday. It was good to sit with her among her church family and reflect on the amazing combinations of experiences and opportunities that enabled my mother to reach such an age. It was a time of gratitude. It was also a time of sober reflection: she isn't that well, though the illness is holding off, and I am (still) only 26 years younger than her!

I had found out a few days before that the attending minister had Covid and wasn't able to lead the Sunday service. He had to ask one of his elders to cover the Sunday service and a funeral with just an hour and a half's notice! Lois Shipley was that elder. She led a fine Sunday service including a very creative reflection on the scriptures. I talked with Lois afterwards and thanked her for doing such a fine job with such short notice. Lois was able to draw on her rich experience, she has been preaching and leading worship for over 35 years. That is about as long as I have been doing it, but her ministry will have received much less acknowledgement, remuneration, or resourcing from the wider church. Lois is a wonderful example of a person living out the commitment of her baptism, she is a treasure in the field of us! Who steps up when the minister is away? People like Lois do. One or two people gearing up when others have been enjoying their summer break has been a pattern in most of our churches for many years. It is not the glamour season – many people besides the ministers are away making something of the summer break. These can be low days. It is hard to offer a carefully prepared offering to a congregation with many gaps in it. From time to time some people even dare to make disparaging comments about church not being 'real' when the minister isn't there. But there is a ministry leader there, a someone like Lois ditching their own need to yield to the heat and the opportunity to zone out, researching and praying and putting thoughts together, and doing a wonderful job of leading the worship of God. Aren't these people in our life great! What wonders they are! How grateful we are for them! So here's a cheer from me to them– or to you if you are one of our summer leaders and you are reading this. Can I encourage people to acknowledge these workers

among us and make a point of thanking them for their service. They're amazing!

### **World Day of Prayer Service**

The annual World Day of Prayer Service, on the first Friday of March, was this year hosted by St Peter's Anglican Church. The participating churches in the Riccarton area were Our Lady of Victories, Upper Riccarton Methodist Church and St Ninian's as well as St Peter's. The theme of this year's service "I Beg You....Bear With One Another in Love" inspired by Ephesians 4 : 1-7, was prepared by a group of ecumenical Palestinian Christian women. They had worked on the service together for the last 4 years during the disruption of Covid, but before the current war with Israel.

The service centred round the true stories of 3 Palestinian women, one of Resilience, one of Truth Telling by a younger woman, and one of Flourishing. They all tell of living under the occupation of Israel and the Nakbas of 1948 and 1967 when hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were forced to flee their homes. Even though it was hard to bear together in love during these times, the Palestinians rose to the challenge and were determined to remain a loving community. However, one wonders since the events of the last few months if these women will find it in their hearts to bear with one another in love - if indeed they are still alive to do so.

For more information on the service which includes background information on the country and notes on the artist and symbolism of the leaflet picture, I encourage you to check out the WDP website under resources. You will find the whole service there plus a very poignant livestream talk with some of the writers of the service which was recorded in early December after the Israeli bombing had started.

[worlddayofprayer.org.nz/resources/](http://worlddayofprayer.org.nz/resources/)

2024 Leaders Worship Service

Additional Information - Global Conversation with Writers

Sheila Nokes



### **St Ninians Organ**

From Glenys Graham:

As a parish, St Ninian's really values its pipe organ, and features instrumental music as a significant and integral part of Sunday worship. Occasional weddings and funerals also require the organ to be involved. We are one of very few Christchurch churches fortunate to retain their pipe organs in working order following the devastation of the earthquakes.

Although our George Croft organ (1961) is a small 2-manual instrument with a limited number of stops, (yes, the addition of even ONE solo stop would be great!) the congregation is very appreciative of the music each week. It has also been the parish's pleasure to offer an afternoon's musical entertainment (organised by Jean Fryer) to residents of local rest homes for the last 2 years, and several guests expressed their pleasure in hearing a pipe organ once more. (As a follow-up Barbara Horne kindly arranged a recent session especially for an elderly couple who were keen to choose some of their favourite hymns. At 94 and 96 they were delighted to sing the old hymns with organ accompaniment.) The children from St Teresa's school choir, who participated in the entertainment afternoons, were so fascinated by the organ (console at the front, and pipes at the rear of the church), that several were keen to come

to a special "introduction to the pipe organ" demonstration we organised for them.

The organist is also appreciative of the support and encouragement regularly received from the congregation and perceives this as confirmation of the power of music to enhance the worship experience.

From Barbara Horne:

I have always appreciated our organ at St Ninians but recently I have become aware of how special and precious it is to others. The interest and delight it brought to the children in the choir from St Teresa's school across the road for one. We also receive comments from other visitors worshipping with us from time to time.

St Ninian's has invited local rest home residents to afternoons of music and entertainment. On one of these occasions one of the guests spoke to me about the organ which he appreciated and thoroughly enjoyed. Glenys, our organist, suggested that we invite Bruce and Rosemary to come to St Ninians and choose some of their favourite hymns. Glenys played and we sang. It was very pleasant indeed and it reminded me of singing in church with my dad over 50 years ago. These and other conversations with visiting people prompted me to drop a note to Pam Koller whose father, Sir Laurie Govan gave us the organ many years ago. He chose to use part of his inheritance from his father to donate the organ, in memory of his parents. Pam was pleased to hear that the organ continued to give many people pleasure and spiritual uplifting. Pam remembers when her Dad bought the organ and she was able to share my letter with her brother and sisters.

