

**Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa  
New Zealand**

**ST NINIAN'S PARISH NEWS**

**March 2025**



**This magazine was delivered by**

**Phone number**

## **Easter Message from the moderator:**

### *Autumnal Letting-Go*

After a late burst of summer weather, we are beginning to feel the turn of the season. Mornings have begun to feel quite autumnal. I love that word! And I have to say that autumn is my favourite season. There is something about the softer days, the sense of gathering in, the changing colours of the trees (brilliant in the South), the feeling of a different season with its own uniqueness and vibe.

Autumn also coincides with our season of Lent. The time of the year where we journey towards Good Friday. A time for reflection, repentance and spiritual preparation. A time where many Christians engage in practices such as fasting, prayer, penance, and self-denial to grow closer to God and reflect on the significance of Jesus's sacrificial giving and death on the cross.

So, we have these two seasons of autumn and Lent occurring in parallel. We often hear of people giving something up for Lent; a bit like a shortened (or maybe elongated) New Year's resolution – that for six weeks they will give up, say, chocolate, or social media, or a habit that is not helpful. And we reflect on how the trees 'give up' their leaves in this season. How might we respond, how might we take this seasonal opportunity to reflect more deeply on our faith commitment?

Perhaps we need to think about what our motivation is. If we give up something just to prove that we can, or that we 'should', it may well be an undertaking that brings a hollow sense of victory at the end. So what, we've proved we've got will power! Rather, if we give up something as a way of helping us grow closer to God, how much more meaningful and satisfying our 'letting go' will be.

I have found that with much travelling and a very different routine to my life as I carry out my role as Moderator, and also as parish

minister, it has been more difficult for me to maintain a sense of a regular rhythm in my devotional life. For me, this season of Lent is going to provide an opportunity to 'let go' of that sense of dislocation, to claim new ways of incorporating that rhythm into my life.

For those of us who attend Ash Wednesday services and have the sign of the cross in ash placed on our foreheads, hear the words 'Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return' and 'Repent, and believe in the Gospel', this is both sobering and resonates deeply. This Lenten time offers an opportunity to grow in our Christian faith.

At a time when there is so much uncertainty, prejudice, violence and hatred in our world, it may seem counter-intuitive to turn inwards and reflect in this way. And yet growing in our faith, knowing to whom we belong, reflecting on his self-giving and loving ways, enables us to live more fully in this world that is crying out for hope and justice.

Just as the trees let go of their leaves and stand bare for a season, we too can let go of the things that may distract or mis-shape us, so that we too, like the trees, can be renewed and refreshed for the next season.

"From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised". [Matthew 16: 21]

*Rose*

***Right Rev Rose Luxford***

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## What's been happening?

- A Combined Worship service was held on 8<sup>th</sup> December. It was a service of readings and carols, led by Rev Hugh Perry. Members of the Nuku'alofa Church ChCh Base, New Hope Evangelical Church, and Kingdom Living Ministries (Samoan) participated in reading the Christmas story from the Bible. Members of the Nuku'alofa church sang Christmas songs. It was a joyous occasion. Following the service we shared lunch in the hall. It was great to see the members mixing and chatting, and to have young people enjoying themselves. It was agreed that we should do it again.
- Deb Coughlan was farewelled at the combined service. She was thanked for her work in the office and her contribution to life at St Ninian's.
- On 15<sup>th</sup> December Jane and Hugh Catto led worship, assisted by Nick and Matt. The theme was the different versions of the Christmas story as told by Luke and Matthew. A novel presentation of the Nativity characters added to the story. Thanks to the Catto family for their refreshing presentation.



- Thanks to Rev Barbara Peddie, Anne Kay, Rev Stephanie Wells, and Rev Chris Elliot who also led worship for us over Christmas.

