



## Supporting Families

Let's support and strengthen whānau — family. Some of our best church experiences occur when we feel church is one of the families we belong to: church as whānau. Families are very significant for churches. From our whānau come our children, our youth, our young adults. When we strengthen and support our church families we help mums and dads, grandparents and caregivers to bring their young ones up in the faith. When we disciple our children we build the church of the present and the future.



Anglican Life



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**Cover Images** — Children are a gift from God and a joyful part of God's family. Images from St Peter's Anglican Preschool, 2019 | **Credit** — Supplied

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

Design — Leisa Jamieson — jamiesonmessage@icloud.com

Contributing Writers — new info for contributors here:

Philip Baldwin, Ven. Canon Mark Chamberlain, Sarah Dunning,  
 Rev'd Dr John Fox, Diana Langdon, Jenny May, Eddie O'Connor, Azaria Peach,  
 Margie and Nigel Pugh, Dr Murray Sheard, Gillian Southey

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

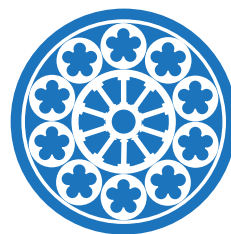
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# Belonging to God's Family



When we talk about Regeneration of the Diocese of Christchurch, we need to talk families. What it means to be a church family for instance—to love and support one another as brothers and sisters in Christ.



We need to talk about how we grow as a family, through welcoming new family members in the name of Christ. In baptism, people join God's family and make the local church their spiritual home. Also good for regenerating our churches is people shifting into our local parish areas and finding in our churches the warmth and welcome of a loving, open-hearted family.

There is another important aspect to family and regeneration. Many families in our society are finding life is tough and full of challenges. Can we be a network of churches across Canterbury, Westland and the Chatham Islands which provides support to families, both those involved in our churches and those in communities our churches serve? In all sorts of ways, we already provide support. But the challenges facing families keep changing. Within the last few months the cost of living has risen faster than in any comparable period for many years past. Covid infections and isolations are a new problem for

families to solve in 2022. Are we able to evolve the support we offer families, so it assists them to meet present day challenges?

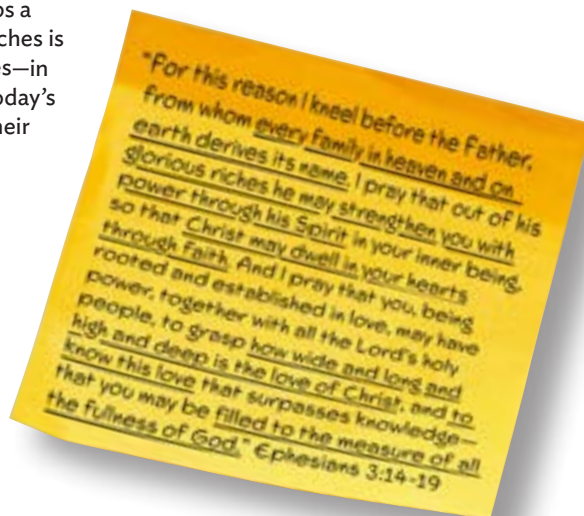
A focus on supporting families, incidentally, is a way to affirm the importance of every generation in our Diocese. As I move around the Diocese I am conscious of the role grandparents play, for example, in bringing their grandchildren to church. Perhaps a question we can ask in our churches is this: how are we blessing families—in all their varieties and forms in today's world—in our churches and in their surrounding communities?

Back to the opening above: the most important family we ever belong to, whatever generation we count ourselves part of, whatever the size and shape of our current human family, is the family of God (see, for instance, Ephesians 3).

What a privilege it is to belong to God's family and to have brothers and sisters in Christ in every part of the world, through all ages past and in the ages to come!

Manaaki,  
Bishop Peter.

+Peter



## The Transitional Cathedral, Latimer Square

**SUNDAY 5 JUNE  
PENTECOST**

Services at 8:00am, 10:00am and 5:00pm

**17/18 JUNE**

Garden City Makete Community Market in Cathedral

**SUNDAY 10 JULY**

10:00am Kidsfest Service - Kids of all ages welcome!

**SATURDAY 13 AUGUST**

7.00pm: "Georgia on my Mind"  
A concert featuring Fiona Pears and the Cathedral Choristers



See our website for details of regular services and other events coming up  
[www.christchurchcathedral.co.nz](http://www.christchurchcathedral.co.nz) | [admin@christchurchcathedral.co.nz](mailto:admin@christchurchcathedral.co.nz) | (03) 366 0046

# City Missioner Embraces Whānau

By the time you read this, hopefully Matthew Mark, the former City Missioner, will have embraced his whānau in the UK in person.

Although he was the City Missioner for only five years, Matthew Mark was happy he left behind an organisation that, yes, provides a safety net at the bottom of the cliff, but also focusses on sustainable change and thriving communities, to lessen the chance of people and families arriving there again.

On the streets, in the foodbank, the shelter, the education classes or counselling sessions, Matthew Mark was the smiling face and passionate facilitator behind the team of workers who make up the complex City Mission team. Matthew said he was grateful that the team are doggedly passionate about investing in community. They are determined to figure out causal factors and are solutions focussed—in it for the long-term, not just a quick win.

“Here in our communities today we are the hands and feet of Christ—we need to be active in our communities, seeking the last, lost and lonely, as Christ did.”  
Matthew Mark



“...(Mark’s) leadership has been really impressive—he’s certainly left a mark!” Dean Lawrence Kimberley

“Here, in this world today, we are the hands and feet of Christ—we need to be active in our communities, seeking the last, the lost and lonely, as Christ did. When we do, we see people change from being at their lowest ebb, to, over time, becoming a contributing member of their local community. It’s a joy and a privilege,” said Matthew. “When I announced my departure, I got a call from a member of the CM team, who reminded me that they had initially been one of our clients—that’s how amazing this business is—I related to them as a colleague completely forgetting they had been a client! Another thing I love is that the team always strive to bring the best out of each person their encounter. I am thankful for having been part of an organisation rich in ability and with God’s mission at the heart of all they do.”



Matt and Dexter at the City Mission in March 2022 Credit: City Mission

## What’s next?

Matthew and Sheila Mark (with dogs Dexter and Cooper) are now over in England with family, including their two grandchildren, one of whom they had not met at the time of writing this article. The Diocese thanks both Matthew and Sheila (Ecumenical Chaplain, Otago Uni Medical School, Christchurch Campus) for their mahi and our prayers are with them in their new journey. Want more? Read the [Stuff story here](#).



Credit: City Mission

## The Farewell:

On behalf of the Diocese at Matt’s farewell morning tea, in March, Dean Lawrence acknowledged Matt’s leadership and all he achieved as City Missioner. He said the Mission had faced challenging years and the new buildings were a sign of the transformational change under Matt’s leadership. “I think your leadership has been really impressive—it’s certainly left a mark. We want to acknowledge that and on behalf of the diocese we would like to wish you well for the next chapter of your life.”



## Good News!

Corinne Haines, a member of St Barnabas Fendalton, former CEO of Trimble Navigation and current Chair of Ōtākaro Limited, has been announced as Interim City Missioner—Congratulations Corinne!



# Seeing the Need

## Nigeria's neglected nerve jangling pain and blindness

Imagine thousands of painful parasites crawling under your skin, making their way into your eyes, gnawing away at your optic nerve, causing your sight to dim, bit by bit, until you're blind.

This is the harsh reality for Nigeria's poorer residents affected by River Blindness (RB). Tropical diseases like RB, infect more than one billion people but sadly this situation is mostly ignored by the developed world. RB thrives in this tropical poverty-stricken land; it's a perfect storm—poor sanitation, unsafe drinking water, numerous insects to spread disease, and little access to health services or government support.

RB, in its early stages, causes debilitating and disfiguring skin conditions like elephant or leopard skin. The parasites cause lumps to form under the skin. It's truly uncomfortable (the beasts are feasting on your nerves, after all). The infected person rubs and scratches until their skin becomes rough, thick and scared—called elephant skin. But leopard skin is worse. That's when the irritation is so bad the person ends up cutting themselves to try to dig out the source of the torture. This leaves them

with mottled and blotched skin-leopard skin. Eventually the parasites reach the warm moist eyeballs and slowly chew through the optic nerve. Excruciatingly painful and the blindness can't be reversed.

Approximately 90 per cent of the worst tropical diseases can be treated with medicines. Pharmaceutical company Merck donates the worm-killing antibiotic Mectizan, which must be administered once a year to kill the black fly larvae and stop it from eating away at those affected. If an infected person receives a Mectizan tablet in time, it will kill off the young larvae. But it is absolutely crucial that everyone in affected areas receive their tablets on time, at least once a year. If tablets are missed, the worms may become mature enough to resist the antibiotic. Then the older worm clumps do their worst and blindness is inevitable.



