

**Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa
New Zealand**

ST NINIAN'S PARISH NEWS

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This magazine was delivered by

Phone number

Right Rev Rose Luxford
Moderator Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand

Tēnā koutou katoa

Advent...a time of waiting. A time to slow down somewhat and take the time to reflect as we approach the season of Christmas. To reflect on the coming of the Christ. A time for the weekly rhythm of lighting an Advent candle, for singing seasonal hymns and songs, to talk of hope, peace, joy and love. And a time when we are very aware of how this rhythm and focus differs quite dramatically from the rhythm and focus of society, of the world.

How do the themes of hope, peace, joy and love resonate in our world at this time? Are they just sentimental, soft words we throw about, or do they speak to our hearts and have their outworking in action?

The backdrop to this church season feels very discordant to such themes. Last week we had the formal public apology from the government by the Prime Minister to the survivors of abuse in care. I attended a survivor-led gathering at the Pipitea marae in Wellington that same day and saw and felt some of the reality of how life is, and has been, for some of those survivors. And last week the contentious Principles of the Treaty Bill had its first reading in the house, eliciting protest, dismay and anger from many. Beyond our shores, across the world, there is continued violence, oppression and prejudice. Do our themes of Advent have anything to say, any power, any impact?

As Christians we believe that they do, and they must. That Jesus, the Prince of Peace, continues to be the way, the truth and the life. Jesus spoke into situations of brokenness, strife and prejudice and showed a different way in which to live. A way that led to life. Rather than seeing these themes as soft and sentimental, we see them as strong and purposeful.

At weddings I have sometimes used a version of that popular reading from Corinthians which puts it this way... “Love is tough: there is nothing it cannot face. Love never loses hope, never loses heart”. There is a sense of resilience, tenaciousness, strength in this that I believe is seen in the life and works of Jesus.

The pictures that accompany this message are of little Christmas tree hangings made by one of our church members. One for each of the weeks of Advent - hope, peace, joy and love. Can we use these themes to motivate us to action in our particular context? For instance, can we ask/challenge ourselves with questions such as, how can I bring a sense of hope to those in need around me – in prayerful and practical ways? How can I work towards peace where there is brokenness? We can be very intentional in seeking to incarnate the Advent themes into our lives... hope, peace, joy, love. We are all part of the Body of Christ. As we all seek to incarnate these themes into our daily living, we strengthen the presence and effectiveness of the Body of Christ here and now. And we do this in the strength of Christ and by the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Enter this season of Advent with a sense of expectancy, and the knowledge that through Christ all things are possible.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it.” [John 1: 1-5]

Advent
blessings.

Rose



What's been happening?

The Hall Roof

The heavy rain in July moved some tiles on the hall roof resulting in leaks into the hall. The excessive water resulted in the supporting beam cracking. A structural engineer checked the damage and as a result of his recommendation three props have been installed to support the roof. People using the hall have been instructed to not use the door that opens into this area, but to enter the hall through the back door, up the ramp.

On Saturday 24th August a choir called **Schola Cantorum**, conducted by Courtney Hickmott, hired the church for an afternoon concert. About 100 people attended. There was also a performance by **Renaissance**, an instrumental group. The instrumental and choral music ranged from Medieval to modern times. However, the instruments were mainly medieval and fascinating to hear and see them being played. There were a couple of excellent soloists. The acoustics in the church were splendid.

Interim Moderator

A Function to thank Rev Hugh Perry was held on the second Sunday in September. We had a special morning tea. Hugh's wife, Raewyn, joined us. We presented Hugh and Raewyn with a dinner voucher for the George Hotel in appreciation of all he has done during 5 years as Interim Moderator and Convener of the Ministry Settlement Board. Hugh will continue to lead monthly worship services

A group from **Step Ahead** has enquired about having a monthly Christian Fellowship meeting at St Ninian's. Marie Allison and Anne Kay have agreed to lead the group initially. We are grateful for their offer.

Step Ahead has also hired a lounge for a fortnightly yoga session.