- On the evening of 15<sup>th</sup> December Sheila Nokes, Jean Fryer, Pam and Lance McKechie attended the special service in St Peter's church hall to celebrate the official launch of the Nuku'alofa Church Christchurch base. The group had had a weekend of celebration and devotion culminating in the Sunday evening celebration of worship and a meal. A pastor and his wife had come from Tonga and he gave the evening address (in English, because of the St Ninian's presence). We were presented with beautiful floral leis, and after the service of prayer, sermon, singing and dance, we were treated to a sumptuous feast. This generous congregation has offered to mow the lawns and tidy the grounds each week. We are grateful and value their presence at St Ninian's.
- Due to illness the Kingdom Living congregation is having a break from worship at St Ninian's. We wish them well.
- On Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> Feb, Mary Bullock hosted members of the Floral Arrangers Society to afternoon tea in the Puriri Lounge. Over the years the group has arranged flowers for many functions, charging their clients, and using the many thousands of dollars raised to give to charities. Some of their members were longstanding members of St Ninian's, including Jean Dick, Val Crawford and Isobel Jones. The group was thrilled to see Jean Dick's painting hanging in the entrance to the lounges. They enjoyed the comfort and convenience of our lounge.

### **World Day of Prayer 2025:" I Made You Wonderfully"**

On Friday 7th March, St Ninian's hosted the annual World Day of Prayer service. As it is an ecumenical service, we were assisted by ladies from Our Lady of Victories Catholic Church, St Peter's and St Luke's Anglican, Upper Riccarton Methodist and our own Tongan congregation.

This year the service was prepared by a group of women in the Cook Islands. The services are always prepared several years in advance.

This one was written during the pandemic in 2020, and consequently, there were several references to Covid. The church was decorated with many symbols of the Cook Islands. Flowers, an integral part of their identity, symbolising love, friendship and respect. They frequently wear flower crowns and leis and flowers often appear on fabrics, clothing and handmade quilts. Everyone who attended the service was given a flower to wear and the readers wore leis. The altar and lectern were covered with blue fabric evoking the ocean and they were adorned with shells. The ocean is a defining feature of life in the Cook Islands - it means life. It is a source of food, livelihood and a means of travel. The ocean connects people and communities. There was a small wooden canoe which is the traditional means of travel for Cook Islanders. This represents the God-given ingenuity of Polynesian ancestors who created the canoe. Also on the altar were coconuts and palm-like leaves. The coconut tree is referred to as the "tree of life" because every part of the tree is useful. And lastly, the Bible was open at Psalm 139: v 14

"I praise you for I am fearfully and wonderfully made" which was the theme for the service.

The artwork on the cover of the booklet was created by a mother and daughter team, Tarani and Tevairangi Napa.



A little background information: The Cook Islands consist of 15 islands, of which 12 are inhabited, scattered over 2 million km of the Pacific Ocean. The capital is Rarotonga with a population of 10,040 out of a total population of 15,040. Many Cook Islanders live abroad, mainly in NZ (approx 80,000) and Australia (20,000). The



islands were first thought to be inhabited between 500-800 AD by people arriving on double hulled canoes from what is now French Polynesia to the north. The first record of Europeans to visit the Islands was a Spanish explorer in the late 16th century but then no further record until Captain James Cook during his expeditions of 1773 and 1777. He never landed on Rarotonga but the much smaller Palmerston Island. He named the Islands, Hervey Islands, after a Lord of the Admiralty, but they were renamed Cook Islands after the great explorer 50 years later by the Russian cartographer, Admiral Johann von Krusenstern.

Tourism is the main source of income for the Islands (66% of GDP) overtaking agriculture after the international airport opened in 1973. Until then, 70% of the labour force worked in agriculture but now it's only 10%. Tourism brings both advantages and disadvantages to the residents. It brings money into the economy and creates jobs and employment; however a high number of tourists can put pressure on infrastructure and natural resources such as water.

August 4th commemorates the birth of the Cook Islands as an independent nation and it is celebrated annually with a week long Te



Maeva Nui Festival.

-Sheila Nokes





## **Deaths**

It was with deep sadness that we attended the funeral on Dec 18<sup>th</sup> for our friend and fellow parishioner, Puck Tabak. Puck (known as Perk) and her husband Kees, were people who joined in all aspects of our fellowship at St Ninian's. Before she became unwell Puck was a regular on the flower roster, picking flowers from her garden and often cajoling flowers from her willing neighbours, and bringing the flowers with her on the bus. She was also creative with dried arrangements. They both came to movie nights, coffee mornings, parish teas, and working bees. The large crowd who attended her funeral and afternoon tea was an indication of the respect and love with which Puck was remembered. We extend love and sympathy to Kees, and Puck's family.