Worldwide 36 million people are blind, yet 75 per cent of blindness is preventable or treatable. RB is rife in Nigeria. Antibiotics and access to ongoing healthcare is needed to stamp it out. Meet Mairige (top) who has been permanently blinded. But thankfully, because of the work of cbm fieldworkers, her great niece Wajir's eyes are safe (above). Credit: cbm

Through the generosity of cbm supporters, the crucial antibiotics are delivered by field workers to those at risk. River Blindness is totally preventable, but cbm need your support to keep this vital medicine landing where it's needed.

cbm, also known as Christian Blind Mission, is an international Christian development organisation, whose mission includes delivering life-changing medication, support and surgeries to those disadvantaged by poverty and disability. cbm aspires to follow the teachings of Jesus in Luke 10:27 "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbour as yourself." To find out more visit [www.cbmnz.org.nz](http://www.cbmnz.org.nz).



Dr Murray Sheard received his PhD in Ethics and Philosophy from the University of Auckland. He has worked in international development for over 15 years and is the Chief Executive Officer of cbm New Zealand. [www.cbmnz.org.nz](http://www.cbmnz.org.nz)



## River Blindness can be devastating...

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

To learn more, scan the QR code using your mobile phone camera or go to [www.cbmnz.org.nz/mairige-wajir13](http://www.cbmnz.org.nz/mairige-wajir13)



# Pray, Walk, Eat with Refugees

## Raising money for displaced people

In this year's Operation Refugee, Christian World Service is encouraging people to raise funds doing a "Pray, Walk, Eat" get-together for and with people who have been displaced by war, hunger and persecution.

Maryanna, a young Ukrainian girl, is finding out what life is like as a refugee. The ten-year-old is enjoying playing again after travelling for many days before arriving at the Budapest Airport earlier this year.

"I love flowers," she says. The walls in her room are covered in flowers. Her wardrobe has a picture of a squirrel on it and she has a small table by her bed for her phone. Sadly, when her family fled Odessa, her hometown, they left many things behind. "But it's okay," she adds.

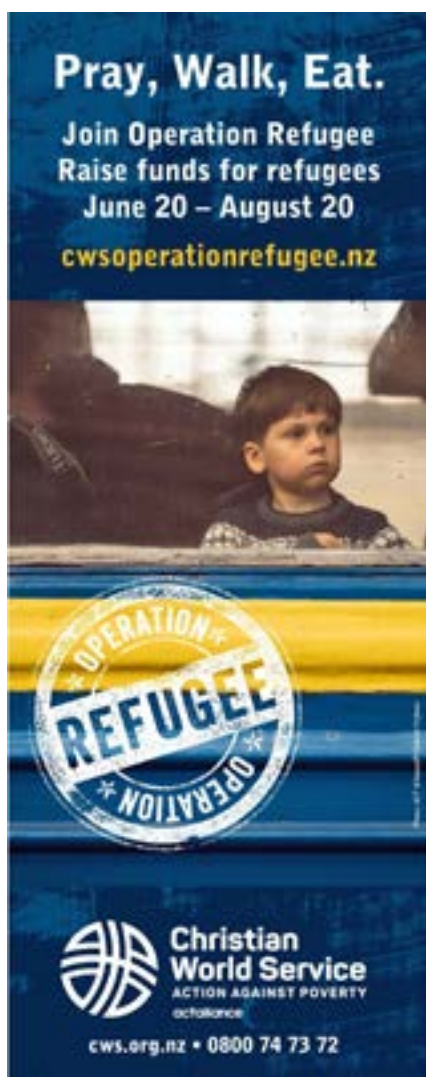
Maryanna, her little sister, mother and grandmother left home in February. They were heading to Bulgaria where her father was caring for her grandfather who was receiving medical treatment. Maryanna's teacher sent lessons and she attended some classes on Zoom. She would like to go back to school to see her friends. Her best friend is already in Germany.

At the Budapest airport, and also in Berehove (west Ukraine near Hungary), a steady stream of children find a warm welcome, refreshments and other help from ACT Alliance (Action by Churches Together) who have set up playrooms for the children. They also supply food and hygiene supplies, community shelter, healthcare, information, legal help and other support in Ukraine and neighbouring countries. At Eastertime, ACT had reached more than 40,000 refugees at the border either in Ukraine or Hungary.

"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in"

Jesus, Matthew 25:35

"In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus instructs us to 'Welcome the Stranger'. Operation Refugee is an opportunity to gather, welcome, listen to their stories, and to pray for refugees. The idea is to raise funds by walking and sharing food, so refugees get the help they so badly need," says Murray Overton, National Director, CWS.



Operation Refugee will launch on Monday 20 June, World Refugee Day, run for two months, and includes Refugee Sunday in our Anglican Lectionary (3 July 2022). Individuals, groups, families, and churches sign up online and download the resources which include refugee stories, a quiz, a Bible study and a variety of walking or eating activities to choose from. Funds raised will assist new refugees like those from Ukraine and Afghanistan as well as longer term communities of Syrian and Palestinian refugees. For more information or to sign up, visit the [CWS website](https://www.cws.org.nz), email or call Murray on (03) 366 9274; [murray.overton@cws.org.nz](mailto:murray.overton@cws.org.nz)



# Children's Praise

"Let everything that has breath  
praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!"  
Psalm 150: 6

In November last year, St Mary's Timaru Parish welcomed on board a new Director of Music, Catherine Anderson.

Catherine was previously the Director of Music at a different St Mary's in London! As part of her new role here, in Timaru, a Children's Church Choir was part of the remit, the previous one having disbanded when the Director moved on.

So now the Children's Choir, for ages 7 to 12 years, is underway. Early in May rehearsals started and Catherine aims

to work with the voices for a couple of months before they attend any church service. It is envisaged that the choristers will be rostered on for the 10am morning service the first Sunday each month (when the adult choir sings at evensong). This 'permanent' slot allows the choristers to be a fully-fledged part of the church, and indeed the choristers will be inducted into their

roles by the parish once their regular services begin, hopefully in August or September this year.

We look forward to hearing the children's voices lead worship at St Mary's later this year. Congratulations to them all.



## The chorister's prayer

Bless, O Lord, us your servants,  
who minister in your temple.  
Grant that what we sing  
with our lips,  
we may believe in our hearts,  
and what we believe  
in our hearts,  
we may show forth in our lives.  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

Rev'd Ben Randall says:

"It's been a joy to see how Catherine has taken the local vision and enthusiasm for this new initiative and has grown and run with it. The choir allows us to reach out to children and families in our local community, to introduce a new generation to faith, to welcome them into the congregation, and to engage them in the active worship of our Anglican church. My prayer for those who will join our choir, and our St Mary's family, is much like the prayer Dean Lawrence Kimberley expressed in his sermon when introducing the Girl Choristers at the Christchurch Cathedral in 2020, that, as you sing the words of our faith and the words of scripture, let that Word (Jesus Christ) make a home in your heart as well, let it speak to you, transform you, and show you the depth of God's love and care. God's love and care for you and for all creation."

# To God be the Glory

## Holy Trinity Parish rejoices

Four celebration services in two months—talk about hectic! But so much festivity and joy! Holy Trinity Church, in the parish of Avonside has been recreated, reinterpreted and reactivated. Devastated in the earthquakes of twelve years ago, the path to reinstatement was not always smooth or even certain, but now it's rebuilt and reopened and the people rejoice.

The building was handed back to the parish, by Church Property Trustees (CPT), on 15 December, and a traditional tikanga blessing of the land, grounds and building conducted by Rev'd Irene Nelson, Te Pihopatanga o Te Waipounamu, Bishop Peter and Rev'd Jill Keir. Rev'd Phillip Robinson and team delivered a catered breakfast—8am on Tuesday 21st December 2021—celebration number one.

Then, of course, Christmas! The people were so happy that the church was finished but didn't want to have a Christmas Celebration mixed with a new church celebration, taking away from both. Hence, they decided to wait until new year to formally celebrate the

new build. In the meantime, they gladly went about Christmas celebrations in St Francis Hall with renewed joy—Saturday 25th December 2021—celebration number two.

In early January, they held their first service in the new church and it was almost at capacity with approximately 70 people attending, a special liturgy, and a catered lunch enjoyed under the trees in the summer sunshine (a Covid inspired blessing)—Sunday 9th January 2022—celebration number three.

And finally, exactly 165 years since the original building consecration, the new Holy Trinity Avonside was formally consecrated for liturgical and sacred

use by Bishop Peter, another special liturgy, music, cake cutting and a socially distanced supper of generous proportions—Thursday evening 24 February 2022—celebration number four.



The Logo represents the Trinity: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.



Holy Trinity Avonside—the new church is cleverly and snugly on the old footprint. The church, nestled here among the mature plants and memorial stones, has a picturesque approach. Credit: AnglicanLife.



“I feel privileged,” says Rev’d Jill Keir, “and a great sense of gratitude. The parish faithfuls have been so patient, so to get to this point is truly a shot in the arm. But one thing I love about this amazing parish is that throughout it all life went on—there may have been emptiness and uncertainty, followed by construction activity and relentless decision-making—but the building itself was never their ‘raison d’être’. It is, and always will be, living out Christ-centred mission in our Avonside community.”

