

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed Alleluia!

Why did Christ die? What happened when he rose again? What impact does this have on us today? Are we spreading with contagious joy the Easter story? God's redemptive plan? His outrageous grace? If Christ is the light of the world, and we have His light, are we hiding it or letting it shine?

Let's celebrate our free gift of eternal life in Christ and go tell others about it, that they too may be transformed from death to life, from darkness to light, and from life in this world to life everlasting! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed—Alleluia!



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Cover Images – This cover was created using two separate images. The background image is a 'mercy' mosaic, depicting "I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink". This is one of seven mosaic panels that hung above the west nave entrance doors of the Christ Church Cathedral. The mosaics tells the story in Matthew 25: 35-36 that when Jesus returns he will separate the sheep and goats—those who do His will and those who don't, those who have mercy on others, and those who don't. In the 2010-11 earthquakes three of the seven mosaics fell and recently the remaining four were taken down. All seven are now in storage awaiting repair and reinstatement
Credit – CCRL. The foreground image of the three crosses is by Gerd Altmann from Pixabay.

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I am the Resurrection and the Life



My ideal Easter is always sunny days filled with the last of the golden weather of summer and clear nights bathed in the full moon which sets our Easter dates each year. Hot cross buns on Good Friday. Lots of chocolate on Easter Day. Brilliant, moving services through these holy days. What could go wrong? Actually, lots of things.



This year the summer across our islands has been pretty dreadful (as I write Cyclone Gabrielle is wreaking havoc). Hot cross buns can be tricky to get right if baking at home. And, as for chocolate, it seems to get more and more expensive every year. A less than ideal Easter is very fitting to the history behind it. There would be no Easter if our world was ideal since there would then be no reason for Christ to die for our sins so that we might be reconciled with God. It is precisely the mess we have made of things (and continue to make of things) which set Easter in motion as a festival in which we commemorate the Last Supper of Jesus, his Crucifixion and celebrate his Resurrection. Within this sequence of events the very meaning of our faith is to be found—that Christ died for our sins and rose again that we might live no longer for ourselves but for him who died that we might ourselves enter into resurrection life with Christ. There is a lot to ponder and a lot to give God praise for.

is the beating heart of the Good News—our confidence that God meets us in any circumstance of life with love and compassion, with forgiveness and grace. When life is far from ideal, whether because we have sinned or been sinned against, or because we are suffering or weighed down by the suffering of others, this journey of Christ through death into life is the visible sign to all humanity that God is not immune to the reality of our frail and vulnerable lives, having experienced suffering and death in the person of Jesus Christ. In the mystery of that suffering, death and resurrection,

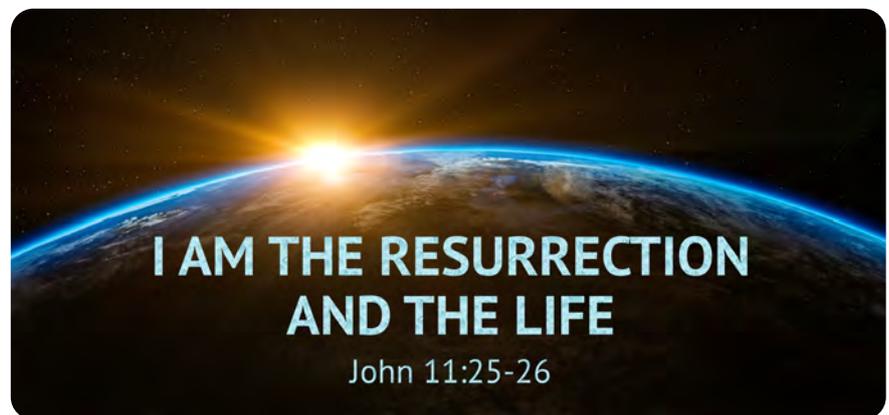
the God who meets us in Jesus offers forgiveness and cleansing from our wrongdoing and opens the way for our wounds in life to be healed.

There is a lot to celebrate each Easter, including this Easter, whether the sun is shining and the moon is visible in its splendid fullness, or not!

Manaaki,
Bishop Peter.

+Peter

The journey of Christ through betrayal, denial, desertion, mocking, scourging, being nailed to a cross, dying, being buried and then being raised to new life



Credit: refugecc.us

HOLY WEEK & EASTER at The Transitional Cathedral, Latimer Square

SUNDAY 2 APRIL PALM SUNDAY

8:00am Holy Eucharist
10:00am Choral Eucharist
5:00pm Service of Passiontide
Music & Readings

TUESDAY 4 APRIL

11:00am Diocesan Chrism & Renewal Service
(held at St Christopher's Church, Avonhead)
12:05pm Holy Eucharist

WEDNESDAY 5 APRIL

7:30am Holy Eucharist
12:05pm Holy Eucharist

MAUNDY THURSDAY 6 APRIL

12:05pm Holy Eucharist
7:00pm Eucharist of the Last Supper

GOOD FRIDAY 7 APRIL

10:00am Children's Service of Stations of the Cross
12:00noon Celebration of the Lord's Passion

HOLY SATURDAY 8 APRIL

12:noon: Middy Prayer
8:00pm The Great Vigil with the First Eucharist of Easter

SUNDAY 9 APRIL - EASTER

8:00am Holy Eucharist
10:00am Festival Eucharist
Music by The Cathedral Choir
5:00pm Festal Evensong
Music by The Cathedral Choir



See our website for full details of these and our other regular weekly services
www.christchurchcathedral.co.nz | admin@christchurchcathedral.co.nz | (03) 3660046

The Joy of Progress

Breathing life back into the heart of our city

Great News! We've celebrated a milestone! The Cathedral is now fully stabilised for entry and repair! We are one step closer to fully reinstating our Cathedral and breathing life back into the heart of our city.



Christ Church Cathedral
Reinstatement Project

Stabilising works started in May 2020 and were completed in March this year—that's about three years in the making (give or take a lock-down or two). And during that time no worker was harmed and no further damage to heritage fabrics occurred. This is worthy of a celebration!

put in a tremendous amount of work and their efforts should be recognised," says Project Director Keith Paterson.

"Now we can start the next crucial phase of work: first strengthening the walls then working on the substructure with new foundations and base isolators.

"So, yes, we can now partially see into the building site and workers can get safely in to start the repair proper. Observers will still not see huge activity—but rest assured it's all happening in the interior—critical work which will ultimately provide a building that is as safe as any new public facility," says Keith.

"For ten years the Cathedral was in a holding space, so it is truly magnificent to see life returning. Being able to be inside is momentous progress and another great sign of our city rising again," says Bishop Peter.

The Cathedral is now 34% NBS (new building standard) a seismic rating which means the building can be entered for repair and construction purposes.

"The progress on site over the last year, especially, is testament to the team getting it done. Every team member has



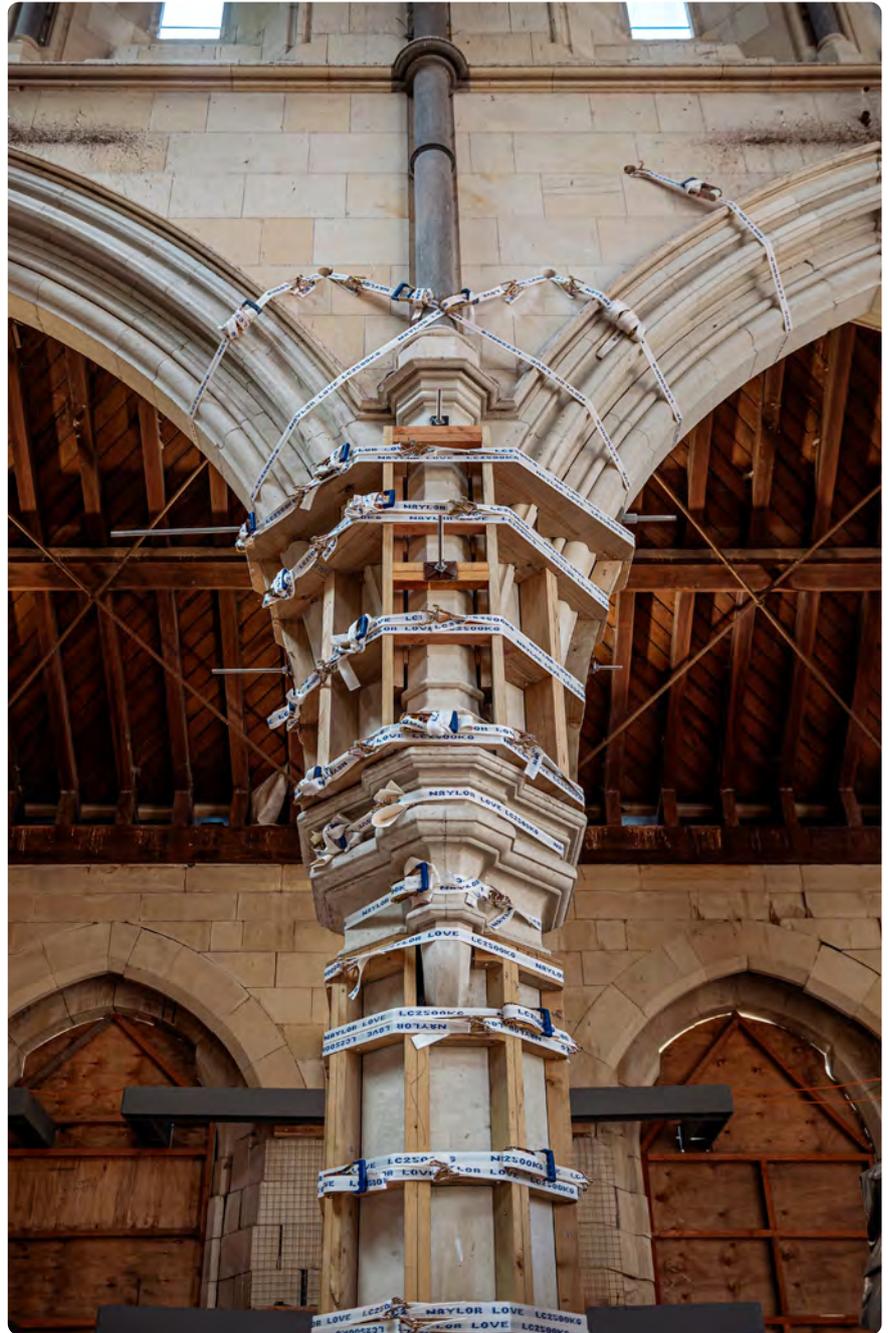
Photo Credit: all cathedral images by Olivia Spencer Bower

The final stage of the programme will be finishing work and the internal outfit. Once completed the Cathedral will be the only earthquake damaged, neo-gothic stone Cathedral to be base isolated and seismically repaired to a new building standard. We are looking forward to the joy of that delivery.

