

The Vicar writes:

Dear Parishioners,

Advent and Christmas: The beginning of a new story

This is the church's season of hope *par excellence*! Hope for a new beginning is exactly what is needed in our community as we come into the seasons of Advent and Christmas this year.



One of the lines of a Christmas Carol that we will be singing says this: “Lo, within a manger lies he who made the starry skies.” The picture is of the creator of the universe laying aside majesty, glory and power, to enter into creation as a human being.

Christmas, therefore, celebrates the weakness of God, the vulnerability of God, the childlike playfulness of God; for God comes to us as a tiny baby. He is the light who comes in the midst of darkness. He is the one who shares every trial and difficulty that we face. He is the first-born of all creation, the first-born of Mary. He is a God's new beginning in a broken and troubled world.

The shepherds hear “good news of great joy.” This is not the kind of joy that comes with relief after coming through a hardship. It is the joy which is the fruit of God's Spirit. God has been speaking through creation and the events over which we have no control. God has been speaking through human history, through liberating the people from Egypt and from Babylon. But this new story, this new beginning, is the story of God-with-us, God living a human life. This is the story of God humanising our history and our stories, redeeming them and refocusing them in Christ, to orient us to a future that has the kingdom of heaven in sight. We experience joy not only because Christ comes to us on our level understanding our vulnerabilities, but because he will come again in glory and take us to Himself.



The birth of Jesus is only the beginning of a story we know well. The rest will unfold quickly. In the events of Herod, the flight to Egypt, and the Holy Innocents who are massacred at Herod's hand, we see in advance the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus. This reminds us that Jesus was born into a dark world where people are betrayed, where power is misused and not held to account, and where there is loss. Jesus will enter into this and experience it all with us.



But God sees beyond the darkness. He created the universe and saw that it was very good. He raised Jesus from the dead into the splendour of his glorious light. God will find a home of equal splendour in the hearts of Mary and Joseph, in the hearts of the shepherds, and in our hearts.

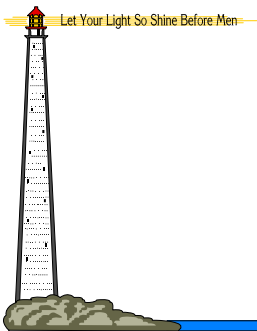
The kingdom of God is directed to the poor, the hungry and those who weep. Christmas is to news of great joy to them, and to all who will open their hearts to God, who longs to make a dwelling place in our hearts.

*What can I give him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd I would bring a lamb.
If I were a wise man I would do my part.
But what I can I give him, give my heart. **



Lawrence Kimberley

** from the Carol, 'In the bleak mid-winter.' Text by Christina Rossetti 1830—1894.
Published in 'Common Praise', Canterbury Press, Norwich 2000*



CHRISTIANS

“Some Christians are like wheelbarrows—no good unless pushed.
Some are like Kites—if you don't keep a string on them they fly away.
Some are like kittens—only content when petted.
Some are like balloons— full of air and ready to blow up.
Others are like a good watch—open, face, pure gold, quietly busy and full of good works.”
Quote from 'Exploring the faith' by Jim Cropp

PARISH MINISTRIES

CHILDREN and YOUNG PEOPLE

All our teaching and fun groups for children and young people have had a difficult year but in all cases some sort of programme that meets the needs of these age groups has been maintained. A big thank you to those who have put aside their own difficulties and worries to care for our young people and families through the year. Please remember in your prayers all those involved with these groups as it is all part of the ministry to our 'parish family'

'mainly music' We have had a disrupted year but have been truly blessed by the support of other mainly music groups in the North Island & Australia. We have received gifts of teddy bears for the children and amazing chocolate tool sets for Father's Day, which included the verse from Joshua: "I hereby command you: Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go"



A huge thank you to Margo, Sarah, Marion, Helen and the kitchen team and to Graham for helping with the clean up every week. 'mainly music' is a team outreach to preschoolers and their families and caregivers in our community, so please uphold us in your prayers each Tuesday! We will conclude for the year with a party and carols on Tuesday 13th December 10am in the St Mark's Lounge.
Anna Wilson..

Children's Church: . Children's Church: In spite of the challenges facing the children's ministry team this year, children of the parish continue meeting together every Sunday morning as part of the main Sunday Eucharist at 10:00am, ably led by a dedicated team of parents. Our thanks to all who continue to provide this ministry. Children and families are always welcome to join in. Please speak with the vicar if you have any inquiries.

