



Anglican Diocese of Christchurch

AnglicanLife eMagazine (Hope)

From Bishop Peter Carrell

Hope

What a year this has been for our world! War in Sudan, Gaza and Ukraine has continued, and widened, to include southern Lebanon. President Trump has been elected to be president again – heralding uncertainties about future policy and delivery on promises made. Nearer to home, the promised Treaty principles bill has secured its first reading and catalysed huge protests throughout Aotearoa New Zealand. Our planet heats up without let up. At least inflation on food and fuel prices seems to be having a let up.

What might we hope for in 2025?

Naturally, we will hope that the world changes for the better. That the wars cease and the killing stops. That governments around the world, not only in the USA, embrace sensible policies that are sensitive to the stresses and strains of life, especially for those who live at the hard end of the uneven playing field. Even better if those policies mitigate climate change and bring forth justice. In a world awash with wealth, might there be a better share in that wealth for the poor?

At Christmas we have opportunity to again proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. That into a harsh world, the Son of God was born according to God's plan for the salvation of the world. With the birth of Jesus came hope – the hope that true transformation of humanity occurs when we embrace the death and resurrection of Jesus and allow his life to be our life.

Whatever we hope for in 2025, may our hope be grounded in the good news of Jesus Christ. As we hope for changes to our global and local situations, may we be empowered by the Spirit of Jesus to be agents of transformation so that what we hope for the whole world may be lived out in our own lives. A better world is not about a better government or better climate or better relationship between and within nations. A better world is about you and me being better people because the life of Jesus transforms our lives.

Put more simply, may Jesus be born again in us this Christmas!

+Peter



AnglicanLife eMagazine (Hope) issue 82

"Hope has a name".

Throughout this year, our magazine focused on love (Easter), joy (winter), peace (spring), and now hope (Advent).

As we prepare for the busy month of Advent and Christmas in 2024, we hold fast to the unshakeable hope we have in Jesus Christ (Hebrews 6:19-20) and pray we do not waver for He "who has promised is faithful" (Hebrews 10:23).

Below is an excerpt of a poem excerpt by Isaac Wimberley, also read out in Kari Jobe's song "[Forever](#)" ([YouTube video, 12](#)

[mins 44 seconds](#)):

*"... hope has a name,
joy has a name,
peace has a name,
love has a name,
and that name is Jesus Christ!*

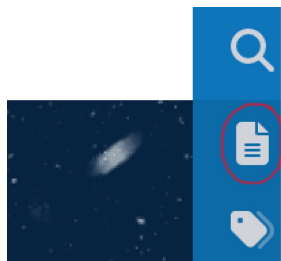
Praise His name forever!"

And

"I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in Him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit". (Romans 15:13, NLT)

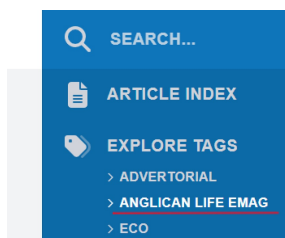
May your hope be anchored in the Lord Jesus Christ, and be renewed by reading His Word, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.

To read all of the articles in this issue, go to the top right and hover over the second icon called "Article Index" (see circled below):



The indicated icon is the "Article Index". — Image by: Anglican Centre Staff

Next, select "Anglican Life eMag" (see underlined below):



Select 'Anglican Life eMag' to read all articles in this issue. — Image by: Anglican Centre Staff

We hope you will enjoy reading this issue.

May we continue to encourage each other each week as we go in the name of Christ to share the living hope we have to others.

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An Active Hope

Words: Kris Singh, Marketing and Communications Manager, Anglican Missions (Aotearoa New Zealand and Polynesia).

By now, you've probably had at least one conversation about how fast the year has flown by. These chats tend to appear in November, when the countdown to Christmas becomes real, and we scramble to wrap up last-minute plans, set holiday arrangements, and weigh in on when it's acceptable to start decorating.

It's an odd paradox—we spend the year racing toward December 25th, only to wonder where it went once we get there. Maybe it's the hope of a break that flips those calendar pages forward so quickly. Hope for a break, a fresh start, or the simple joy of time with loved ones.

It's also curious that hope often comes paired with uncertainty – with waiting. Advent reveals that tension between the "already" and the "not yet", challenging us to live in a tension that oftentimes stretches us beyond our capacity. After all, hope is hard to hold onto in the face of sickness, family trouble, financial strain or loss.