Jill talks about the activities currently happening in the parish alongside the ideas and possibilities they are exploring. “We’re continuing our all age services that are attracting new families, and looking to develop more outreach from that. We have a strong attendance at our foot clinics and a great Eldercare group as well. Now that we have a specific Sunday School space within the church setting, we will further develop tailored children’s activities as part of the worship service. But as well, we are looking into the community around us and figuring out what they need most, what they are interested in—we are putting thought into what activities interest people and keep them coming back,” says Jill.



*A joyously full worship space—the prayer is that the congregation will continue to grow and thrive, and that this level of community engagement will continue each and every week! Credit: AnglicanLife*

Realistically, the parish are aware that they are a small congregation, on the more mature side, but are certainly searching their hearts looking for ways to be more attractive to younger people and families. They’ve had about six new members join since the church re-

opened, so that’s a positive start. And Jill has a strong sense that God is calling the Avonside parish into something new. The challenge for them will be to see what that is, embrace the vision, and go for it. AMEN!



*Bishop Peter speaking at the Consecration Service. The main space was full and the spill-out space in the lobby was also used. This angle shows the old painted beams (Mountfort) that were a feature of the former church beautifully incorporated into the pillars of the vestibule. The old and the new in harmony side by side. Credit: AnglicanLife*



Two of the features particularly spoken of are the delight in the new chapel space including the inclusion of the old stained-glass windows (right), and the sense of warmth and peace (the wairua) visitors feel when entering Holy Trinity's beautiful sacred space. Credit: AnglicanLife



### Oh, let the ancient words impart...

Hymns and songs of praise are an integral part of our worship and a great encouragement as well. Holy words of faith have the ability to change us as we sing them. In the celebration of the consecration service four hymns were sung—and each one was a strong statement of faith, commitment and mission. Thank you to whoever chose those particular songs—they encouraged and enhanced the joy on the day. We pray they will also lead you forward as you journey into a new future together.

1. To God be the Glory! Great things he hath done!  
words and music
2. In Christ alone my hope is found – Here in the power of Christ I'll stand! words and music
3. Great is thy faithfulness! All I have needed thy hand has provided. Great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me! words and music
4. Lift High the Cross! The love of Christ proclaim, 'til all the world adore His sacred name.  
words and music

### The Project Partners:

CPT Recovery team's, Kerry Mercer (on behalf of Suzanne and David Price) says this was a complex but wonderful rebuild to provide a new multi-functional church space. The entire team (CPT, contractors and consultants) worked well together, enjoyed the project, and are very proud of the finished result.

Jill is grateful for...

- The parish who pulled together to ensure the project happened while still doing and being church in their community
- CPT
  - who steered the project and assisted the parish by providing advice and project oversight skills
  - for not having to make all the decisions because they built confidence in the experts and trust in the professionals
- Hugh Tennant, the Architect, whose perception and foresight meant the end product was truly inspirational with every detail thought of and attended to.

Heartfelt thanks go to these contractors:

**Contractor:** RPC Construction

**Building Services:** Pedersen Read & Powell Fenwick

**Architect:** Tennent Brown & Chaplin Crooks

**Structural Engineer:** Ruamoko Solutions

**Quantity Surveyor:** BBD Ltd

**Specialist Contractor:** Stewart Stained Glass



“We focused on our space being available, welcoming and present in the community”  
Rev’d Jacqui Stevenson

# The Bryndwr Family Homecoming

“There’s no place like Home,” says Dorothy in the Wizard of Oz. And St Aidan’s faith community could say the same. They’re excited to be home, ready to strengthen relationships around them and implement plans to renew their mission to their local community.

Yes, the journey was long and encountered many challenges along the way, but the extended rebuild period also brought personal growth as people acted out their resilience and determination; it brought generosity when St Aidan’s faith community, alongside other churches and other funding avenues (Rata, CCC Strengthening Communities) supplied funds and interim plant; and it brought a renewed desire by the parishioners to be and inhabit a church/community space that spills out into the streets showing in word and deed the transforming love of God.

Rev’d Jacqui Stevenson, the Vicar, says the group of parishioners who worked on the rebuild project were an incredible team. “There were many different voices speaking into the project, but the guiding focus was on providing an available, welcoming and present space both for worship and the community around us. This allowed us to move forward making the most of any opportunity to reflect and pray about what would serve the community best,” says Jacqui.

Looking at the building now, gone are the old curtains, the dated flooring, the dreary space that could be dark and very cold. Now it is light-filled, tech-savvy and highly functional for services, community events and to hire out to others. The kitchen is modern and easy to access. The kitchenette and toilet attached to the front rooms make it ideal for a separate community space. And the new stackable chairs, on manoeuvrable trolleys, make setting up and packing down of the church setting much easier and faster. All in all, what you get is ease and practicality of use. Just what you want for a community centre-styled church with a missional mindset.

Jacqui says the monetary gifts that turned up from our faith community, wider community members and other churches were true early-church style giving. Northwest Christchurch Parish and St Barnabas both gave to help them

out. As did Village Presbyterian who unstintingly gave a space for St Aidan’s to inhabit over the 12 months they were ousted from their building. “It was a true kingdom gift,” said Jacqui. “We had to stop some ministries but were able to carry on many of the ones deeply important to us, because they allowed us free use of the buildings, while the Vege Co-op, the Youth Trust and the Guides were all able to continue out of other spaces.”

The parish came home to the refurbished space (on the corner of Brookside Tce and Aorangi Rd) in early December, and although the pandemic

meant no big party was possible, their first act of worship in their new space was a community event. It was held on the lawn and included a brass band, food (gifted by Naylor Love Canterbury), balloons and activities all in celebration of returning home. The parish also went ahead with Christmas baskets for families in the area. So, although they have not stopped their community outreach, they look forward to being able to develop it more fully now that they have the right space, and the pandemic has eased in its restrictions. “Our community sharing food again—what a blessing,” says Jacqui.



*The worship space is brighter and full of high-tech systems that improve worship. Credit: AnglicanLife*



*The easy-to-clean, easy-to-operate, kitchen improves the community centre as catering and functions are now, well, ‘easy’! Credit: AnglicanLife*

## The Project Partners:

CPT Recovery team, Kerryn Mercer and David Price, say the works involved earthquake repairs including strengthening, substantial betterment works including a full cosmetic renovation of the multi-functional building and a new kitchen extension. The betterment works have made a huge difference to way the building can now function. CPT says a big thank you to the team at Bryndwr for doing the necessary mahi to make it all happen. The buildings were back in use before Christmas but just recently some minor betterment tweaks have completed the project. CPT says well done to all involved, including these contractors:

**Contractor:** Image Construction Ltd  
**Building Services:** Powell Fenwick  
**Architect:** Chaplin Crooks  
**Structural Engineer:** Aurecon NZ Ltd  
**Quantity Surveyor:** BBD Ltd  
**Specialist Contractor:** Stewart Stained Glass

# Stepping Out of the Wilderness

## The story of Opawa-St Martin's Recovery project

As wilderness experiences go, the Opawa-St Martin's journey from earthquake to recovery has been 12 long years duration, travelling to five different interim sites, spanning three priests' tenures, more than a full generation of St Mark's primary school students' experience, and has even held up a retirement (thanks Wayne Sinclair for sticking with it). The Opawa-St Martins wilderness experience has been a test, a painful travail, a time of growth, a time where change has challenged them deeply. But they are now back—their wandering is finished at last. Thanks be to God!

As this article is being written, it's still not quite there though. Among the chaos of the building site, the hopeful glimpses emerge of what will be a stunning space, as yet without carpets, drapes and fixtures. But the bones are there and the light floods in and the stained-glass windows and vaulted ceilings look fantastic. The hope and excitement is building and although (due to Covid) they didn't make it back in time for Easter, nor their Patronal Festival, they hope to be in (God willing) by the end of May, just in time for this article to be read. Hallelujah!

"A building project is a complex and movable feast, and in a pandemic it's doubly so," says Rev'd Canon Ben Truman, Vicar of St Mark's. "But through it all, I have increased my understanding of the importance of place—the way a particular place becomes important to a community. The level of buy-in

from the wider community has been so heartening," he says. "The support and monetary gifts have been generous and a great blessing and encouragement. And that gives me great hope for the future of the parish, for our missional path, and for a strong community."

Ben also highlights the resilience and graciousness of the parishioners, his faithful congregation who have worshipped in many different places and spaces over the 12-year journey. "They have stuck in there through all the changes and have continued to be the people of God, a people of hope and of purpose." There have been times of great grief. One of those was the decision to relinquish St Anne's. Although it was the right decision, it was hard. The redeeming action within the loss is that the iconic cross stained-glass window is now incorporated into the

new St Anne's Chapel attached to the rebuilt St Mark's Church—melding the new with the old is one way in which St Mark's has been made a place to call home for both congregations.