“Reaching this significant stabilising milestone of the reinstatement’s journey makes the day when we reopen our doors to the world feel tangibly closer. I look forward to this day and when our Cathedral will again be a centre for the spiritual life of Christchurch,” says Bishop Peter.

To Date:

- 258 tonnes of waste removed
- 408 tonnes of steel framing inserted
- 200,000+ hours worked on site.



Biblical Pilgrimage 2023—Israel and Turkey
September Weeks 1–3



- Follow in the Footsteps of Jesus and St Paul
- Visit the Seven Churches in Revelation
- Tour Gallipoli and Cappadocia

Contact Rev. Chris and Susanne Donaldson (Hosts)
donaldsons@gmail.com or 027 853 3670

Checking we are Getting it Right

A review of the ADMSC accounting and payroll services

Henry Ford said. “If you always do what you have always done, you will always get what you have always got”. That is why it is helpful at times to review what you do and see if it could be done, not differently, but better.

So, the accounting firm BDO reviewed the work of the Anglican Diocesan Ministry Support Centre (ADMSC) accounting and payroll services to see what, if any, improvements could be made.

The ADMSC accounting team of Nikki Gin, Jocelyn Kubala, Celeste Chai and Paul Dumaguin, managed by the Diocesan Finance Manager, Lynda Alexander provides accounting services and reporting for 30 of the parishes in the Diocese, the Cathedral and other related entities. In addition, they maintain the accounts and financial reports of the Diocese, and ADMSC.

The Payroll Officer, Kay Wilson, assisted one day a week by Sharon Prebble from Anglican Care, reports directly to the Diocesan Manager. Kay manages the monthly payroll for over 300 people consisting of the monthly payroll for all our clergy, and the fortnightly payrolls for Anglian Care, the Cathedral, parish staff and the Anglican Centre.

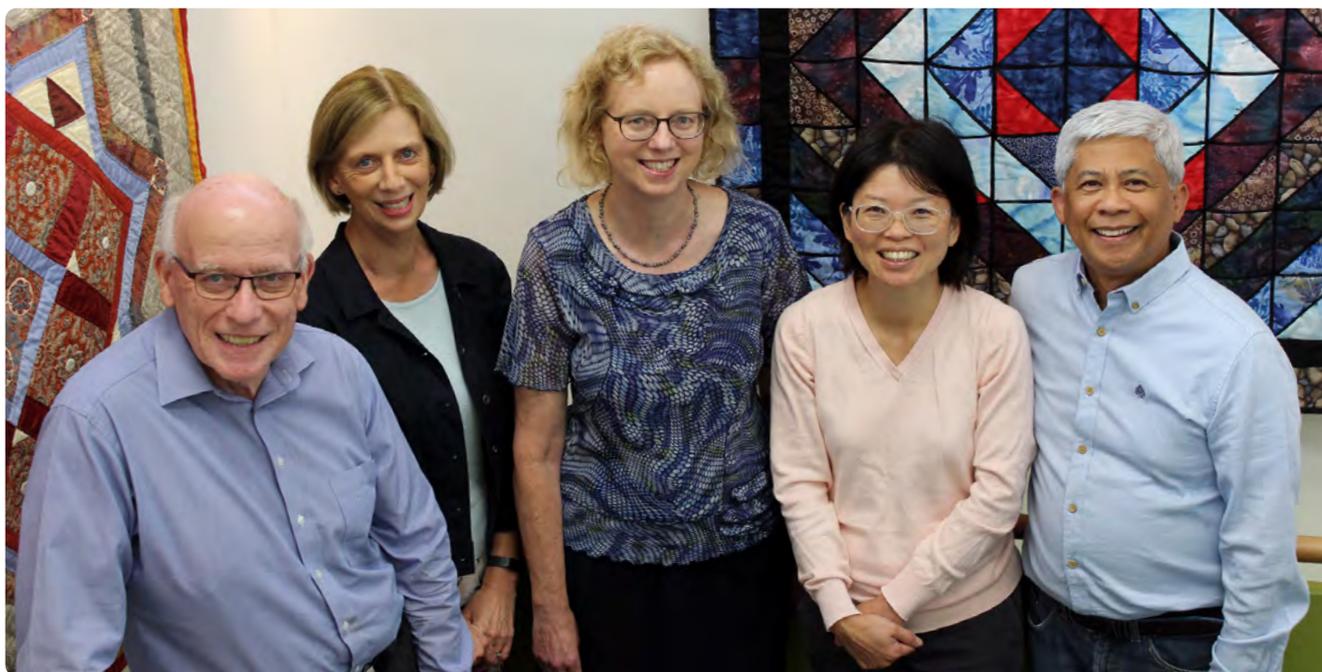
BDO sought feedback from users of the accounting scheme and payroll services. The review made recommendations across nine areas. The recommendations varied in complexity from minor changes in the way accounts are administered through to the more major introduction of new software. Edwin and Lynda considered the recommendations—did they suit us and make a tangible difference? Were they feasible? They then wrote an implementation plan that focused initially on recommendations considered most worthy, some of which have already been implemented, while others will require considerable staff time to resource and implement but will be worth it in the long run.

One of the major recommendations is the introduction of online time sheets and scheduling for staff at the City Mission. We’ve already spoken to three companies to find a suitable solution, and one that may also be used, eventually, with parishes. Another major recommendation is extending the use of Xero to all parishes in the scheme.

In an era of ever-increasing compliance and regulations (that make it difficult for volunteers to do parish accounts) the team are pleased to hear that parish treasurers were ‘highly satisfied’ with the accounting service. This is good news.

“I am grateful that the finance team, directed by Lynda and Edwin, frequently go the extra mile to serve our people and parishes,” says Dean Lawrence Kimberley, Chair of the ADMSC Governance Board.

“The system enhancements we are looking into will make sure our financial services to parishes continue to improve. Much of the work of a finance team is hidden and unseen, and yet is incredibly important for the smooth running of the Diocese. Please support us as we work through and implement these changes. I don’t know about you, but I look forward to updating systems, streamlining effort, and generally working smarter (not harder) in support of God’s mission within our Diocese.”



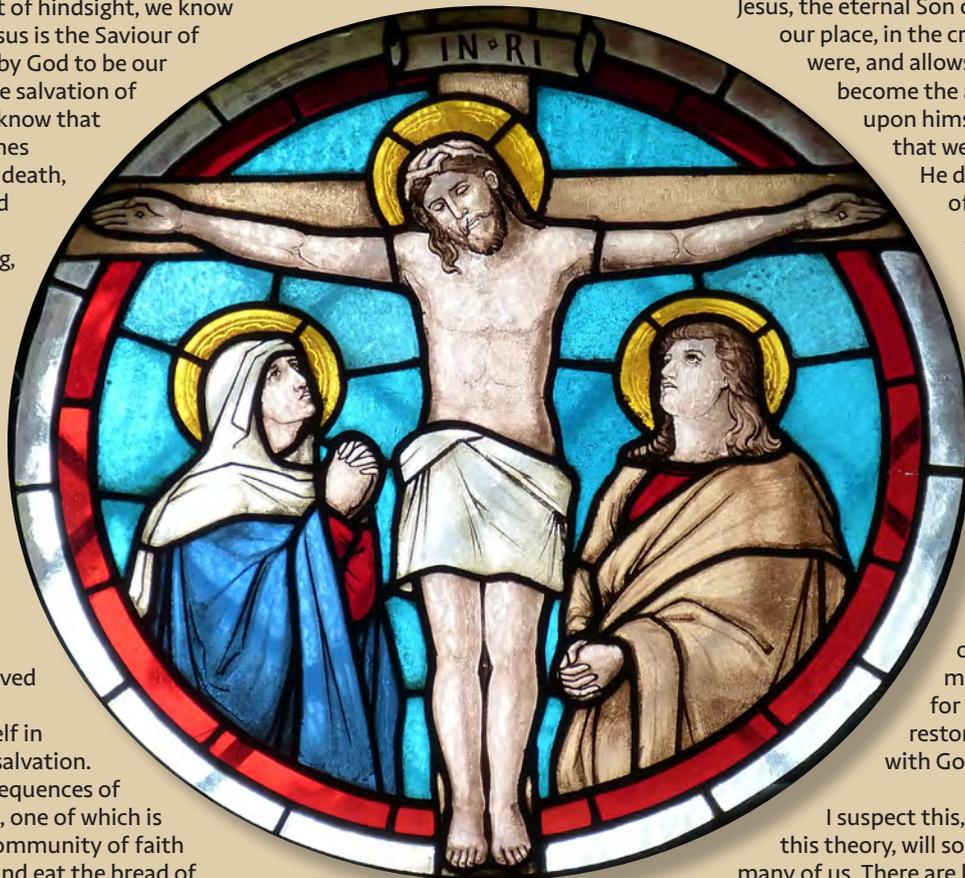
Diocesan Manager Edwin Boyce, Payroll Officer Kay Wilson, Finance Manager Lynda Alexander, with Assistant Accountants Celeste Chai and Paul Dumaguin. Absent: Accounts Assistants Jocelyn Kubala and Nikki Gin. Credit: Jo Bean

Why Did Jesus Die?

Atonement, Grace, and the risen Christ in us

In the world of the bible, names have a significance and level of importance that the modern western mind tends to overlook. For the biblical writers, names shape our being and help form who we are. Novelists, such as JK Rowling, are well aware of this. If you have read the Harry Potter novels, you will be aware of characters like Cornelius Fudge, the Minister of Magic who needs to make sure he is on the winning side, and therefore keeps fudging issues and decisions because he lacks the strength of conviction to do the right thing. Biblical names are tied to identity as well. The name 'Jesus' is also no accident. It has the same meaning as the older Hebrew version of this name which is 'Joshua', and it means, 'God is our Salvation'. That name sums up exactly who Jesus is.

With the benefit of hindsight, we know very well that Jesus is the Saviour of the World, sent by God to be our salvation and the salvation of all creation. We know that Jesus accomplishes this through his death, resurrection, and ascension. The curious thing, though, is that the Church has never defined how the death of Jesus saves us. We see what he does in his life and death. In great humility he becomes human. He embraces everything involved in being human, facing death itself in order to be our salvation. We see the consequences of the resurrection, one of which is that there is a community of faith who know him and eat the bread of life with him. But the Church has never defined anywhere how that life, death and resurrection saves. When we look at the Creed, which we say frequently in the Liturgy of this Church, it simply says, "...For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven..." And that's it. In the absence of any definition of how God saves us in Christ, theologians down through the ages, beginning with writers such as St Paul, have come up with a wide range of explanations. These are called 'theories' because that is what they are. 'Theories of Atonement' is the technical term, and there are many of them.



