



# St John's Today

## HOME CHURCH GROUPS

Rev'd Julie Guest

## **SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES**

Rev'd Stephanie Owen - 871-3400

## **PASTORAL CARE**

Bev Anso - 871-6273

## **ST SAVIOURS BIBLE STUDY**

June Gennard - 027 366-4771

## **PRAYER CHAIN**

Steve Anso - 871-6273

## **MUSIC TEAM CONTACT**

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## **MAGAZINE**

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## **OP SHOP** - 871 8480

## **MONDAY MEAL**

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## INTEREST GROUPS

### **ST JOHN'S CHRISTIAN WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP**

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## **CURSILLO**

Annette Rea - 871-8032

## **KNIT & NATTER**

Office - 871-5568

## **GARDEN GROUP**

Els Brown - 027 279-8044

## **PIRONGIA CHURCH CRAFT GROUP**

Barbara Preece - 027 871-9494

## YOUTH

### **MAINLY MUSIC - ST JOHN'S**

Contact Office - 871-5568

### **FRIDAY CLUB** (Youth Group)

Contact Office - 871-5568

*(during school term for children 5-13yrs)*

### **HOLIDAY PROGRAMME**

Sam Pullenger - sampsjc3@gmail.com

### **DIOCESAN WEBSITE - WITH LINK TO OUR SITE**

www.waikato.anglican.org.nz

## PARISH TEAM

### **VESTRY**

Christine Bryant (*Synods Person*) Helen Stubbs (*Synods Person*) Murray Gardiner, Coral Loomb, Els Brown, Paul Bryant, Jocelyn Taylor, Sam Pullenger. Warren Timms

### **VICAR'S WARDEN**

Christine Bryant

### **PEOPLE'S WARDEN**

Coral Loomb

### **LICENSED LAY MINISTERS**

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St Saviours Church Pirongia— @stsaviourspirongia



3-Monthly Magazine for the Anglican Parish of St John  
At St John's Church, Te Awamutu  
St Paul's Church, Rangiaowhia  
St Saviours Church, Pirongia

## **Autumn 2023**

If undelivered return to:  
162 Arawata St, Te Awamutu 3800  
or let the office know if you no longer wish to receive this - Ph. 871-5568

# *In Remembrance:*

*We commit to God and pray for the family of:*

**Ann Benson, Amy Rewita  
Lois Kendell, Tony Webber  
Patricia Grierson**



Please advise the Parish Office (Ph. 871-5568) of any parishioner illness, hospital admissions or prayer requests for noting by our Pastoral Care team.

## *Prayer Chain:*

If you need someone to pray for you regularly, or if you know someone who is sick and needs prayer, please remember that the Prayer Chain is here to journey with you and in confidence.

**Phone Steve Anso 871-6273 or the Office**

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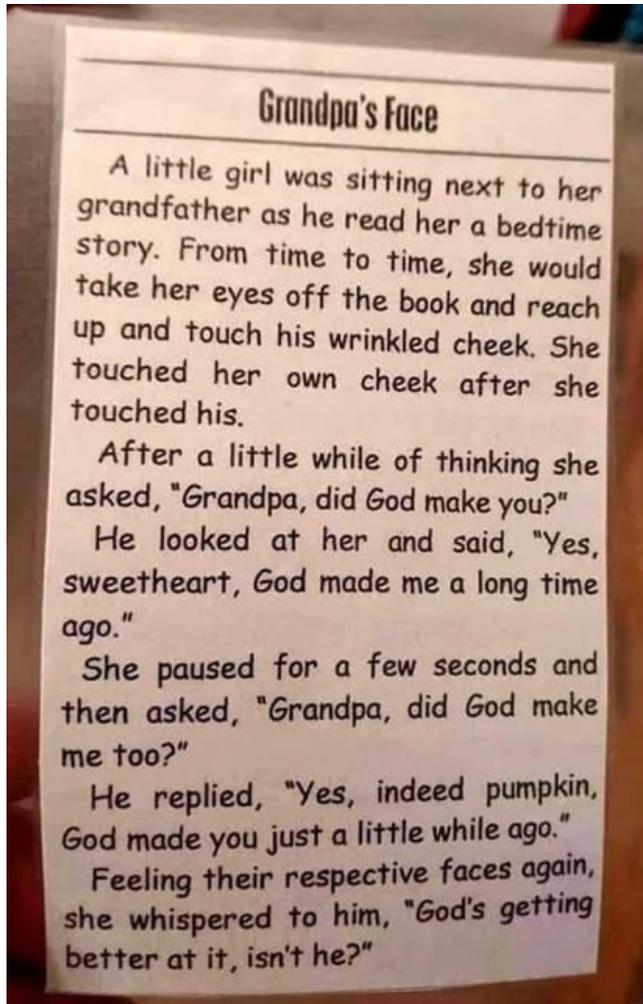
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**CLOSE OFF DATE FOR MAGAZINE:  
THURSDAY 24TH MAY**