Advent and the birth of Christ are deeply connected to that sense of uncertainty. Mary and Joseph faced unknowns from the moment of the angel's announcement through to their difficult journey to Bethlehem. The political climate was turbulent, and people's expectations of a powerful Messiah were fulfilled quietly, humbly, and in ways few anticipated – a baby in a manger.

But the beauty of Advent is that it's not a time of passive waiting, like sitting idly at a bus stop. It's active, hopeful anticipation which dares us to look beyond the capacity of our current circumstances. Advent is God's plan for humanity's problem.

I'm a huge space geek, and one of my favourite space movies is "Apollo 13". It tells the story of the 1970 Apollo 13 mission to the moon. During the mission, an oxygen tank exploded, and the three astronauts onboard Apollo 13 found themselves in a harrowing life-or-death situation, floating 200,000 miles away from Earth with a crippled ship and very few options that ended in their survival.

Hope is not naive or blind to reality. Those astronauts and engineers were acutely aware of their situation; they saw every flaw, every broken piece of equipment, and every limitation of time and resources. The astronauts had the added heartbreak of passing by the moon and never landing on it.

But rather than give into despair, mission control and the astronauts turned their hope into action. They meticulously worked through options, used all available resources, and relied on their training, refusing to give up even in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds. The three Apollo astronauts followed a new star in the sky – Earth – to find their salvation.

In a world that feels like it's constantly on fire, it can be so easy to fall into the black void of hopelessness, drifting in space without a way to get home. Advent offers us a chance to pause during all this complexity and remember that hope isn't a feel-good notion. It's a fiercely powerful sustaining force that drives us to act, love, and persevere in ways we could never imagine.

This Advent, hold onto that resilient hope. The hope that doesn't ignore your struggles but moves and works through them. Let hope be your guiding star to look towards, keeping you moving forward and trusting in the One who is greater than our individual circumstances. Because that's the hope that believes when things are broken. That's the hope that leads us home.



Playgroup Community Outreach

Words + Photos: Azaria Brooker, Children's Ministry Developer

I have been involved in facilitating a playgroup at St Martin's (a.k.a. St MJ's Church), Riccarton-Spreydon Parish, for the past 4 year. Over this time, I have seen 200% grown from an average of 7 children per week to about 21 children per week. Most of our growth is through word-of-mouth, people inviting their friend and other parents they meet at the park and preschool.

I have seen great community flourish out of this space, and we see people connect with each other and with us. After reflecting a lot on this and what I have seen and experienced, I

can see that it relates to regeneration and the mission of God's Kingdom. It creates an invitation for people to come into a church and experience community and the kingdom of God in many little ways.



Image by: Azaria Brooker

St MJ's Playgroup, many other Preschool playgroups and music groups that the churches run in our Diocese are all about connecting and serving. For example, creating a space for the caregivers to connect with each other and with the church people running the groups, and serving our local community by providing a fun, safe environment at minimal cost. By doing this you are building connections with your wider community in a way that meets their actual needs.



Image by: Azaria Brooker

I have been talking to many other people who help run and facilitate playgroups and music groups and I have found they experience many of the same things.



Image by: Azaria Brooker

Preschool music groups are one of the most effective and simple ways to connect with the community around your church. Parenting young toddlers can be hard at times especially when stay-at-home parents feel isolated and lonely, craving adult interaction. With a simple group that has both music, and some time for the children to play together and parents to chat to each other, you can minister to both the kids and the adults. The church becomes a fun, safe and familiar place.

"I am constantly amazed at the questions, discussions and conversations that I have with or overhear from non-Christian parents after our music group. Many of these parents have never been inside a church building before. When we simply listen to and love these parents and their children with the Fruit of the Spirit we are given, we minister to them as Jesus did. As the relationship grows, many will ask questions about our faith and beliefs, and watching them take those first unsure but hopeful steps towards Christ, fills my heart with joy and hope. Take the chance, meet them, listen to them, love them. And watch God at work." – Meaghan Gaarkeuken, St Barnabas Church, Woodend.

"Bubz and bops is a preschool music group at St Aidan's church in Bryndwr that we started on Tuesday mornings in July 2024. So far, it is a small group of a few families, and it is wonderful to see all the kids and parents becoming such close friends already. It is such a joy to see the children coming out of their shells". - Ruth Allan-Johns, St Aidan's Church, Bryndwr.