Credit: Falco from Pixabay

The most well known in our time is the justice theory, and it exists in both Catholic and Protestant forms. And it goes like this. God made the world, and it was very good. But we humans were disobedient and brought sin into the world. This offends God, meaning we humans need to be held to account. But because God is eternal there is no possible way for finite humans to make any appropriate atonement to God for our sin on an eternal level. God needs someone on our side to make an eternal sacrifice to make adequate satisfaction for our sin. So, God sends

Jesus, the eternal Son of God, to stand in our place, in the criminal dock as it were, and allows himself to become the accused, to take upon himself the charges that we should be facing. He does this on behalf of all humanity. Jesus who, being fully human and fully God, is the only one able to take the judgement and punishment humanity deserves. In his death on the cross he receives the punishment that should be ours, in order to make atonement for our sin, and restore our relationship with God.

I suspect this, or some form of this theory, will sound familiar to many of us. There are lots of problems with this theory, not least of which what it says about God. Is God really desiring someone be punished for our transgressions? How does that align with other parts of the biblical witness that point to God being love, forgiveness, compassion, light and life? Those who grew up with this theory as children are likely to be afraid of God's wrath, to be deeply afraid of God when they have done something wrong, and they are likely to be burdened with guilt about the failings in their lives. Another common outcome is that this theory suggests we need to be a Christian in order to avoid ending up in hell, which is not a great motivation for being people of faith.

Interestingly, this theory was first thought of by an Archbishop of Canterbury, St Anselm, who lived in the 12th century. When he first wrote up this theory, it was roundly criticised by just about everyone, and yet it is now the dominant theory about how God saves in the minds of many Christians, both protestant and catholic. It's a

12th century theory! Christians got on perfectly well without this for the first thousand years of our existence.

If you read about the faith of the of the early Christians (the faith community of the first four or five centuries) there is another theory in play that is all about sheer grace. Some call this theory 'the great exchange', but the technical

“For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God”
(2 Cor 5:21)



This is the mystery of the riches of divine grace for sinners; for by a wonderful exchange our sins are now not ours but Christ's, and Christ's righteousness is not Christ's but ours.

Martin Luther

AZ QUOTES

Credit: Martin Luther quote—This is the mystery of the riches of divine grace... (azquotes.com)

term is kenosis/theosis. It goes like this. God made us to be in relationship with himself. According to God's loving purpose and in great humility, God set aside all that heaven offers to become human, to embrace every aspect of our humanity, including being vulnerable and dependent, risking everything to entrust himself to unreliable human beings, embracing even death itself. The more God embraces the depths of our humanity, the more his divinity permeates through our humanity, so that in Christ we are raised up and participate in the divinity of God.



Credit: Thomas by Pixabay

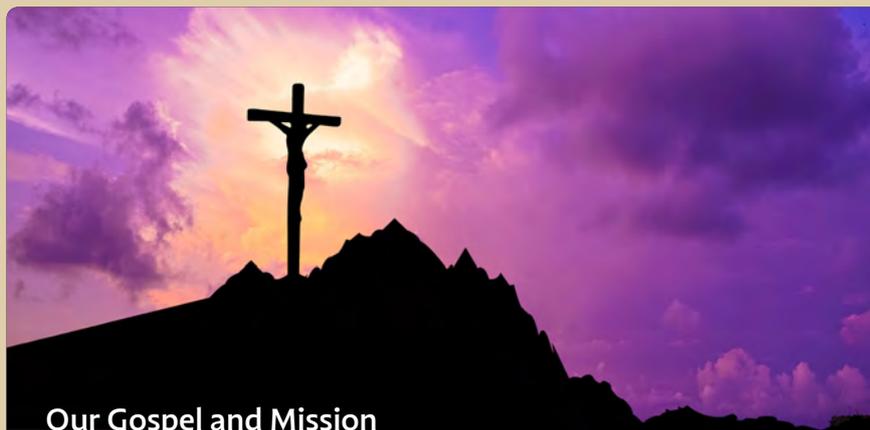
The great exchange means that the more God embraces the depths of our humanity, the more we are filled with God. That is why Jesus had to face death, so that even the experience of death itself is permeated with God's divine presence and redeemed so that God's grace is present even in the darkest places of our lives: God, loving, redeeming, raising us up. St Paul puts it this way, "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Cor 5:21). In this theory, there is no theme of punishment, just the wonderful, unmerited grace of God, restoring, renewing, recreating, raising up.

The journey of Christ is the journey of a soul. Just as the entire Body of Christ is born in the font of baptism, crucified with Christ in his passion, raised again at the resurrection, and placed at the right hand of God in his ascension, so we are born with Christ in his nativity. In adoring the birth of our Saviour, we find we are celebrating the commencement of our own life. In coming to the cross on Good Friday, we are embracing the depths of our human existence, and when we come to the empty tomb on Easter Day, we find ourselves being raised in Christ into the company of God, so that the image of God in us is restored, and we are made into a new creation in Christ.



The Very Rev'd Lawrence Kimberley, Dean of Christchurch

Lawrence is the Dean of Christchurch. He enjoys reading in the area of the theology of the Incarnation and Atonement. He believes the Holy Spirit works powerfully through the Liturgy of the Church to form our relationship with God. He is married to Elizabeth, loves classical music and the creative arts generally.



Our Gospel and Mission

King of Kings by Brooke Ligertwood / Hillsong Worship

King of Kings tells the story of the Gospel and the Church. As we sing, we can journey with Christ through his birth, death, resurrection, and into Pentecost, the birth of the Church, the with the implied "Go Ye". This is our salvation story—the one we are directed to share. And this outstanding gospel story leads us firmly into praise using Paul's words, our Anglican Doxology, "Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honour and glory forever and ever. Amen." (1 Timothy 1:17).

In the darkness, we were waiting
Without hope, without light
'Til from Heaven You came running
There was mercy in Your eyes
To fulfill the law and prophets
To a virgin came the word
From a throne of endless glory
To a cradle in the dirt

Chorus
*Praise the Father, praise the Son
Praise the Spirit, three in one
God of glory, Majesty
Praise forever to the King of Kings*

To reveal the kingdom coming
And to reconcile the lost
To redeem the whole creation
You did not despise the cross
For even in your suffering
You saw to the other side
Knowing this was our salvation
Jesus for our sake you died

Chorus

And the morning that You rose
All of Heaven held its breath
'Til that stone was moved for good
For the Lamb had conquered death
And the dead rose from their tombs
And the angels stood in awe
For the souls of all who'd come
To the Father are restored

And the church of Christ was born
Then the Spirit lit the flame
Now this gospel truth of old
Shall not kneel, shall not faint
By His blood and in His name
In His freedom I am free
For the love of Jesus Christ
Who has resurrected me

Chorus

Credit: Briam Cute from Pixabay

Extra for Experts:

This song is firmly rooted in scripture and packed full of theology. The task, should you choose to accept it, is to read each scripture verse listed below, then align it with the phrase in the song. Matthew 5:17; Acts 1:8; Acts 2:24; Acts 2:42; Acts 4:12; Romans 1:16–17; 1 Peter 2:24; John 15:13; John 1:12; Hebrews 12:2; 1 John 3:1.

New Beginnings

Editor's Note: This article is about the City Mission's Community Development team. For those less familiar with this team, they used to be under Anglican Care but now are within the City Mission umbrella. They take a local communities or grassroots approach to providing support out in the places or locales of need, and they do this with qualified community workers and a large volunteer support base. Now read on...



**Christchurch
City Mission**

Te Whare Mīhana Ki Ōtautahi

Easter is about new beginnings, and this Easter will be the first for the City Mission's Community Development team under a new team leader.

But Vivienne Jackson is no stranger. She stepped up to lead the team at the end of last year, after working for 12 years within it as a Pegasus Health Partnership Community Worker (PCW).

Vivienne says Easter's theme of 'new beginnings' is a good description of the team's work.

"Often when someone steps into one of our community hubs for help they are looking for something new. It can

be about personal growth, it might be about getting new skills, or even just being supported by new friends. They can end up becoming a butterfly, spreading their wings, and flying away, which is a great symbol of the Resurrection."

The City Mission's Community Development team includes community development workers, social workers, and partnership community workers who work alongside volunteers. Working

through local organisations like parishes and hubs, they help find solutions to the specific needs of communities. They help people struggling with such problems as social isolation, loneliness, poor self-esteem, unemployment, poverty, mental ill health, family breakdown, inadequate housing and 'at risk youth'. "They can end up becoming a butterfly, spreading their wings, and flying away, which is a great symbol of the Resurrection," says Vivienne.



"[Those we support] can end up becoming a butterfly, spreading their wings, and flying away, which is a great symbol of the Resurrection," says Community Development Team Leader Vivienne Jackson. Credit: Alfred Schrock/Unsplash

She says it is so rewarding when people do take flight—like that butterfly. A good example is a woman who had been quite dependent on one of the hubs for a long time, then one day she asked for help to apply for a job.

“We were unsure if she was ready for this big step, but helped her with the CV and application, and she got the job. She has done well, so much so that she has two departments in the organisation vying for her services now. This is someone who completely blossomed from the person who first came to us—she is better off financially, her health is better, her family relationships are better—it is everything we hope will happen with people we help.”

Vivienne was appointed at the end of last year and she is keen to expand the work of Community Development and look at other areas of the city it can be involved in. And she says there is a lot of room for new projects within the hubs and connections with parishes.

Vivienne lives at Governors Bay, attends the St Cuthbert’s Church, and is deeply involved in the Anglican Church. She is the Bishop’s Warden of Mt Herbert Parish and a lay minister, taking between two and four services a month in the parish. Her involvement goes even wider—she is a Diocesan Nominator, and serves on both the Diocesan Synod and the motu’s General Synod.

“Yes, I keep very busy,” she says laughing.

Vivienne says the idea of Community Development fits very well with how the Church asks people to help others.

“We are often called to help people and meet their needs for housing, education, food, and clothing, all of those things that as you know, can be provided by the mission. But also, as Community Development does, to help people find their own answers to these problems.”

Vivienne says parishes and churches are in a great position to seek out the needs of their community and look for ways to meet those needs. However, parishes often lack the knowledge or the people power to run these support programmes. So, working with Community Development can be hugely beneficial and can find new ways to help.

