



## Celebrate!

Why is Christmas a celebration? Why should we attend Church at Advent and Christmas Day? Out of habit? Because of the children? Because Mum thinks it would be a lovely thing for the family to do? In some ways any reason is a good one if people come to church! But don't forget the real reason for Advent and Christmas.

It's because at Christmas we celebrate that the absurd, the unthinkable, the unfathomable has happened. The great, creator God of all things, became a human being. God became a tiny, helpless human baby that needed to be fed and changed and cared for. We celebrate at Christmas because God did this out of love for us. God entered into our world, was born as a human being, so that he could save us! This Christmas let's celebrate that most wonderful good news!

*Anglican Life*

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Cover Image — Jo Seagar and her band of singing angels in the annual Nativity play, Oxford—Cust Parish, 2021

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Editor — Jo Bean — editor@anglicanlife.org.nz

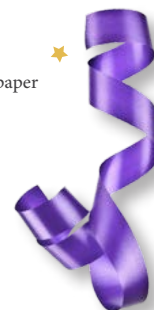
Design — Leisa Jamieson — jamiesonmessage@icloud.com

Contributing Writers — Jo Bean, Gareth Bezett, CCRL, Mark Chamberlain, Jo Cotton, Heather Fraser, Sarah Hancock, Meg Harvey, Mike Hawke, Adam Heinz, Diana Langdon, Nathan Muirhead, Ewan Sargent, Murray Sheard, Miriam Tillman.

Advertising Enquiries — Jo Bean — editor@anglicanlife.org.nz

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# Celebrate!



## Celebrating God's Gracious and Generous Gifts

What does the Lambeth Conference for bishops of the Anglican Communion (held in late July to early August this year) and Christmas have in common? I think the common element is found in the word "gift".

It was a huge and much appreciated gift that Teresa and I were able to participate in the conference. The experience of the conference itself, held in Canterbury, Kent (with a day at Lambeth Palace, London) was amazing. We met lots of interesting people, heard wonderful speakers, and shared in diverse worship services. We were blessed by amazing hot, sunny weather. Perhaps most importantly, given disagreements within the Anglican Communion, the conference ended on a lovely feel-good sense of our unity in diversity and of our commitment to live with difference. It was also a wonderful gift that the Diocese of Christchurch supported both of us to go the conference and for that we are very grateful.

When we think of Christmas, any Christmas, we always think about gifts—the gifts of the wise men from the East, and the gift of Jesus Christ to the world. What gift am I going to give my loved ones? Perhaps we will also be able to see the experience of Christmas itself as a gift. For some of us Christmas is a gift because it is one day in the year when all our family get together. For others Christmas is a gift because it is one day when we have a complete holiday from our work as a busy employee or a hard-pressed business owner. Personally (as someone who "works" on Christmas Day) I find the gift of Christmas is not its restfulness but the peacefulness of this particular day of the year.

When we receive gifts, whether it is some amazing experience akin to our experience of the Lambeth Conference, or a special something wrapped up in paper, we receive something we have not earned. We are recipients of grace, of a generosity that makes us joyful and humble at the same time. At the first Christmas and at the coming Christmas, the greatest gift is that God comes to us in Jesus Christ and gives to each who will receive it the undeserved and abundant blessing of God—life wrapped up in love, a love full of life. Thanks be to God for God's kindness to us.

Manaaki,  
Bishop Peter.

+Peter

## Christmas at The Transitional Cathedral, Latimer Square

<b>Sunday 18 December:</b>	<b>7:00pm</b>	<b>Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols</b>	<i>Music: The Cathedral Choir</i>
<b>Tuesday 20 December:</b>	<b>5:30pm</b>	<b>Cathedral Chorister recital held at The Piano</b>	
<b>Wednesday 21 Dec.:</b>	<b>1:00pm</b>	<b>Choristers Carol Recital at the Cathedral</b>	
<b>Thursday 22 December:</b>	<b>3:00pm</b>	<b>The Children's Nativity Service with Animals</b>	
<b>Saturday 24 December:</b>	<b>6:00pm</b>	<b>Christmas Carol Recital by the Cathedral Choir</b>	
	<b>10:15pm</b>	<b>Carol Singing by candlelight</b>	
	<b>11:00pm</b>	<b>The Midnight Mass</b>	<i>Music: The Cathedral Choir</i>
<b>Sunday 25 December:</b>	<b>8:00am</b>	<b>Holy Eucharist with Carols</b>	
	<b>10:00am</b>	<b>Festival Eucharist</b>	<i>Music: The Cathedral Choir</i>
	<b>5:00pm</b>	<b>Festal Evensong</b>	<i>Music: The Lay Clerks &amp; Choral Scholars of the Cathedral Choir</i>



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## Thank You Lord for Lambeth

Since 1867 bishops from the Anglican Communion have been meeting regularly (albeit approximately every ten years) for the Lambeth Conference. The first conferences were at Lambeth Place, the London residence of the Archbishop of Canterbury. More recent conferences, with hundreds of bishops attending have been held at the University of Kent, Canterbury, England. To meet in 2022, the first conference since 2008, was a relief since Covid restrictions had meant a postponement from the scheduled conference in 2020. Eleven bishops and eight spouses from the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia were able to attend the 2022 Lambeth Conference held in late July–early August.

All conferences are opportunities to meet people with common interests and experiences to share. With opening retreats for bishops and for spouses, plenary sessions for all, small groups for Bible studies and other discussions, and some very long queues for meals, there were plenty of opportunities to meet and get to know Anglican leaders from around the globe. The small group I was in, for example, brought together bishops from South Sudan, Canada, South Africa, England, USA and of course, New Zealand. Each of us faced different challenges, brought different views to the table, and yet all shared a commitment to serving “God’s church for God’s world”, the Conference theme.

We (the ACANZP bishops) led a Eucharist service on day two of the conference. It was inspiring, on this

and many other worship occasions, to be present when different nationalities joined together in unity, worshipping God through the power of the Holy Spirit. Each Eucharist held had a different flavour and when they were led by provinces from across the Communion, that province had an opportunity through a video presentation to showcase the challenges and blessings they currently experience.

A standout feature of the Conference was the fresh revelation of what it means to be an Anglican Christian. Anglicans are members of a global Communion which ministers in some 160 countries, in many cultures and languages. Worship in Canterbury Cathedral highlighted our historical roots in Christianity in Britain from St Augustine of Canterbury who was appointed in 597 AD. It started the connection with successive Archbishops of Canterbury to us here in Canterbury NZ today.

The Lambeth Conference 2022 included presentations of a series of documents known as the Lambeth Calls, ranging across church and social issues, and challenging dioceses to take up the “call” to do more (for example, responding to climate change) or enhance what we are doing (say, to develop discipleship). Over the next couple of years, I will be working on how we can respond to these Calls in the Diocese of Christchurch.

At the end of some previous Lambeth Conferences there have been anxious reflections on the future of the Anglican Communion as a body embracing diversity and seeking unity in Christ. At the conclusion of this Conference, I and many others are confident that we have renewed our commitment to live with difference, to keep working on unity and to continue in relationships which strengthen our life and mission in Christ.

+Peter



L- R: +Andrew Hedge (Waiapu), +Kito Pikaahu (Tai Tokerau), +Peter, +Gabriel Sharma (Fiji), +Henry Bull (Fiji), +Steve Maina (Nelson), +Ross Bay (Auckland), +Steven Benford (Dunedin), ++Philip Richardson (Waikato and Taranaki, Archbishop of New Zealand), +Eleanor Sanderson (Wellington), +Justin Duckworth (Wellington).





# Celebrating Our 90+ Parishioners!



"Over the next three decades, the number of older persons worldwide is projected to more than double, reaching more than 1.5 billion persons in 2050." United Nations.

At St Barnabas, there are around 60 people in their 90th year and over—three in their 100's and the oldest is 104!

Since 2019 St Barnabas Fendalton has been celebrating its nonagenarians and centenarians with an annual afternoon tea and sing-along at the end of September or early October. The United Nations created an International Day of Older Persons in 1990 and it has been celebrated on 1 October every year since.

Just imagine the change they have seen in the world. They have lived through The Depression, WWII, the 60s, the invention of the computer and mobile phones, managed carless days, and now Covid! They have contributed to the life of the Parish for many decades, some since their infant baptisms at St Barnabas. A number remember going to Sunday School classes, being involved at vestry, and volunteering in many areas of parish life.

"It's called the Nonagenarians and Centarians Sing-along and Afternoon Tea, and year 25 people attended," says Jo Cotton, Pastoral Care Coordinator St Barnabas Fendalton.

"It's always such a lovely afternoon. Normally Denis Guyan would be playing the piano to lead the sing-along, but he was away testing out pipe organs across France. So, instead, we enjoyed Rev'd Jenny Wilkens on piano and Rev'd John Shoaf on guitar and trumpet! We sang some old-time favourites such as The White Cliffs of Dover, Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory, and We'll Meet Again, and we ended with a very special and 'new', God Save the King.