**COLLATION DATE:  
1ST MAY 2024**

**Send contributions either by email to:  
stjohns.awa@xtra.co.nz  
or drop them into the office.**



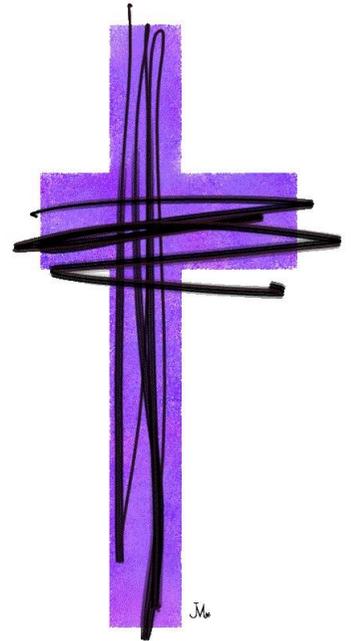
## Lent

Welcome to this first magazine for 2024. A new start is always exciting. This magazine is a new start in more ways than one. It will be a little different because we don't have Roz with us. Roz edited the layout of the magazine for the past four years, bringing her passion and knowledge to the task. The new team of Maggie, Sam and I will bring a different style, simply because we are different people, with different skills.

The theme for this issue is Lent-which is another opportunity for a new start. Those of us who have experienced many Lenten journeys in our life-times might be tempted to think that there is likely nothing new in yet another Lenten journey. It is just the season of the church rolling around as it will always do. You are of course correct. But I don't think you are right!

The life Jesus invites us into has nothing to do with going through the motions. In fact in the Ash Wednesday gospel reading Jesus has a little rant at people who do that. I wonder if part of our problem lies in many years of hearing that we need to give up, button down, and slow down during this time. Have we understood that we have to give up something we like doing or having for something we're not very sure about? Or something that we just don't like doing? Many people have shared with me that prayer is not their forte. And as for contemplation! Forget it!

And that is what I think makes Lent seem hard or even boring. For me, Lent is challenging because making time to "come away," is hard. But the time spent is so worth it. I can't tell you what you and Jesus might discover as you hang out together this Lent, but I can tell you that if you don't "pick up the phone" to Jesus, you will not hear his voice. If you have no



idea how to hang out with Jesus, our Diocesan website has some fantastic pointers. You can find link to that website on our St John's website.

Once you're on the diocesan site, click on under "Education" scroll down, and down....until you find descriptions of a number of different ways to help with prayer and contemplation, from Lectio Devina to Colouring. I am happy to help anyone find the website, and even happier to give pointers into styles of contemplative practice to try this Lent.

I have included in this issue the homily I gave at the Ash Wednesday service at St Patrick's for those who were not able to be there. I hope this will encourage you on your own Lenten journey. Blessings.