“Our main goal is for people to feel connected with each other, so programmes like our community development hubs are needed now more than ever—even if it’s “just” to combat loneliness. If your church is interested in getting deeper into your community and wants to find ways to really make a difference, have a chat to me and let’s find ways we can help each other to fulfil Christ’s mission here on earth.”



New Community Development Team Leader Vivienne Jackson has worked with the team for 12 years. Credit: supplied

Here are some of the City Mission Community Development projects, initiatives and partnerships...

- Sydenham Community Development Project
- Sydenham Family Community Development Worker
- Addington Family Community Development Worker
- Seasons For Growth courses on understanding grief
- Foot Clinics at various venues across East Christchurch
- Pegasus Partnership Community Workers in South Christchurch
- Partnering with Parishes to support parish-based Community Development Workers at:
 - Manuka Cottage at Addington
 - 126 On The Corner at Hei Hei Broomfield
 - Linwood Resource Centre and Men’s shed

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No Politics, Sex, or Religion!

Community Evangelism training for all

My Grandma used to tell me, “There are three things you don’t talk about at a family gathering or over dinner—politics, sex and religion.” I disagree, especially about the latter. I believe that evangelism is our whole life’s work, in thought, in action, and in words. For many, me included, talking about our faith to those outside the church is one of the trickier parts of being a follower of Christ.

Faith Empowered is a UK Church Army resource designed to train and develop local church members to talk to non-churched people in their communities. It was originally developed in the UK, is now in its sixth year, and is seeing success in the UK, Ireland and, now New Zealand!

The course consists of 10 sessions, designed to be delivered over a year, aimed to develop participants’ understanding of evangelism and then help them take steps towards doing evangelism in their local community. They then end up as leaders of evangelism within their community, shaping the way the church reaches out to those around them. It’s all about deepening intentional evangelism within your local context.

Mark Chamberlain, Archdeacon for Regeneration and Mission, sourced the resource from Church Army UK. The participants from our Diocese consist of ministers, parish leaders and parishioners with a heart for evangelism. They started in October last year and to date have had seven sessions, each via zoom. This will continue throughout this year.

The ten sessions are:

1. Building Relationships
2. Sowing Seeds
3. Listening to Context
4. Being Church
5. Reflecting Well
6. Mission Planning
7. Enabling Others
8. Tackling Big Questions
9. Missional Activity
10. Learning Through Failure.

Cathy Maslin writes:

I took the opportunity to participate in the Faith Empowered course on evangelism being assured it was for the ordinary introvert as much as the ‘out there’ leader-of-the-pack. It was with much relief then, that I discovered I wasn’t in charge of a nationwide outreach programme after the first session! Jonny Price and Jane Henderson, our hosts from the UK, besides leading as patient mentors to a diverse group of plain-spoken Kiwi’s, have shown their commitment to us by faithfully getting up rather early on the other side of the world for our monthly night-time meetings on Zoom.

My interest gained traction the more I realised Faith Empowered was less about programs and organised outreaches—what has become a common perception of evangelism—and far more about the early biblical demonstration of spreading the Word. If you possess ‘Good News’ it becomes an outworked part of the life you live and share. It struck me as slightly odd that I need encouragement to share the good news and yet I grew up in a culture where faith, although I attended Church on a Sunday, was rarely bought up in everyday conversation.

Intentionality is a linchpin; the intention to do something is the start of making it happen. After session two on sowing seeds, I happened to be talking to my neighbour about his son who was looking at the prospect of a long car ride back home after donating a kidney (the recipient was being transported by helicopter). Conviction hit and so I mumbled out a “I will pray he gets on the same helicopter.” My neighbour was a tad cagey about how his son got home, however, there was no mention of a car ride.

As soon as you take spirituality off the ‘in-house only’ list endless opportunities emerge for evangelism, sometimes without even going out your front gate. We will never be able to know people’s reception in our current climate to an offer of a ride to their appointment, or hearing we went to church in the weekend, or listening to what the Bible says about fortune telling or... This is the risky part of intention—we risk being genuine, living what we believe with all those we encounter. Faith Empowered reminds me that all the outcomes of our evangelistic efforts, large or small, are in God’s hands. We are empowered having the help of the Holy Spirit in discerning what to do or say or when. It’s not all up to us! Now that’s something to celebrate!

Cathy Maslin is from the Temuka Parish, South Canterbury, where she is a social justice rep, a synod rep, and a parish nominator.

Heather Driessen writes:

Paul said we should seek pure motives in love for people and Christ, with a deep conviction of truth (2 Corinthians 5:11-15). And we must trust that the Lord will add to our numbers (Acts 2:47). Our God of love is calling us to break down the walls of isolation and alienation that entrap so many people.

So how do we do this?

Meals shared express a feeling of community, generosity, and being of value. Unspoken, it says to the guests, we care about you, we want to spend time with you, we value you, and that you are worth our love and attention. I reflected that the primary image that Jesus used for the kingdom, was in the sharing of foods—the good Samaritan, the feeding of the five thousand, the last supper, etc.

As we looked at the concept of “gossiping the Gospel”, I wanted to learn how to approach people about the Good News. The simple fact is that most people come to faith through the influence of family members, small-group Bible studies, or a conversation with a friend—that is, Christians intentionally talking about the gospel.

I took to heart that Christians should be thinking through the reasons for the hope we have in Christ, reasons that sweep away the objections and questions. And, as we set out the facts of the gospel, we remember the aim is to be compassionate, understanding, and loving (1 Peter 3:15). With the Lord’s help in prayer, we can do this.

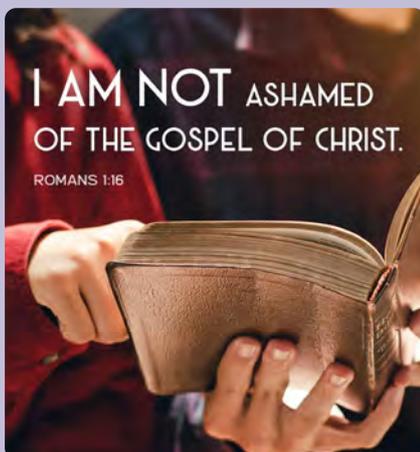
I challenge you, the reader, to...

- think about a conversation you can have with a non-believer, get it sorted in your head what you will say, then
- roll-play it with a friend, then
- pray for an opportunity, and
- try it for real!
- Afterwards let me or your Vicar know what happened!
- And keep on praying for that person. You may have planted a seed—you might not see the fruit of that seed. God himself does the work in their hearts. All we have to do is keep praying and saying!

Heather Driessen is licensed lay minister in the Rangiora Parish, North Canterbury.

Interested?

The current course is now up to session 7, but if you’re interested, talk to Mark on 0274327474 or arm@anglicanlife.org.nz



Romans 1:16 Credit: [BiblePortal](#)

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Ethical at heart

From Darkness to Light

The joy of baptism

Saving lives—that’s what Christianity is all about, isn’t it? Leading people from darkness to light, from death to eternal life. Following the great commission to Go, and Tell, and Baptise. So that’s what Rev’d Chris Ponniah does, faithfully, and with joy, every day.

On Sunday 19 February Chris baptised five people in a pool at a parishioner’s house. The three adults and two children are part of the Sunday @5 congregation, an informal service that starts with a meal then moves into praise, encouragement, prayer and sharing of faith stories. Each of the three adult newly minted Christians has a story of how they met God through coming along to one of the services—but below you will hear two testimonies, one from Emily and the other from Jake.

But first let’s hear from Rev’d Chris Ponniah about why and how he is obedient to the call to “go and make

disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matt 28:19).

Chris says:

Evangelism has been my passion ever since I gave my life to the Lord in 1978. My calling was to be an evangelist/ church planter and that was why I went to a missions college and majored in missiology. When Joy and I married we were looking at going to Thailand as missionaries/church planters, but God had other plans and he brought me into church ministry to lead churches into the community and overseas. Over the years, I have seen God work through the churches I pastored. This led to

active outreach into local communities, congregations either growing, or being started, as well as new mission congregations started in Indonesia and Nepal.

Jesus said, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few” (Matt 9:37). The problem is not with the harvest, but the lack of workers to go out and bring in the harvest. It doesn’t mean it is going to be easy bringing in the harvest, but it’s there. People are waiting to be brought into the kingdom of God. So, when I start my day in prayer, I ask God to lead me to people who are ready for the gospel. Or, when I meet someone, I look for opportunities to



Emily was ecstatic to be baptised, her joy overflowing. Baptism photos credit: Jo Bean

turn conversations around to focus on some spiritual issue. Generally, people like to talk about their spiritual views if the conversation is done graciously and in a non-threatening way. In fact, I can't remember a time when someone has violently objected to a conversation with me about God or the gospel. After I have a positive conversation with someone, I fix another time to catch up with them—usually over a coffee as I find this a method that works for me and a good excuse to have another cup of coffee! My goal in doing this is to develop a friendship with the person I am meeting and to help answer their questions of faith and spirituality.

When we launched our new Sunday evening gathering, I invited several of the people that I had been journeying with. Many of them are either new Christians, or not yet Christians. Some of them got baptised (Sun 19 February) and there are a few more people wanting to get baptised—we hope to have another baptism in a couple of months' time.



Emily was baptised by Rev'd Chris with Families Leader, Anna McMillan, assisting.

But just getting them to Baptism isn't the end, I also like to link people into the church community by finding people with similar interests and introducing them. Sometimes I'll bring them together where we will chat over a meal or a cuppa. Recently I formed a group of

about seven people who have all dabbled with different forms of spirituality. We will be studying Neil Anderson's book, *Victory over Darkness* and explore the identity we have as followers of Christ. The studies in the book start with the gospel, then the importance and application of believing truth and finally, how we can have victory over the darkness by living these truths.

Now let's hear Emily's story:

Emily comes from a line of witchcraft, following her mother's and grandmother's craft. She grew up believing in witchcraft and thinking it was a positive thing, a family practise that for her family was 'normal'—a practise of positive magic, as they saw it. Instead of prayer, they did a spell to manifest something positive. Emily practised her craft for 12 years.

But Emily also had a darker, confused side. Looking back, she sees the dark parts for what they were, spiritual attacks, and knows her craft had a consequence. Her darkness included being a child of sexual abuse, and a number of really frightening episodes of sleep paralysis. But Emily says, "even in times of darkness, I still felt the Lord's presence, I still prayed and felt heard."



Emily's children receiving their care package including a child-friendly Bible, post baptism.