A three-tiered refreshments platter being shared by Pat Williams and Rev'd Jenny Wilkens. Credit: St Barnabas

"Nothing but the best for these special people in our parish, we laid out the fine china and put on a delicious high tea. Some of our guests can no longer get to church regularly for various reasons so it's wonderful to see old friends reuniting who hadn't seen each other for such a long time. It is important that we celebrate the life and times of our older congregation."



Lovely ladies Dawne Clarke, Pamela McKenzie and Robin Willis having an enjoyable catch-up over tea and cake! Credit: St Barnabas

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# People Not Things

City Mission celebrates new initiatives

They say don't celebrate material things, because it's people that matter, not things. At the City Mission, we agree, even though we are busy celebrating the opening of two buildings, stage one in our redevelopment on Hereford Street. The reason for our joy is these beautiful new buildings will let us do even more to help the people we care for.

We have spent months watching our old buildings pulled down, the site being cleared, and then the new buildings growing up from concrete pads and filling out into rooms. These first buildings to open were our new Thrive Café and our new Transitional Housing facility.

We have so many hopes, dreams and expectations for Whakaora Kainga—the name gifted to our new site by Pihopa Rihare, Bishop Richard Wallace, the Māori Anglican Bishop for Te Waiponamu.

Whakaora Kainga translates into healing homes and this reflects the idea of a flourishing village and of a people whose mana is restored. It really fits what we intend for it. City Missioner, Corinne Haines says, "The people working together in our buildings is our community. Our café will become a hub in this "village" and a meeting place for residents, clients, staff and the public."

The truly affordable café (coffees \$3, cooked breakfast \$7.50) makes it accessible to everyone and it's also where our clients will learn work skills like waiting and barista training, while up

to 15 residents in the transitional housing apartments will gain life skills and get the one-to-one support that helps them to live in community with others. The residents will stay for three months and will get help to find accommodation and ongoing support once they have moved on.

Bishop Peter Carrell referred to words quoted recently by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, but originally spoken by Mahatma Gandhi, which seemed particularly relevant to the work the City Mission is doing with Whakaora Kainga.

"The City Mission's work is deeply political—it follows the political and social philosophy that 'the true measure of any society can be found in how it treats its most vulnerable members.' The Church must operate on God's vision for a good society and the City Mission's work is an expression of what that means in our community," says Bishop Peter.



*Happy beginnings: Bishop Richard Wallace, Bishop Peter Carrell and City Missioner Corinne Haines at the stage one celebration in October. Stage one includes the Thrive Café and a new block of transitional housing. In March next year the new foodbank, food warehouse and staff offices will also open. When that happens there will be an official opening for all three premises. Credit: CCM*



## Want a coffee?

Come along to the new social enterprise Thrive Café on 275 Hereford St. You'll be doing our trainees a good turn and supporting CCM at the same time!





# Digging Deeper

## Re-setting your spiritual growth for 2023

Christmas is here and the new year is coming up rapidly behind it. It's such a cliché, but we do get very busy at this time of year and can sometimes be guilty of forgetting 'the reason for the season.' So, it makes sense to try this Christmas to pause and assess where we are spiritually, to contemplate where we want to be this time next year, and figure out how we get there.

There are a few parts of the nativity story that help to remind us how and why to pause and assess the state of our souls. Here are just three of them:

1. **Mary's Song—Expressing Gratitude**—"My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed..." The Magnificat, Luke 1:46-55

Like Mary, be grateful! Psychologists are telling us more and more the mental and physical health benefits of having gratitude. Research has found gratitude will improve health, help people deal with adversity, and build strong relationships. During the pandemic and lockdowns doctors and mental health workers often emphasised looking at your situation and finding something to be grateful for—even the smallest thing. So perhaps you can take time to look at the Christmas story and count the blessings for which we can be grateful. Then consider adopting an 'attitude of gratitude' that feeds your spiritual life and growth. It's easier to be loving and to be loved when we are mindful of all that God has done, and still does, in our lives and the world for which we can be thankful.

2. **The Birth of Christ—Simplicity and Making Room**—"While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn." Luke 2:6-7

In the western world we are used to the birth of a baby being associated with doctors, hospitals, midwives, birthing pools and so on. We forget that there are women around the world who, like Mary, have very simple births. Sure, the angels and the shepherds and the magi came soon after, but if we go by

Luke the actual birth of Jesus—the actual momentous, world changing moment—was pretty simple. Maybe we need to look at this account of our Lord's birth, wonder at its simplicity and think about what in our lives needs to be made simple in the next year so that we make room to grow spiritually. In rediscovering the joy and power of the simple practices of church and life we could discover spiritual practices that are humble and unassuming yet so life-giving to our souls.

3. **The whole earth and heaven rejoiced—Celebrate**—"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours!" Luke 2:13-24

Alongside the need to be grateful and the need to seek out simple, humble spiritual practices, the story of Jesus' birth also tells us to celebrate when the time is right. We can celebrate that which we are grateful for and we should celebrate the good things in our faith and spiritual life when they happen—it is right after Jesus' birth that the angel proclaims the news to be celebrated to the shepherds. There are many problems and difficulties in our lives, but so too there is goodness. The letter to the Romans reminds us, "We know that all things work together for good for those who love God." It is the least we can do as spiritual beings to celebrate the goodness God is and gives. To celebrate as a spiritual practice is to honour our Creator and provider. This would seem to be a positive direction for our spiritual growth in the coming 12 months.

So, this time of year and the nativity story are treasures for us in our journey as Christians. The love that they bring forth gives us such hope that it is difficult not to have faith in the risen Jesus. But on a smaller scale they give us



parts of God's journey with us that we can use to grow spiritually. I encourage you to take this Christmas to truly reflect on the birth of Jesus and how the many parts of the scripture narrative can actually prompt us to consider our faith and spirituality and how we can dig deeper, reset and make 2023 a richer spiritual year for us all. Merry Christmas.



Rev'd Dr Meg Harvey is the new Vicar of Amberley in North Canterbury. She has a background in psychology and working with children and adolescents. Meg has an interest in Celtic and Contemplative Christianity. In her time off she loves to read and have fun with her 7-month-old kitten, Dewi (named after the patron saint of Wales).



# Releasing Our Local Church Potential

33 parishes find encouragement and tools for growth at the *Leading your Church into Growth* Conference

What do you long for and desire most for your local church? I think many of us would say we long to see the huge potential of our local churches realised—to see them flourishing and bursting with spiritual life. The recent *Leading your Church into Growth* (LyCiG) conference at St Christopher's, from 18-20 October, put legs on that vision and offered a straightforward plan for growth.

115 people came to the conference from 33 of our parishes and they reported having a tremendous time of learning, fellowship and lots and lots of encouragement! Over 40 Vicars and priests-in-charge were present and almost without exception found the conference to be very empowering indeed. Survey results showed that 97% of attendees said that LyCiG would make a positive difference to their parish's ministry and mission in the future. It was the perfect tonic as we move out of what has been a very challenging Covid period.

*Leading your Church into Growth* has been running in the UK for the last 25 years and has been honed and improved over that time. Its purpose is to help clergy and laity lead in such a way that their churches grow and flourish. LyCiG is so good that many UK bishops require that their newly ordained clergy go on the course. Archbishop of York Stephen Cottrell said "In a church culture which is too easily besotted and beguiled by all that is shiny and new, LyCiG concentrates on the tried and tested putting parish and people, evangelism and service front and centre. This is extraordinary help for ordinary churches."

Conference speakers Rev'd Harry Steele (Sheffield) and Ven. Rhiannon King (Ipswich) were encouraging, funny, informative and inspiring. One attendee said "This (conference) was amazing and so timely. After Covid and a number of deaths in our Parish, it was so refreshing to focus on looking forward, being positive and being instructed and encouraged by Harry and Rhiannon who brought fresh stories and ideas with them. I felt blessed. Thank you to everyone involved in making this happen."

"Looking forward to using these tools in the days to come."  
Attendee 26+

"I am so pleased I attended this conference... this conference has made me feel enthusiastic again. A beautiful reminder: we are ALL responsible for being open to ideas that will encourage people to want to learn about God." Attendee 60+



Feature





“LyCiG has ignited my heart for investing more deeply & intentionally in praying for God to bring growth to our community of faith & those yet to find Jesus.”  
Attendee 40+



The conference had a strong emphasis on desire and prayer. It deepened our desire to see our parishes grow in numbers and in discipleship and to work intentionally to that end. We were also urged to make prayer a priority in our parishes—asking that God would answer our prayers to reach ‘one more person’. One attendee summed up this interplay of desire and prayer in the following way: “[LyCiG] has been so valuable and has really energised me for the future prayerful growth of our parish. Thank you.”