*Rev'd Julie Guest*

## What's On at St John's

<b><u>Sunday</u></b>	<b>8.00 am</b>	Service ( <b>Old St John's</b> , Te Awamutu)
	<b>9.00 am</b>	Service ( <i>1st &amp; 3rd Sundays</i> ) ( <b>St Paul's</b> )
	<b>9:15 am</b>	Service ( <i>1st, 2nd &amp; 4th</i> ) ( <b>St Saviours</b> )
	<b>10.30 am</b>	Service ( <b>St John's</b> , Te Awamutu)
<b><u>Monday</u></b>	<b>9.30 am</b>	Knit and Natter (Lounge)
	<b>10 -2 pm</b>	Pirongia Craft Group (St Saviours)
	<b>5.00 pm</b>	Outreach Meal (Lounge)
<b><u>Friday</u></b>	<b>9:30-11 am</b>	Mainly Music (Hall)*
	<b>5.00 -7 pm</b>	Friday Club ( <i>ex Youth Group</i> ) (Hall)*

**1st Thursday of the Month** Film Night, 7pm, Parish Lounge.

**2nd Tuesday of the Month** Christian Women's Fellowship, 11am Lounge

**2nd Saturday of the Month** Gardening Group at St John's, 9am

**4th Sunday of the Month** Evensong at St Paul's, 4pm

**5th Sunday of the Month** Combined Parish Service

*(Check pew sheet closer to date for the time and the church hosting this).*

**5th Sunday of the Month** Evensong, Old St John's, 4.30 pm followed by Social Parish Meal at Te Awamutu RSA at 5.30 pm  
*(If no 5th Sunday then RSA Meal held on 1st Sunday at 5.30 pm).*

# Easter Services

## **PALM SUNDAY** (24th March)

- 8.00am Eucharist OSJ
- 10.30am Eucharist & baptism St John's

## **HOLY WEEK** (Wed 27th March)

- 11.00am Midday Prayer St John's

## **MAUNDY THURSDAY** (28th March)

- 9.00am Chrism Mass at St Peter's Cathedral,  
Hamilton. All welcome.
- 7.00pm A service of Eucharist, foot washing and  
Stripping the Church at St John's. Gather in  
Lounge.

## **GOOD FRIDAY** (29th March)

- 10.00am Combined Churches Good Friday Witness  
meet at St Patrick's Catholic Church to join  
the walk of witness to St John's.
- 2.30pm Contemplative Prayer OSJ

## **EASTER DAY** (31st March)

- 6.30am First Light Service St Paul's
- 8.00am Eucharist OSJ
- 9.00am Eucharist St Paul's
- 9.15am Eucharist St Saviours
- 10.30am Eucharist St John's

# Title from sam!!!

C.S. Lewis always wrote with such an expansive imagination. Like many of us, I grew up reading *The Chronicles of Narnia* series, being drawn into Lewis' beautiful world of fantasy which seemed to have no end in scope. When I reached my mid-teen years I began to read other novels Lewis wrote. There is one story of Lewis' that I often find myself reflecting on - *The Great Divorce*. *The Great Divorce* follows the dream of the narrator who finds himself, initially in a place of longing, sadness and apathy - hell. Boarding a bus alongside others, the narrator travels to a new land, one which is vibrant with colour and hope - heaven. Getting off the bus he finds it hurts to stand on the grass, like the grass is too real, too full.

Each person who gets off the bus is met by a giant-like person who journey's with them as they try to wrap their minds around where they are and what they desire. As the narrator warms to the giant, the place, and accepts his own desires he finds he begins to acclimate to the environment. Rather than being hard and sharp, the grass becomes soft and delicate, while still holding its substance, as though the narrator's perspective strengthens and aligns his body for this new context. For some, however, this new context is too real, too much; they immediately jump back on the bus heading back to where they began. The main thrust of the book focuses on the question, why do some choose to follow God, while others do not?

For me, *The Great Divorce* had a profound impact because of the way I was invited to think about what true life looks like. True life, though more fulfilling in every way, also comes with a cost, a risk of giving up what I deem to be my own. In the book, life in hell is meaningless, and people end up removing themselves far from others, while life in heaven is enriching, the more you engage and accept, the more it has to offer.

For Lewis, the point is not to try and describe what heaven and hell will look like, or how they will interact. Rather, it is to discuss how we live in this life we have been given here on earth.

As I grew up, I was taught that earth - our current status - is a place that will continue to grow darker and more sinful; what we should be really excited about is leaving earth and going to heaven one day. When we get to heaven all things will be made right. However, if our focus is on getting to heaven, or even if our focus, for others, is on saving their souls so they will go to heaven, I believe we have missed the point of the incarnation of Jesus. We miss the point of creation as a whole.