I love hearing these stories about what other groups are seeing and experiencing. It is so encouraging as Preschool music groups are such an important ministry of our churches.

I would love to hear more about what Preschool group you have happening in your local church.

[Azaria Brooker](#)

Children's Ministry Developer



Stage One of Youth Hub Christchurch opens

Word: Rachael Cox + Photos: Youth Hub Christchurch



Image by: Youth Hub Christchurch

Stage One of New Zealand's first purpose-built Youth Hub, complete with supported housing facilities, has opened its doors in central Christchurch.

"Right from the start Anglican Care has supported this project," Chair of the Youth Hub Trust Dame Sue Bagshaw says.

"I can't thank them enough for purchasing the acre of land in 2018 for the Hub at 109 Salisbury Street in central Christchurch and leasing it back to Youth Hub Trust to build and run the facility."

"Without Anglican Care's generosity and support, this project would quite simply would not have happened," Sue says.

"We are so pleased Anglican Care saw this as an investment in Christchurch's future and in helping young people to reach their potential."

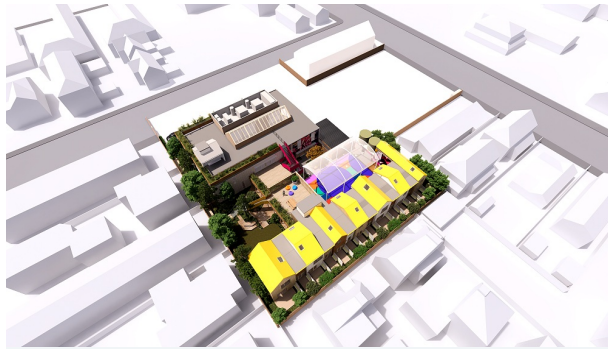


Image by: Youth Hub Christchurch

The Youth Hub's vision is to enable all young people in Ōtautahi Christchurch the opportunity to lead healthy, safe and valued lives, fulfilling their potential and vibrantly contributing to their community.

The Youth Hub site at 109 Salisbury Street in the central city used to be a swamp area where many Kahikatea trees grew. The trees grew to be the tallest trees in the forest by interlocking their roots in the swampy ground to stay stable. The Youth hub Trust hopes that the Hub will provide young people with interlocking roots in the Youth Hub community to have a place they can call their own – their Tūrakawaewae – a place to stand.

The \$21 million Stage One of the Youth Hub includes a wraparound services block for a dozen youth providers including anchor tenants Te Tahī Youth, Voyce Whakarongo Mai, Youthline, as well as an outdoor activities courtyard.



Aerial Stage One once complete — Image by: The Youth Hub

A supported housing wing with 22 bedrooms will open in early in the New Year, while a Recreation and Events Centre will be built in 2025. The Youth Hub Trust continues to fundraise to build another wing of housing, along with communal spaces including a café, creative arts spaces, carving workshop and garden areas.

"We have deteriorating rates of youth mental health and wellbeing, and we need to try different things if we want to turn this around," Dame Sue says.

"We hope that Youth Hub Christchurch help all Christchurch youth, especially those who have had a rough start in life, break the intergenerational cycle of adversity and give them the skills, support and confidence they need to thrive."

The Hub is expected to deliver more than 8,000 connection points with young people aged between 10 and 25 annually once open.

Further information about the Youth Hub, including ways to donate, are available [on its website](#).



Dame Sue Bagshaw with Youthline
Volunteer Coordinator Ataahua Hepi. —
Image by: Rata Foundation The Youth Hub



Hope in the Cross

Photo + Words: Edwin Boyce

A visitor to the Anglican Centre recently remarked that she was disappointed by the lack of visible signs that we were a Christian organisation.

I took her to the entrance lobby and pointed out the two-meter high, back-lit wooden cross standing prominently there. She was surprised—it had been there the whole time, and yet she had never noticed it.

This made me wonder, has the cross, once a striking symbol of our faith, become so commonplace that we no longer notice it? More importantly, have we lost sight of the profound hope that it represents?