Other topics covered included a simple plan for outreach and growth summed up in the four Ps—Prayer, Presence, Proclamation and Persuasion (based on Acts 17). Each ‘P’ represents one step on an intentional outreach pathway. It all begins with concerted **Prayer** and is followed by members of the Church being a positive **Presence** in their local community. **Proclaiming** involves becoming more explicit in our witness—commending our faith personally and running introductory courses like Alpha.

The final step involves **Persuasion**—working with those who want to explore Christianity further and answering questions that may be raised.

Both Rhiannon and Harry were very popular speakers and chatted freely to attendees during the break times. When asked why they had come halfway around the world to lead the conference Rhiannon replied “Jesus has done so much for me that I can’t help myself. I want to tell everyone. I want every church to be flourishing.” To the same question Harry replied “My motivation is that I absolutely love the local church. I firmly believe the local church can have a big impact on communities. And at the heart of the local church, I love the celebration of Holy Communion and breaking open the Word of God. And I see that in a sacramental way, that Jesus takes us and breaks us and he sends us out into the world and that is mission and that sets my heart on fire. And I think every local church has huge potential. LyCiG is a key to release some of that potential.”

As the conference entered its last day, attendees were challenged to write down three ‘next steps’ to consolidate and put into action the things learned. These were placed on the communion table and prayed over by Bishop Peter during the final eucharist. A large proportion of attendees also indicated interest in undertaking what is known as a ‘LyCiG Local’ which is a shortened course suitable for individual parish groups.

### The stats don’t lie...

- 33 of ~55 parishes were represented; 115 people including over 40 vicars/priests-in-charge attended.
- 100% said it was a positive experience and 97% reported it would make a difference in their churches
- 100% said they would recommend others attend a LyCiG conference





Harry and Rhiannon met with a group of Diocesan leaders after the conference and brainstormed further ways of embedding learnings from the conference and it was suggested that we have another *LyCiG* next year and invite the Wellington Diocese to consider having one as well, either before or after ours. This would helpfully minimize conference speaker travel costs. Another *LyCiG* next year would enable those on the course this year to consolidate learnings and to give those who weren't at the conference a further opportunity to attend.

"I came to the course skeptical, but it has blown me away! It's clear, simple and encouraging. I would highly recommend this course to every church!" Attendee 40+



"I think if we keep running this course locally, it is going to fan into flame a passion for growth in our parishes. Love to see this continuing." Attendee 60+

"I am incredibly excited by how the *LyCiG* course relates to our church... It takes us from simply being a presence to showing people where the water that quenches our spiritual thirst comes from." Attendee 60+



"[This has been a] life changing experience." Attendee 40+



The final word is reserved for one participant who said “Leading your Church into Growth has ignited my heart for investing more deeply and intentionally in praying for God to bring growth to our community of faith and those yet to find Jesus. A great tool for the church to live and grow and change to flourish in his likeness.”

#### Four “P”s for growth: Prayer Presence, Proclamation and Persuasion

1. Prayer: We pray for growth.
2. Presence: Our church is a positive presence in our community.
3. Proclamation: We take opportunities to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ.
4. Persuasion: Not all will respond, but some will want to hear more, so we ‘persuade’ those who do want to hear more, by teaching them how to become a follower of Jesus.

#### Prayer (for growth):

#### The Leading your Church into Growth Prayer:

God of mission,  
who alone brings growth to your Church,  
Send your Holy spirit to give vision to our planning,  
wisdom to our actions  
and power to our witness.  
Help our church to grow in numbers,  
In spiritual commitment to you,  
and in service to our local community,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

‘When I pray, coincidences happen, and when I don’t they don’t’.

– William Temple

Feature



“[Let’s invite] the Spirit to guide us to do God’s work in God’s place.”  
Attendee 26+

“Strengthens my confidence to step out prayerfully.” Attendee 60+

“The manual is very clear and includes great diagrams.”  
Attendee 40+



# Light Parties

Celebrations that are not Spooky and Kooky—just outright FUN!

As we walked around our supermarkets and malls in October, it was hard to miss the displays of pumpkin-themed merchandise heralding the celebration of Halloween. In recent years, as our New Zealand culture has become more infused and influenced by the celebrations and traditions of the many cultures and peoples that now call New Zealand home, there has been a marked increase in costume parties in schools and homes and trick-or-treaters knocking on doors. At St Christopher's we see this enthusiasm for costumes, parties and sugary treats as an opportunity to connect with families in our community—we provide the venue, food, decorations and entertainment; families bring the costumes, energy and fun.

The past few years have been marked by cancellations, postponements, and social restrictions that have caused separation, isolation, loneliness and stress for many in our communities. St Christopher's Light Parties are just one way we are bringing people together again, in safe and fun ways, allowing us to share God's love with our community. Last year we had a Star Wars themed party complete with an epic light saber duel between Darth Vader and Luke Skywalker that had children and adults alike enthralled. This year we went medieval with archery, jousting, apple bobbing, potion making, a bouncy castle and more. (At the time this story went to print no photos were available. Check them out on their website: [www.stchristophers.org.nz](http://www.stchristophers.org.nz) or their Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/stchristopherschurch](http://www.facebook.com/stchristopherschurch))

We found so many positive outcomes from planning and running these parties. It brings our parishioners together and allows us to discover more of their talents, hobbies and interests. The Lamp Korean church, who worship at St Christopher's on Sunday afternoons, have participated with us as well, expanding the connection and co-operation between our churches. We also, most importantly, meet and connect with local families; some that may have never come to St Christopher's before, others that may come along to one of our Christmas Services or were a Mainly Music family in years gone by. It's a great opportunity, while the kids play and the adults sip a coffee or hot chocolate, to get to know these families and for them to get to know us. It is hopefully the start of a beautiful friendship.

## Did you know....

According to Wiki, Halloween is thought to have roots in Christian beliefs and practices. The English word 'Halloween' comes from "All Hallows' Eve", being the evening before the Christian holy days of All Hallows' Day (now referred to as All Saints' Day) on 1 November and All Souls' Day on 2 November.



An epic battle between good and evil from the Star Wars themed Light Party at St Christopher's in 2021. Credit: Avonhead Parish



# Come—Let's Celebrate

With tongue in cheek, celebration comes easy if you are a Crusader fan, a one-eyed Cantabrian, as we continue to have win, after win, after win—with the best rugby coach in the world, Razor Robertson!

Of course, the concept of celebration for Christians runs much, much deeper. Throughout the Old Testament we witness many celebratory events. For instance, Passover, where the people of God celebrate the passing over of the angel of death (the last plague visited on Egypt before the Israelites were released). And what about Purim which celebrates the incredible courageous decision of Esther, who was “born for a time such as this” to save her Jewish people from extermination as planned by the wicked Haman. Then there is the return to Jerusalem, and the rebuilding of the wall with Nehemiah and Ezra which was the cause for many more celebrations.

But the greatest for us, as followers of Jesus, is celebrated in the opening chapters of the gospels with the birth of Jesus Christ. Even today the birth of a baby causes one of the greatest celebratory moments a whanau and community shares. The sheer joy of a new-born is unparalleled.

Recently when leading a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, the group spent time in the Shepherd's fields and experienced

the caves where the shepherds would have spent time watching over their sheep. And yes, we also visited the Church of Nativity, the birthplace of Jesus.

Then, in Galilee, a place where Jesus celebrated so often, several couples renewed their wedding vows with a celebratory sweet red wine for the toasts. As we thought about Jesus first miracle, we embraced being in Cana, the very place it happened. Later in The Sea of Galilee others celebrated the reaffirmation of their baptism vows, by being “dipped” three times in the waters of that famous lake. Indeed, times of great celebration.

I believe that in these celebrations we are thanking God for the privilege of life. Patsy and I amongst many others know the tragedies that can come on anyone at anytime and it's difficult to celebrate with such a dark shadow lurking.

However, times of celebration go beyond our personal circumstances. Christmas is the ultimate example. While for many Christmas is a reminder of tough times, such as the loss of family, at the same

“Times of celebration go beyond our personal circumstances.”  
Rev'd Mike Hawke

time it is a celebration of the greatest of times, the birth of the Saviour of the world. It is expressed by amazing church services, uplifting music and the meeting of family and friends. Together we will sing those carols that will take us out of ourselves into the majesty and poignancy to remember again the sheer joy of the baby born in a stable because there was no room at the inn.



Rev'd Mike Hawke

Mike is a one-eyed Cantabrian who loves all

sports especially cricket. He is married to Patsy and moved back to Christchurch after retiring from the role of Dean of Nelson Cathedral in 2016. Previously a beloved Vicar at St Christopher's in Avonhead, Mike is also a musician (guitar), and both he and Patsy love to travel.