Little Annies Playgroup: This group is now meeting at St Mark's on Wednesday mornings. Contact the vicar (981 7384) if you have inquiries..

SMY Model Club: I took over the running of the SMY Modelling Club from Stephen Coulthard following his departure to Tanzania half-way through the year and, so far, have found it to be an enjoyable and not too challenging experience. For that I owe a lot of credit to Elliot Scholz, my second in command and chief law enforcement officer!, as well as Hamish Cuthbert, Graeme Harris, John Hamilton and Colin & Leanda Shaw who each give up a Friday each month to provide assistance. Before Stephen's departure the record attendance was 14 including some add-ons he brought from his school in Rangiora, but even without these additions numbers have hovered fairly steadily at around 6-8 kids.



The routine for the evenings starts with about an hour of model making, followed by an outside game. Then we have light refreshments and a small reflection from the Vicar while the kids settle themselves down again, and finish with another period of model building. It runs from 6-8pm on Friday evenings during term time, in the St Mark's Church hall. The cost is 50c a night which goes towards glue and paint, as well as the cost of buying a model - there are always some available for purchase on the night for \$10-15. New members are welcome to come along, and it doesn't matter if they are connected to the parish or not (on any night probably about half the attendees have no other connection at all!), but they must be either 8 years old or turning 8 in that school term, be capable of respecting everyone else's models, and the longer their concentration span the better! Aidan Kimberley

SMYLE: this group of older pre teens and teens has been led for the last part of this year by Andrea and Greg McEvoy. who have provided a programme of fun and discussion monthly on Saturday nights.

HOME GROUPS

These groups provide a very special opportunity for people to meet in a relaxed atmosphere and get to know others in the parish.

They include:

Anabasis (homeward or upward journey) house group meets twice a month on the 2nd. & 4th. Thursday evening, usually at the home of Judy Leonard, 40 Ngaio St., at 7.30pm. We have continued a series of studies on different ways of "contemplative Prayer, using Teresa Blythe's book "50 Ways to Pray". We would love to welcome any newcomers to our group. Barbara Tonkin ph 9811612.



Thursday Group at Shewan's home. 1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month at 7.30pm. We didn't start meeting this year until July, but since then we have been continuing to study the Readings for the following Sunday. We have had some very interesting discussions and have come up with some very different ideas from those voiced in the sermon. New members always welcome. Jean Shewan ph 337 1642.

The Monday group meets every week at 10.00am at the home of Anna Penman and they spend time exploring their faith and seeing how it applies to the every day world of family life, work and parenting. More details from Sarah Rea ph 942 2557.

Tuesday morning group: This group was meeting on Thursday mornings but has changed its meeting time to Tuesday mornings. The group meets fortnightly at 9:30am on Tuesdays at St Mark's hall (in the Wilson Room). This may suit those who wish to come after dropping their children to kindy or to school, but of course, everyone is welcome. Contact Elizabeth Kimberley on 981 7384 for details.

Details of all these groups can be found on our web site or by contacting the Parish Office. .from The Clergy or from our web site (see front page for address)

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP GROUPS

ASSOCIATION OF ANGLICAN WOMEN:

St Anne's Group: highlights of the last few months include a day trip to Akaroa, a meeting with Members of the AAW Diocesan Committee and an afternoon visit to St Augustine's, Cashmere for an afternoon of fellowship.

St Mark's Group: We have continued to meet on the third Thursday of each month and recently we welcomed Adrienne Robinson, AAW Diocesan President, Anne Russell-Brighty Diocesan Archdeacon to the Deacons. Anne talked about the role of a Deacon in the work of the church and Adrienne brought us up to date on the activities and concerns of the AAW wider Diocese. You are welcome to join us, Kathleen Cable ph 339 0105

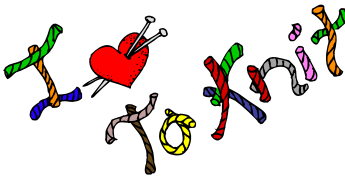
WOMEN OF OPAWA ST MARTINS (WOPS):

This group of women have not been meeting regularly this year but have had several social gatherings and met before the fair to bag sweets for the stall. *See pew sheet or web site for meeting details.*

Parish Craft Group

Meeting time: Every Thursday 1:00pm St Mark's Church Lounge.