You see the weird and wonderful thing about Emily's life was that she also, alongside her witchcraft practice, felt God calling her. She knew the two 'masters' were completely different, and she was stubborn. She heard God calling but refused to listen. Her life, family and friends were all pro-occult, and she didn't want to leave that behind.

Emily has a partner and two beautiful young children. It was after the babies were born that she felt the voice of God kick in more strongly. She even attended a church for a short time but felt condemned and what they wanted her to do—burn all her witchcraft paraphernalia—was too radical.

The constant battle happening in her life was exhausting and one day, in a fit of frustration, she packed up all her witchcraft tools and the Bible she'd been given, put them in a box and placed it in the garage. As she did this, she dropped the Bible. It fell open, she picked it up and read, "I am the Lord your God. Do not worship any other idols..." Later on when she shared this with Chris, he pointed her to Exodus 20: 3-4 where God said not to have any other God before Him or to make any images. That was the verse she saw that day.

"This was my God moment—when He stopped me in my tracks," says Emily. "I just knew I couldn't do it anymore. I gave up the fight." So she surrendered to God and made the choice to let go her witchcraft and chose to follow God instead.

So, this year Emily reached out on her Facebook community page and asked, "Does anyone know a good church for me and my children around this area?" Immediately an answer popped up, "Try St Tim's on Kendal Ave. They have great children's and families' programmes, and the Vicar is really open and approachable. His name is Chris Ponniah. Have a chat to him."

Chris, alerted to the "introduction" contacted Emily, they had a chat over coffee, and Emily was invited to the Sunday morning service at St Tim's. She came, brought her children and found a home. She said St Tim's was welcoming, open, and not condemning of her past. The next time she met with Chris for a coffee, Chris explained what it means to follow Christ. That made sense to her, and she decided that she wanted to follow Christ. And before very long, Chris offered baptism, explaining it

Romans 6:3-5 "That is what happened in baptism. When we went under the water, we left the old country of sin behind; when we came up out of the water, we entered into the new country of grace [and light]—a new life in a new land!" (The Message Translation).

was a public declaration, and a spiritually symbolic event. Emily declared as she was baptised in a parishioner's pool in February, that she willingly surrendered her life to Christ. "This baptism is a burial of my old life and a rising from that death to a new life in Christ." Emily also talked to her children, who said they too believed in God and wanted to follow Jesus, so they were baptised alongside their mother in the pool that sunny evening.

Today, in her workplace God has surrounded Emily with praying women, she's connected into St Tim's morning congregation, and attends a group that Chris runs learning more about the pitfalls and traps of the un-holy spiritual scene. She is growing in wisdom and shines with the light of Christ. Hallelujah!

"Go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit"
(Matt 28:19).

Credit: Jeremy Bishop, Unsplash

And let's hear from Jake:

Jake, a butcher by trade, came from a family with an abusive father-figure and an unknown Dad. He was filled with hate and rage which he struggled to control. When he was 25 he met his Dad but his Dad refused to acknowledge him—he had his “own real family to look after”. It was then the rage spilled out and the crime started. A chaotic mix of shoplifting, gangs, meth, and alcohol got him six lags in prison.

At thirty, Jake decided enough was enough. He made the choice to change his life around. He has now been clean for 10 months, engaged in rehab at Odyssey House, and when that six months is finished, very soon, he's due to go a half-way house where he begins a transition to work programme.

He has joined the 'Running for Recovery' programme at Odyssey House, gets up before 6am each morning for a run with the team (the “Speed Freaks”) and has competed in a number of running events including one at Hanmer Springs, the City2Surf, and the Canterbury half marathon.

“I now have a positive future,” says Jake. “I feel like my life has a purpose. When I get out, I'll look for a job hopefully in a kitchen as I have enjoyed my kitchen



Jake is baptised by Rev'd Chris assisted by Youth Leader, Nathan Muirhead.

duties here. My big dream is to one day own a food truck. I'm not perfect, I still find forgiveness for my dad hard, but I am stronger now and can make better choices. For example, recently I lost a relationship that had started in prison, but I've come to realise I need to break former associations to give myself the best chance at continued recovery. I am now surrounded by some loyal and caring family, friends and a new church community who will all help me to keep on learning and growing.”

Jake said at his baptism, “I am here because I've made a personal decision to reject my previous life of crime and addiction and prison. This is my turning point—I want to follow Christ and look forward to a better future, with Christ at my side.”

At Baptism, from the parish of Burnside-Harewood, each candidate gets a Bible, a set of daily devotions, a certificate and a candle, symbolising that we are the Light of the World because we carry the Light of Christ in us wherever we go.



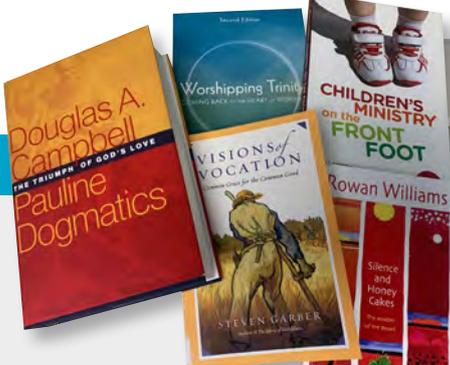
Rev'd Chris Ponniah
Chris is married to Joy and they have three children and two grandchildren. Chris enjoys hanging around cafes in Christchurch, drinking coffee and talking to people. When he is not with his family or drinking coffee, he is the vicar of Burnside-Harewood Parish!



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Noeline's Inspired Book

A 90-year-old reframes her story!

Noeline Boag, aged 90 years young, long-time resident at Holly Lea (Retirement) Village and parishioner of St Barnabas' Fendalton, has a new lease of life. Afterall, if Sarah can have a baby at 90 (Gen 17: 17) then Noeline can write a book at 90!

In recent years Noeline had been grappling with feelings of irrelevancy in today's fast-paced, younger-focussed, modern life—stuck in a “mire of despondency,” as Bunyan might have described it.

Enter journalist Jehan Casinader, who, following a significant bout of depression, wrote a book called, *This Is Not How It Ends: How rewriting your story can save your life* (HarperCollins, 2020). Promoted as a book of “healing and hope” it outlines the power of storytelling, especially to help re-write/re-frame our stories, even the broken bits.

This inspired Noeline to write a book about her life's experience. Her book *A Pilgrim's Story* begins in 1932 in the UK. Noeline didn't think she had lived an interesting life, but she put pen to paper and began her writing journey. She chronicles her experiences as a nurse, working in Ashburton (the UK version), her exploration of faith, and becoming a nun for over twenty years, helping to

set up a Children's home in Fiji, then her ongoing battles with chronic fatigue and depression. Her health was a source of oppression and limited her life greatly. But through it all emerges a rich tapestry of a life lived well.

“Noeline has taught me it's never too late to change your mindset.” Jehan Casinader

Noeline, with the help of Olive Lawson and Jo Cotton from St Barnabas, got her story published in November last year. Holly Lea put on a fabulous book launch and invited Jehan! Their meeting was inspirational in itself, and the NZ Woman's Weekly featured the two in a recent publication (10 Jan 2023). ([Read it here www.nowtolove.co.nz/news/real-life/answering-noelenes-prayers-46445](http://www.nowtolove.co.nz/news/real-life/answering-noelenes-prayers-46445).)

“In recent years, instead of valuing my life and accepting it as a precious gift, I've been hoping I don't linger into a decrepit old age. As it is, I'm now 90 years old, living in a retirement home, dependent on a walker and experiencing cognitive difficulties. Jehan threw me a challenge to reconsider where I am with the current version of my story.”
Noeline Boag

Editor's note:

I was inspired by this story—both of them! The take-away from this is that, regardless of your age and health, you are valuable and loved by God. Psalm 71: 18 speaks specifically to this: “God, now that I'm old and gray, don't walk away. Give me grace to demonstrate to the next generation all your mighty miracles and your excitement, to show them your magnificent power!” (The Passion Translation). Or this little gem from Isaiah 46:4: “Even as you grow old and your hair turns grey, I'll keep carrying you! I am your Maker and your Caregiver. I will carry you and be your Saviour” (TPT)

The book, *A Pilgrim's Story*, is the journey of one woman's walk with Christ, told with honesty and simplicity. The book is available for purchase from the St Barnabas' Church office for \$20. Eftpos is available. Contact Jo Cotton jo@stbarnabas.org.nz



Author of *A Pilgrim's Story* Noeline (R) and her inspiration, Jehan, (L) met at the book launch at the end of last year. Thank you Holly Lee Village, Jehan, Jo and Olive. Credit: Supplied

Virtue Signalling

Accusing people of virtue signalling has become commonplace in recent years, especially online but also in traditional media. I've always found it a little perplexing and when I come across it, I often respond to the screen or radio, "what would you have them signal?!"

The general sense is that someone is expressing views to demonstrate that they are a morally upright person. When levelled as an accusation, the implication is that the expression is insincere or solely being made to impress. Even if true, this seems to be a normal kind of human behaviour. We all, whether conscious of it or not, signal all kinds of things to one another by what we say, how we say it, and even how we dress.

One way that I virtue signal is the way I cross the road in front of children. Whenever I notice there are kids around, I am very careful to cross the road responsibly. I wait for the lights to change, use the pedestrian crossing, or very obviously look both ways as the situation may require. When I'm just by myself, I pay little attention to the rules. What I'm doing is signalling to any children present how they should cross the road, hopefully reinforcing messages they get elsewhere. I'm trying to inculcate a virtue, even though this is not a virtue I possess myself. By my actions, I'm trying to make the world a better (in this case, safer) place by influencing others.

I suspect that accusations of virtue signalling are often a response to the accuser feeling implicitly criticised for not sharing or expressing a particular value. When someone goes out of their way to use, for example, gender-neutral language, someone else who doesn't might feel that they are being asked to change.

More recently, I've noticed accusations of virtue signalling slipping into Christian discourse. I find this even more perplexing and more than a little worrying. For a Christian to accuse another of virtual signalling really does raise the question of what they want signalled. Would they rather have vice signalled?

In traditional Christian understanding, drawing on ideas from ancient philosophy, virtue and vice are both

habits than can be cultivated, the difference being whether they are good for us or bad. As Christians, those habits which bring us closer to being Christ-like are called virtues, those which take us further from the image of Christ are vices. The wonderful and awful thing about habits is, over time the behaviour becomes second nature.

With the Reformation's focus on salvation by faith and not works, cultivation of virtue has often sat uncomfortably in Protestantism. Focus on God's work in our salvation means that Protestants can sometimes be unsure what role, if any, their effort plays. This is the kind of question that N. T. Wright addresses in his book, *After You Believe: Why Christian Character Matters* (HarperOne, 2010; available from Theology House library.)