Mike with whanau singing and celebrating together. Credit: supplied

# Be Present, Listen, See the Need

## Celebrating the 24-7 YouthWork at Burnside High

Across our diocese many of our church youth workers are involved in 24-7YW youth work. I am one of them. If these individuals were featured in a documentary, I could imagine David Attenborough stating:

“And here is a 24-7YW youth worker blending into their parish surroundings on a Sunday. Many parishioners know these individuals by titles such as ‘the children’s worker’, ‘youth worker’ or ‘youth pastor’ yet few realise they also are part of the 24-7 YouthWork network. Even less know what they do for 24-7 YouthWork.” *(Yes—I know you read this in a David A-style voice!)*

24-7 YouthWork is a trust relationship between a local school and a local church in the context of the local community working together. It is a Christian organisation that aims to build a good, strong and healthy foundation for the next generation of New Zealanders coming through high school. Youth workers are ‘presence based’ which means we go to school with the desire to connect, be a positive role model and to be present in the moment. We coach, mentor, lead groups and provide leadership development. More often than not, there is a lot of conversation and hanging out. Regardless of the activity, relationships are key.

As the youth worker at the Parish of Burnside and Harewood, I have the privilege of working within Burnside High School, my local 24-7YW context. Once the largest school in New Zealand, Burnside High School has almost 2500 students. It is an excellent school with many opportunities for youth backed up by 285 staff including eight counsellors. Yet, as with any school, they have a range of complex needs.

Phil Holstein, the retiring principal of Burnside High School, readily acknowledges this. Being a teenager navigating change within your body, social groups and the world can be incredibly disorientating and difficult. On top of this is the impact of climate



# 24-7 YouthWork

Te Muka Rangatahi

The 24-7YWs “make a difference to the lives of our young people and long may it continue.”  
Phil Holstein

change, unparalleled access and influence of digital technology, building tension between Russia, China and the United States, as well as a global pandemic. There are a lot of things that can make youth fearful and anxious. Often a listening ear and thoughtful response by a youth worker go a long way.

According to Phil Holstein, the 24-7YWs have an effective and positive influence on the school and provide great role models for the students.

“From the school’s point of view, the work they do is of immense significance. Their focus is to support young people by building positive relationships with both the students and staff. I am aware of just how significant some of the one-on-one work has been to our students. The YWs are able to approach students from a totally different perspective from the school guidance services (younger faces, non-teachers!) and there is no doubt that they have a very positive impact on our students, within the school context and beyond. It’s making a difference to the lives of our young people and long may it continue.”

However, there are often many times that we, as youth workers, may feel like we are not achieving much. Many of our lunchtimes are spent connecting with



24-7YWs youth worker Gene Kweon chatting with some BHS students. Credit: 24-7YW

- To learn about 24-7YW [www.24-7youthwork.nz](http://www.24-7youthwork.nz)
- To donate to 24-7YW [www.24-7youthwork.nz/donate](http://www.24-7youthwork.nz/donate)





youth by talking about random, shallow stuff or coaching sports we are not experts of. However, Nate, the 24-7YW team leader for Burnside High School, reminds us that “shallow” for us, might be “significant to God”:

For the last six years, Nate coached a boys’ football team for the school. One lunchtime practice, he questioned himself as to why he was being paid to coach football when he was not a football coach. As various emotions swirled within him, a young person came up to him who ‘looked off’. This student asked Nate if he could speak with him. Detecting something wasn’t right, he told the boys to continue their training while Nate and the young person moved away and sat under a tree. The boy began, “I took a bunch of pills to try to take my own life. I feel terrified and I feel scared.” Nate was able to assist him in getting the support he needed, and that boy is now a young man who is thriving in life. To this day, Nate is thankful to God that he was on that football pitch and present for that boy that day.



The Burnside High School 24-7YW team at the National Hui.

L-R: BHS Team Leader, Nathanael (Nate) Loong (Chinese Community Church on Greens Rd), Gene Kweon (Village Presbyterian on Ilam Rd), Marcus Sim (Chinese Community Church), and Nathan Muirhead (Burnside Parish).

A new youth worker, Sara Cornish also from St Timothy’s, has since joined the BHS team (insert).

Simply stated, we don’t go into schools to fix anyone, nor do we go in with an agenda of growing our parish youth groups. Youth workers are in schools to be present, to listen and to see the needs around us. As Micah 6:8 reminds us, our job is simple: act justly—love mercy—and walk humbly with our God.

### Prayer and financial support is needed

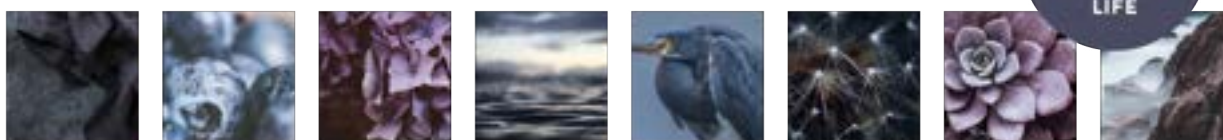
Please pray for all the 24-7YW members in our Diocese (all 80 of them!). Please pray that God would empower them with His Holy Spirit to make them attentive to the physical, social and spiritual needs within their school contexts. May they have positive connections with staff, students and the school communities. Let’s also pray that God will provide the funds that are necessary to pay their wages. Note: 24-7YW workers are paid partly by the school, in partnership with the local church they come from. Sometimes other trusts also help such as the Burnside Community Transformation Trust (BCTT) which contributes to the Burnside 24-7YW wages.



Nathan Muirhead is the youth worker at St Timothy’s within the Parish of Burnside–Harewood. He was a primary school teacher for ten years and a volunteer youth leader at St Pauls, Symonds Street, Auckland. In his leisure time, Nathan, aka Wally, can be spotted playing disc golf, jogging and attempting DIY.

## BLUEPRINT

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# Garden of Eden or Valley of Gehenna?

Are we heading for a Garden of Eden or a barren Valley of Gehenna? The challenges of climate change can feel overwhelming, but there are practical things we can all do. There's always a reason to plant a tree and you don't even have to be an arborist or even believe in climate change.

Tekau Rakau—Ten Trees is our parish's response to Synod's 2019 declaration of a climate change and ecological emergency (motion 11). Our aim is to plant ten trees a year for every person on the parish roll. Planting a future forest requires land ownership, long-term maintenance and protection, and planning and organisation. However, if you volunteer at a Trees for Canterbury or a Christchurch City Council led planting day, all the hard stuff is done for you. All you have to do is dig.

In the last three years, volunteers from our parish have joined community planting days at Mairehau, Travis

Wetland, Horseshoe Lake, Styx Mill, The Groynes, Southshore Reserve, Halswell Quarry Park and Orton Bradley Park. Parishioners aged from three to 83 years have taken part. If you can walk 500 metres over rough ground, then you are fit enough to lend a hand. In less than two hours you will be relaxing in the sun, and probably enjoying a BBQ.

The hardest part of volunteering is turning up. You have to get out of bed, find some gumboots and travel to the event. By yourself, you're probably not going to do it. Turning up requires a sense of shared mission, that your morning effort is contributing to something worthwhile.

"This is what we at OSM are doing—10 trees for all on our roll. But just imagine if every parish did this—the impact we could make!" Adam Heinz

One of the biggest plantings, in the Cranford flood basin on Philpotts Road, Mairehau, is part of the Matariki Tu Rākau—One Billion Trees programme. The tree planting was led by Trees for Canterbury with Christchurch City Council, Conservation Volunteers NZ and the RSA—they aim to plant 350,000 trees nationwide to honour each person who has served overseas in the Armed Forces since WW1.

In the future forest at Mairehau, kahikatea saplings are nurtured into adolescence. The seed was collected from Putaringamotu, Riccarton Bush,

Trees grow like teens if you give them a chance.



Dan planting a knee-high Kahikatea seedling in 2020

*'Gehenna is the Greek translation of the Hebrew word, ge Hinnom, referring to the valley of Hinnom, near Jerusalem. It was a place of abomination, of human sacrifice, often by fire. In later years it became a place where the city's waste was dumped and burned. Most English translations refer to it as Hell, although a modern interpretation might be a place or state of misery, torture, punishment and eternal fire. Hence the contrast between the flourishing Garden of Eden and the valley of death and fire, Gehenna.*



and revisiting a waist-high Kahikatea seedling in 2022.





and grown into seedlings by Trees for Canterbury. Volunteers, including our parish team, planted at Mairehau over many months throughout 2020 and 2021. In 2022 we returned to join the volunteers adding companion plants to nurse this floodplain into a forest ecosystem. Only the strongest seedlings planted in the sweet spots between the stop banks and field drains survive, but these mōrehu (survivors) will seed many descendants—we expect 40,000 forest giants will grow here.

The first fruits of our work are beginning to take shape. Shelter plants like Ngaio are reaching waist height. The Kahikatea is at knee height. Within 10 years these future forest giants will be taller than the tallest adult. Trees grow like teenagers, if you just give them a chance. “Blessed are those who plant trees under whose shade they will never sit<sup>2</sup>.”