One congregation Ben particularly wanted to celebrate for their faithfulness, is the Wednesday group. After losing St Anne's, then losing the school (during Covid) they continued to meet at a cafe for coffee and communion (not holy) to keep up the connections that are so vital. Then, early this year, the tenants next to the church vacated, which meant the group have been meeting there instead. They put up with the renovations happening around them, and the fact that it looks like a building site, and still they make it a holy space to gather, take communion, and pray.





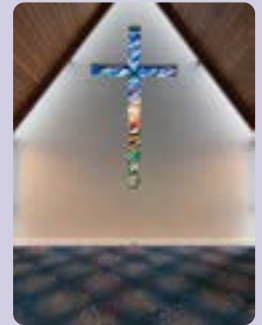
“The level of buy-in from the wider community has been so heartening.” Ben Truman



Ben is looking forward to...

- Having one central place to meet. (He tells of the frustration of having resources scattered over six possible sites—so finding a particular item can be tricky!)
- Not having to set up the chairs in the school hall at 6:30am!
- Giving his long-suffering wardens a break
- Re-starting missional endeavours currently curtailed such as mainly music and other church/community events
- Inhabiting a building prepared for ministry for the next 50 years
- Using modern audio/visual equipment
- Having the St Anne’s Chapel as a reflective space
- Having a smaller sanctuary so that the congregation are better served
- Having a warmer, drier, lighter space
- Having a building that reflects the beauty of God in its very being.

“Being in the wilderness is a horrid place to be, an uncomfortable space. It’s a period of liminality and while you’re in it you don’t know how long it will last. The Bible articulates many wilderness experiences and some of them are significantly longer than 12 years. But here we are, and we’ve made it. The wilderness is behind us. And the beauty of this holy space helps us turn towards God, which in turn helps us to hold our hand out to humanity. We will grow and make use of this outstanding structure, to further God’s Kingdom.”



Above: Chapel cross window  
Left: The carpet is a bespoke design using colours and shapes from the stained glass window, arranged into a pattern that shows both a series of crosses and a beautiful glowing effect.

### The Project Partners:

CPT Recovery team, Kerryn Mercer and David Price, say the works involved earthquake repairs and parish betterment works (including a new chapel extension); strengthening and renovation of all buildings on site (and, for the parish, one next door as well!)! One highlight was the very delicate job of saving the stained-glass window from the former St Anne’s and incorporating it into the new St Anne’s Chapel. CPT says a big thank you to the team at Opawa-St Martin’s for making the huge task as smooth as possible, and congratulations on your new premises.

Thanks also to these contractors:

**Contractor:** HRS Construction

**Building Services:** Powell Fenwick

**Architect:** Chaplin Crooks

**Structural Engineer:** Aurecon NZ Ltd

**Quantity Surveyor:** BBD Ltd

**Specialist Contractor:** Stewart Stained Glass

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# Healthy Soil—Healthy Parishes

## Making the most of family dinners

The term “Good Soil” is drawn from Jesus’ words in Matthew 13:8-9 from which we can dare to believe that we as a church can cultivate the soil in preparation for the seed to fall. “But some seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. Whoever has ears, let them hear.”

Traditionally, the process of following Jesus is known as discipleship (or apprenticeship). Here at St Martins–St James, we believe that discipleship is a core aspect of Christian life. Our life together is a journey as we transition from old to new and in this formation, we grow in faith.

We also believe that discipleship isn’t a solo sport. We grow together in community, and we believe vibrant community is the best space to grow as disciples. We have a pattern of playing together, praying together, eating together, doing mission together and learning together. We believe this provides a safe and informal opportunity to explore and grow in faith. Hence our vision statement: “Together Cultivating a Culture of Discipleship, Mission and Regeneration”

More broadly, a number of churches across NZ have embraced the *Good Soil Collective* discipleship *movement* [www.goodsoilcollective.org.nz](http://www.goodsoilcollective.org.nz) as a way to guide our discipleship efforts, and we have found this helpful in shaping our discipleship culture. It has given us a common language to guide our spiritual journey together. Hence creating a culture of discipleship, mission and regeneration throughout our ministries and life together.

Our parish “*School of Good Soil*” is part of a movement that has spent the past thirty-five years making disciples around the world. They’re now equipping churches and organisations around the world (including in Aotearoa New Zealand) to make disciples, and catalyse these kinds of movements. Over the years there has been a key observation: “If you make disciples, you always get the church. But if you make a

church, you rarely get disciples.” (Mike Breen, *Building a Discipling Culture*)

When churches realise that attendance is dropping, one typical response is to develop programmes and hold evangelistic events in hopes of curbing the trend. Our default mode seems to be attempting to (re)grow the church through events. However, is it possible that in all of this we’ve actually neglected the call of Jesus to make disciples?

What this *Good Soil Collective* has seen is where churches are focused on making disciples rather than just growing churches a culture emerges that creates a multiplying movement. Its main focus is no longer about a church building or gathering (important as that is). Rather, discipleship leads to a shift in the way



Family events—where everyone, young and old, can have fun—is a great space to grow disciples. Credit: supplied



“Discipleship isn’t a solo sport”  
Azariah Peach

that people think and live on a day-to-day community level, which leads to the discipling of others, which leads to multiplication of people who become naturally missional and evangelistic.

In order to see this kind of shift take place, we need to start the formation process with ourselves. Are we spending most of our time focused on the machinery and mechanics of church growth, and perhaps missing the real people and processes involved in real discipleship? Are we following the person and pattern of Jesus in our everyday lives? Are we helping others to do this too? We need to recapture the way of Jesus and once again become familiar with how he lived and led, so that we can empower those around us to do the same.

#### Our Families Initiative

Over the past three years we have been focusing on intentionally cultivating a culture of discipleship. Part of God’s leading us on this journey brought us to see a need for a missional community space where families can play together, pray together, eat together, do mission together and learn together. Missional Communities are a way of helping followers of Jesus to live on-mission every day, and ultimately to mobilise the church to live out its calling.

This started with a few combined events planned for after a church service; an Easter Egg Hunt and a games afternoon. Both these events were great fun and well attended but we felt there needed to be a more organic approach to them. After some discernment we trialed our first two gatherings; a shared meal with our families and anyone else from the church and community. This provides a relaxed space to share our faith in Jesus where people felt comfortable and the children were able to play games outside. Moving forward we are looking to expand our connection with the wider community via multiple prongs: our playgroup and children’s music groups, and through this families’ group.



Who is Azaria Peach?

Azaria Peach is the Children’s Worker and Play Group Administrator for St Martins–St James, Riccarton–Spreydon Parish, on Lincoln Rd. Azaria has always enjoyed connecting with people, especially children as they learn and grow. She loves the great outdoors and enjoys spending many hours out and about in the New Zealand bush. To get hold of Azaria, please contact the church office: [office@stmartinsstjames.church](mailto:office@stmartinsstjames.church)

#### Want to know more?

Do you want to dip your toe into the School of Good Soil? St Martins–St James Church runs four incredibly profound and fun sessions over the month of May with a choice of either afternoon or evening sessions. Please contact Azaria Peach on [office@stmartinsstjames.church](mailto:office@stmartinsstjames.church)

# Catching the Faith

“Christian faith is both taught and caught, but if we don’t teach it, it’s unlikely to be caught”  
Margie Pugh

Have you heard the quip, “insanity is inherited—you catch it from your children!”? Looking back on our Christian parenting journey, my wife and I have been reflecting on how much of the faith is taught and how much is caught—the old conundrum of nature and nurture, of a kind.

The Bible is clear that we must teach our children God’s ways, His goodness, His nature—and His grand redemption plan. But we can’t just teach—we also need to inhabit the faith ourselves and live out a godly example for our children so they can ‘catch’ it as well as ‘learn’ it. Walking the talk as Christian parents (keeping in mind our children are great at recognising talk that is not authentic).

In our own parenting journey, we got some things right and some things wrong, but despite the rightness or wrongness of any individual decision, the overall approach and habits we strove to develop seem to have worked. We are blessed that both of our children, now adults and married with children of their own, each have a strong faith and are themselves nurturing faith-filled children.

“He gathers the lambs in His arms and carries them close to His heart; He gently leads those that have young” Is 40:11b

The actions we took that contributed to this result, are listed in the green box (a dad and grandad’s perspective) opposite page and the orange box (a mum and grandma’s perspective) right. They are not a magical formula, but we hope they help, inspire and encourage you in your parenting journey.



Families are a circle of strength and love. Credit: flickr / Liz West



### A dad and grandad's perspective—routines of prayer, reading the Scriptures and meeting with other believers

- We started praying for them in the womb (Ps 139:13). We still do.
- We said grace (giving thanks) before each meal, and they soon joined in. From a very young age, we established a night-time prayer routine. Over time they learnt to pray and see the Lord answer their prayers, sometimes urgent ones, like getting the locked car door opened!
- From birth, we took them every week to church with us. They met and got to know the local church family and they attended church from their childhood (Luke 4:16).
- While they were still infants, we began reading age-appropriate Christian Bible stories to them, which they loved. They often asked us to read and re-read these stories with them. As they grew older, we would explain how the story was relevant to them.
- From an early age, we established a bedtime routine every evening that consisted of a Bible story (with actions!). The story of Jonah and the whale was a favourite. Then we would pray together, the kids participating too, and then it was bedtime. If we had visitors to tea, we politely said we had a bedtime routine for the children and would they mind while the children enjoyed that time. (Nobody ever stormed out so it can't have been too bad!)
- In our daughters' early school days they attended a secular school, and each evening when they felt ready, we asked them what they had been learning.