The cross in the entrance of the Anglican Centre is no ordinary structure. I crafted it from wood recovered from one of our churches after the Canterbury earthquakes. I won't specify which church, because in many ways, it represents all our churches that were damaged, as well as the collective sacrifices we've faced. Like the original cross of Christ, it reminds us of sacrifice and loss—but also of hope.

And just as the first cross was a reminder of Christ's ultimate sacrifice, this cross, too, holds deep meaning.

The wood bears imperfections—nail holes, dents, and scars—reminders of the trials it has endured. In these flaws, we see a reflection of ourselves, our sins, and our brokenness. Yet, we also see something greater, the hope of redemption, symbolised by the light shining behind the cross.

Jesus carried our imperfections and sins to the cross, transforming them into hope and renewal. This cross, made from the remains of a damaged church, hanging with all its flaws exposed, is a powerful symbol of the hope we hold for the renewal of our diocese. It's a reminder that no matter how broken things may seem, through the cross, there is always hope for restoration.

The cross reminds us that even from destruction, something new can arise. It points to the resurrection, where after death and suffering came new life. And just as the cross brought life and hope to the world through Jesus, it reminds us today that our diocese, our community, and our faith can also be renewed. The hope in the cross is not just for the future, it's a promise for us now.

So, next time you visit the Anglican Centre, take a moment to notice the cross in the entrance. Come closer, reflect on its meaning, and let it renew your hope in the power of the cross.



Cathedral Update

Words + Photos: CCRL

As we have previously shared, as result of the request for further central support for the reinstatement of Christ Church Cathedral being declined in August, construction must pause. Work on site will cease in early December 2024.

This has a far-reaching impact on the Cathedral completion timeline and cost. Nevertheless, it is a pause in construction,

not a pause in finding a solution.

The contractor is now removing the scaffolding, protecting the site and tidying up prior to handover to CCRL at the beginning of December. In turn, CCRL is focused on minimising ongoing costs during this new phase. Moving the project team on site in Cathedral Square is part of this. This is a time for careful custodianship and all the incredible work that has been completed to date. We have a stabilised Cathedral and have a project that is already one third completed. We know what we need to do but must focus on finding a way to achieve it.

At a joint meeting of CPT and CCRL in October, there was unanimous agreement that the reinstatement of the Cathedral remains our objective, and we will continue to work to find funding support.

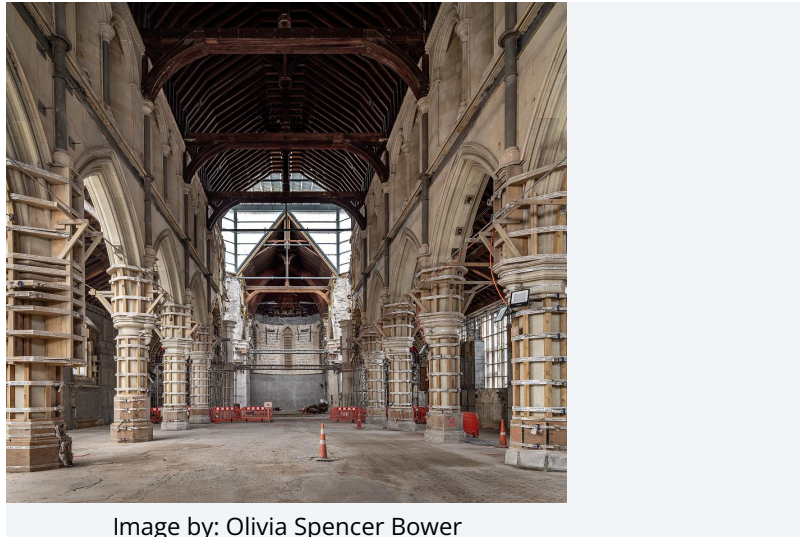


Image by: Olivia Spencer Bower

Christ Church Cathedral will welcome group visits inside this Christmas – yes inside – where they will be greeted by the 10-metre steel City Mission Christmas Tree.

The *Twelve Days of Christmas* event offers bookings for up to 50 visitors at a time on weekdays from 3 - 18 December 2024.

Donation entry to the visit is a minimum \$25 koha.

All proceeds go to the Christchurch City Mission. Opening the Cathedral and erecting and lighting the tree has been achieved at no cost to Christ Church Cathedral Reinstatement Limited (CCRL), or the City Mission, thanks to the generous support of Christchurch businesses.

Booking is essential and places are limited so [please book now](#).