Two hours of positivity for the planet—volunteers at a community planting day at Philpotts Road, Mairehau dig holes, plant trees, and hope nature will do the rest. After less than 2hrs work, they were rewarded with a BBQ. It's a fun family activity. Credit: OSM Parish

### Other Things you can do...

- Parishes, churches, groups or individuals can make a decision to plant more trees. Perhaps 10 trees this coming year? Or if that's too much, 1 tree per year for the next ten years? Whatever you can do, we need to make it a priority for our plant, our children and mokopuna. If you rent, ask your landlord if you can plant some trees?
- Have a Green Thumb? Propagate ten trees each year and give them away?
- Check out [www.treesforcanterbury.org.nz](http://www.treesforcanterbury.org.nz) or the [www.ccc.govt.nz/parks-and-gardens/volunteer-in-parks/volunteer-events](http://www.ccc.govt.nz/parks-and-gardens/volunteer-in-parks/volunteer-events) for the next planting day in your area.
- Mark 5 June Arbor Day in your calendar each year and plan an activity (both at your place and at church).



Adam Heinz is a synod rep for Opawa-St Martins Parish and attends Saint Mark's Church.

<sup>2</sup>Quote of disputed origin. In this format possibly French but earlier references to the same sentiment can be found in Roman writings (by Caecilius Statius c160BC). A similar proverb is also found in ancient Indian writings.



The possibilities for growth are almost endless! This Kahikatea tree is in Riccarton Bush where the seeds come from that grew the saplings we planted. Thanks Dan! Credit: OSM Parish

# A Whakapapa of Faith

## Conversations in stitch and poetry

Recently, at St Christopher's Church, in the Robertson Hall, was a display of stitchery and artwork that was both beautiful and disturbing. In October, the church hosted artist Miriam Jessie Fisher's Whakapapa of Faith installation, a group of textile artworks combined with the spoken word and poetry that highlights two unsung women in scripture.

The exhibition was the culmination of a Miriam's Master of Theology (creative works) through Laidlaw College. In it she sought to recover the voices of four marginalised women in the Bible through poetry, textiles, and whakapapa (genealogy), in a way that also honours the current context of Aotearoa New Zealand with all its rich partnerships, including Te Reo Māori.

There were ten separate pieces of stitched textiles, some hangings and some clothing, and some of the poetic works on display. The work focused on the lives of two women who have been maligned historically—Eve and Mary Magdalene, and two women who are often considered minor characters yet are the recipients of extraordinary divine grace and attention—Hagar and Leah. The works invite the viewer to

experience the reality of the women's lives in all their richness of joy and depths of despair, their experience of trauma and of divine grace.

But none of these insipid words do justice to the artworks. They need to be seen. So here are some images of the stitchery. I invite you to see, read, contemplate and allow any confronting ideas to sit, and hold their space.

"I love that you have given a voice to the silenced... These women are given voices at last." Feedback from earlier exhibitions





“What an incredible testimony to women in scripture you have created. It is moving and meaningful. Such a beautiful blend of deep, interesting, important theology and beautiful, moving creativity. I feel blessed and challenged by this experience.” Feedback from earlier exhibitions



“Thank you immensely for remembering and preaching the whakapapa and talanoa of the faithful of God—who happen to be women!” Feedback from earlier exhibitions



Miriam Jessie Fisher is not just a Lecturer in Education at Laidlaw College. Miriam has taught at all levels from primary to adults. She is also an accomplished speaker and sometimes thespian. She has authored books and loves to explore the intersection between faith and creativity. Miriam is a joyful extrovert who loves reading, purchasing books, sewing, stitching, writing and being around people. She has been married for 20 years to Michael and they have two wonderful teenage sons.

# Celebrating a Collaboration and a Freebie!

Thank you Nelson Diocese, Strandz and St John's College Trust Board!

It's not often you get something for free, is it? If it's free, there must be a catch? Well, this one is all free—no strings attached—and it's awesome!

Nelson Diocese's 'Discipleship Pathway' team reached out to Strandz and together (with St John's College Trust funding)—they have developed a series of digital training programmes that anyone can listen to and learn from.

If you want to inspire and encourage your children and families to be 'hope bearers and kingdom changers in the world', then it's a no brainer to make the time to watch and reflect on these videos.



The videos are presented by some of New Zealand's children and families' ministry experts and offer real-world, practical ideas to get your church community engaged. They're ideal for people new to kid's ministry, but even old hands will get something out of them.

There will be five classes in the children and families' ministry series, and at the time of publishing (October), the first two classes are already available online, with the rest being released later this year and in early 2023.



"The Strandz Discipleship Pathway material is fabulous—the production values of the videos and the content are both excellent." The Ven. Canon Mark Chamberlain



## 1. Diana Langdon presents Intergenerational Communities

Key: Unpacking how intergenerational ministry can provide opportunities for all generations to worship, serve and seek God together, and what it means for the Church today.

There are six modules, and each module has class notes, reflection questions and resources to access. The six modules are:

- Why Bring Generations Together?
- How Did We Get Here?
- The Theology of Accommodation
- Intergenerational Opportunities
- It's Who You Know
- Intergenerational Worship

This Intergenerational Communities class is now live! You can enrol and watch it for free here [www.discipleship.nz/courses/intergenerational](http://www.discipleship.nz/courses/intergenerational)



## Strandz

Strandz is the hub of Children and Families ministry in the Anglican Dioceses of New Zealand. They encourage, equip, resource, train and cheer on those working in this important ministry.

## 2. Greta Greenwood presents Whānau on Mission

Key: the majority of Jesus' mission was outside the walls of church, and ours can be too. In this class, you will explore joining in on God's mission as families, starting from our homes, our streets, and our neighbourhoods.

The Whānau on Mission class is now live! You can enrol and watch it for free here [www.discipleship.nz/courses/whanauonmission](http://www.discipleship.nz/courses/whanauonmission)



## 3. Cath McVey presents Partnering with Families

This class is the next in line—check out if it's landed by visiting [www.discipleship.nz](http://www.discipleship.nz)

So, let's celebrate getting something for free this season and delve into this awesome collaborative resource! Tu Meke!





# cbm Helping to Heal the Blind in Africa

Will you help?

Imagine thousands of painful parasites crawling under your skin, making their way into your eyes, gnawing away at your optic nerve, slowly stealing your sight and eventually making you go blind.

This is the harsh reality for millions of people living in sub-Saharan Africa who are affected by a Neglected Tropical Disease (NTD) called Onchocerciasis, or commonly known as River Blindness. NTDs infect more than one billion people in the world's poorest communities of which Africa has the highest burden. They thrive in impoverished, tropical regions where there is poor sanitation, unsafe drinking water, numerous insects to spread disease and little access to health services and Government support.

River Blindness is caused by being bitten by the black river flies that infest sub-Saharan Africa, where more than 99% of River Blindness occurs. Worldwide 36 million people are blind, yet 75% of blindness is preventable or treatable. In Nigeria, an estimated 31 million people are at risk of blindness, and a variety of debilitating and disfiguring skin conditions caused by River Blindness where the disease carrying blackfly parasites are still rife.

The parasites bloom into hundreds of thousands of baby worms. They knot up together into lumps you can feel just under your skin. People infected rub and rip at their skin, until it becomes thick and rough. They call this Elephant Skin. Even worse is Leopard Skin, where you are suffering so badly, you cut at yourself with knives, hooks and sharp spoons. Then the parasites go for your eyeballs. Gnawing at everything, they chew

through your optic nerves. Your eyesight dims and fades. This blindness cannot be reversed.

Approximately 90% of NTDs can be treated with medicine. Pharmaceutical companies donate worm-killing antibiotics, which must be administered once a year to kill the black fly larvae. Through the generosity of cbm supporters, this medicine is then delivered by cbm-funded field workers, to people at risk of being bitten by the blackfly and contracting River Blindness. As a result of the medication being donated, the impact of gifts given in support this vital programme is multiplied x7.



Above: Kabiru guiding his blind father Masu



Right: Masu, Kabiru and his family

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbour as yourself." cbm aspires to follow the teachings of Jesus in Luke 10:27

Left: Kabiru's eyes are safe from River Blindness

cbm, also known as Christian Blind Mission, is an international Christian development organisation, whose mission includes delivering life-changing medication, support and surgeries to those disadvantaged by poverty and disability. To find out more visit [www.cbmnz.org.nz](http://www.cbmnz.org.nz).



Dr Murray Sheard received his PhD in Ethics and Philosophy from the University of Auckland. He has worked in international development for over 15 years and is the CEO of cbm NZ.

Kabiru  
(aged 10)



## River Blindness can be devastating...

Adults and children, like Kabiru, need sight-saving medicine to kill the parasites and help protect their eyes from the unbearable itching and life-long loss of sight caused by River Blindness.

To learn more, scan the QR code using your mobile phone camera or go to [www.cbmnz.org.nz/masu6](http://www.cbmnz.org.nz/masu6)



# Following the Invitation of God

I knew I wanted to be a missionary when I was 12 years old—I felt that God was calling me to Africa. By the time I was 16, my friend and I were sitting in the back of our maths class drawing pictures of the truck we were going to drive around from village to village where we would set up with tents and give medical care and perform surgeries. A bold but ‘simple’ vision.