We wanted them to open up about their day's activities, so we could share our views as Christians with them. If the Christian view was different to what they were being taught at school, we explained that not everybody believed in God, and some had a different way of looking at life. These talks weren't lectures, just comfortable conversations with our kids.



Credit: Rod Anderson, Christian Post Cartoonist

### A mum and grandma's perspective—relationship, authenticity and lifting them to God

- We made conscious decisions about our parenting style. We worked hard to build good relationships with them when they were young. Not to be just their friends but keeping the parenting role involved too. This established the boundaries for their teenage years, which helped the communication channel to always be open. [In spite of peer pressure, home life is still a really important thing for teenagers.]
- We kept in mind that our Christian faith is both taught and caught, but if we don't teach it, it's unlikely to be caught. We tried to be real with our Christian faith, and where appropriate, shared how we prayed about our struggles and gave thanks for those we overcome! We tried to admit when we did wrong and needed to seek God's forgiveness.
- We prayed, using Scripture, by putting our child's name into the verse. For example, 2 Thess 3:3, "For the Lord is faithful and will strengthen and protect (child's name) from the evil one". There are lots of other examples in the Scriptures but below are three of my 'go-to' verses:
  - Philippians 1:6—for Salvation
  - Ephesians 3:17-19—for emotional wellbeing
  - 2 Peter 1:5-8—For self-control and diligence

Be encouraged that the Lord understands parenting is hard. He knows when we are tired, or discouraged, and don't know the way ahead. He is a very gracious God and gives help in times of need (Ps 46:1-3, Ps 91:14-16). Daily entrust them into the Lord's care and leave them with Him. Isaiah 40:11b was one of my favourites when our girls were young: "He gathers the lambs in His arms and carries them close to His heart; He gently leads those that have young."



Who are Margie and Nigel Pugh?

Margie and Nigel Pugh have been retired since 2019, having owned their own business prior to that. They have been married nearly 40 years, have two married daughters, and six of the very best grandchildren. They worship and serve at St Martins-St James in Spreydon.

# Imagine No More War

The Memorial Chapel tells a pertinent story

The Christ Church Cathedral Reinstatement Project has many different aspects that make up the complex whole. One of these is salvaging, protecting and preserving any heritage fabrics and treasures, for use in the reinstated cathedral, where it possibly can. One such treasure is the Memorial Chapel panels and other chapel fixtures. Below is an adaptation of material written by Jenny May who is part of the onsite heritage team working for the project.



The St Michael and St George Memorial Chapel (begun post WWI in 1922), is situated in the South Transept of the Cathedral. It is dedicated to those who were killed in both World Wars. The completed Chapel was dedicated by Archbishop Campbell West-Watson and opened as the Chapel of St Michael and St George by Sir Bernard Freyberg, the then Governor General of New Zealand, on Remembrance Day, 6 November 1949.

As was the custom, symbolism was a well-established method of storytelling within architecture. The altars and tables, the panelling, screens and carvings all told stories. The Memorial Chapel told its own story of sacrifice, loss and remembrance. Part of that was directly told via the colours, flags and names from the Canterbury Regiments. Other stories are more subtle and knowledge about symbolism brings them to life.

So, what has been happening to the precious heritage items in the chapel?

- The flags and colours, very fragile, were retrieved immediately post-quake and are in storage.
- The screen dividing the chapel from the nave, carved in 1924 by Frederick George Gurnsey, was originally the choir (or rood) screen that divided the chancel and nave. This screen is still in place.
- The carved screen behind the altar (the reredos) and the altar itself on the east wall of the chapel, are still there along with the west wall panelling.
  - The altar and altar rails (oak) were carved by Dean Carrington in memory of his son, Christopher, who was killed on the Somme in 1916. The altar is referred to as the Carrington altar.
- The magnificent reredos, that sits behind (and above) the altar, was designed by architect Richard Strachan De Renzy Harman but carved by Frederick Gurnsey and his assistant Jake Vivian. The screen features a peacock, a symbol of immortality; poppies on the left, for eternal sleep; and a laurel on the right, for effort and achievement. It also contains two 'pennant' flags belonging to Saints Michael (the champion of justice and guardian of the Church) and George (who represents valour and selflessness and is also the patron saint of England).



Look at the intricate work in this! The reredos screen features a peacock, poppies, a laurel and the pennant flags of Saints George and Michael.



- The south wall panels and credence table (side table for use during a Eucharist) have been retrieved and placed in storage.
- These panels, also carved by Gurnsey and Vivian, contain symbols of the Services – combatant and non-combatant, Navy, Chaplains, Army, Air Force, and Medical.
- The credence table was given by Service Chaplains in memory of the Rev'd Keith Harper, the only serving New Zealand Chaplain to lose his life in WWII. Harper, born in England, was killed at Monte Casino.
- Four angels hold the symbols of four countries—Wales, a leek; Ireland, a shamrock; Scotland, a thistle; and England, a rose. They're in reasonable condition including the gilding (gold overlay),

but some pigeon poo (guano) damage has occurred, and they will need expert cleaning and conservation.

- A carved pīpīwharau (shining cuckoo) is nestled in a wreath of kawakawa. The large heart shaped leaves of the kawakawa are a symbol of courage and fortitude and a branch of kawakawa laid on a marae signifies mourning and death (aituā). A pare kawakawa (mourning wreath) is worn by women at tangihanga. The call of the pīpīwharau is associated with spring or new growth. Among these symbols are carved the words of a whakatauki or proverb “Ka tangi te wharau, ko nga karere a Mahuru.” A literal translation of this is: When the shining cuckoo cries, it heralds the spring. The bird symbolises new life, and signals a change for the better, which is appropriate in this context.



- The panels continue on the west wall of the Chapel and sit under carved Coats of Arms of the countries that constituted the British Empire at that date. Each country's shield is surmounted on a carving of local flora. These have yet to be retrieved.

Like the Citizens War Memorial, this chapel was designed after the first world war but completed after the second world war, with the intention and fervent hope there would be no more war, ever. But given the Afghanistan and Ukraine conflicts so visible today, this hope seems fragile. The symbolism within the Memorial Chapel is there to remind us that peace in all its forms is something worth pursuing. Peace in our hearts, our families, our communities, in NZ, the Pacific and all around the globe, is something we need to be vigilant about, actively pursuing, always.



The team on site have recently removed some of the memorial panels from the Memorial Chapel. The removed panels have been boxed and are in storage awaiting conservation cleaning.  
Credit: Naylor Love

### Heritage significance:

Christ Church Cathedral is scheduled in the Christchurch District Plan as a Highly Significant (Group 1) heritage item and listed as a Category 1 Historic Place by Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga. This means that the Cathedral is recognised at the highest level of national cultural heritage significance. The Reinstatement Project has an unrelenting focus on protecting and preserving this heritage and, where possible, retrieving existing fabrics and treasures. Jenny May has been part of a team behind this aspect of the Reinstatement Project who look forward to the day when the heritage aspects, fabrics and features will be reinstated to their rightful place within the Christ Church Cathedral.



Who is Jenny May?

Jenny May is an architectural historian and heritage professional. Post the Canterbury quakes, she spent a large proportion of her time as the principal heritage consultant to the CCC Heritage Recovery Team. Jenny is also involved in a wide range of Trusts and Boards. She is a past lay canon and a Verger for the Cathedral, where she attends. In 2007 she received the ONZM for her work in heritage.

# Five Strands for Children and Families Ministry

As the church responds to the global pandemic and has had to reconsider how to minister in a changing world, we also find ourselves rethinking our mission and ministry with children and families.

Intergenerational services, Sunday school, Messy Church, family small groups—what’s the silver bullet for growing children and families ministry in 2022? You may have seen different models come and go in your church, but how can we connect with families in this new, changed landscape? The more stories I hear from across the motu, the more I’ve stopped looking for a silver bullet. Perhaps the answer can be found in two, small, three letter words: ‘Yes, and...’.

A whole-hearted community of faith where children are embraced, belong and have opportunities to encounter God will include a lot of ‘Yes, and...’ moments. You will see glimmers and expressions of these five core Strandz values in the life of a church and the holistic discipleship of our tamariki.

## Kingdom pilgrims

Let’s think of children full members of the kingdom, not members-in-training. They have their own faith journey and relationship with God as they are right now. There is no age, height, developmental or intelligence requirements to become a disciple of Jesus, and we journey alongside children on the same pilgrimage of faith. A church that embodies this will provide opportunities to minister with children, not just minister to, or for children. Let’s be committed to do this faith journey together.