St Ninian's is participating in a **Hui** with other groups in the upper Riccarton area.

The focus is on supporting at risk people living in the area. Two meetings have been held to date. The last one was at St Ninian's, as will the next one. Pam and Jean attended.

The **Kumon tutor group** is now using the two lounges on Monday and Thursday afternoons, from 3pm to 7pm. They are also hiring the new storeroom between the lounges to secure all their tutor resources and trestle tables.

A group called **Access** hired the lounges for three days to train carers of people with disabilities. It is satisfying to see the rooms being used by the community.

The Annual Meeting was held in October. Copies of the Annual Report were available for members to study. A motion was agreed expressing thanks to all those who work for the greater good of our community.

Kelvin Chapman indicated that he wishes to resign from being our **Presbytery Elder**, a role he has filled for at least 20 years. He also served on the Presbytery Property and Finance committee. Kelvin was thanked for his sterling service. We will be seeking someone else to represent St Ninian's. There are only two meetings a year now, but they may involve travel. We can elect more than one person to fill the role. Please talk with Kelvin if you are interested.

Members of the present **Standing Committee** were thanked and re-elected for the coming year.



The Singalong

On Monday, 18th November we invited people from six local retirement villages to join us at St Ninian's for a **musical afternoon**. They duly arrived in their vans and our people were on hand to help them inside and to seats. There were many walking frames to store around the inside of the church. Glenys Graham entertained on the organ. She then accompanied an old-time singalong on the piano. Joan O'Malley played some lilting music on her harp. The school choir from St Teresa's delighted the elderly audience with their young melodious voices. While the St Ninian's hosts were serving drinks and home-baked biscuits to the happy visitors, Audrey Bush and Glenys Graham played a couple of duets on the piano – very skillfully.



To finish the afternoon Glenys played the organ again and the children were watching her using both hands and feet. They wondered how the sound travelled from the console to the organ pipes. So do I !!!

The 12 days of Christmas

From 1558 until 1829, Catholics in England were not permitted to practice their faith openly. Someone during that era wrote this carol as a catechism for young Catholics. It has two levels of meaning:

The Partridge in a Pear Tree was Jesus Christ.
Two Turtle Doves were the Old and New Testaments.

Three French Hens stood for faith, hope and love.

Four Calling Birds were the four gospels of, Matthew, Mark, Luke & John.

Five Golden Rings recalled the Torah or Law, the 1st five books of the Old Testament.

The Six Geese-a-Laying stood for the six days of creation.

Seven Swans a-Swimming represented the

sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit: Prophecy, Serving, Teaching, Exhortation, Contribution, Leadership and Mercy.

Eight Maids a-Milking were the eight Beatitudes.

Nine Ladies Dancing were the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit – Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness & Self Control.

Ten Lords a-Leaping were the Ten Commandments.

Eleven Pipers Piping stood for the eleven faithful disciples.

The Twelve Drummers drumming symbolised the twelve points of belief in the Apostles' Creed.



Brian White, one of our longstanding coffee morning regulars, turned 90 on 27th October. We celebrated with a lovely orange cake that Brian supplied. Happy Birthday Brian.



Another Birthday We were delighted to celebrate Pauline Wallace's 75th birthday at morning tea on Sunday 17th November. Pauline was very excited to share the occasion with her Church friends.

Deaths

It was with deep sadness that we attended the funeral of Margaret Wallace at St Ninian's, on 23rd September. Rev Barbara Peddie officiated. Margaret had been a well loved and respected member and organist at St Ninian's for many years. She came on some of our St Ninian's On the Move weekends and really enjoyed herself. She was a highly accomplished musician, having played organs nationwide. It was no surprise that Margaret had chosen all the music, hymns and choral works for her funeral service. Her very accomplished family sang beautifully. Glenys Graham, our organist, was honoured to play Margaret's selection of music. We were treated to an amazing farewell for Margaret.