If you can't visit, gifts and non-perishable donations are still welcomed to be dropped to the Transitional Cathedral (234 Hereford St) anytime between 9am - 4pm Monday to Friday.

'With all of our hands the roof of the Cathedral will rise again'.

Have a look at Christ Church Cathedral Reinstatement [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#) pages and please follow us.

"Hope is the power of being cheerful in circumstances that we know to be desperate."

G. K. CHESTERTON (1874-1936)

Snippets

"Hope is the power of being cheerful in circumstances that we know to be desperate."—G. K. Chesterton (1874-1936)



Sermon at the Ordination of Deacons

Words: Ven. Indrea Alexander, Archdeacon of Mid Canterbury
+ Photo: Yvette Koo Butcher

**Sermon at the ordination of deacons, Christchurch Transitional Cathedral
Saturday, 23 November 2024 by Ven. Indrea Alexander,
Archdeacon of Mid Canterbury.**

Bible readings: Isaiah 42:1-7; Romans 12:1-13; and John 12:20-26.

One of the books that accompanied me through childhood was "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe"—the classic C. S. Lewis story of good and evil, failure and forgiveness, costly sacrificial love, resurrection, and talking animals.

The book was subsequently turned into a BBC TV series, and then a movie – mainly filmed in NZ.

Yesterday was the anniversary of C. S. Lewis' death in 1963, and while I first met him in the pages of children's fantasy, he was an acclaimed Christian writer, broadcaster and apologist—that's not someone who apologises for Christianity, but someone who offers sustained and reasoned argument in defence of the truth of Christianity.

He had grappled with questions of faith for years before becoming a follower of Jesus at 32. He later described his younger self as having been paradoxically "angry with God for not existing."

His quotable quotes are myriad.

"I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen: not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else."—C. S. Lewis

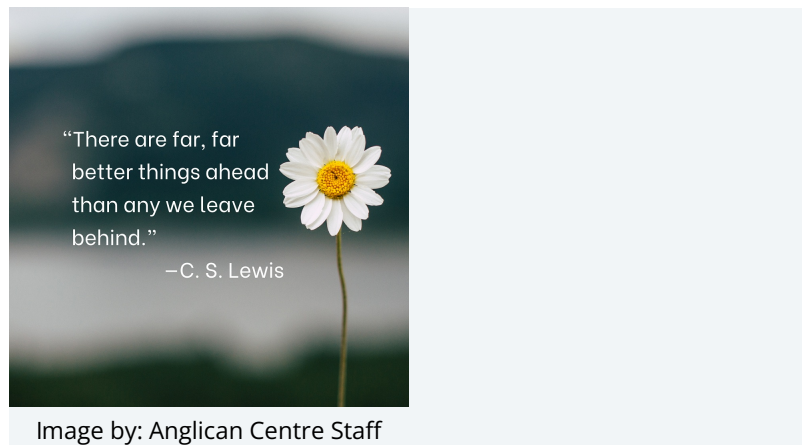
Or this one,

"Humility is not thinking less of yourself, but thinking of yourself less."—C. S. Lewis

Or perhaps we can claim this one today,

"There are far, far better things ahead than any we leave behind." - C. S. Lewis.

That's a beautifully positive and hopeful message for a day like this, when there is a bit of leaving and grieving happening as Andy [Dickson], Sage [Burke], Anne [Shave], and Robert [Jamieson] move from past places of life and ministry, into fresh places and roles with different people. "There are far, far better things ahead than any we leave behind."



But there's another C. S. Lewis quote that may ring true for today's batch of deacons too:

"We are not necessarily doubting that God will do the best for us; we are wondering how painful the best will turn out to be."—C. S. Lewis

When we say "yes" to God, we join the rough road walked by Jesus. A road where wheat falls and dies before new life emerges.

As Jesus said in the gospel reading, "Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also." And where was Jesus? Where is Jesus? Comforting the afflicted and afflicting the comfortable. Prophetically speaking out disagreeable truth, disrupting the status quo, dining with the ostracised, inviting in the marginalised, grieving with the neglected and bereaved.

Jesus identified himself with the servant songs of Isaiah—called to be a light to the nations, to bring sight to the blind, freedom to the imprisoned. To bring forth justice - tending, strengthening, empowering, not over-powering. As we identify ourselves with Jesus, we join in this commission.