## Building strategic faith formation

We walk alongside children through the different stages of their life, and nurture their experience and understanding of who God is in each season. We’re thinking ahead to what they will need as they grow, and who can walk alongside them as they form their faith. Let’s make space for questions, wonderings, stories and provide opportunities for children to use their spiritual gifts for the benefit of the whole community.

## Intergenerational Faith Communities

An intergenerational community of faith is the best place for the discipleship of young people, as we connect up the generations of

faith and provide opportunities to worship together. Australian speaker and worship leader, Beth Barnett, describes intergenerational ministry as “the practice of facilitating, hosting and celebrating the shared life and connections of all and any generations together, in ways that disempower generational divisions, and more wholly embody the call to live as God’s reconciled people in the Kingdom of God.” This doesn’t mean we ditch our peer group ministries—they also have a role to play, as part of a larger intergenerational whānau.

## Partnering with Families

The church has a unique opportunity to advocate for, support and cheer on faith at home, recognising that the vital role of parents and caregivers in sharing God in the daily rhythm of life. The family home has a unique influence and opportunity to display the heart of God to every

generation. Families don’t just want to be seen as part of the church, they want to belong, and they want to be known—for their individuality, their passions, and with space to discover the ways in which they can be a family on mission in their community.

## Whānau

God is already at work in our local community—in the schools, workplaces and groups, in ways that we might not even notice. We also have a role to play as we love, serve and welcome families in our wider community, and the communities we live in. If we believe that children are spiritual beings, then the children and families in our neighbourhood will also be on their own faith journey, and we can help point out where God is at work and give language to express what they see.

It's important that we  
pray for our kids, but  
it's also vital to pray  
with our kids, so  
that we show them  
what it is like to  
have a relationship  
with God our Father.

Andy Frost





"One Generation shall praise  
God's works to one another"  
Psalm 145:4

### 'Yes, and...'

Our kete doesn't just hold one of these values—we need to grow all five. Is it just about seeing children as kingdom pilgrims? Yes, and... it's also about intergenerational ministry, and it's about supporting parents... and... and. If anything, perhaps the church just needs a few more conjunctions.

As you look into your own church kete, I wonder which one of these five values stood out to you? Which one is your church great at living out? Are there any that you may need to invest in more? As we learn to embrace the 'Yes, and...', may our desire for becoming a whole-hearted church not simply be quenched by a single silver bullet or easy fix. May we see glimpses of God's grace as the generations are woven together to become communities of grace, embrace, belonging and encounter.

"Tell it to your children,  
and let your children tell it  
to their children, and their  
children to the next  
generation."

Joel 1:3



"We will tell the  
next generation  
the praiseworthy  
deeds of the  
Lord, his power  
and the wonders  
he has done."

Psalm 78:4



### Sparked an idea for you?

If you want to chat about your children and families' ministry, please contact Emma Tovey, the Christchurch Diocesan Children's Ministry Developer on [cmd@anglicanlife.org.nz](mailto:cmd@anglicanlife.org.nz) or visit her amazingly helpful website [anglicanchildren.com](http://anglicanchildren.com) or the Strandz website [strandz.org.nz](http://strandz.org.nz)



### Who is Diana Langdon?

Diana Langdon is National Children and Families Ministry Enabler for Tikanga Pākehā. She oversees Strandz (the hub of children and families ministry), supporting a network of amazing leaders to encourage and equip the church to grow young disciples with a strong, passionate and lasting faith in Jesus.

# Finding Higher Ground

Most of the time, we get away with not asking ourselves what we really believe. New Zealand is safe, relatively prosperous, and basically cohesive. Our standard of living is good, our people lulled into irreligion and vague worship of the beach and the bach, and crises are far away in other continents or on time scales which make them seem so.

But it is in the moment of sudden shock, the moment in which our trust is tested, that we discover, deep down, what we really hold on to. I have seen this in every context I've ministered in. Crisis has a way of testing you—and Jesus said that it would. Jesus promises his followers: “in this world you will have trouble” (Jn 16:33), and that “through many trials” we enter the kingdom (Acts 14:22). We're even told by James that we should expect and welcome trial because the testing of our faith produces patience and endurance (James 1:2 onwards).

No one I know welcomes trial. It's heavy, hard, and, if long term, will test everything you've got. NZ is now (March

2022) in the peak of the plague. The things we trusted in—prosperity, jobs, family life, the Big Blue Wall that makes us safe from the rest of the world—all those things have been ripped apart. We feel, some of us for the first time, our smallness, our vulnerability, and the shadow of death. Dust to Dust—Ashes to Ashes.

Yes—we need to protect the vulnerable and take sensible precautions according to the law. But as well we can take hold of another opportunity: God asks us in times of trial and crisis to return to him to make the sources and the place of our trust clear. When the things we have trusted in fail, we have two choices: to

retreat into a world of meaninglessness and paralysis, or to strike out for higher ground—to accept the fragility and interdependence of the world and ourselves, and to find the one source of consolation, which is constant, even when hidden.

During my second mobility decline, I lost so many things. Muscle. Brain space. Energy. Friends, even some very close ones. I came within an inch of losing my PhD, and my faith. Lost in a fog of resentment, I lashed out at God in much the same way as some do in the moment of testing. This doesn't feel fair. Partly, it's because we are out of practice with unfashionable virtues like patience and



Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry his cross. Credit: freepik/wirestock



endurance and self-control. Partly it's because we too often no longer form communities in which vulnerability and long-term suffering are safe. But, in my own life, I came to realise that the loss of those things I valued, while excruciating, was an opportunity for me to abandon substitutes for God and find him in the dark. "Some trust in horses, some in chariots, we will trust in the Lord Our God" (Ps 20:7).

We can try to limit suffering, to fight against it, but we cannot eliminate it. In the moment where we cannot see God, in the moment we are prisoners to our own limits and our own wounded sight, that is when mature faith begins; faith not in God as a cosmic Santa, Guarantor of Comfort, and Giver of Presents, but in the Crucified God who bore his cross

that we might be healed and whole. We are so, not necessarily by being spared every trial and every chance, but by taking every trial and every chance as a refining ground for Faith, Hope, and Love, and for the kind of community that values "suffering with" and nurtures deep relationships.

The difference between the people who outlast their trials and those felled by them is those acts of enduring trust and faithful service and "upright conduct", even in the dark, supported by others, and by Faith. For example...

- A woman dying of painful motor neurone disease, her hands clamped around her holding cross, still saying "I love you" and "I am not afraid".

- The homeless man telling me his story of horror and family abuse, and then belting out "Tama Ngākau Mārie" and receiving communion kneeling on the cracked footpath, like the child he used to be.

Trials are inevitable, and, even as we pray in the Lord's Prayer to be delivered from them, we know that we will inevitably be bashed around—by life, time, chance, plague, and trial. Yet and still, the death of the things we are so often tempted to trust in can be "a severe mercy." We can look upon trial as an invitation to join the human race, to embrace our littleness, to follow Christ in the Way of Sorrow, knowing that in the end it will be the way of Life and Glory.

*Thanks: This article was originally published in Common Ground, the online magazine of Venn Foundation. To learn more go to [www.venn.org.nz](http://www.venn.org.nz)*

### Still My Soul

Be still, my soul; the Lord is on your side;  
bear patiently the cross of grief or pain;  
leave to your God to order and provide;  
in ev'ry change he faithful will remain.  
Be still, my soul; your best, your heav'nly friend  
through thorny ways leads to a joyful end.

*Lyrics: Kathrina von Schlegel / Translator: Jane Borthwick*



### Who is Rev'd Dr John Fox?

Rev'd Dr John Fox is Priest Assistant at St Christopher's Church, Avonhead, and the Senior Ecumenical Chaplain at Canterbury University. John was raised in Westport, Christchurch and North Canterbury, and comes originally from a Pentecostal background. He has been an academic, worked in family and community restoration, public policy, and children's and youth work, as well as stints in pastoral care for students and disabled people. He is a trustee of Elevate, the Christian Disability Trust, a vocal opponent of euthanasia being legalised, an uncle, brother, son, grandson and friend. He specializes in good coffee, teaching adults to read, music, and slow food.

"Gentle Jesus, meek and mild is a snivelling modern invention, with no warrant in the gospels."  
George Bernard Shaw

# Embrace the Weirdness of Jesus...

and be transformed!

How are you at embracing weirdness? Parents of teenagers are probably used to their children thinking of them in this way. Some parents fight it and try and to compensate, while others embrace it. It's only later, teens realise who the real conformists are!

But what about your faith? Do you realise that Christianity is just plain weird? Let's cut through the domesticated 'gentle Jesus meek and mild' to the reality. Jesus was thought of as an oddball. He was anti-establishment. He taught in an ego-centric way "you have heard it said but I say...". He hung out with the misfits of society. He was roundly rejected by politicians and social influencers. He was marched out of Jerusalem and crucified in the most degrading, humiliating way conceivable. But sadly, ever since the first Pentecost, Christians have swung between following the 'weird' example of Jesus and following a 'tame' Jesus that is more acceptable to the prevailing culture—from weirdness to safety.