As Wright notes, an ethic of virtue is both a traditional Christian perspective and increasingly influential in contemporary scholarship. It seems entirely consistent with much of the message of the New Testament, especially Paul's writings.

It is entirely orthodox and traditional to cultivate virtue and to encourage others to do the same. One way we might do this is to demonstrate a virtue in the hope others might emulate us. In saying this, I would be quick to add that the virtue being signalled will be far more convincing if it is actually practiced. Hypocrisy is not virtue. In the context of a relationship in Christ, one might well privately point out to a fellow believer that their actions don't always line up with their rhetoric. I do hope, however, that using the phrase "virtue signalling" doesn't become a habit in the Church.

Gal 5:22-23 The Passion Translation "But the fruit produced by the Holy Spirit within you is divine love in all its varied expressions: joy that overflows, peace that subdues, patience that endures, kindness in action, a life full of virtue, faith that prevails, gentleness of heart, and strength of spirit."



Gareth Bezett (MTh Otago University) is the Director of Theology House which he took up in late 2019. A theology scholar, previously from the Wellington Diocese, his background also incorporates business, accounting and computer systems. Hamilton-born, he is married to Tracey, and they enjoy walking their dog, Nando.

Never Forget. Never Again.

27 January 2023 was International Holocaust Remembrance Day. We must remember—though it's not easy to remind ourselves. We must be vigilant—educate ourselves about racism, religious persecution and the 'them v us' mentality. We must not let it happen again—we must stand up and speak up against injustice, for inclusivity, diversity, tolerance and sacrificial love wherever needed.

Holocaust Remembrance Day is a day to honour the dead (about 6 million Jews as well as others considered 'less than') and to tell their stories. 27 January was chosen as the date of the liberation of the notorious death camp at Auschwitz in 1945. Remembering is important—we need to ensure that the events of the holocaust are kept alive in our collective memory today and in times to come so that each and all of us proactively work to stop any such horrific trauma happening again.

The theme for this year, 2023, is the 1943 Warsaw Ghetto uprising and we honour the youth movements who fought back against the Nazis and their collaborators. On 19 April in '43, the youth refused to be quietly deported—about 7000 were killed in the month-long uprising and about 7000 were rounded up and put to death afterwards in concentration camps and killing centres. It was the most significant uprising by Jews and other civilians against the Nazis' occupation of Europe. Our prayer today and moving forward is that the story of sacrifice from the young leaders in Warsaw will inspire young people today, and indeed

all of us, to continue to combat racism, antisemitism, discrimination, and hatred; and work for a truly inclusive society here in Aotearoa that celebrates our growing diversity as a nation.

To prevent another holocaust, we have to remain vigilant. Sadly, there is a great deal of work to do. Here in the City Centre I observe an increase in white nationalism, more aggression, more and ugly racism. This is especially noticeable toward those with brown skins and has been getting worse over the last two or three years. It feels like there has been a shift in attitudes in our community, at the very time when our former Prime Minister has been calling for kindness and compassion in our human relating. We would do well to remember her embrace for a survivor; her compassionate call, "They are us." Add to the mix the Black Lives Matter movement that has come out of the USA. Add to that the ugly war going on in Ukraine, and wars still festering in other places. Introduce the level of misinformation online, and the difficulty the online world has in setting ethical

"To forget a Holocaust is to kill twice." Elie Wiesel, Holocaust survivor and human rights campaigner

standards for communication—the mix is getting more and more toxic every day. The cost-of-living crisis is also a factor, where some can afford to live, and some can't, and the gap's getting wider. Are we coming to a perfect storm? When we add all these factors together, the conditions feel ripe for the growth of prejudice, and a more deeply divided society.

This is a sign that there is something basic about how we imagine society coming under threat. As a Christian, I am an inheritor of the Abrahamic biblical heritage which we share with our Jewish and Muslim brothers and sisters here today. The biblical theology of covenantal relations is critically important; this says that the role of each of us is to contribute to the building of a society in which there is a trustworthy network of relations, dependable enough to allow more people to become active and generous contributors in our community.

For our younger believers...

Younger readers may like to try some well-known books (many now also films) about the holocaust. Parents may like to read them first, or read them to or with their families, so they can answer questions that come up.

The Hiding Place—Corrie ten Boom
The Diary of Anne Frank
The Boy In The Stripped Pyjamas—John Boyne
The Silver Sword—Ian Serraillier
I am David—Anne Holme
When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit—Judith Kerr
Night—Elie Wiesel



Never Forget. Never Again.

The train tracks leading to Auschwitz death camp where more than one million Jews (and a huge number of Poles) were murdered by the Nazis. We must not forget. Genocide must not happen again. Credit: [wiki](#)

At the heart of the Christian faith, the Love of God is made visible in the person of Christ. Jesus' life of sacrifice shows us that God thinks every person is worthwhile, every person is worth dying for, and that means God thinks there is no sacrifice too great to make, or gift that is too great to give, in order for every human being to be filled with God and live life in its fullness. And if God thinks that each of us is so worthwhile, we have to ask hard questions about why we treat some people as less than human, why we allow prejudice and racism to go unchallenged, and why we allow so many people to live below the poverty line.

As Christians, we stand here today to advocate for a society which is loving, attentive and generous; that values each person and in turn sets them free to love, be attentive and generous; that sets them free to live. If we want a civil and moral society, we must never forget our past and where things end up if prejudice and racism go unchallenged; and we must commit ourselves to work 'out loud' for an inclusive, loving, attentive, and trustworthy society. How will you support this goal?

Holocaust Remembrance Day

Find out more at www.coe.int/en/web/portal/holocaust-remembrance

This article was written by the Very Rev'd Lawrence Kimberley. For author information refer to page 7.

Dare to delve into the part religion played in the holocaust?

Did you know that Luther, the great reformist and theologian, was also antisemitic? This article delves into Luther's murky past... www.premierchristianity.com/features/the-shocking-truth-about-christianity-and-the-holocaust/3934.article

Magazine, Magazine, in my Church— Who is Reading me at all?

With only minor apologies to Disney and Snow White, life is busy, complicated, ever-changing. Sometimes I don't 'whistle as I work'—instead I feel like I'm in a washing-machine being bashed around by new ideas and new ways of doing things. Sometimes I'm in a flat spin. In my lifetime transformative inventions include the TV, the personal computer, the cellphone, the smartphone, and the smartwatch. We've gone from Encyclopaedia Britannica to Mr Google and Madam Siri. We've gone from Morse code to shorthand typing, to text speak, ICYMI.



Credit: 1zoom.me



If you didn't understand ICYMI, and now have FOMO, DW BC IYKYK and if UDK, it's NBD. (Sorry, but I couldn't resist that and FWIF even I had to look these up!) Aroha mai—I get back to communicating in long-form.

The moral of the story is that time moves on and technology births and morphs finding new ways to do things that changes the way we live and communicate. A lot of this is good. Very Good. For instance, I use an app for evening devotions and really enjoy creating such a relaxing and calming bed-time routine. Using Facebook and Messenger I can keep in touch with cousins, nieces and nephews so easily. I no longer wear a watch or carry a diary—they are redundant now to all but the reluctant to adapt and the "I prefer/It works for me" team.

All this is a preface to, and a gentle journey towards saying, the time of the printed magazine is coming to an end. Not straight away, but within the next year or so. There are a number of reasons for this change, some of which are:

Money They take a significant budget to produce (design/print/dispatch at a minimum) and these costs keep going up.

Left-overs Let's face it, it's not a good look to have piles of magazines sitting around unused and eventually dumped which seems to happen in a number of our parishes.

Workload peaks and troughs The time involved is concentrated in four truncated bursts which ties a certain editor up exclusively for a number of weeks each year (ideally smoothing this out will make all comms run more smoothly).

Technology The way people get their news and digest their information is changing. Not many buy the Press now, but the majority click through on STUFF. I'm a dinosaur who prefers books to an e-reader or kindle, but even I get my news and events online.

Time Poor There is a trend towards smaller bites of information with links to 'click here to read more'. Who takes a magazine and reads it from cover to cover? Maybe on holiday? But most now flick through, scan articles that interest them and ditch the rest. It's a real fight for 'airtime' out there, as people are busy and selective in their choices.

Immediacy Printing takes time, so articles have to be written two months before delivery. That means the news is not immediate. These days, that is not as acceptable as it once was and going online means we can post articles as they happen, rather than write in advance or post event.

Don't panic You will still get three printed magazines this year: this one (Easter), Christmas and one in between. Well, that's the plan, God willing. So enjoy and relish the hard copy, if that's your preference, because its days are numbered. We may end up doing both a small print run and online for a period, from 2024—as transitioning all at once may be challenging. I am aware of my audience and although I am trying to interest and cater for younger Anglicans, many of the current readers are in the 50+ age group. My dad, 90 this year, won't read this magazine online, so I am sure that printing some articles out and giving them to him on paper will be my job for a time. I am attempting to do my best for all audiences, but the realities of the digital age mean that eventually the printed magazine will finish.

For me, as editor, this will be a huge change and a big learning curve. I will miss the design element that will mostly be automated once digital. But I am trying to do what's best for Christchurch Anglicans moving forward. And with God's grace, we will all still read, be inspired and encouraged in our Christian walk no matter what format the information comes in. To God Be The Glory.



How has job searching changed in the Digital Age? Credit: The Barrett Group



**Text
Abbreviation Legend:**

- ICYMI: In case you missed it
- FOMO: Fear of missing out
- DW: Don't Worry
- BC: Because
- IYKYK: If you know, you know
- UDK: You don't know
- NBD: No big deal
- FWIW: For what it's worth.

Feedback?

Got feedback? Email the editor editor@anglicanlife.org

Easter Prayers

Easter is the highlight of the Christian year. Yes, we all love Christmas, but it's just the beginning of the story. Easter is the culmination of God's great plan for redemption and reconciliation of all people back to himself. Easter can be a busy time, a holiday time, or even a hard-working time (retail, hospo and clergy, for instance). What are you longing for this Easter? Taking time out to pray each day may help us focus on the outrageous grace extended to all of us in Christ's death. Here are some prayers for Eastertide that focus on different aspects of the Easter story: thankfulness, praise, boldness, hope, renewal, victory, and resurrection power. Choose one that suits your need (or all!) and pray it each day of Holy Week (between Palm Sunday and Easter Day) or for the week following Easter Day. You may like to add your own specific petitions as well.