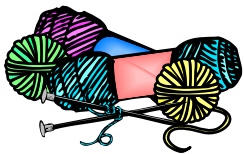
Earlier this year before the weather started to cool, our craft group decided to knit some winter woolies for the children of the parish. We decided it was going to be a long cold winter for most, as many of us had insufficient heating and draughty houses as a consequence of the earthquakes. At such times it is usually better to think of others, and knitting is a good way to calm one's nerves, while helping others stay warm. The 'Project Winter Wraps' started from that premise and the group members raided their own wool stashes and set to work. Some of our wider parish family gave wool they uncovered while having to shift house and we were most grateful for their



contribution as there were no wool shops open at that time. The project grew quickly as others responded to the call and started knitting as well, with the exchange of knitting packs and made up jerseys taking place after church each Sunday. The knitting group from St Mark's Remuera helped us by sending several packages of beautiful knitting as well and their handy work inspired us to keep going, the task seemed less daunting.

Progress was steady but slow until we were supported by the 'Creative Fibre Organization', a contact of Jane Teal's through the Diocesan Archive network. Margaret Gibson, called on volunteers to help our project and we soon had nearly all the parish children with something lovely and warm to wear (and in time for the big snow). With the help of The Anglican Parish of Wadestown in Wellington as well, we have been able to give a little warmth (in more ways than one) to the Sydenham Community Preschool and some of our local Kindergarten children. It has been wonderful to extend our orbit

further than our parish families. Approximately 150 children have been given a woollen gift and although we have wound down a little, we are collecting knitting for next winter as we have decided this project needs to be ongoing for a time. Thank you to all of you out there who have been so generous with your time and skill and your wool, your work has been so much appreciated by the recipients.



Warmest Regards,

Elizabeth Kimberley convener of the parish Craft Group

MISSION AND OUTREACH

As mentioned in our last issue, we farewelled Stephen Coulthard in July as he took up a teaching position in Tanzania .Since then Vestry members have discussed various ways in which we can provide ongoing support for Stephen and for the school, and the following decisions have been made:

That the Parish will contribute \$400 per month to assist Stephen personally . Parishioners are invited to contribute to this either on a regular basis through the giving envelopes or with a one- off donation. The money will be paid to Stephen through the Anglican Missions Board.

That the Parish will hold an Advent appeal to raise funds to purchase a class set of Bibles for Stephen’s class and a large world map for teaching purposes.

Gifts towards this can be put in the Offertory (Clearly marked with your giving number and what it is for. We will work with the CMS and ABM to work out the best way to get the goods to the School.

Other events organised by the Mission Committee have included an evening focussed on the NZ Bible Society, giving us an insight into their work and the resources for all ages that are available to all Churches, and a visit by Captain Louise Weller (Church Army) who runs the Kidz’ Coach ministry. This is an after school ministry in the suburbs of Christchurch, which brings the Good News to the children. The “tables of Eight’ hospitality idea will be followed up next year, and the Mission Committee have also arranged a fundraising and awareness raising lunch after 10.00 am Eucharist on Advent Sunday (November 27).



FAITH

*Future
Adventures
Inching
Towards
Heaven*

HOPE

*Happiness
Offering
Peaceful
Eternity*

CHARITY

*Caring
Hearts
Acting
Responsively
In
Troubled
Years.*

Jean Shewan

SPECIAL EVENTS:

ST ANNE'S PATRONAL FESTIVAL.

The Birthday Party: On Saturday 30 July a group of around forty parishioners and friends enjoyed a programme presented by 'Keeping Good Company'. This series of sketches and songs is written by Stephen Deal (UK) and gives us a look at scripture in a more light hearted way, which still highlights the message. After Afternoon Tea and birthday cake three teams of six to eight people took part in a quiz run by the Rev'd David Winfield director of 'Keeping Good Company' Thanks to all who joined together to enable this event to happen.

Celebration Eucharist. On Sunday morning parishioners gathered at 10.00 am at St Anne's to share Eucharist and fellowship over morning tea as we celebrated the Feast of St Anne, Mother of the Virgin Mary, and gave thanks for more than 150 years of Christian Ministry in this area.



Enjoying afternoon tea before the quiz at St Anne's Birthday Party

A Not-Shaggy Dog Story—anyone identify with this?

An older tired looking Dalmatian dog wandered into my yard the other day. I could tell from his collar, veterinarian tags and well-fed belly that he had a home and was well taken care of. He calmly came over to me wagging his tail. I gave him a few pats on the head. He then followed me into my house, slowly walked down the hall, curled up on my leather couch and fell asleep. An hour later he went to the door and I let him out.