The Church, however, does not have a monopoly on the justice that is at the heart of God. We work alongside all who seek the wellbeing of others, though we do so in response to the call and commissioning of Jesus. We work slowly, faithfully, establishing little pockets of justice. Little inroads of hope. Our actions live out our prayer, "your kingdom come, your will be done".

People in our communities will glimpse Jesus through our actions as we continue the in-breaking of the kingdom of God. And many are yearning to see him. In Isaiah it said, the coastlands, the wild margins, wait for the servant's teaching. In the gospel, Greeks, people outside Jesus' circle, ask Philip, "Sir, we want to see Jesus."

Who are people going to approach today for that introduction to Jesus?
Robert? Anne? Sage? Andy? You? Me?

All of us, as disciples and friends of Jesus, are access points to him. We all need to be ready to respond when people express, however clearly or inarticulately, "Please, we want to see Jesus". We are all engaged in the transformative adventure of seeking to live Jesus-shaped lives in a Jesus-shaped church working for a Jesus-shaped world to the glory of God.

"Where I am, there will my servant be also", Jesus said. And then the gospel offers a wonderful promise: "Whoever serves me, the Father will honour".

Our faithful duty, our humble service, is honoured by God's quiet approval. And that means so much. Knowing that God honours the living sacrifice we offer can sustain us through decades of ups and downs, monotony and challenge. In serving, we can find the deep joy of obedience.

Obedience, service and duty feel a bit like words of a bygone era. Maybe from my grandparents' time. Like diligence, obligation, perseverance, responsibility, commitment. But they live alongside exciting words that describe what we do together as the diversely skilled and gifted people of God, the body of Christ. Wonderful words offered in the reading from Romans like transformation, renewal, giftedness, love, zeal, cheerfulness...

So, as a disciple of Jesus, may you not forget that you have a heart to love a broken world. May you not forget that you have a voice to speak out the good news of Jesus Christ. May you not forget that you have hands to serve others. May you not forget that you have feet to go where love is needed. And may you never forget that with Christ you do not walk alone.



Hope

Words: Dean Ben Truman

I love the English language. But sometimes it fails us. Certain words have accumulated 1,001 meanings and nuances and connotations, making it nigh-on impossible to get a truly shared meaning.

Hope is one of those words.

By it we may mean something as wet and inane as 'wish'.

By it we may mean something as intangible and ethereal as 'dream'.

By it we may mean something a personal and unfounded as 'optimism' or 'idealism'.

By it we may mean something as strong and dependable as 'conviction' or 'assurance'.

When the church talks of hope in Advent, we're meaning a strong hope. A 10/10 hope. A capital 'H' Hope. A hope that rests on something more than my current emotional state. In Advent, I don't want a small dose of hope to overcome temporary skepticism and apprehension. I want a lasting hope that makes despair run for the hills. I want a hope full of *chutzpah!*

During December many (most?) of our churches will light Advent candles: **Hope, Peace, Joy, Love, Jesus**. It's a relatively new practice, going back to the Lutherans in the 16th century, and not really popularised until the 1930s at the earliest. But I adore the practice. It is a reminder that we already know the story. We know the trajectory before the first candle is lit.

That is the grace of the now-and-not-yet-ness of the Kingdom of God. As the ancient Easter hymn would put it, *"The strife is o'er, the battle done; the victory of life is won; the song of triumph has begun. Alleluia!"* From the very moment that God takes on flesh, we are assured of the victory of life and love. On Christmas morning, Hope finds a face.

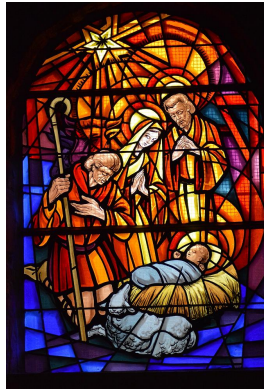


Image by: pixabay.com

Of course, the objective Hope we have in Christ does not always lead to a subjective feeling of hope. There are times when it might feel that the candles remain unlit. Hope may seem to fade. Doubt is to be embraced as part of the journey, and my own generally optimistic disposition has recently had its challenges (dare I mention the American election?!). Even then, the deeper Hope remains, because Hope is not dependent upon us, but is rather the guarantee of the God who takes on our flesh.