I love reading the first couple chapters of Genesis, because of the hope and purpose that is wrapped up in the creation story. What is interesting to note - if you haven't read Genesis 1 & 2 recently I encourage you to go read them - is that God says that everything he creates is "good". Not perfect, not bad, but good. Everything has been created for a purpose, and all things are as God intends for them to be. Further, God does not create a static world, since everything has purpose, everything is designed to grow, develop and change as it learns and matures. God is not finished, he has planted the seed and now, through watering and feeding, this world will grow into what God has for it.

Skipping through the Old Testament and into the New Testament we find that even when humans decide to turn away from God and abandon the path God has paved for them, God always pursues his plans. And so we find ourselves, in the Gospels confronted with the God who would go so far as to become human. Interestingly, though, it is not only because of the corruption of sin that God has become human. What we are truly confronted with is that God has always planned to become human in order that we would become his adopted children - we would enter into the life of the triune God of love through the humanity of Jesus (Galatians 4:4-7).

I felt uncomfortable driving into the cemetery. The GPS blurted out "you have reached your final destination."

Apparently there's a third option between burial and cremation.



## Who suffers with Lexophilia? Why, a lexophile of course!

- ◆ How does Moses make tea? Hebrews it.
- ◆ Venison for dinner again? Oh deer!
- ◆ A cartoonist was found dead in his home. Details are sketchy.
- ◆ I used to be a banker, but then I lost interest.
- ◆ Haunted French pancakes give me the crêpes.
- ◆ England has no kidney bank, but it does have a Liverpool.
- ◆ I tried to catch some fog, but I mist.
- ◆ They told me I had type-A blood, but it was a Typo.
- ◆ I changed my iPod's name to Titanic. It's syncing now.
- ◆ I know a guy who's addicted to brake fluid, but he says he can stop any time.
- ◆ I stayed up all night to see where the sun went, and then it dawned on me.
- ◆ This girl said she recognized me from the vegetarian club, but I'd never met herbivore.
- ◆ I'm reading a book about anti-gravity. I just can't put it down.
- ◆ I did a theatrical performance about puns. It was a play on words.
- ◆ Why were the Indians here first? They had reservations.
- ◆ I didn't like my beard at first. Then it grew on me.
- ◆ Did you hear about the cross-eyed teacher who lost her job because she couldn't control her pupils?
- ◆ When you get a bladder infection, urine trouble.
- ◆ Broken pencils are pointless.
- ◆ I dropped out of communism class because of lousy Marx.
- ◆ I got a job at a bakery because I kneaded dough.
- ◆ Velcro - what a rip off!
- ◆ Don't worry about old age; it doesn't last.

*Trevor Natzke*

We are designed to live in relationship with God who empowers our relationships with ourselves, with others and with the rest of creation.

I wonder how you view your relationship with this world, do you view your purpose as caring for and enjoying this creation God has given us? Do you, like me as I grew up, view your purpose as escaping to the place where all is perfect? This Easter, as we again reflect and celebrate Jesus' life, death, resurrection and ascension, I encourage you to think about what Jesus' ascension means for you. When Jesus ascended to the Father, he did not only do so for himself. He is not finished. Jesus, as a human, sits in the presence of the Father, inviting all humanity to do the same, through him. This is an invitation to view our lives as lived in the presence and power of the triune God of love.

God has more in plan for this place called earth that we live. Rather than allowing ourselves to be drawn into the apathy and hopelessness that often characterises this world, what if we were guided into care and hope for this creation - humans, creatures and the earth. Like heaven in *The Great Divorce*, as we allow our eyes to be opened to the richness of the life God has in store for this place, I believe our bodies and minds will be empowered to engage and enjoy it in ever deeper ways. Let us seek the places where the Spirit is at work renewing and restoring this world and participate with him, in doing so, may we enjoy the true life God intends for us.