I found a way to get to Africa—I joined Mercy Ships and travelled from place to place along the African coastline for three years. A Mercy Ship arrives, sets up tents on the docks, and welcomes patients sorting their needs and logistics. Then they are sent onboard for surgery or other medical procedures.

That period included six months in Togo. While there, a friend asked me to visit a hospital two hours north. We went for a weekend, and they invited me to return to work there if I was interested. I was, so I did. After my six weeks, I was invited to visit a new hospital even further north, just a mere 36 hrs away. There I saw a pharmacy, still at the concrete block stage. “Could you help design the pharmacy?” I sure could, and happily drew up plans. “Well now you’ve designed the place, you had better come back and work here!”

It took me two and a half years to complete my obligations and re-organise my life, but then I was back—and the hospital was due to open in six weeks! It was aptly named Hôpital de l’Espérance—The Hospital of Hope.

Hope has 78 beds including maternity. Each year up to 500 patients are admitted. They have five operating rooms for surgeries, and an out-patients clinic that sees up to 200 patients a day. Those outpatients then stop by the pharmacy for their prescriptions. We have had over 80,000 patients call through the pharmacy in the last seven years.

My initial job was to manage the pharmacy including training the local technicians. We started with six technicians, one IT support person, and only six weeks before opening! Not nearly enough to get a pharmacy department up and running! But somehow, by the grace of God, we managed.

Technicians dispense the medicines and write the labels in French (the national language of Togo). However, most of the time they are explaining the medicines to the patients in their local dialects and languages as not all speak French (especially if they have not had any schooling). Most of the technicians speak three to four languages each and think nothing of it. It was so exciting to see peoples faces light up when I was able to say a few words in their local language.

The day-to-day running of the pharmacy was the relatively easy part to teach. Systems that work, adapted to the local environment and resources. For me the big hurdle was figuring out how to order the medicines twice a year from five different countries, sometimes with a 6–9 month wait! In New Zealand I order medicines once, sometimes twice a day. When I left, we had ten technicians running the pharmacy, doing both ordering and dispensing. It has been a privilege, joy and challenge to train them all.

In 2019 the Covid pandemic began in Wuhan. The effect on the hospitals in Africa have been many and varied. Initially with road and border closures our patient numbers dwindled. As people found ways to move around, the numbers steadily grew. Some patients travelled long and difficult distances to receive care. We were fortunate to receive vaccines in March 2021 for all health care workers in Togo. Many African patients were scared of the vaccines, so they watched the missionaries being immunised and then got theirs from the same vials. Sharing a common experience helped bring us together as a community.

During Covid large churches were not able to meet in person. The large church in Mango broke up into small neighbourhood groups consisting of a couple of families each and continued to meet together in God’s name. It was encouraging to see that they still wanted to meet together as it had become a part of their lives.



*A bright and cheerful bunch, the pharmacy staff in their new uniforms. Credit: Supplied.*



*Hôpital de l’Espérance staff children amusing themselves with chalk. Credit: Supplied.*

Large gatherings were often restricted, so I spent more time with smaller friend groups which led to stronger friendships. We would spend time together eating or playing games. Deep conversations came about organically from inviting each other to share our respective holidays and explain the significance of Christmas or Easter, while also learning from them.

One of the joys I had at Hope was the children of the staff. With no creche or afterschool programmes they would hang around at all hours. I would often have a piece of chalk or a balloon for them to play with. The plans for a crèche got waylaid with Covid, but the fundraising that happened through St Stephen’s CCAANZ was diverted to finish building Le Bon Berger (The Good Shepherd) Mango Christian School.





The Sunday afternoon Kids Club. Credit: Supplied.



Miriam with friends at the market. Credit: Supplied.

The school started two years ago with years one and two plus a kindergarten class. Each year as the children move up a class the school grows with the addition of new entrants. The building was completed for the new school year in August 2022. Some more structures are still required. The school aims to cover costs through school fees and is also backed by the large church in Mango.

One of the hospital chaplains, Ancien (meaning ancient) writes songs in the Anufo language and records them. Some other missionaries and I helped him with recording costs and a CD with eight songs was launched. These have been shared far and wide across the region so people can hear about God through song in their own language. I played the songs in the pharmacy and wrote them out phonetically. This led to a translation project for me with my Anufo language tutor, who is Muslim. He would discuss the Anufo words and topics to get the correct meaning. Consequently, before I left, I was able to give Ancien a stack of song books in both Anufo and French to use in their local house churches.

During my six years there, I have been glad to see many Christian baptisms in the very Muslim area of Togo. I know that it was because of the Hospital of Hope that people were able to hear about the love of God and grow in relationship with Him. God leads us step-by-step—all we have to do is be open to following Him, and take the first step.

### Please pray for...

- the Togolese Pharmacy Technicians who are running the pharmacy
- all the long-term and short-term missionaries in Togo
- the chaplains who visit the patients in the hospital each day and go to the surrounding villages
- the Christian school in Mango, for the new buildings and all the students and teachers.



Image By TUBS commons.  
wikimedia.org

### Togo

- Officially the Togolese Republic, a member of the UN
- A population of ~8 mil in a tiny land area of ~55,000 km<sup>2</sup> (Canterbury is ~44,000 km<sup>2</sup>)
- Togo is long and narrow—only 160 km wide
- Primary French speaking with an agricultural economy
- Primarily Christian but with a significant Muslim faith as well. The local religion Voodoo is still practiced by some mainly in the south.



Miriam, a former Mission Partner with NZCMS, spent six years as a pharmacist at The Hospital of Hope, in Mango, Togo (West Africa). While there Miriam was supported by a number of Anglican churches including St Augustine's and St Stephen's. She returned to Christchurch last year, still working as a pharmacist. She is a regular worshiper at St Stephen's. She is not sure what her next adventure with God is, but eagerly awaits His direction.



# Teaching the Faith with Theology House

Gareth Bezett, Director of Theology House (TH), has now been in the role three years—and what a strange three years with disruptions from both pandemics and a major location shift. A year ago TH moved, along with the Anglican Centre into the upstairs portion of Cardale House on Tuam St. Jo Bean interviewed Gareth about the things they have achieved despite the disruptions. And Theology House definitely has some celebrations to claim!

**Q** How has your time as TH Director been, Gareth? What do you have to celebrate?

**A** It's been both a challenging and a deeply rewarding period. I don't think any of the grand ideas I arrived with came to fruition, and yet some of the big wins we've had were quite unexpected.

**Q** Tell us about that, Gareth?

**A** During Covid we had to cancel events, and that was frustrating. But at various stages, as lockdowns allowed, we ran some fantastic public events. In 2020, working with the Transitional Cathedral, we held two forums on the referendum questions alongside the general election. During Ice Week, we ran a seminar on theology and ecology. And there have been several gatherings about the Living Wage Movement which is something I am particularly passionate about. I think it's important we are seen to have a voice in public theology. And just recently, in October, we co-hosted a high-quality seminar on science and theology with NZ Christians in Science.

**Q** I hear you've also been running a new course. How did that come about?

**A** The pandemic also provided an opportunity to experiment. We successfully piloted a new education programme with the catchy name of Theology House Certificate in Ministry and Leadership with one student in the first year (2021) and a cohort of eight students this year. The programme included classes in Bible and Theology, Leadership, and Discipleship, and Ministry Skills. Paul Hegglin and Emma Tovey, from the Diocesan Ministry Team, taught the programme alongside me. It was designed to be flexible—we met together face-to-face when it was safe to do so, but also met online when necessary. This is now very much the norm for education. This programme has given students a good grounding in biblical theology and some practical skills for their future ministries. Of course, it couldn't have happened without the financial support from St John's College Trust Board. Their funding enabled an initiative that did much more than just fill the gap while public events were largely off the agenda.

**Q** Talk to us about the shift, Gareth—is the new physical space and configuration helpful?

**A** It's a very attractive and functional space. We now have flexible spaces for meetings and events, and that has been a bonus. While moving a library represents a particular challenge, we are already seeing an increase in foot traffic as our central city location with parking proves popular. Heather Fraser, Administrator, and Sarah Dunning, Librarian, have been hard at work making Theology House's new home a welcoming and functional space. Please spread the word and call in to browse—we have an extensive collection of theological and ministry resources. Our library is free to join and use—and not just for Anglicans.

**Q** What else can TH celebrate?

**A** A long-standing contribution to the life of the Church in Aotearoa has been Theology House's annual Lenten studies. I find it encouraging to send copies off to all parts of the country and different denominations as each one represents an individual's willingness to engage with scripture as part of their walk with Christ. The last two years' studies have been a bit different, perhaps more practical than theological, and feedback has been mixed. But I'm particularly excited about our plans for the next two years' studies moving forward. I am in the middle of collating these now working with some wonderful local and national authors and experts to create something quite special. We hope it will have a wide audience and can be used as a personal study as well as a corporate one. We also hope that it can be used at other times, not just in Lent.