We also acknowledge the death of Brian White who died recently, aged 90. Brian was a long-time member of the Thursday coffee group, and was originally invited along by Rob Ferguson when he met him at McDonalds. Brian was a parishioner at St Teresa's. In the days before St Teresa's held a Good Friday service, he and a group of St Teresa's folk would join us for worship, sometimes doing a Bible reading. They then joined us for hot cross buns. This tradition has continued to this day. Brian had a strong singing voice. We will miss Brian's presence this year, but I'm sure he will be with us in spirit.

## **Update on the Redevelopment Program**

- A Congregational meeting was held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> Feb, attended by our redevelopment project manager, Regan Cliff, and the architect of our new building, Paul Wilkins. The purpose of the meeting was to seek approval of the building plans for the redevelopment of the church site for building consent. Detailed plans had been circulated to all members. The men gave a very informative presentation using the data projector and screen and

answering questions. There was an atmosphere of excitement and expectation.

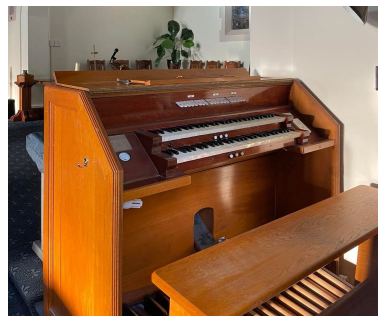
The congregation approved the Resource Consent Issue drawings by PXA architects and the submission of the resource consent application to the Christchurch City Council.

### **Our Pipe Organ**

In September 2026, next year, we will celebrate the centenary of the St Ninian's church building. Our building has survived many trials and stood firm in the 2011 earthquakes with minimal damage. We have repaired the earthquake damage and upgraded the structural performance of the building to meet current structural requirements. Our church is in good shape. We now want to recognise this important milestone in the life of our parish in an appropriate manner.

Our pipe organ is a treasure. It was gifted to the parish by the Govan family in the 1960s. It has served our Parish well since that time and is one of the few pipe organs remaining in post-earthquake Christchurch churches. Music has always played an important part in our worship, more recently in creating space for meditation and contemplation as we worship.

It is now time to give our organ a major spruce up. It needs attention to a number of matters (see details attached) including, after the strengthening work on the church, a major cleaning which involves removing each of the individual pipes for cleaning and checking. We have a proposal from South Island Organ Co to do this work at an estimated cost of \$ 19500. + GST



Standing committee has agreed to make the funding of this project our Centennial gift to our church. We therefore invite contributions

to an organ maintenance fund so that this important work can be undertaken in a timely manner. Mention “organ” in your bank transfer to ensure that it goes to the right place. Receipts to enable IRD taxation offset will be issued for all donations.

Please give this matter your careful consideration.

-Kelvin Chapman

To contribute to the organ maintenance fund please use the following information:

**St Ninian's Presbyterian Church 03-0855-0371202-01**

### **From organist/SI Organ Co.**

Details of work to be undertaken:

The Organ is very dirty inside the case containing the pipes (above the front door), due to the earthquake, then additional dust created during restoration of the church (even though the pipes were covered.) As some pipes are open at the top, the dirt is also inside the pipes. This excessive dirt will affect both the pitch and the tuning of the pipes, and if the dirt moves inside the pipes it can cause further damage. This requires two people with understanding of the inside of a pipe organ to work together to do the necessary cleaning as otherwise further damage can be caused.

Shaking in the earthquake has caused damage to some of the pipes. As can be seen in the diagram, organ pipes stand - fairly "loosely" - in holes in a board (rack board). Metal pipes are made of a mixture of lead and tin -very heavy. **Dents** can eventually become **folds**, and a pipe or **pipes may then fall** on to others, causing a domino



effect, and consequent hugely increased repair costs. (A potential hazard for anyone near a collapsing set of pipes!) To repair the damaged pipes, they must be removed, (Fortunately the pipes which we can see at the FRONT of the organ box are more securely fastened. This is just the way pipe organs are constructed!)