The next day he was back, greeted me in my yard, walked inside, resumed his spot on the couch and again slept for about two hours. This continued, off and on, for several weeks.

Curious, one day I pinned a note to his collar, reading, "I would like to find out who the owner of this wonderful sweet dog is and ask if you are aware that almost every afternoon your dog comes to my house for a nap?"

The next day the dog arrived again for his nap with a different note pinned to his collar, "He lives in a home with 6 children, 2 under the age of three—he's trying to catch up on his sleep. Can I come with him tomorrow?"

PARISH FAIR:

Once again in spite of all the difficulties and challenges of these past few months, members of the parish and of our local Community rallied round to make our fair a big success. In the best spirit of 'make do and mend' we fitted into the restricted grounds and buildings of St Mark's, and stalls overflowing with goods were well patronised.

Activities and entertainment encouraged people to stay around and allowed them to forget for a while their living and housing difficulties. Thank you to our Fair Committee for their hard work and to all who contributed in any way. We hope to announce soon the groups chosen to receive some of our fair proceeds.



Monthly Book Fairs:

In a new initiative over the last few months a Book Fair has been held on the last Friday of each month. It started well but has been affected by snow and other things in the Parish and beyond. It has provided another forum for us to make contact with our community and hear the stories of trials and recovery from the earthquake.

THE GOOD NEWS

Large buildings of the Church, vast wealth and treasure display
Tombs, plaques and effigies record history of the day.
The saints are exulted high in statues of stone and gold,
Robes, linen and silver plate proclaim worship rites of old.

But where is Christ our Lord, the Servant, Shepherd, King,:
The life of sacrifice, prayers simple voices sing
Welcome to the stranger, comfort for poor in heart
Justice for the victim, taking weaker people's part?

Christ, sacrifice of love in Death and Resurrection
Shines through the coloured glass and all worldly decoration
So all may hear good news, wealth does not earn God's favour.
The gifts of grace and mercy are free from God our Saviour.

Jean Shewan

NOTICEBOARD;

End of year function for Children's Church still to be arranged—
details later.

January 2012 Services:

Unless an alternative venue is specified,
all Services will be held at **St Anne's Church,**

Sundays of January: 1, 8, 15, 23, 30:

8.00 am Eucharist

10.00 am Combined Eucharist
and Children's Church



Friday January 6 EPIPHANY

11.00: am Eucharist followed by Shared Lunch.
(Venue to be advised)

Wednesdays January 11, 18 25

10.00 am Eucharist in St Mark's Lounge resumes
ie there will be no Wednesday Communion on
December 28 2011, or on January 4 2012.



As shown above there will be Sunday School or some
activities available for the younger members of the
congregation on all Sundays.

LINK with GERALDINE PARISH— The clergy and Vestry
are still discussing ways in which we can link up and have some
time to rest and recharge our batteries either in Geraldine or here
in Opawa St Martins.

On a lighter note:

A little girl was talking to her teacher about whales. The teacher said it
was physically impossible for a whale to swallow a human because, although it
was a very large mammal, its' throat was very small. The little girl stated
that Jonah was swallowed by a whale. Irritated the teacher reiterated that
a whale could not swallow a human being; it was physically impossible.... The
little girl said, "When I get to heaven I will ask Jonah" The teacher asked,
"What if Jonah went to hell?" The little girl replied, "Then you ask him"

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS

Sunday November 27: Advent Sunday

8.00 am Eucharist

10.00 am Eucharist and Children's Church

7.30 pm Advent Lessons and Carols



Sundays December 4 and 11

8.00 am Eucharist

10.00 am Eucharist and Children's Church

(On **4 December** there will be a shared lunch for a donation of \$2.00 —see Mission Committee Report)

Sunday December 18

8.00 am Eucharist

10.00 am Eucharist and Children's Church

7.30 pm Lessons and Carols followed by shared supper party

CHRISTMAS EVE: December 24.



5.00 pm Nativity Service for Parish and Community at St Marks School Play ground (St Mark's Wilson Room if wet.)