From Barbara Chapman:

Memories of the early days of the pipe organ

The gift of the pipe organ by the Govan family in the early 1960s, was a very significant event, replacing an electrically powered organ



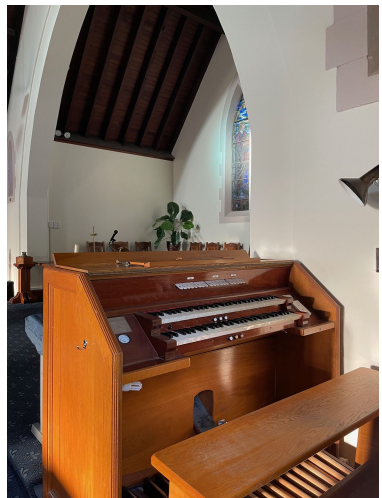
that in earlier times, I think, sat up under the window in the sanctuary. When the front of the church was altered, early in the ministry of Rev Bob Griffiths, that organ was moved to where the console lives now.

A friend of mine was married in the Church when the pipe organ was very new. The memory I have was that we were nearly blasted out of the church by the volume. The organist at the time and for a total of 40+ years was Murray Jones.

Murray was an identical twin, his brother being a Bon Brush Salesman. Legend had it that there were occasions, not many, when Murray's twin played the organ without the switch being detected. There is, on record, a letter from the Govan family about the future of the organ should St Ninian's cease to be a Presbyterian place of worship. The organ is to be offered to another Presbyterian Church, should there be one interested; failing that it is to be offered to Christchurch Boys' High School.

During the recent earthquake strengthening of the church building, the organ pipes and console were carefully protected. Maintenance of the organ has been undertaken by the South Island Organ Company, at least since the 1970s.

Organists who have produced Sunday music on the organ over the 63 years, include Murray Jones, Tim Emerson, Graham Hollobon, Martin and Jenny Setchell, Glenys Graham, Margaret Wallace. We have been well served.



## **Summer Reflections#2: The ways we 'other' others- *Martin Stewart***

Last week I reflected on the good people who step up while the usual ministry leaders are on holiday. This week I am exploring a trait that pops up more frequently in my work than I would wish.

It's the way some people or groups 'other' one another. You know, the way we talk about others in categories that disparage and depersonalise people. We all probably do it without realising: 'Oh the younger generation, they are so needy and entitled;' 'those politicians feeding from the taxpayers' trough;' or 'those lazy people on the dole.' If you have younger people in your family circle, or you meet a politician getting about their work, or you know someone struggling to find a job, of course you don't leap in with disapproving comments. You might even like or value them. But as for the rest of them... Just imagine if people treated you this way!

I have sat in church meetings or church services where similar forms of 'othering' have been given voice with words used as a form of judgemental cluster bomb (who cares who gets caught up in the shrapnel?) to make some kind of point about how righteous they are by comparison. We lump people into categories and other them. Liberal. Conservative. Progressive. Fundamentalist. Bible-believing. Trad. Happy-clapper. It is easy to stay at the shallow end and fling labels at people we perceive to be different from us, but it begins to fall to pieces once any of us steps across the perceived divide and get to know some of the people from those 'other' churches. On the other side you find all kinds of nuances and, big surprise, the extent of our commonality. You find people deeply committed to living out their baptisms and wrestling with the scriptures just like you. You find storied people glorious or battered, challenged or challenging, but embraced despite it all by their experiences of forgiveness and grace. You find people who doubt and struggle and triumph just like you. You find people who sin and fall short of the glory of God (yes, everywhere!). Most of all you will find stories of people for whom

their particular church community has offered sanctuary, friendship, and meaning. In other words, you find people who have been met by Jesus on the road and declared 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?' [Luke 24:32]. If you listen well, you will constantly discover people who defy the very labels you used to categorise them with.

If anyone thinks they have a stronghold on all that is true simply ask yourself about what has changed in your thinking since you were a lot younger. Anything? Back then would you have had any issues with the you that you have now become? Surely! What wise counsel would you now like to offer your younger self?

A classic 'othering' phrase appears in the Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector [Luke 18:9-14]. 'The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: "God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector.'" People who pray I-thank-you-that-I-am-not-like-other-people-prayers do indeed stand by themselves. They are immersed in divides – righteous/unrighteous, me/you, we/they. Tragically, their sense of God with them leads to smugness and judgement. They become immersed in understanding themselves by who they are against.

I think this 'othering' is an infection in our life, I really do. Some flashpoint issues have divided us over the years, but it is no excuse for self-righteousness and the tossing of labels. Pointing fingers at each other is a shocking witness to the life of God among us. Why does our commonality seem to be the least-explored thing in our life together?

The tax-collector over there is our brother in Christ. So too is the Pharisee!

## **St Ninian's Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand**

5 Puriri Street, Riccarton, Christchurch 8041

St Ninian's is a Christian community focussed on justice, compassion and inclusiveness, and the exploration of a spirituality relevant to the contemporary world.

[www.stninians.godzone.net.nz](http://www.stninians.godzone.net.nz)

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