A Prayer of Thankfulness

(adapted from a prayer by Rachel Marie Stone)

Lord God, you loved this world so much, that you gave your one and only Son, that we might be called your children. Lord, help us to live in the gladness and grace of Easter Sunday, every day. Help us to have hearts of thankfulness for your sacrifice. Open our eyes that we might truly see the full extent of your grace and rejoice in your free gift of salvation. Strengthen us to walk in that mighty grace and tell your good news to the world. We pray this in the glorious name of Jesus, Amen.

An Easter Prayer of Praise—Worthy is The Lamb

(adapted from a prayer of praise by Becky Harling)

Everlasting God, as we celebrate Easter and the triumphant victory of Jesus Christ over death and sin, we fall down before you and worship you. We cry with others around the world, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and blessing!" All of creation bows before you, our Paschal lamb, because you are the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords who has won the victory and conquered death! Alleluia, Amen!

Image Credit: jcomp/Freepik

A Prayer for Easter Boldness

(adapted from a prayer by Emily Massey)

Creator God, we are living in a day unlike anything we have ever seen before. Chaos, confusion, and turmoil has been stirring in the hearts of so many people. We know that justice belongs in your hand, and we trust that you have a great plan to see hearts transformed and lives changed. Jesus, thank you for your mercy that

you poured out on the cross, that has given those who call upon your name and trust in you for forgiveness, a new life. We want to be a part of your great redemptive plan on the earth. Help us fix our eyes on you when we are tempted to only look at the problems around us. Give us the boldness to tell others about the only solution to what our world is experiencing—your glorious Gospel! In your mighty name, Amen.

A Prayer for Renewal and an Easter Collect

(NZPB p588—A Te Reo

Māori version of this prayer may also be found on p588)

Eternal giver of life and light, this holy time of Easter shines with the radiance of the risen Christ; renew your Church with the Spirit given to us in baptism, that we may worship you in sincerity and truth, and shine as a light in the world; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

A Prayer for Hope

(adapted from a prayer by Daniel Okpara)

Lord Jesus Christ, reflecting on your resurrection brings new hope to my existence. May your victory over earthly death turn my eyes away from my troubles to your unchanging promises. May the empty tomb help me to leave my sorrows at the foot of the cross, so that God's hope, promises, and forgiveness reign supreme in my life, forever and ever. In Jesus' name, Amen.

A Prayer for Resurrection Power

(adapted from a prayer by Rachel Olsen)

Dear Lord, this Eastertide help me to realise afresh what your death and resurrection mean for me—forgiveness, freedom, and the ability to walk with you through this fallen world into eternity. Help me to walk in your resurrection power every day until we meet in person. In Jesus' name, Amen.

A Celebration of Victory

(adapted from a prayer by Daniel Okpara)

Victorious Christ, how wonderful, how marvellous is your love! To think that you were willing to go through all that agony for me! You arose in victory, joy, liberation, and freedom from the hands of evil—and you did it all to spare humanity the defeat of eternal life without

God. Now we can say with the apostle Paul, "O death, where is your sting? Grave, where is your victory?" O Lord, as I reflect on your triumphant win over the enemy for all time, it fills me with wonder and gives me joy, hope and peace. Your abundant love will see me through whatever troubles may come my way, from now till eternity! In Jesus name, Amen.

Cathedral Controversy

Heart of the City—the Story of Christchurch’s Controversial Cathedral

Author—Edmund Bohan

Publisher: Quentin Wilson Publishing, 2022.

Early controversies (late 1800s) about Christchurch’s Cathedral make for fascinating reading in Bohan’s *Heart of the City*. There was debate about whether to locate the Cathedral within or away from Cathedral Square, and about its cost, fundraising, design, relationship with neighbouring Anglican churches, and even whether a cathedral was actually necessary...

As we know, voices for building a cathedral prevailed, and Bohan details the views and involvement of many from the “rich gallery of personalities who created and served it.” All did not go smoothly, however, and comments from the project’s early years seem eerily prescient, such as a reference to “the overgrown and seemingly abandoned site” in the 1860s, when construction money had run out. “For the next eight years the site in the centre of the Square lay abandoned. Grass grew

over the foundations...” Lord Lyttelton referred to the site’s “most dismal and melancholy aspect.”

The book offers an interesting precis of earthquakes here in Christchurch both before and after the cathedral’s construction and includes the prophetic recommendation from architect Sir Gilbert Scott to utilise a wooden frame because of New Zealand’s earthquake vulnerability! (The Bishop and Dean rejected the recommendation.)

The book wends its way through the years from the laying of the foundation stone in 1864, to its eventual consecration in 1904. Details of its subsequent 107 years are offered, showing it grow as a centre for church and civic events of joy, grief and commemoration. “By the time the earthquakes of 2010 and 2011 changed Christchurch forever, the cathedral at

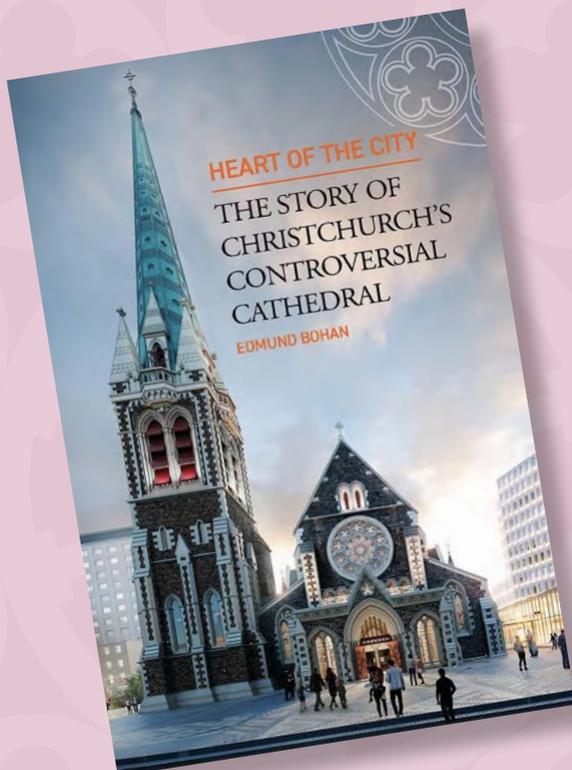
the city’s geographical centre was truly a place of significant cultural and civic memory.”

While the early history was fascinating, the latter part of the book uncomfortably evoked for me the torrid vitriol, personal attacks, and heavy tactics of the recent 2010 onwards post-quake era. Attempts at reconciliation and co-operation failed and Bohan details Court actions and initiatives by a plethora of acronyms.

Mistakes in the text, such as describing former diocesan bishop Victoria Matthews as having retired, and mistakenly stating synod met on the day of the 2010 quake (it didn’t proceed) made me guarded about what other mistakes may be included that I could not identify. Bohan also describes himself as “an historian ... with what some may regard as a too coldly rational eye.” I do. Facts and their interaction are bare bones. Motivations, theological understandings, influences, and church decision-making processes all flesh out history.

Heart of the City, the hardcover book is attractively presented, with a Bible-like page marker ribbon. The typeface and line spacing make for easy reading, but the over-large font size for the first paragraph of each chapter is disconcertingly loud.

Bohan welcomes the progress now being made in the Square, where, “...after the sound and fury of the previous tumultuous years, Christ Church Cathedral (is) being restored.”



Midlife Ministry Opportunities

Faith and Hope in Midlife—Reflecting on Churchgoers' Experiences

Author—Anne Shave

Publisher: Philip Garside Publishing Ltd 2022

Ah! My midlife age group! Our faith journeys! Our experiences! At last!

There was no trepidation about picking up this book for reviewing but perhaps concern that it would be heavy going (it was based on a doctoral thesis) or just plain old boring (midlife spiritual experience)? But because I knew the author (we are distant relatives somehow) and knew she's from Christchurch (St Barnabas) curiosity got the better of me... and the reality was sublime.

This book is like sitting down with your best friends with a coffee and being instantly transported to deep and honest conversations about our lives, church and faith right now. All the frustrations and searching and questions I've been pondering on... are addressed here in black and white... legitimised by Anne's doctorate research.

By page 50 any fears for this review were thrown away. I've now bought it and marked it up with pen, highlighter and added comments at the front! I've been thinking and pondering what to do about it. Use it as a home group study guide? Investigate different forms of prayer? Read some of those books

from the nine-page bibliography? Or implement some of those oh-so-relevant ideas that have already been tried and tested with local congregations?

Anne admits that this book raises more questions than it answers. It's done the same for me. Thank you, Anne, for producing a book that is topical, current and relates to our kiwi context.

Leading Your Church into Growth (LYCiG)

Any parish involved in the LYCiG training will welcome this book—full of questions, ideas and resources to encourage midlife ministry in your community.

Available at Theology House Library for loan or sale.

Also available (\$30) by emailing Anne on shavea6@gmail.com



Anne Shave's work, based on research and interviews of Presbyterian, Anglican and Catholic people across the motu, provides invaluable insight into kiwi midlife spirituality. Credit: Supplied

Save the Date: 12-14 October

The Leading your Church into Growth Conference is coming again! Clear your diary from 12-14 October, and begin gathering a team from your parish—this is a great opportunity to be inspired and equipped for mission.



Easter—it's not all about Chocolate!

This simple narrative play can be performed instead of the Gospel reading of the Resurrection Story (Luke 24:1–12 / John 20:1–18 / Mark 16 1–11 / Matt 28:1–10) on Easter Sunday.

Setting: *Amy and Josh are talking excitedly about Easter tomorrow. Rosie overhears their conversation and steps in to tell them the true story of Easter.*

Josh: I can't believe Easter's nearly here! I can't wait to eat all the Easter eggs!

Amy: *(as Amy replies Rosie enters carrying a bible. She has two scarfs around her neck twisted together—one blue one white)* Yeah! I'm hoping I have the biggest chocolate bunny and I'm going to eat it first thing in the morning.

Rosie: Hey guys. What's up?

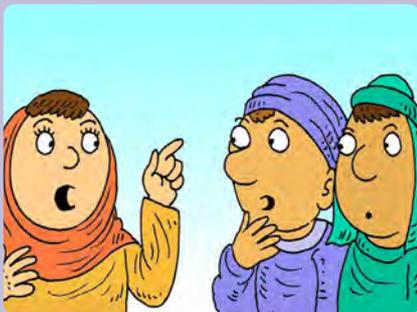
Josh: Easter!

Amy: We're so excited!

Rosie: Oh really! That's great! What is your favourite part of Easter?

Amy and Josh: Eating all the chocolate! The chocolate of course!

Rosie: But that's nothing to do with Easter. I mean the real Easter story.



Josh: What story?