11.00 pm Carol Singing

11.30 pm Christmas Eucharist

CHRISTMAS DAY: December 25

8.00 am Eucharist

9.30 am Family Eucharist

Unless an alternative venue is specified,
all Services will be held
at **St Anne's Church**



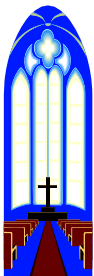
CHRISTCHURCH CATHEDRAL

On Wednesday 9 November your vicar attended a service of de-consecration of Christ Church Cathedral in the Square. Six bus loads of people, up to 350 of us, were taken from the Botanical Gardens car park into the Red Zone for a



short service of prayer lead by Bishop Victoria. For me it a first view inside the red zone. The number of buildings that have already gone was amazing. Some shops are still looking as if they have not been touched since 22 February. Warners Hotel, The Press, the Regent picture theatre and other buildings have gone, leaving large vacant sites around Cathedral Square.

Once in the square, we stood facing the broken entrance and the collapsed west wall of the Cathedral and gave thanks for the life and witness and ministry that had gone on there since the building was first consecrated by Bishop Harper in November 1881. To quote from the service sheet: “We did not treat this space as we would ordinary space, but as we would treat the very presence of God.”



In his mihi of welcome, Dean Peter Beck noted that “this is a sad day, and yet another step in the recovery and rebuilding of our city.”

The Dean paid tribute to the many “living stones” which had held the spirit of Christchurch for so many years, and concluded with a prayer from the former UN Secretary-General, Dag Hammarskjöld: “For all that has been, thanks. For all that will be, yes!”

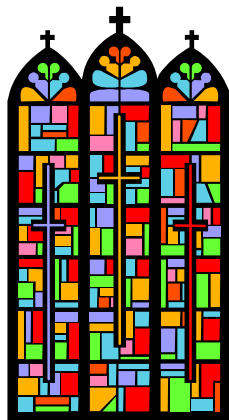
In contrast to another service of de-consecration I had attended, this one had music to help us lift our hearts and prayers to God. The Cathedral Choir turned up wearing their red cassocks and the hymns and psalms brought note of hope to a poignant occasion. The first hymn was “Thy hand ,O God, has guided, thy Church from age to age.”

Readings were from Lamentations (3:17-24) – “My soul is bereft of peace” – and Revelation (21:1-4): “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth...”

In her homily, Bishop Victoria acknowledged the prevailing sorrow but focused strongly on the hope of resurrection. “In homelessness, God’s love is still with us,” she said. “This is not a time to lose hope... We need to move on, knowing that what God has in store for us is more magnificent... We are a work in progress... Even as we deconsecrate, as we shed our tears, let us be full of hope because we go forward in the mission of Christ. It is the mission that matters... Let us be a pilgrim people – people of the resurrection.”

We then moved to the formal words of deconsecration, in which Bishop Victoria declares: “I do remit this building, and all objects remaining in it, for any lawful and reputable use, according to the laws of this land... This building, having now been deconsecrated and secularized, I declare to be no longer subject to my canonical jurisdiction.”

I have to say that I found these words rather blunt. My understanding is that the reason de-consecration is needed is that the church is saying that while work is being carried out the building ceases to be a primarily place of worship and prayer. At the service the Dean explained that it is rather like lifting a *tapu* in Maori culture. This allows other kinds of activity to be undertaken which would normally be prohibited in a holy place. In the view of your vicar, the cathedral site is still very much a holy place regardless of what took place in this service. On the other hand, this ‘rite of passage’ marks a particular point in the cathedral’s journey of recovery.



We concluded with the hymn “Now thank we all our God.” After a short pause the buses returned and took us back to the Botanical Gardens.

The next step for the cathedral is to make the building safe so that the square can be opened to the public. My hope is that there will now be a diocesan conversation about what building is put back in the future.

There are plans being developed for a transitional cathedral, however, a suitable site is still being sought.

Lawrence Kimberley Vicar.

MISSION AND OUTREACH

‘OUR’ MISSIONARY—STEPHEN COULTHARD writing from Tanzania



Dear friends

The 3rd week of term 2 has now been completed, and here's an update from Tanzania.

Term 2 finished on 30th September with our athletic sports day. I did some time taking shot put, and some on long jump. The participation and general attitude from the pupils, primary and secondary was very good. Some former pupils came along to watch, and I was pleased to meet a member of my 2001-03 cricket team. I've met a couple of other past pupils since I last wrote, and it is pleasing to hear they are doing well.

In Term 1 I started up an after school cricket group for secondary and senior primary pupils. I now have 9 members signed up, and they seem to enjoy and appreciate it. They're mostly of Indian origin, though one African boy has now signed up. With the afternoon sun reflecting off the light coloured sand, it gets pretty hot!