## Got a thought or suggestion?

TH would love to hear any feedback or suggestions you might have for courses and events that would interest you and your community. Contact Gareth on [director@theologyhouse.ac.nz](mailto:director@theologyhouse.ac.nz)



**Q** Can you give us a taste teaser, Gareth?

**A** The studies for 2023 and 2024 arise in the context of the Church's need to respond meaningfully to the Royal Commission on Abuse in Care. The hope is that the studies will help lay some groundwork for those conversations down the track. Clearly, two Lenten Studies aren't an adequate response or even the beginning of a response, but we do hope that they will help the Church to face up to this challenge. The studies won't be about abuse as such but how we live out our calling as Christian communities without shying away our failures. And they are shaping up to be a very interesting group of studies with contributions from experts in their fields. I am looking forward to delivering the first set early next year.

**Q** And finally, how has it been moving down here, finding new jobs, building a new home?

**A** My time in Christchurch Diocese so far has been a real blessing. Christchurch has also been very good to my wife, Tracey Wakefield and I, especially with the opportunity to build a new home and then fill it with a new addition—Nando—our retired greyhound.

## Theology House Library

**What?** Resources for theological study, preaching, home groups, ministry with anyone from toddlers to seniors and much more.

**Who?** For anyone wanting to go deeper in their faith and resource their ministries—whether lay or ordained.

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**Questions?**

- Check out our website: [www.theologyhouse.ac.nz](http://www.theologyhouse.ac.nz)
- For any logistics questions contact Heather on [admin@theologyhouse.ac.nz](mailto:admin@theologyhouse.ac.nz)
- For any book inquiries contact Sarah on [librarian@theologyhouse.ac.nz](mailto:librarian@theologyhouse.ac.nz)



A super helpful team, Heather, Gareth and Sarah are enjoying their new Theology House library space at Cardale House, 95 Tuam St. Be it physical or virtual access to resources or study information, they aim to make it as easy as possible.

Theology House will be closed Friday 23 December 2022 — Sunday 8 January 2023



## Theology House Considering a study programme in 2023?

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Anglican Centre | Cardinal House | 95 Taum Street | Christchurch 8011

# Looking Back and Looking Forward

Chris, you have a number of roles at the Cathedral including Cathedral Administrator, Chapter Secretary, and Verger. And you've been in these roles for a while, totalling more than 30 years. That's some background! And a huge connection to the Cathedral. So, let's explore some of your cathedral stories—both looking back and looking forward.

**Q** Chris, you were there, working in the Cathedral when the earthquakes happened. The first big one did some damage, but the second big one in February 2011 did the worst. Can you tell us a bit about that?

**A** It started as a usual working day. We'd gotten used to aftershocks and ignored most of them. When this one started, I was at my desk with the Director of Music. As usual, we ignored it but soon realised it was bigger than normal. We took shelter in a doorway as the quake got louder and more violent. Our Theologian in Residence, Rev'd Lynda Patterson, appeared out of her office looking a little surprised before venturing back under her desk. The noise was incredible, and it didn't take long to realise why. Usually in an aftershock the bells would swing back and forth, and we would hear them ring. There was no such noise this time.

Between my office and the main Cathedral was a passage with a glass partition. We noticed a cloud of dust moving up the length of the Cathedral—

another indication that this was a bit more than another aftershock. Once the shaking stopped, I ventured into the main body of the Cathedral, although I could see very little because of the dust. As the dust settled, I could see light coming from the west end—where light shouldn't be—and it didn't take long to realise the tower was down. I spent some time getting bewildered tourists out, fortunately none were injured. Some of our volunteers suffered minor injuries and had luckily already made their way out.

Once the building was empty and quiet, some staff and I wandered around checking for anyone who might have still been inside. It was eerily quiet. By this stage we could see the extent of the damage with the huge pile of rubble at the back of the nave. Once we were sure that there was no one inside we went out into the Square. I was met by one of our regular homeless friends who asked if I could get his bag from inside. I retrieved it for him and last saw him heading across the Square. I haven't seen him since and sometimes wonder what happened to him.

Staff congregated at the War Memorial to view the damage and to see Sue Spigel being rescued from the room above which was the north porch where she had been working as a fabric artist-in-residence. There was a sense of incredulity that Sue appeared to be the only significant injury. However, none of us could believe that the tower had been empty, and we were sure that there would have been deaths. This was confirmed a week later when I was escorted back in to retrieve the CCTV footage from tower cameras. The police and Urban Search and Rescue compared footage of everyone in the tower with footage from the cameras in the Square. Everyone who had been in the tower was confirmed as later being seen in the Square.

The damage was of course significant. After a couple of hours we were well aware there was nothing else for us to do so collected the rest of our belongings. I was somewhat surprised when the landline phone rang (we had a system with battery backup). A voice asked if this was bad time to talk about services, I suggested it was. The good thing was that staff could use this phone to ring family as the cellular network was playing up.

One last piece of karma—someone had parked in the Music Director's car park (an unforgiveable sin), but one of the huge sheets of security glass protecting the eastern stained-glass windows had fallen on it, causing a lot of damage. Our Music Director got into his entirely undamaged car and headed off. The central city was already being locked down and everyone was being told to leave. It took me over an hour to get home (usually a 5-10 minute trip), to discover that fortunately my house was still in one piece albeit with no water or power, and a very bemused dog who had been playing in the liquefaction.





**Q** Tell us a bit about your roll at the Cathedral?

**A** I've been working at the Cathedral since 1991. I went on an OE in 1990 and returned to find a job (my Masters was in Geography—still not entirely sure how I ended up working in a Cathedral!). While looking for gainful employment I volunteered as an assistant verger and cleaner at the Cathedral, having known my predecessor there since I was a child. I then moved to helping the Dean create some educational resources for visiting school groups and then when Noel Woods retired as Administrator the Assistant Administrator's role fell open and I was offered that position. So, in a variety of roles I have been there far too long!

I often describe the Administrator's role as looking after the things that aren't liturgy. This ranges from events, the shop, cleaning, to being a general dogsbody!

In addition, I do the jobs of Cathedral Verger. When you mention Verger people often think of the grumpy character from Dad's Army. Whereas some may say there are similarities, I say there are none. The verger is the stage manager for the church services making sure that people (and furniture) are in the right place at the right time and that things run smoothly; or at least when things aren't running smoothly, I make sure no one no one can tell.

**Q** Looking back, you must have so many memories of your time in the Cathedral. Can you tell us a bit about them? Perhaps your most obscure, challenging or most enjoyable?

**A** Among the obscure were hosting the world's largest pavlova and the very friendly white tiger for Orana Park, the Dean in a tutu at a Christmas party, and Dame Malvina Major hurtling around the Cathedral on a scooter as the White Witch for a KidsFest version of the Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe! You can't beat that!

Funerals are always challenging but some notable ones were Director of Music David Childs, Green Party leader Rod Donald, Charles Upham VC (mixing military protocols and church dynamics is a challenge in itself). Another challenge was the 1999/2000 earthquake strengthening and 2007/08 fabric restoration—all done while keeping the Cathedral open and operating every day.

For me, the most enjoyable times I remember are the big celebratory services such as Christmas midnight. The Cathedral was always packed. We literally had to move people out of the way to get the processions in. Really special times.

**Q** Looking forward, in late 2027, we aim to have the doors of the Cathedral in the Square open again. What's the first thing or space you'll go and see in the cathedral?

**A** Assuming I'll get a chance to get in before we actually open to the public, I'm looking forward to just standing in an empty nave. The building was always at its best when there was no one in it and one of the perks of the job was to experience that on a daily basis. However, I am looking forward to getting back up the tower to join the bellringers again. I have been a ringer long before working here and it will be a delight to have the Cathedral bells ringing again. The ringers are already working on ensuring we have enough bellringers for the occasion, as it takes a while to train them (anyone interested, see me!).

And again, in late 2027, what are you most looking forward to about being back in Cathedral Square, the heart of the city?

Getting back into a space where I spent 20 very enjoyable years.

*This is a slightly shortened version of the full interview available on the [CCRL website](#).*



The Anglican Centre will be closed at 5pm Friday 23 December 2022 and reopen at 8:30am Monday 9 January 2023.



We wish you the gift of Jesus. In a world where worry, not peace, prevails, stir up that good news again in our hearts, that we, like the angels and shepherds, can't help but tell others of the good news of Jesus Christ.

The Anglican Centre | Cardale House | 95 Tuam Street | Christchurch

For children/Tamariki

# Secret A<sup>1</sup> Christmas Song


The 12 Days of Christmas are the 12 days from Christmas Day (25 December) until Epiphany (the coming of the Three Kings, celebrated on January 6).

Did you know that the song about the Twelve Days of Christmas has a hidden meaning behind it? Sometimes in history it wasn't fashionable to be a Christian, so it was written in a secret code—a bit like

a hidden treasure map. It was sung to remind Christians about basic Christian beliefs.