So, this Advent, as the candle of Hope is lit, can I encourage you to remember that it is not an invitation to believe harder or doubt less or to put on a mask of optimism. Lighting the candle of Hope is to claim that, by the incarnation, Hope is secured and becomes part of the bedrock of our new creation. Hope is here to stay.

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope." – Romans 15:13



'Living Faith' Conference Encouraged Us to Live 'Jesus-shaped Lives'

Words: Ven. Canon Mark Chamberlain + Photos: Mandy Caldwell

A major conference took place in the Diocese on Labour Weekend which was entitled 'Living Faith' - and people went away re-energised, re-charged, and renewed in their walk with Jesus.

As a result of church scandals, belligerent atheists, and the recent Census showing the accelerating decline in religion in Kiwi society, it's not surprising that many Anglicans might feel discouraged about their Christian faith. It can be tough engaging with family members who were once alongside us in church but have since walked away.

Because of this a conference was organised in October, intended to inspire and encourage faith and spur us all on to a deeper walk with Jesus. We were convinced of the benefit of gathering, from time to time, in a large group for worship, faith-building and fellowship. And so the Living Faith Conference was conceived.

And it was great! 400 Anglicans from 42 of our 55 ministry units gathered in the Christchurch Boys' High auditorium. Women, men, children, and young people came, and the energy was amazing! It was pouring with rain outside, but the feeling of fellowship and encouragement was tangible on the inside. One person said, "It was uplifting to hear from people whose faith is certainly alive. The heartfelt encouragement resonated with the audience, and we were able to consider the future through a more hopeful lens."

Grant Adams from St Christopher's Avonhead said, "Congratulations on pulling off a very successful event! What I appreciated most was the unity of themes—truly a strong message to us and hopefully a platform to help us move forward as we look at the future of the Diocese."



Eleanor Sanderson, Bishop of Hull in the UK. — Image by: Mandy Caldwell

The three keynote speakers were Eleanor Sanderson, Bishop of Hull in the UK— previously Assistant Bishop of Wellington, local social worker and disciple-maker Dallas Harema, and church musician trainer Grant Norsworthy. All three speakers contributed to the theme from their experience in prayer and disciple making. And they were all very well received. 95% of respondents said that they either strongly agreed or agreed that "Overall the speakers were interesting, accessible and engaging."



Ven. Canon Mark Chamberlain, and disciple-maker, Dallas Harema. — Image by: Mandy Caldwell

Bishop Peter summarised the day by saying,

"The challenge and encouragement from the Living Faith conference is that the present and future regeneration of the Diocese is through focus on living Jesus-shaped lives in a Jesus-shaped church working for a Jesus-shaped world to the glory of God. With this understanding of what it means for each of us to be a disciple, Jesus invites us to be involved with others encouraging fellow disciples to make disciples. Critical in this process is a focus on engaging with each other where we are at in the messiness of life. Programmes and courses have their place, but the first call to the church at this time is to 'let love be genuine', that is, to develop a culture of love in which we hear what God is saying to us, day by day, and act on God's voice."



Image by: Mandy Caldwell

Participants were particularly impressed by the care and attention to detail. Everyone received a welcome bag which contained, among other things, a pen, notebook, holding cross and chocolate fish! The catering was excellent, there was plenty of time for catching up and fellowship, a children and family space was available with well-organised activities, participants were invited to engage with the theme in a variety of ways including a panel discussion, expert reflections were offered from Rev'd Dr Karen Kemp and Archbishop Justin Duckworth—and the music was amazing! 85% said they found that the worship was uplifting and engaging – not easy to achieve when Anglicans from different churches get together!



Church musician trainer, Grant Norsworthy. — Image by: Mandy Caldwell

Participants were encouraged to take a 'next step of faith' when they left the conference to embed new practices and ideas. Some chose to join the existing 250 members of the Diocese Prayer Community

for more intentional prayer, and about 70 people indicated they wanted to be part of a bulk purchase of John Mark Comer's new book called 'Practicing the Way'. Everyone was encouraged to meet in parish groups in a month's time to discuss and keep alive the inspiration of the conference. One person said, "It was particularly helpful for our parish group to gather over takeaways after the conference to debrief and reflect together on what God is challenging is to do as a parish as well as individuals. The conference was a great catalyst for this sort of conversation".