Amy: It'll just be some old boring story written by some old geezer who doesn't like chocolate.

Rosie: Oh, you two. The Easter story is written in the Bible. Haven't you ever heard about how Jesus came to save the world?

Josh: Like Superman?

Amy: Like the Avengers?

Rosie: Yes—but Jesus is much better than Superman or any of the Avengers. Just hold on and listen. *(she opens her Bible to the New Testament)* The Easter story is quite long so I'll flick over the early bits and go straight to the action. Ok here's a massive party, they call Palm Sunday *(she flicks a page)* Then the Last Supper—a bit spooky *(flicks again)* Then a big fight in a garden...

Josh: A fight?!!

Rosie: Yes, a fight, actually two—one in a garden and one in a palace...but we need to skip over that for now *(flicks another page)*

Josh: Awww!

Rosie: Then an awful death and a secret burial... *(flicks)*

Amy: *(eagerly)* Can we hear that bit? Sounds gruesome.

Rosie: It was. Really horrible. But for now, I want to jump straight to the next bit, after the burial. *(flicks and find what she needs)* So Jesus...

Amy: Jesus was the superhero you're talking about, right?

Rosie: Right.

Josh: And the superhero died?

Rosie: Right.

Amy: So how could he be a superhero? This story is stupid. Superhero dead and buried—the end.

Rosie: I didn't say it was the end. The next bit is the best bit. Let's read from here and see...

Josh: *(reading)* "Luke Chapter 24 verses 1 to 12. On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus." Oooh was it body-snatched?



Rosie: Well, sort of, but just read on...

Amy: My turn! *(she takes the Bible and reads)*

"While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men

said to them, 'Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: 'The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again'. Then they remembered his words."

Josh: Risen? You mean come alive again? Fantastic. The story's getting better. Keep reading Amy.

Amy: "When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles."

Josh: Hang on, who were the Eleven, and the Apostles?

Rosie: They were Jesus' best friends, his gang, so to speak.

Amy: So let me get this right. All of the "boys" thought Jesus was dead and buried, and the women went to the tomb, saw it was empty, heard some angels and came back to the gang and said "He's alive!" Good luck with that! *(rolling her eyes)* You can read the next bit Josh.



Josh: *(quietly)* "The apostles did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense."

Amy: Hang on... What was that Josh? Please repeat it.

Josh: "The apostles did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense." *(Amy mimes the mike drop)* "Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened. But John, who also ran to the tomb, went inside. He saw and believed." I don't get it—he believed what?

Rosie: He saw that Jesus was gone, remembered that Jesus had told them before he died that he would come alive again, so now that the tomb was empty, he saw and knew that Jesus really had risen from the dead!

Amy: But what happened to the women?

Rosie: Mary, one of his friends, stayed by the tomb weeping. She was very sad and didn't know what had happened. Then a man came up to her and asked why she was crying. She thought he was the gardener so asked him if he knew where Jesus was. Here Amy, you read Mary's bit *(Rosie unties her twisted scarf and gives her the blue scarf from around her neck)* and Josh you read the parts of the man *(she gives him the white scarf. Then Rosie hands the Bible over and Josh and Amy read and act out together)*



Amy: *(reading as Mary, kneeling and upset)*

Sir, if you have shifted him, tell me where he is, and I will take the body away for you."

Josh: *(reading as Jesus)* Mary!

Amy: *(as Mary, jumps up in excitement)*

Jesus! It's you! You're alive! *(she excitedly tries to touch and to hug him).*

Josh: *(as Jesus)* Yes Mary, it's really me. But please don't touch me—I haven't yet gone back to my Father. But go! Hurry and tell my friends that I am alive and about to head back home to my Father in Heaven—My God and Your God."

Amy: *(as Mary runs out screaming, telling anyone she can find)* I have seen the Lord! I've seen Him! He's Alive! He's Alive! Yippee!!! *etc as she runs out)*

Rosie: on that note, let's all sing together:



The Easter Song Keith Green / The Easter Song Veggie Tales *(or some other joyous Easter song your congregation prefers).*

Source: Adapted from a play by Felicia Mollohan called Simple Easter Play Script

Image credits: freebibleimages.org

DEATH IS DEFEATED

A SIGN WAS WRITTEN ABOVE HIM TO MOCK JESUS

This is the King of the Jews

WHAT DID JESUS SAY BEFORE HE DIED (LOOK UP MATTHEW 27)

THEY MADE HIM WEAR A CROWN OF THORNS

IT TOOK 6 HOURS FOR JESUS TO DIE

JESUS PREDICTED HIS OWN DEATH (MATTHEW 16:21)

THE SKY TURNED DARK FOR THREE HOURS

THERE WERE 2 THIEVES ON CROSSES NEXT TO JESUS.

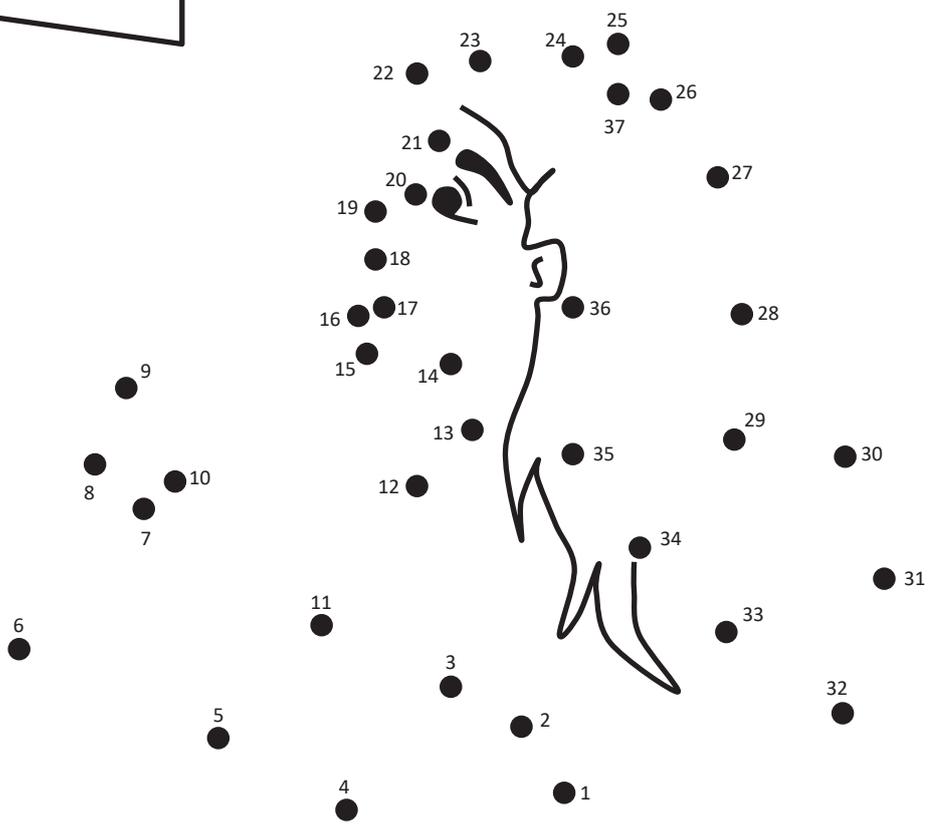
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WHAT DID JESUS SAY TO THE THIEVES? (LOOK UP MATTHEW 27)

JESUS SIDE WAS PIERCED WITH A SWORD AFTER HE DIED.

CONNECT THE DOTS TO DRAW MARY WHEN SHE FOUND THE EMPTY TOMB...

THE FIRST PEOPLE TO SEE JESUS AFTER THE RESURRECTION WERE WOMEN!



CRUCIFIXION WAS HOW ROMANS KILLED THIEVES, MURDERERS AND TERRORISTS

THE TOMB WAS EMPTY

THE BODIES OF THE HOLY MEN WERE RAISED

IS SAY
? (THEW 27)



<https://pastordonn.substack.com>

A ROMAN NAIL



<https://cbnIsrael.org>

AN ACTUAL TOMB IN ISRAEL

THANK YOU JESUS FOR...



SWORD

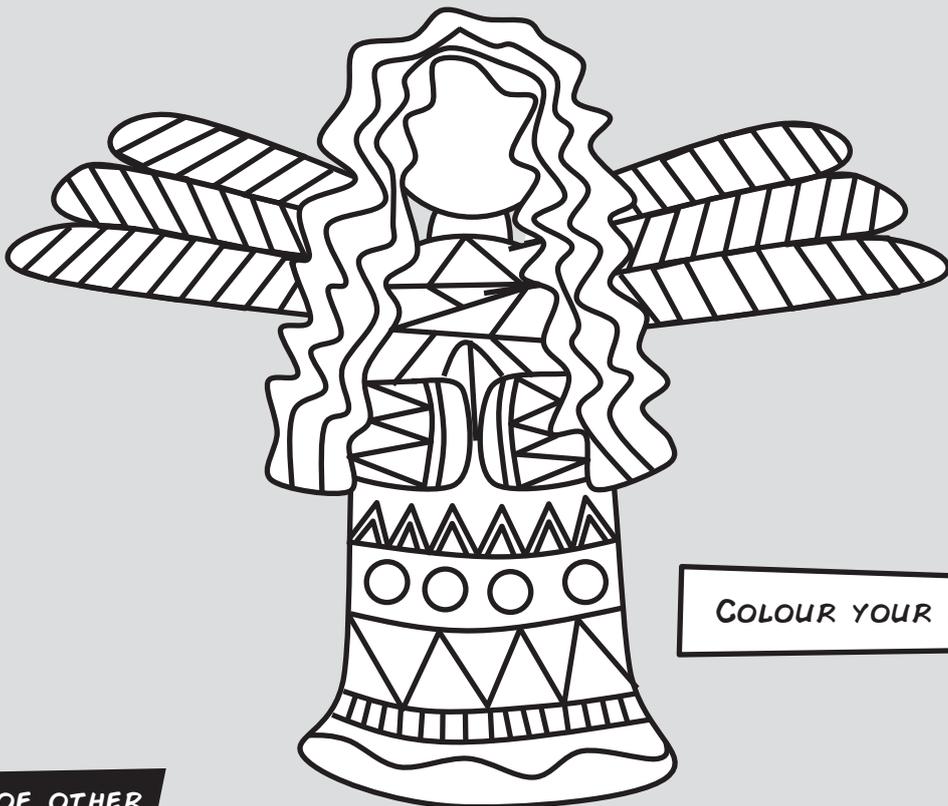


<https://coinsweekly.com>

COINS FROM JESUS' TIME.

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AN ANGEL SAT ON THE TOMBSTONE



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