When you sing this song this year, see if you can remember the meaning behind each line.

## 12 The Hidden Meaning of the Days of Christmas

December **25** 

**A Partridge in a Pear Tree**  
The One true God revealed in the person of Jesus Christ

December **26** 

**Two Turtle doves**  
The Old and New Testaments

December **27** 

**Three French hens**  
Faith, Hope and Love

December **28** 


**The Four Calling Birds**  
Four Gospels

December **29** 

**The Five Gold Rings**  
Recall the Torah (Law) the First Five Books of the Old Testament

December **30** 

**Six Geese A-Laying**  
Six Days of Creation

December **31** 

**Seven Swans A-Swimming**  
Sevenfold Gifts of the Spirit

January **1** 


**Eight Maids A-Milking**  
Eight Beatitudes

January **2** 

**Nine Ladies Dancing**  
Nine Fruits of the Spirit (See Galatians 5)

January **3** 

**Ten Lords A-Leaping**  
Ten Commandments

January **4** 

**Eleven Pipers Piping**  
Eleven Faithful Disciples

January **5** 

**Twelve Drummers Drumming**  
12 Points of Belief in the Apostles Creed

Ask your parents to help you look up the Bible and read about each meaning.

Read more and download your copy: [www.courageouschristianfather.com/the-12-days-of-christmas/](http://www.courageouschristianfather.com/the-12-days-of-christmas/)



# Using Music to Soothe the Christmas Holiday Monster

Are you caught up in the scary and frenetic "holiday monster" called Christmas? It's a strange beast, if there ever was one—a twisted melding of middle-class capitalism, ancient Roman customs, Thomas Kinkade paintings, and medieval nativity scenes. And yet somehow amidst the mixed bag of traditions, the bustle of parties, tree decoration, light hanging, and shopping, as Christian families, we need to find a way to make Jesus the centre of it all. (*The Gilkersons intoxicatedonlife.com*)

One way to do this is to use the gift of music. After all, music can soothe the savage beast, or so they say.

I don't know about you, but I learned a lot of my best theology from the words of Christmas Carols. Playing Christcentred Advent and Christmas carols around the house in the month of December is a simple choice to make. And if you do devotions after tea each night with the children, why not take one carol each night and talk about it? Yes—many of the old-fashioned phrases will need explanations, but by doing this and explaining the meaning behind the carols, when the kids sing them, they will connect with them so much more.

Did you know God commands us as disciples to sing and teach one another using music? Colossians 3:16 (TPT) So, let's get into it. And he wouldn't have done this without making us musical creatures. The creator who made the birds and human voices, and music as a language that smashes all barriers, surely intends is to be used in heartfelt thanks and praise to Him! As well, its worth noting that when we sing our brain releases chemicals that both

calm and energise us. Isn't it fantastic that when we sing praise, it's good for us—not only to let God know we adore Him, but it also helps us to feel good. I wonder who designed that system? As if that wasn't enough, singing together creates musical memories which are laid down in our long-term memory. Dementia patients respond to songs from their childhood even when they don't recognise the family member in front of them. There is so much about music that is good and healthy for our families, I could go on for ages. But you get the point.

Additionally, if you have the time, do some research and tell your children about the stories behind the music. Like Amazing Grace or It is Well With My Soul, the stories behind songs provide so much more insight to the words themselves. The Gilkersons have written a book on this, so that might be your starting point (you can download a *digital version* for under NZ\$25). NB this book is reviewed on pages 28-29

Monster Image by [www.freepik.com](http://www.freepik.com) Music clip from [www.fineartamerica.com](http://www.fineartamerica.com)



"The lyrics to many Christmas carols, like a lot of old church songs, are packed with rich meaning." (*Gilkerson Family intoxicatedonlife.com*)

"Let the word of Christ live in you richly, flooding you with all wisdom. Apply the Scriptures as you teach and instruct one another with the Psalms, and with festive praises, and with prophetic songs given to you spontaneously by the Spirit, so sing to God with all your hearts!" Colossians 3:16 (TPT)

We are made in the image of a God who exults over His people with loud singing (Zephaniah 3:17), and in the image of a Saviour who sings praises to God in our midst (Hebrews 2:12). Is it any wonder music has such a profound impact on us? (*Gilkerson Family intoxicatedonlife.com*)



Luke and Trisha Gilkerson are the authors of dozens of books for parents and home schoolers. Together, they run the website *IntoxicatedOnLife.com*. Luke has a BA in Philosophy and an MA in Religion from Reformed Theological Seminary. He has worked as a University Campus Minister and as the Educational Resource Manager at Covenant Eyes, a company dedicated to protecting eyes and minds from harmful sexual content online. Trisha has a degree in Biology and a master's in Counselling, and home schools her five boys. Together the Gilkersons have authored several family Bible studies including *The Talk: 7 Lessons to Introduce Your Child to Biblical Sexuality*.

# A Christmas Prayer

By Robert Louis Stevenson

Loving Father,  
Help us remember the birth of Jesus,  
that we may share in the song of the angels,  
the gladness of the shepherds,  
and the worship of the wise men.

Close the door of hate  
and open the door of love all over the world.  
Let kindness come with every gift  
and good desires with every blessing  
which Christ brings,  
and teach us to be merry with clear hearts.

May the Christmas morning  
make us happy to be your children,  
and Christmas evening bring us to our beds  
with grateful thoughts,  
forgiving and forgiven,  
for Jesus' sake  
Amen.



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## The Tale of Christmas

Written by Mark and Janine Rees-Thomas.  
Illustrated by Richard Lemmens and Scott Pearson.  
Published by Bible Society New Zealand  
Available from Mana Stores for \$19.99.

An authentic but 'real' telling of the Christmas Story, including the emotional rollercoaster set of events inherent in the story but not fleshed out in the Gospels.

The angels and their messages feature prominently in this rendition. Readers will join the hosts of angels as they shout their mighty sound, travel with the wisemen and find the Son of God. Promoted as "a fun engaging retelling of the Christmas story that is thought provoking and fresh, with large vivid illustrations." It's the illustrations that really capture my interest... Mary looking less than serene on the donkey, Mary having such a fright when Gabriel appears, the shepherds stunned by a host of angels, and more. They really made me laugh out loud. The book is promoted as being suitable for ages 6 to 12, and the young at heart of all ages (that's me!).





# The Stories Behind the Music:

Christmas Carol Devotions and Activities for Your Family.

Written by Luke & Trish Gilkerson.

Music can powerfully communicate to our minds and hearts the truths of the gospel. During the Christmas season, parents can use the sounds of the holiday to impart truth to their kids—that's where this book comes in.

As referred to in the Harakeke section for parents (page 27) this book features 15 devotionals centred around

traditional Christmas carols. Each lesson includes a story about how the carol was written, lyrics and sheet music, Scripture reading and devotional, discussion questions, a short prayer, a family craft. This book can be purchased in soft cover on Amazon or as a digital book from [www.intoxicatedonlife.com](http://www.intoxicatedonlife.com). It can also be borrowed from Theology House.



## The Little Drummer Boy

Written by Ezra J Keats, Penguin/Puffin Books.

Another musical offering—it's a fabulously illustrated book that visually tells the story of the little drummer boy song we all know and love, complete with the song melody at the back (although why they didn't include a full piano score or even just guitar chords, I don't know!). Having sung this song many-a-time as a child, I joyfully worked my way through the pages and lines singing to my heart's content. But if you

don't know the song, you'll enjoy the story and illustrations just as much. And the moral of this story—give Jesus your own offering, be it a drum solo, a song, or your heart.

You can watch a [YouTube video](#) of The Little Drummer Boy with Marci Chavalas reading the story (not singing!).



## Song of the Stars

Written by Sally Lloyd-Jones. Illustrated by Alison Jay.

Published by Zonderkidz. Audio book read by David Suchet.

Available from [www.sallylloyd-jones.com](http://www.sallylloyd-jones.com)

It can also be borrowed from Theology House.

From the well-known writer of the Storybook Bible, and last edition's 23rd Psalm, comes a book that anticipates the Christ-child's birth in a special way. The birds, the seas and all that lives tell of the 'about-to-be' birth, getting more excited as the book progresses. At the end, finally the long-awaited child comes. A great Advent story with delightful illustrations.

It's a hard cardboard book suitable for reading to the very young. My one comment is that it's based in the other hemisphere so the animals may not be familiar to your audience, however, this doesn't spoil its narrative or impact.

It also features some of the names for the Christ Child such as 'Bright Morning Star' and "Good Shepherd" and these can all be unpacked with your children as suits your audience.

I enjoy the mellifluous voice of Hercule Poirot actor, David Suchet, so would recommend the audio book. If you want to have a preview of the book, you can watch a promo video on YouTube. And there's a super bonus feature—a free downloadable play script of the book! Maybe the family can do this together on Christmas Eve!





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