(diagram of organ from SI Organ Co)

### **Step Ahead Christian Fellowship Group**

This mixed group meets the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of the month 11-15 – 12pm with Anne & Marie at St Ninian's.

Numbers vary from 3-7. Some we see once, others are regulars.

We are a very relaxed group who sit around a lighted candle and talk. The first day was centered around the verse "Footprints" and the Ten Commandments. Other days could be centered on paraphrases of Bible Verses; Advent and Christmas; A Joy Cowley poem. Their input is always interesting.

We are happy with our informal gatherings; we are learning ourselves and are guided by the individual needs of our friends.

### **St Ninian's Gatherings**

These are held on the 1st Wednesday of the month at 10:30 am over a cup of tea or coffee, and the 3rd Wednesday of the month at 5:00pm – with a light meal provided.

These meetings began in 2023 after 20 women indicated that they would like the opportunity to gather informally to share fellowship.

The initial idea of a women's gathering soon developed into meetings welcoming whoever wished to participate. The morning group is a constant smaller group that appreciates the opportunity to meet during the day. A larger group, usually 16 to 20 folk, enjoy meeting together for two hours over a shared light meal in the early evening.

The monthly topics have been varied e.g. we shared favourite books from our childhood, a favourite holiday place, we listened to a speaker, Tala Voss, My childhood growing up with my family in very remote Karamea no ' mod cons '. We talked about memorable moments in our careers, we brought along items we would like to take to The Repair Shop.

Who would have thought we had someone tell us about caring for John Cleese, or that the item we brought wishing that it could be repaired at the Repair Shop was taken away and repaired! And after listening to Tala, being astounded by the skills and resilience of this family, especially the children who experienced their early life in such a unique environment.

We are always looking for topics that will direct our discussions. Karen Armstrong's book "Fields of Blood, Religion and the History of Violence." will direct a future discussion and I am hoping to persuade a friend to open a discussion on women in the workforce by telling us of her experiences in the NZ Airforce as one of women in an early intake of women to train as an airforce officer. We will have a mid winter dinner. The topic for this will be, Recipes Tried and True, and these recipes will be used to make our dinner. Please tell Barbara Horne or Patricia Crumpton if you have suggestions of topics for future discussion starters.

Our next topic will be talking about climate action. 12 of us attended a lecture on the topic delivered by Bronwyn Hayward. After the lecture we found a cafe in Riccarton and shared some fellowship over a Chinese meal.

I have been made aware of how my present actions will massively impact future generations and what I need to do is as Micah says -- "to do justly, and to love mercy and walk humbly with my God". With the emphasis on DOING justly, now!

-Tricia Crumpton.

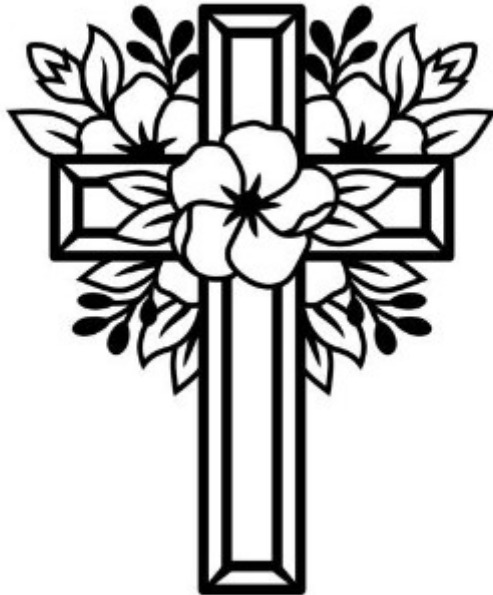
## **Easter Services:**

**Maundy Thursday service:** Thursday, 17<sup>th</sup> April at 7p.m led by Rev Chris Elliot

**Good Friday service:** Friday 18<sup>th</sup> April, 9.30a.m led by Rev Hugh Perry

**Easter Sunday service:** Sunday 20<sup>th</sup>, 9.30a.m Communion led by Rev Dr Barbara Peddie

**Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> April:** worship led by the Parish worship group



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

5 Puriri Street, Riccarton, Christchurch 8041

St Ninian's is a Christian community focused 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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**Organists:** Glenys Graham  
Lois Dalton

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