We had a 2 week term break, which was very timely for me. In the first week, the Hookings (Viki is head, and Alastair property manager) invited me to go with them to Dar es Salaam and the coast. It was a most refreshing time, and lovely to be by the sea - you don't realise how much you miss being near the sea, until you find yourself several hundred kms from it as we are here. It was also very nice going by car rather than enduring the bus.

The second week was mostly school related, though I did get my Tanzanian Driver's licence. It was based on my NZ licence, so I didn't actually have to do a test. However, you would not believe the process, which took no less than 7 hours of queuing up and going backwards and forwards: First to TRA (=IRD, who supervise issuing of licences,) to Traffic Police (about a mile away,) to TRA, to Traffic Pol, to Post office to get photocopy, to Traffic Pol and there around 5 or 6 offices trying to get something signed, back to TRA, to a bank to pay 40,000/- fee, (45 min queue), to TRA, then to TRA again next day to pick up the licence! I was pretty exhausted by that lot, but it is good to be official - my NZ licence was only good for 3 months here. Very few people I was dealing with appeared to have any English and the only questions I was asked were, do we speak English in NZ and do we drive on the left like Tanzania.

Staffing is a little tight at CAMS this term and next. An American long-term teacher, Peter, is away on leave, as well as other gaps, meaning other teachers are having to spread around a bit more. I'm now also taking 2 or 3 periods a week with Std 5, as well as my Std. 6,7 and F 1 classes.

At this point the 2012-13 year is decidedly thin for teachers, so if you know anyone who might be interested, tell them they would be appreciated in Tanzania! At the moment I am writing exams papers, for our mid year exams.

I had an amazing experience last Saturday, visiting a couple of villages with a programme run by DCT, called Carpenter's Kids. What they do is take the 50 poorest children from a particular parish and give support to them in various ways. This day was for distributing school uniforms and shoes, plus stationery and bars of soap. At government schools, a uniform is compulsory. Someone had been out there on a motorbike a week before, to measure all the children for their sizes. The clothes were then made by Dodoma tailors, and also at a vocational training establishment also run by the Diocese. It is all most impressive. In our party of 6 there were also 2 British men, and we were all expected to make speeches in the parish churches both at the beginning and end - fortunately an African minister in the party was able to translate for us, as my Swahili ran out fairly quickly.

We had 2 brief showers a couple of days last month, and there is at times a little more cloud about which is blessed relief, but Dodoma remains hot, dry and dusty. Thirty-two to 34 C is fairly usual - not unbearable, but pretty unrelenting, and we don't have any a/con

One of the on-going issues here is theft. I unfortunately lost a memory card from my camera, with pictures from the trip here and the first couple of weeks - I'd swapped it in my camera to show some pictures on an old one, from home; not thinking of it as a tradable item, I probably left it in the classroom, and I expect a cleaner helped herself. (I did manage to get another one in Dar.) You just always have to be so careful here. People are not getting things that have been sent in the mail, either

It really is encouraging to continue to hear of the good things happening at St.Mark's / St Anne's, and especially with the Friday night group. I brought a few models over to Tanzania with me, and thanks to some kind people who sent some glue, I have been able to do a bit of model-making with a few missionaries' kids, which they very much liked.



I got to see 4 world up games, managing to find an establishment taking South African cable TV. Aiden K was also very good in keeping me up to date. I wonder if there's a certain sigh of relief now that it's all over?

I'm sorry to hear the earthquakes continue, with a 5.5 apparently 3 weeks ago. We do get the occasional very tiny shake, being close to the Great Rift Valley.

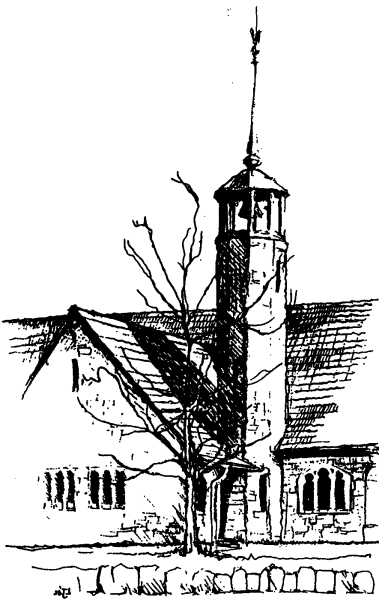
I mentioned Warren Parker, the former head of this school who had been at CAMS for 24 years, diagnosed with a bad form of cancer. He has been receiving chemotherapy in UK, and shortly begins his 4th lot. He then will be returning to NZ in early December. I'd appreciate your prayers for him. Other prayer requests would be for maintaining energy, as the heat goes on, and for the continuing work of the school

God bless you, as you serve Him in whatever way during your daily lives.