I think it's time that we rediscovered the true character of our faith—in our churches, in our ministries, with children and families, with our young people, with our clergy and lay people. It's time to start being weird again—and embracing it!

The resurrected Jesus said to his disciples "As the Father sent me so I send you." John's version of the great commission shows that our mission must be in continuity with the mission of

Jesus. The mission of our Diocese must be modelled on the mission of Jesus. And the early Church followed Jesus in this way. Paul said, "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ" (1 Cor 11:1).

So, what was Jesus' example? He sought out and befriended the lost and lonely. He offered generous hospitality to those in need. He stood against those corrupted by power and privilege. This was Jesus' mission and as we stand in continuity with Jesus, it must be our mission too.

Let's open up the scriptures and rediscover Jesus and see just how disturbing and eccentric he must have seemed to those who encountered him. His deep compassion, unconditional love and courageous opposition to all that was evil must have seemed weird and downright dangerous. We need to meet the real Jesus again and not be satisfied with an 'airbrushed' version.

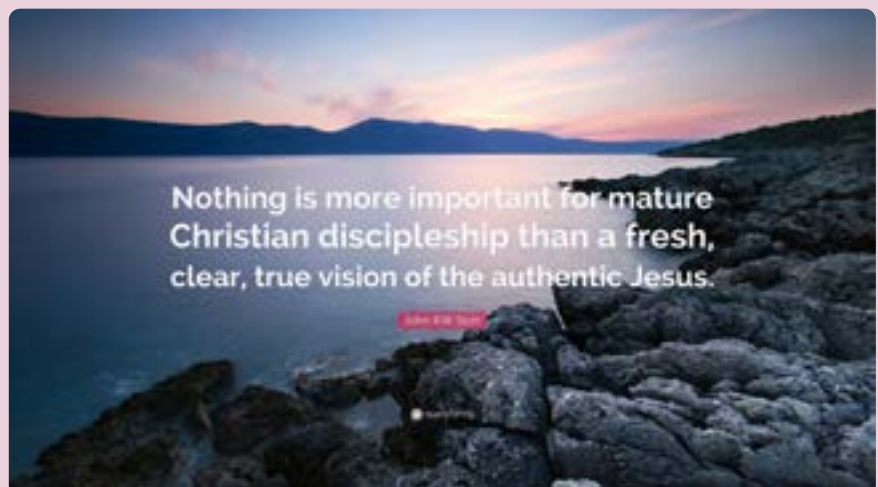
So how do we engage with the real Jesus? Well, we must first acknowledge that any talk of growth and change can be costly and difficult. We're simply not used to swimming against the tide. But as Christians we fundamentally believe that we can change and here's how.

First of all, we need to keep encountering Jesus in the Bible. We also need to keep praying that the Holy Spirit will help us—it is a spiritual work. And finally, we need to be accountable. Generally speaking, people take the easier route unless we know we are accountable to someone. This means opening up our lives to someone we trust and being honest about our struggles and spiritual progress.

The other dimension is to help our whole church reflect the character of Jesus to the community. This might mean organising a Messy Church for families and finishing with an inclusive celebration meal—making sure all kinds of families are invited. It might mean sponsoring, either formally or informally, a refugee family. It might mean adopting a section of highway and cleaning up the rubbish. It might mean blessing the local community with a Christmas or Easter gift. It might mean cleaning up the local skate park and basketball court. It might mean finding ways to advocate for climate justice. These ideas and many more besides are ways whole churches can obey Jesus' commission "As the Father sent me so I send you."



Credit: uncagedbird.com







Modern Last Supper Credit: Raw Spoon

As churches brainstorm and implement what might be appropriate for their local communities, some unexpected consequences emerge. One thing that emerges as we embark on doing mission, is that the faith of those involved is deepened. That happens because faith is formed more effectively through actions rather than words. Words can be cheap, but actions show the true intention of the heart.

Additionally, as we participate with Jesus in his mission to the world, we find that a greater sense of community is developed and sustained. It is not

the superficial community of singing hymns with people we happen to share a pew with, but the deep community of missional engagement—we grow as we go.

And, as others see us taking action to usher in God's Kingdom of justice and love, all kinds of people will be attracted to our faith and want to experience what we enjoy. Evangelism will emerge from an authentic community. It might seem weird but somehow makes sense at a deeper level.

Australian author Michael Frost wrote "The Christian movement must be the living, breathing promise to society that it is possible to live out the values of Christ—that is, to be a radical, troubling alternative to the power imbalances in the empire. In a world of greed and consumerism, the church ought to be a community of generosity and selflessness."

So, let's embrace weirdness, be transformed and live out the authentic life of Jesus!



Ven. Canon Mark Chamberlain

Mark is the recently appointed Archdeacon for Regeneration and Mission and is available to support parishes in their journey toward discipleship and growth. He is married to Pip, has five adult children and four grandchildren. He enjoys, tramping, gardening and reading.



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# Is Your Marriage Like Ships Passing in the Night?

Connecting with your spouse in busy times

My wife, Susan, and I began our married life living about three hours apart in driving distance. From time to time some of my friends would regularly ask me, “How is your marriage doing?” or “Aren’t you finding married life difficult?” or “When do you get to spend time with your wife?”

*(The answers I gave my friends are in a are in the orange speech-bubble on the next page)*

I had moved to a city of about 100,000 because the best job offer I had was there, and Susan stayed at her teaching position at the university where we had met. You, too, might wonder how we managed, since our living apart encompassed the whole time that we were still officially newly-weds, and another year after that.

We definitely looked forward to our time together, and we used it first and foremost to enjoy each other’s company, regardless of any of the routine or unexpected intrusions that are always part of everyday life. This kind of marriage certainly isn’t for everyone, and yet many couples face similar struggles, carving out time each week to be together. Pursuing different career tracks and juggling child-care responsibilities can mean that spouses end up passing like “ships in the night”. When do you find time to “just talk”? How do you navigate the various errands and chores that need doing? Simply answering these questions or dealing with such issues explains the reasons why our relationship worked then, and continues to work now. To do that, I refer you to the green box at the top right of the opposite page.

These suggestions come from a worthwhile book entitled, *The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work*, by John M. Gottman and Nan Silver. The book is based on Gottman’s research and observations of the habits of



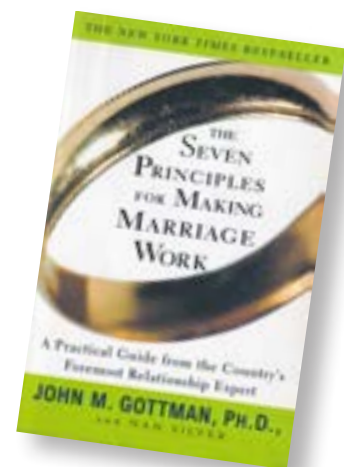
Credit: supplied

married couples. He has identified seven principles that guide couples on the path toward a harmonious and long-lasting relationship. But perhaps most important (well it was for us) is what Gottman calls “The Magic Five Hours.” He makes a most startling claim: that working briefly on your marriage every day will do more for your health and longevity than working out in a health club!

One of the things I like most about this book is the unswervingly positive approach that the authors’ take toward improving marriage relationships. Based on their research they emphasise the “you-catch-more-flies-with-honey-than-you-do-with-vinegar” approach to a relationship. For us, this meant:

- Partings: keeping up-to-date with each other’s thoughts and feelings, hopes and fears, goals and struggles;
- Admiration / Appreciation: expressing admiration, fondness, and respect for each other;
- Affection: speaking and acting in sympathetic, affectionate, and encouraging ways that let each other know that we are valued; and
- Listening / Being Influenced: letting each other influence our decision making by taking their opinions and feelings into account.

In spite of being so far apart, our 30-45 minute conversations on the telephone each evening covered several items that make up ‘The Magic Five Hours.’ We covered Partings by making sure that we learn something about the other’s coming day, especially when will be the best time to call tomorrow! We included Reunions by asking (and being sympathetic listeners to) how the day went for each other. We also used this time to express admiration and appreciation—and affection—for each other. It felt quite unusual for us to talk this way over the phone, but it became



Credit: Gottman, John and Nan Silver. “*The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work*.” New York: Three Rivers Press, 1999. (ISBN 0-609-80579-7)



another way of fanning the flames of romance so that we really looked forward to spending our day off together!

For us, as Christians, the whole orientation of the book made a lot of sense. A New Testament passage that really speaks to both of us is Colossians 3:12-17. Paul reminds us to be compassionate, kind, humble, gentle, and patient; to bear with one another and forgive one another; to live in peace and to be thankful to God in all circumstances. Gottman has given us a practical way to live out these Christian virtues in our marriage.

#### ANSWERS:

1. Very well.
2. No.
3. Almost every week.

#### Who is Philip Baldwin?

Philip Baldwin moved from Canada to New Zealand with his wife, Susan, in 2009 when she became Vicar of the Parish of Malvern. They have both been active in a variety of roles in the Diocese of Christchurch, in the parish, and in the township of Darfield over the past 13 years. They are retiring to Kaikoura this year, and plan to enjoy the beauty of creation there with their two dogs, Max and Major.