Office Changes

Due to an increase in the workload at her main employment at the Methodist Mission Preschool, Deb Coughlan has resigned from our office administrator position. Deb joined us in April 2023. We have really enjoyed having Deb in the office and appreciated her expertise and initiative. She has had a very pleasant interaction with all who visited or communicated with the office, always making people feel welcome. Thank you, Deb

Recently we interviewed and appointed her successor. Meredith Wilson has had some church office experience relieving and assisting in the office at St Mark's Anglican Church in Opawa, where she and her family worship. She has had a few days in our office with Deb and will take over at the beginning of December. Meredith will be working on Thursday and Friday mornings. A very warm welcome to Meredith!

The office will be closed from 30th December and reopen Thursday 9th January.

A note from Deb.... Goodbye from me! It's been such fun supporting the parish of St Ninian's. I have enjoyed reconnecting with those I remember from my younger years at St Ninian's, as well as meeting and getting to know other members of the parish. It's sad to say goodbye, but I have no doubt that I will be well informed of the comings and goings at St Ninian's, and I know where to find you all! All the best, Deb

Update on the Redevelopment Program

The sale of the car park to Presbyterian Support Upper South Island has been finalized. Church Property Trustees and PSUSI have signed the documents and the deposit has been paid. We have permission from the Church Property Trustees to proceed with the demolition of the hall, and the construction of the new drive. We have sufficient funds to do this before we sell the tennis courts.

The current program for both buildings is summarized below

- Engage Design Team for both buildings - Nov 24
- Developed design stage for both building sufficient for resource consent Dec-Feb
- Lodge resource consent – March
- Demolish hall and construct ROW – March - April
- Resource consent granted – May
- Lodge subdivision consent – May
- PSUSI lodge building consent – May
- PSUSI – Construction starts – July
- Titles issued and settlement of sale – Oct

Room Use Charges for 2025

The Property and Finance Committee has reviewed the charges for use of the lounges and church for 2025. There has been no increase since Jan 2023 because of uncertainty about the negotiations over the sale of the car park and demolition of the hall and office block. During this year the use of the church on Sundays has increased significantly, with three additional groups using it now, and there is more casual use of the lounges. This is good for our finances and is mainly trouble free.

However a significant increase in power costs and the need to ensure we have enough cleaning, led to the decision to increase the room charges by 10%.

For your information, the new charges are as in the following list:

LOUNGES	GST registered	Community
One lounge per hr up to 2.5 hrs	\$25.50	\$23.00
One lounge 2.5 to 4hrs	\$60.50	\$57.50
Both lounges 2.5 to 4hrs	\$115.00	\$104
 CHURCH (or hall while available)		
Per hour up to 2.5hrs	\$37.00	\$33.00
2.5 to 4hrs	\$91.00	\$82.50
 SIDE ROOM (in hall) or former office space, while available.		
Per hour up to 2.5hrs	\$14.00	\$11.0
2.5 to 4hrs	\$31.00	\$27.50

Coming Events:

Parish Christmas Tea : Wednesday 4th December 5pm \$10 each

Combined Worship Service : Sunday 8th December 10.30 am followed by a shared lunch in the hall.

Working Bee Monday, 13th February 2025

Refurbished Lounges

Not long after the last magazine came out, the work on the lounges was completed. There have been a few hiccups, but the end result has been well received.

We are very grateful for donations from individuals and groups. These donations meant we were able to re-carpet both rooms and purchase necessary items for the two kitchenettes. Thanks also go to those who repaired the Puriri Lounge curtains, and replaced the curtains on the entry doors.

A well-attended working bee ensured that the lounges were clean and properly set up for use – the first use being for after church morning tea on Sunday, 11th August.



Puriri Lounge



Riccarton Lounge

Poem from Anne Kay

At a recent Parish tea the subject was a favourite poem. What a talented lot we are in this Parish.

I decided to share a Limerick I had written when I was on a tour of Britain, Ireland and Israel in 1988.

*There was a female named Anne
She was part of the Methodist clan
When asked what the reason
She said 'it's the season
To retrace that John Wesley man!*

Now just some history about the beginning of Methodism.