Stephen Coulthard.

***Refer to the Mission Report on Page 7 for ways in which you can support Stephen and the Canon Andrea Mwaka School in Dodoma.

Give us back St Mark's!



When is St Mark's church going to be fixed? A question that gets asked very frequently, and often with a subtle or not so subtle hint about getting on with it. So when is work going to start, let alone be finished? The short answer unfortunately is that it looks as if nothing will start in the near future, for reasons that I will try to cover below.

So what are we to do about this? First of all, our parish focus needs to remain where it is: on mission and on people before buildings and property. Most of our time in vestry meetings is spent considering ways of deepening our relationship with God and ensuring prayer and worship can continue, developing new leaders, strengthening connections with our local community, provision of pastoral care and hospitality to those with

whom we have contact. This is as it should be. As a parish we have to do the best we can to continue to 'be church in our community', and to keep well connected with all our church family. Please keep this in your prayers. If you have any ideas about how we can better minister to the community or one another, please do let someone in Vestry know about it.

In relation to buildings and property, as much pressure as practical is being kept on the process, bearing in mind that the insurance companies have said that they are not prepared to start work on these sorts of projects until we have had a period without earthquakes.

In the mean time, what is happening with St Mark's church? Work on all church property is being managed through CPT. A new Diocesan Operations Manager has been hired who is assisting in this area, and a project management firm has been engaged. Together they are working with Ansvar (the insurers of all church property) and TPA Godfrey's (the loss adjusters) to manage work on all damaged church property. St Marks has been classed as one of the churches requiring urgent work to restore it as soon as possible.

Unfortunately the damage to the church is not simple. The floor is bowed up, there is damage at the foot of the tower, cracks in the tower and there are a number of gaps and cracks in other parts.

Working out how to repair all this has been complicated by the building drawings being caught in the Diocesan office red zone, and not available until very recently. Engineers have inspected the church at length and carried out exploratory work to try and obtain design and reinforcing details. We impatiently await the outcome of this work, which should be available shortly.

This information is however just another step in the process. Does the work to be done require a building consent? If so, does this trigger the need to do other strengthening work in the church? Will the insurers accept the outcome of the work, or will they demand yet more reports? Meanwhile, what are we going to do about the broken tile roof? Your Vestry is not prepared to accept a patch up, which would leave the church with a less than satisfactory result, and a very large replacement project in years to come.

I think we are all looking for a similar outcome, a church building retaining its character, that is safe and weatherproof, and that will be there for many years to come without needing lots of future work. To achieve that will take some time, especially in the current situation. Insurers are trying to minimise their costs. The Council are still refining their approach to building consents for damaged buildings. Engineers and contractors are developing the best repair strategies. Everyone considers their situation should be dealt with as a matter of urgency.

We want St Mark's back as soon as practical. We don't want to rush this project however at the expense of not getting it right. Do keep this project in your prayers.

There is of course work beyond just St Marks church too. Repairs are required in the foyer, the Wilson room and the lounge, and there is more work to be done at St Anne's. This is not being forgotten about, but St Mark's church is the top priority

Neil Shewan. Warden.



Some ways to keep the season of Advent:



Advent is a time for waiting with joyful expectation for the coming of Christ. It is, first of all, a season when our hearts and minds are directed to await Christ's second coming at the end of time. It is also a season to prepare for Christmas when Christ's first coming to us is remembered.

A special advent tone is hard to keep in our homes when friends all have their Christmas trees up with lights on, and Christmas carols are played in shops and sung in schools. The result is that when we actually come to Christmas Day, it seems there is nothing left to celebrate.

Why not set up your own Advent Wreath on your dining room table? Short prayers and Advent hymns can be a simple reminder and keep the feeling of expectation while the community around us celebrates. The parish will provide you with family prayers to use each week.

You can set up your own Christmas Crib scene. Make sure you leave a space (with straw?) for Jesus to arrive on Christmas day.

Decorate a Jesse tree. This can be a simple tree decorated with pictures of biblical characters and events, such as the birth of Moses, the prophet Samuel anointing David king, St Anne the grandmother of Jesus, and so on.