*Sam Pullenger*

# Rangiawhia Commemoration 2024

E ngā rangatira ,

Ngā mihi mahana

I represented Bishop Philip and Bishop Ngārahu Katene today at the February 21 anniversary of the 1864 attack at Rangiawhia.

A large number attended the hui, well over 700 people. The day began with a karakia at 5:30 am at the kohatu memorial offered by Paimarire kai karakia, and three Anglicans. Then breakfast, followed with a pōwhiri by Ngāti Apakura and Ngāti Hinetu on their newly reacquired land care of Te Haahi Mihinare , the Anglican Church.

The land purchase of 4.7 hectares for the iwi by the church had been made by a process involving te Pihopatanga o te Manawa o te Wheke, the diocese of Waikato and Taranaki who raised a large mortgage, the diocese of Auckland, and the diocese of Wellington. This purchase came from a desire to begin to offer partnership in support of restorative justice for the iwi and to offer a new mission based on the inaugural work by Pā Cruz Karauti Fox. The Haahi had been an active partner with the iwi from 1838, with many years of mutual prosperity, until the 1864 attack.

All of the many speakers at the pōwhiri referred to te Haahi Mihinare with deep appreciation for the solidarity and partnership of the church in the recent land acquisition. Any remaining concern about the history of the church's involvement or otherwise in the tragedy of the attack, was transformed into an expression of mutual respect today.

- 4 Health nuts are going to feel stupid someday, lying in the hospital, dying of nothing.
- 3 All of us could take a lesson from the weather. It pays no attention to criticism.
- 2 In the 60's, people took LSD to make the world weird. Now the world is weird, & people take Prozac to make it normal.
- 1 Life is like a jar of jalapeno peppers. What you do today may be a burning issue tomorrow.

Please share this wisdom with others; I need to go to the bathroom.

*John Graham*

## CAN YOU HELP?

In order to accommodate people who find the pews in St John's too uncomfortable, we are seeking sponsorship for up to eight chairs to replace one pew. Each chair will be about \$300.00. If sponsoring a chair is something you'd like to do, please let the Vicar or church office know. We can complete an order once we have the money available. In the meantime, we are using chairs from the lounge, so if you come to use the lounge and notice that all the arm-chairs are missing. You'll know where to find them. Please replace in church when you've use them.



## God's fitness intent for seniors

And on the 8th day. God created Seniors.

Now most seniors never get enough exercise.

In His wisdom God decreed that seniors become forgetful so they would have to search for their glasses, keys, AND other things, thus doing more walking. And God looked down AND saw that it was good.

Then God saw there was another need.

In His wisdom He made seniors lose coordination so they would drop things, requiring them to bend, reach, & stretch. And God looked down & saw that it was good.

Then God considered the function of bladders & decided seniors would have additional calls of nature, requiring more trips to the bathroom, thus providing more exercise. God looked down and saw that it was good.

So, if you find, as you age, you are getting up & down more, remember that's the way God designed us. It's in your best interests, even though you mutter under your breath.

Here are some important facts to remember as we grow older:

- 9 Death is the number 1 killer in the world.
- 8 Life is sexually transmitted.
- 7 Good health is merely the slowest possible rate at which one can die.
- 6 Men have just two motivations: hunger & hanky-panky, & they can't tell them apart. If you see a gleam in his eyes, make him a sandwich.
- 5 Give a person a fish & you feed them for a day. Teach a person to use the Internet & they won't bother you for weeks, months, maybe years.

There was a tangible sense of beginning to move from an experience of rīpekatanga, crucifixion, to arangatanga, resurrection. There was a tangible sense of Houhou i te Rongo, of reconciliation and peace in the air, based on an initial measure of justice.

The Right Honourable Nanaia Mahuta was present and has agreed to be the advocate for Ngāti Apakura and Ngāti Hinetu going forward into marae development on the land. The Mayor of Waipā Susan O'Regan was present, and spoke positively about her relationship and responsibilities with the iwi as they seek a new and creative presence at Rangiaowhia. This beautiful and sacred place is a site of the most tragic poignancy; but also of redemption, hope and pilgrimage for Aotearoa as a whole. A day to remember.