### The Magic Five Hours

**Partings:** Make sure before you say good-bye at the beginning of your day (or good-night at the end of it) that you have learned one thing that will happen in your partner's life that day—from lunch with the boss to a doctor's appointment to a scheduled phone call with an old friend. Time: 2 mins / day x 5 working days = 10 minutes

**Reunions:** Be sure to have a stress-reducing conversation at the end of the working day. Time: 20 mins / day x 5 working days = 1 hour 40 minutes

**Express admiration and appreciation:** Find at least one way, every day, to communicate genuine affection and appreciation toward your spouse. Time: 5 mins / day x 7 days = 35 minutes

**Affection:** Kiss, hold, grab, touch each other during the time you are together. Make sure to kiss each other before going to sleep. Think of that kiss as a way to let go of any minor irritations or resentments that have built up over the day. In other words, lace your kiss with forgiveness and tenderness for your partner. Time: 5 minutes / day x 7 days = 35 minutes

**Weekly Date:** This can be a relaxing, low-pressure way to stay connected. Ask each other questions that let you update your connection with each other, or work out a marital issue, or finish an argument you had that week.

Think of questions to ask your spouse like "Are you still thinking about redecorating the bedroom?" or "Where should we take our next vacation?" or "How are you feeling about your boss these days?" Time: 2 hours once a week

**Grand Total = 5 hours**



# Retreats as Spiritual Dentistry

How taking time out is a crucial part of spiritual practice

Eddie O'Connor, Director of Sister Eveleen Retreat House in Sumner, hosts and/or leads a variety of retreats, meditations and gatherings from the unique venue, perched on the hill above the Scarborough coastline. In April he led a five-day Holy Week retreat for five God-seekers.

What a privilege and blessing to spend Easter with an amazing group of people, as we walked through the Easter story together in silence.

One day that particularly struck me was Holy Saturday. The theme for that day was the sabbath—what it means and why we should have one. The passage we focused on was from the book of Luke, where Jesus and the disciples encounter the Pharisees, who are not happy with Jesus and his teaching about what the sabbath means:

One Sabbath Jesus was going through the grainfields, and his disciples began to pick some heads of grain, rub them in their hands and eat the kernels. Some of the Pharisees asked, "Why are you doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?"

Jesus answered them, "Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? He entered the house of God, and taking the consecrated bread, he ate what is lawful only for priests to eat. And he also gave some to his companions." Then Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath." Luke 6: 1-5

The Pharisees embody a Sabbath that is about obedience to rules, whereas Jesus is advocating something much more radical—that on the Sabbath the spiritual needs of the people are more important than any other obligation.

When I suggest somebody takes a time of retreat, the response I often hear is: "I don't have time," or, "I just can't prioritise that right now." Retreat centres are places where one is deliberately encouraged not to work. Many find this incredibly challenging and it's not uncommon for me to find a retreatant catching up on work or life administration, even when they've said they feel swamped and overworked. We don't know how to turn off these days. We think time spent on unproductive activity (or inactivity) is 'wasted time' and taking a retreat is either self-indulgent or lazy.

But I've also noticed another pattern emerging over the last year or so. A small group of people, some with big jobs and young families, deliberately setting aside time to come and stay for two or three days, once or twice a year. Parents will often take turns, with one parent coming

"Times of retreat are like spiritual dentistry—they are not an indulgence, but a necessity"  
Eddie O'Connor

up while the other looks after the kids, and then trading places with the other. It's a way for them to get the space necessary to rest and listen to what God is saying to them in that particular moment.

Jesus is very clear in his teaching: having a Sabbath is crucial for our relationship with God.

I'd like to suggest that times of retreat are like spiritual dentistry—they are not an indulgence, but a necessity. The hectic pace of modern life affects our souls like sugar affects our teeth. The busier we are, the more spiritual plaque builds up and the less we are able to hear what God is saying to us. And just like dentistry, the longer you go without a time of retreat, the more difficult your check-up will be. So, in this winter season, how about booking in a retreat (either at Sister Eveleen, or somewhere else)? Otherwise, you just might find yourself in need of a spiritual root canal!



Eddie O'Connor, Director of Sister Eveleen Retreat House (SERH) in Sumner, has been a contemplative all his life but he's only recently embraced it. In 2019 he left a career in business management to pursue what he felt were his two callings—writing and teaching contemplative prayer. In April, Eddie began the process of becoming an Ignatian Spiritual Director which he plans to bring into his work at SERH.

Credit: Enos Mantoani from [www.mediamedia.ca](http://www.mediamedia.ca)

God created the  
Sabbath Rest for your  
benefit and blessing.  
You are invited to...

- Rest from your work, cease your striving, and take a pause
- Relax in God's presence and Receive God's Shalom
- Spend time in Relationship with God, being Renewed in your mind, your body, your strength and your spirit

Credit: Sixteen Miles Out / Unsplash



# Book for Families and Faith

## Picture Books

**When God Made You:** This delightful little rhyming story explains how we are all unique and have individual special gifts. It teaches children “how they fit into God’s divine plan.”

**God Gave us Love:** A tender story about getting along with others, showing love to one another, and recognising that all love is from God. “Any time we show love, Little Cub, we’re sharing a bit of His love”.



## For Families

**Activity Cards for Families:** The library has three sets of conversation/thought provoking activity cards. They can be either quick or in depth, depending on the person responding! There are Faith Talk cards, Our Family cards, and A Heart Which Sees cards (turning words into actions). Including Bible verses, prayer suggestions, and activities—they are positive and affirming for families.

**70 Prayer Starters for Children:** A simple book on prayer which aims to help parents and teachers to engage with God from the child’s point of view. Ideas include expressing praise to God through artwork and praying with scripture.

**Family Spirituality:** This short book is designed to help busy families celebrate God’s presence amidst the ups and downs of everyday family life. “Family life sometimes feels anything but spiritual...(but) God is always present...not only in the joys, but also in the turmoil, squabbles,

sadness and even serious challenges that are part of day-to-day-life.”

**Faith-filled moments:** Activities that can be easily incorporated into family life that help to grow an awareness of God. This is a very cool book—it’s simple and do-able, easy to pick-and-mix or work methodically through, and short enough for frazzled parents to cope with!

**Indescribable:** This is an attractive book of 100 science-based family devotions targeted to “help kids discover the incredible creation of our indescribable God”.

**Grace for the Moment:** This Max Lucado book presents short but deep daily devotions (and practical applications) for every day of the year. The writing is very accessible and easily understood.



## For Parents

Loving our kids on purpose: thought-provoking ideas about how to train children to manage their freedoms and protect their hearts. But it starts with you the parent—align your habits to God’s values, so you can help your children grow in God’s love.

The sticky faith guide: How sticky is your faith? Positive and practical, with over 100 ideas and tools, this book aims to empower and provide hope for parents so they can maximise the ‘stickiness’ of their faith. This is a very encouraging, compassionate book that offers hope and affirmation to every ‘trying-to-do-better’ parent (and grandparent).



## Bibles

**My first Hands-on Bible:** For little ones—our favourite well-known stories broken into short sections. Every four pages it includes an activity, a prayer and a “Jesus connection”.

**Hands-on Bible:** For older children—the full bible but rich with explanations, overviews, key verses, related facts, timelines, biographies (of characters) and activities. This is a Bible for motivated readers to read on their own.

**The Action Bible:** For lovers of graphic novels, here is the Bible presented in comic strip style—with God as the original action hero.

**Manga Metamorphosis:** Another comic strip presentation, this time in the popular Japanese Manga style. It starts after Jesus’ death and follows the early church movement. This is a less familiar view of the Bible for older children and teens who are bored by standard Bible narratives.

# Belonging to God's Family

## The Lord's Prayer



**OUR FATHER**  
IN HEAVEN, HALLOWED  
BE YOUR NAME.



YOUR KINGDOM COME,  
**YOUR WILL BE DONE**  
ON EARTH AS IN HEAVEN.



**GIVE US TODAY OUR**  
**DAILY BREAD.**



**FORGIVE US** OUR SINS,  
AS WE **FORGIVE** THOSE  
WHO SIN AGAINST US.

**LEAD US**  
NOT INTO  
TEMPTATION,  
BUT **DELIVER US**  
FROM EVIL.



**FOR THE KINGDOM,**  
THE POWER AND  
THE GLORY ARE YOURS.  
**NOW AND FOREVER. AMEN**

Use this prayer card reminder to help your children learn and pray the Lord's Prayer

- Listen to *Cheeky Monkey* say what the prayer means
- Learn actions to go with it from the *Family Fed Children's Ministry* or make up your own
- Find more fun Lord's Prayer activities here on the [Canadian DLTk website](#)





"Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful." Colossians 3:15

"See how very much our Father loves us, for he calls us his children, and that is what we are!" 1 John 3:1

"If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone." Romans 12:18

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[editor@anglicanlife.org.nz](mailto:editor@anglicanlife.org.nz)

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