Remember to give to others. Everything we have is a gift given us by God. Share what you have with others. You can give to the parish Advent appeals: the CWS appeal, and to the Canon Andrea Mwaka School in Dodoma, Tanzania, where Stephen Coulthard (the parish's CMS Mission partner) is teaching.

Try to delay putting up your Christmas Tree until it is nearly Christmas Day. The Christmas Tree should be fresh on Christmas Day. You may wish to leave it near the front door, suitably attired, for a while before bringing it inside.

Of course, attend the Sunday Eucharist each week to be nourished by Christ himself.

Attend a Christmas Eucharist either at midnight or on Christmas Day.



"Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back."

(Luke 6:38)

*The reason that volunteers are not paid is not because they are
WORTHLESS,
but because they are PRICELESS.*

PARISH REGISTER

BAPTISMS:

11 September 2011

WOOD Ayla Mary Jane

MARRIAGES:

1 October 2011

ASTOR, Louise to SMITH, Craig Stuart

FUNERALS and MEMORIAL SERVICES:

28 July 2011

O'MALLEY Nancy

24 September 2011

AUSTIN, Ruby



The Gifts that Jesus Brings



The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor. Matthew 11:5 (NIV)

The puzzle is based on Matthew 11:2-11 (NIV).

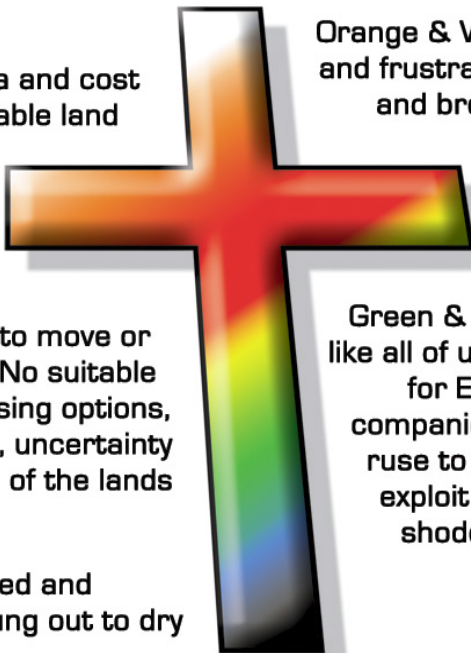
P F R A I S E D X P X G W O B
 R K P R I S O N T T U P O X O
 E S J E F N I B S U Q D O O A
 A D O F K O I I S B C N E O D
 C U H N G I R H E Y U L U A R
 H W N S R H M E F D R Z N F D
 E A M F C C C A D L E Z E T N
 D L M K R C E X L M D E W C I
 V K J A S D F L L C S W S Q S
 H B E S B B I E E D H E A R T
 E H L U I L A M E P H O N N I
 A Y Z I P G W H I P R B P X N
 R O N C N H H M I M G O Q A E
 D Y D X Q D I T A H I Y S M J
 A O Y K B B P H F L F E H Y E

BLIND	LAME	HEARD	DEAF	HEAR
GOOD	PREACHED	POOR	CHRIST	DEAD
RAISED	SEE	LEPROSY	PRISON	JOHN
NEWS	CURED	SIGHT	WALK	HEAR

Accountability! Transparency! Honesty!
It's time to hold the Government, CERA and Insurers to account!

Blue = the stigma and cost of broken, vulnerable land

Orange & White = stress and frustration of waiting and broken promises



Red = the battle to move or the fight to stay: No suitable affordable rehousing options, undervalued RVs, uncertainty re the future use of the lands

Green & Yellow & Grey like all of us = long waits for EQC; Insurance companies using every ruse to short change, exploit and rip us off; shoddy repair work

Black = Uninsured and underinsured: hung out to dry

Enough is Enough!

Demand an independent Advocacy Commission empowered to intervene on behalf of anyone affected by the quakes whatever their colour, empowered to suspend CERA powers in the public interest when the community is not consulted or engaged in the decisions that affect us. Join us, together we can be heard!

Organised By WeCan! Wider Earthquake Communities Action Network
www.wecan-nz.com

The spokesperson for this group is the Rev'd Mike Coleman 027 392 8278 or -mail him at coleman.rm@paradise.net.nz

PARISH OF OPAWA ST MARTINS

This magazine has been delivered to you by:

Name.....

Phone.....

Please contact me, the clergy or wardens or visit the website (see front cover for details)