*David Moxon*

# Julie's Ash Wednesday Homily 2024

*Matthew 6:1-6,16-18*

Beware of practising your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

'So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

'And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

'And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

Today is Valentine's day. I had been thinking about the juxtaposition of Valentine's Day and Ash Wednesday. We are here in church seeking deeper commitment and companionship with our triune God, particularly over this period of Lent. We look for a sign of our commitment in an ash cross, while others look for hearts, roses and chocolates.



The Fundraising Team will be holding another raffle to raise funds for the restoration of the Stained Glass windows in the St Paul's and Old St John's churches.

The raffle will be on sale during April and May at various locations within the Te Awamutu shopping areas.

There will be three draws. The draws will consist of a large Grocery Hamper, a frozen pre-packed Lamb and a beautiful handcrafted cushion.

Members of our large Parish are being asked to please contribute generously with donations of grocery items which can be left at the Parish Office.

Thank you for your generosity.

## **CAN YOU HELP?**

The Fundraising Team is looking for keen members of our large Parish to come on board to assist with future Fundraising ventures.

We are a small team, not a committee. For inquiries please contact Rev. Julie Guest.

*Els Brown*



## St John's Christian Women's Fellowship

The group meets on the second Tuesday of each month, except January, so the first meeting for this year was in February.

While the attendance was disappointingly low in numbers there was the usual happy atmosphere of being together again and catching up with those we had not see over the holiday time.

We discussed the previous year's activities which showed what interesting and varied range of speakers we had heard and topics covered, which extended our knowledge and understanding of new situations with appreciation of situations outside our own.

One highlight was celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of one of our members (our oldest in age as well as longest membership.)

Another month we had invited women from other Christian churches to join us for a morning tea; another special event.

All women of the Parish are invited to join us at our meetings without being obliged to become members. We look forward to seeing you.

*Merle Oliver*

We think of the ashes cross on our foreheads as sign of our love for God and God's love for us, so in a way the ash cross could be our valentine for this year.

And that's appropriate because St Valentine was martyred on this day in the year 269 for preaching the gospel to the Roman Emperor Claudius. When we think about his sacrifice, Valentine offers us an example of responding to the deepest calling. The calling to be set apart, to embark on the necessary journey to prepare our hearts to do God's work in the world.

Last night a group of us enjoyed a pancake feast. Parishioners, people from the Monday meal, a couple of families, and youth group members; a wonderful gathering of God's people, reminding ourselves that this is a feast day in preparation for the fast days to follow.

But I wondered about those who can't join in such a feast. What does fasting mean to them? The Wellington Mission worked with a group of those who come to their meal, to discover what they most needed and wanted. Most of all, this group wanted to be seen, to be noticed **and** to be able to give back. After something to eat and somewhere to sleep, after the very basics, these people wanted to contribute. A couple of student social workers supported the group to try out ideas. At the end of the year Wellington Mission hosted a service of thanksgiving where presentations were made recognising all that had been achieved by members of the group.

They read poems, shared artwork and received the copies of the book written about their experiences.

In his poem Josh said, "Nobody really knows I am homeless." He describes how he is just one more individual turned invisible in our society. He walks around and nobody pays attention to him, he gets on the train, and no one sees him. Today we will have ashes put on our heads, in part, a reminder that we are dust and to dust we shall return.

In that worship service, it would have made no sense to put ashes on the forehead of the homeless people for they know, better than any of us, what it is to remember their mortality, day in, day out. When we put ashes on our forehead it means we are willing to walk with the homeless and other invisible people, to pay attention to them and **work** to make them visible in society. They are the sign of our own death, the death of our systems which are supposed to care on our behalf, but cannot, do not. They are the reminder of our absence in acts of justice.

In the Gospel, Jesus talks about three important gestures of our faith: almsgiving, prayer, and fasting. In Jesus' context, most people did those things more to gain the approval of others, than in sincere piety. Jesus called these people hypocrites, and demanded a different way of living out their faith.