The Wesley brothers John and Charles were very influenced by the Moravian faith when they went to the Americas. Even though they had success with their witnessing in America they felt their own faith was lacking assurance.

Charles found assurance on the 22nd May 1738, although John's heart was 'strangely warmed at 8.45pm at a meeting at Aldersgate Street.'

Charles wrote over 6000 hymns while John is noted to be the Preacher.

It is recorded that John didn't mean to start a new faith. He wanted people to remain within the Church of England. This was on Facebook this week.

An Anglican priest who is the founder of the Methodist church, Rev John Wesley quoted this list. It could have been written for today. This list based on his writings and on display at Bristol, England.

1. *Reduce the gap between the rich and the poor.*
2. *Help everyone to have a job*
3. *Help the poorest, including introducing a living wage*

4. *Offer the best possible education*
5. *Help everyone to feel they can make a difference*
6. *Promote tolerance*
7. *Promote equal treatment for women*
8. *Create a society based on values not profits and consumerism*
9. *End all forms of slavery*
- 10 *Avoid getting into wars*
- 11 *Share the Love of God with everyone*
- 12 *Care for the environment.*

There is also another list which Mrs Google says was not from John Wesley but I'll share it as well. Do all the good you can, in all the ways you can,

To all the souls you can, in every place you can, at all the times you can, with all the zeal you can, as long as ever you can.

It is reported he sang a final hymn 'I'll praise my Maker while I've breath'

His final words being, 'best of all is, God is with us.'

It has been said both the Wesley brothers were very influential during their lifetime.

I made a record of my trip if anyone would like to read it.

Anne Kay

Christmas Gifts.

Once again we are participating in the Methodist Mission Christmas appeal where we put together a hamper of gifts and Christmas food for a family. The hamper gets delivered in the week before Christmas.

Also, we are again filling boxes with sweets to give to people who attend the Totara Group at the PSUSI centre in Harakeke St. The Thursday coffee morning group had fun doing this and sponsored the gifts.

When Christmas Cheer turns to Christmas Fear

For many, this time of year is associated with joy, warmth, and connection.

Yet for some, Christmas is also a time of stress and anxiety

Here at Petersgate Counselling Centre, this time of year starkly highlights the loneliness and isolation epidemic we have in Christchurch, exacerbated by grief from those who have lost loved ones or have unresolved family conflicts, each becoming a sad reminder of past family togetherness and unity.

When the Christmas season becomes a marathon of social, financial, and emotional pressures, this time can conflict between celebrating Christ and coping with a stressful environment leading to significant mental health problems.

The elderly are especially vulnerable. On a fixed income and with limited savings, paying for professional counselling is often beyond their budget.

Donating to Petersgate Counselling Centre can therefore be a way of supporting the elderly this Christmas as all donations are used for our hardship fund which provides subsidized or free professional counselling for people with limited financial resources.

After all, Christmas is about kindness and by extending this spirit to the elderly, we can make a real difference in their lives, assuring that they do not need to navigate the emotional complexities of the holiday season alone.

Gray Crawford - Business Manager

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Christmas Services

- Sunday 1st December is the first Sunday in Advent. Rev Dr Barbara Peddie will be leading worship. We will put up the Christmas tree that day.
- Sunday, 8th December, is the 2nd Sunday in Advent. Rev Hugh Perry will be leading a service of Christmas readings and carols. It will be a combined service with members of the other congregations who worship at St Ninian's. **Worship will begin at 10.30am and will be followed by a shared lunch of finger food in the hall.**
- Sunday, 15th December, 3rd Sunday in Advent. The service will be led by Jane and Hugh Catto. **Please have your donations for the Methodist Mission Christmas Family Hamper in by this day.**
- Sunday 22nd December, 4th Sunday in Advent. Rev Stephanie Wells will be leading worship.
- **Tuesday 24th December NO CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE at St Ninian's**
- 25th December, Christmas Day service at 9.30 am will be led by Anne Kay.
- Sunday 29th December service will be led by Rev Chris Elliot



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

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