*How do you feel when you hear Jesus saying those words? Does Jesus' warning touch a nerve with you?*

So, what do almsgiving, prayer, and fasting have to do with our world, our context today? How should we give our money, pray, and fast in the face of the homeless and other invisible people of our cities? What does our fasting matter to people in Palestine or Ukraine, starving and homeless because of war? To mean anything, these practices must be outward workings of an inward spirituality, a spirituality that causes us to see all people filled with life and honour given by God. The acts of fasting, prayer and almsgiving only mean something if they come from the place where we hold our treasures, our heart, and in our heart we must hold what is important to God.

During Lent our readings call us to return to God with all of our heart. The implication is that we are giving our hearts to things that are not God. We know from the Gospel that we are not to try and impress others with our fasting, praying and giving, but might we be tempted to think Lent is about giving things up so we can impress God?

An example of Te Hāhi at work is on the case where a family had stopped mowing their lawns and caring for the property as required in their agreement. The landlord didn't want to kick them out but was not getting replies from them. He approached police for help. Police didn't want to risk escalating the matter by turning up at the house so Te Hāhi was called in. The team discovered that garden equipment including the lawn mower had been pawned to pay rent after an injury had caused the loss of a job. The Te Hāhi team were able to get back the equipment, helped get the garden manageable again, and helped with transport to WINZ meetings.

The second part of Te Hāhi's care is to support police. Volunteers support and encourage Police staff in appreciation for their efforts and the burden they bear-largely though delivering baking one a weekly basis. Apparently, the police who receive the baking really appreciate the care that it represents.

Does this sound like something you'd like to support? Or do you know someone who'd be keen? We are looking for people willing to be on the support committee and/or train to be visitors. There is much more information on the Te Hāhi website, or talk with Julie or Sam.



**Te Hāhi**  
AOTEAROA

TE HĀHI I ROTO I TE MAHI  
THE CHURCH IN ACTION

TACCLA has made the hard decision to no longer hold the Day of Blessing for Te Awamutu. Since it was interrupted by Covid it has been difficult to find people willing to do

the preparation. Rather than just hold a day or even week-long event, the ministers believe that actually working together throughout the year, bringing care and love into lives and homes that are in need would be more effective. Accordingly, TACCLA invites all Te Awamutu Christians to consider the work of Te Hāhi. Consider where or how you might be able to be involved in the wonderful organisation.

“Te Hāhi Aotearoa is a faith-based volunteer organisation that provides care and support to people impacted by family harm. Te Hāhi is made up of a collective of churches within local communities that partner with Police in providing this support.” (from the Te Hāhi website).

There are two fundamental ways that Te Hāhi works:

The first way is in supporting families. Volunteers visit families on behalf of the Police, and offer awahi (support) in many ways - through kai, practical help around the home, or simply a listening ear. When Police have contact with a family that they know needs more care than Police can offer, but the situation does not qualify for any agency help, Te Hāhi (translation, “the Church” ] comes into action.

The Police reach out to Te Hāhi through the local contact person whose title is *The Champion*. Two volunteers are then selected to attend. The Champion is careful to send a team from different denominations, so that “The Church” is best represented. Volunteers are trained and supported through Te Hāhi. Because the Police are vetting who they are asking Te Hāhi to visit, we can be sure that volunteers will be safe, and can make a difference.

*Maybe instead we should ask ourselves: which is harder – the fasting part or the returning to God with all our heart part?*

Maybe the problem is that we give our hearts away to things that cannot love us back, that we rely on so many other things to love us-everything but God. We have so little of our hearts left after we’ve given most of them, to work, or worry, or Wordle, to the newest diet, or fad exercise regime or....

So, on Ash Wednesday with the faithful all across the world we gather all the pieces of our broken selves...all the given away pieces of our hearts. We remember again the words, “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also,” and we repent... we turn, we return again to God.

What treasures do we hold in our hearts? We take time in the coming Lenten weeks to discover what our treasures are and ask for God’s grace, that as we come home to God, God will bring the address-less, the invisible people, our neighbours, into our hearts.

Remember Josh from the Wellington Mission and his poem? His poem ends saying: “Perhaps tomorrow a blessing will come.”

As we walk today into Lent, can we press closely into our healing God so that we heal our hearts and are able to bring about the blessing people like Josh are asking for?

*Julie Guest*