Image by: Malvern Parish

Many people have since asked me "What's going to happen next year? What do we do with the energy? How might we maintain the momentum toward living a Jesus-shaped life and being disciples who make disciples?" One person even wrote, "Thank you for hosting the largest Diocesan conference yet—this is a good practice run for the next 1,000 strong conference in the future 😊".

Great questions to ask over the next few months. The new year will be a great time to brainstorm and chart a course for 2025.



A Poem: But Who do You Say I am?

Words: Edwin Boyce

I, a priest, met Jesus face to face
And I told Him about
My prayer life
My sermons, and
My pastoral care visits,
And He said,

But who do you say I am?

I, a parish warden, met Jesus face to face
And I told Him about
Our vestry meetings,
Our property portfolio, and
Our financial investments,
And He said,
But who do you say I am?

I, a vestry member, met Jesus face to face
And I told Him about
Our garage sale,
Our plant sale, and
Our book sale,
And He said,
But who do you say I am?

I, a parishioner, met Jesus face to face
And I told him about
Our prayer group,
Our Bible study group, and
Our walking group,
And He said,
But who do you say I am?

I, a Sunday School child, met Jesus face to face
And I told Him I knew
That He taught us to love one another,
That He died for our sins but rose again and conquered death, and
That He is our saviour,

That He is our hope.
And He said,
You know who I AM.



Keeping hope alive at the Christchurch City Mission

Words + Photos: Ewan Sargent

Hope is the special theme of this Advent Anglican *Life* magazine and the idea of hope is deeply meaningful at the Christchurch City Mission.

We see many people at the lowest point in their lives and sometimes they have reached a point where they can't imagine a way out of their despair.

They have lost hope... and yet somehow they find us. Maybe they sense how much we believe in hope?

We believe change for the better is always possible. We believe that inside everyone, no matter how dark the place they have reached, lies an ember of hope that can be fanned back to life.

Our social workers sometimes talk about holding the hope for people who have none. We support and lift them with our different services and when the clients are ready to believe in themselves again, they take their hope back.

City Missioner Corinne Haines speaks to many groups about the Mission's work and she often mentions hope. She did so multiple times in a recent talk to the Anglican Association of Women Social Concerns group at the Holy Trinity Church on Stanmore Road.



City Missioner Corinne Haines speaking to the AAW meeting at Holy Trinity, Avonside. — Image by: Ewan Sargent

As the morning sun streamed through the windows, Corinne gave a wide-ranging talk to women from many parishes on what we do and how we do it (and how much it costs), but also on the compassion and desire that lies behind the work at the City Mission.

"We all need hope in our lives," Corinne said. "And a sense of vision, a sense of direction, and none more so than those who are vulnerable in our city."

The City Mission has four social workers among our many expert staff. Corinne said Jesus could be regarded as the ultimate social worker.

"Jesus developed a strong relationship with his disciples, teaching, mentoring, healing the sick, tending to the physical and emotional needs of the people of the time. He gave us a model we should follow. He showed sympathy, empathy, he ministered to the needs of others, he won their confidence and improved their lives. He gave them hope."

"And that is what we have been doing every day at the City Mission for 95 years."

Corinne said the City Mission was committed to alleviating the needs of the poor and vulnerable, and ensuring these people could reach their full potential, whatever that potential might be.

"We have to find what their capabilities are and capacity to reach their potential, but we respect the dignity, worth and wellbeing of every person. We really do aim to give them hope in their lives, hope that they may not have experienced before."

The Mission helps 50,000 people a year in various ways and the sheer breadth of its services meant sometimes it was difficult for Corinne, who had oversight over everything, to know what was being achieved at an individual level.

But a new employee once said to her "small miracles happen every day at the Mission" and she often reminded herself of that when she hoped enough was being achieved.



City Missioner Corinne Haines says small miracles happen every day the City Mission.
— Image by: Ewan Sargent

"Three hundred and sixty-five small miracles each year means we must be doing some good. We continue to respond to human need by giving love and service. We challenge unjust structures in society, and we constantly review what we're doing to ensure we can do the best for those who come to us. We focus on giving them hope and a vision for the future."

Corinne read a letter of thanks from a woman who had come to the Mission with a serious addiction problem – addiction can be life-threatening. The woman wrote:

"I needed help. I lost my daughter, my grandchildren, my baby, my sanity, my worth, heart, mind, soul, smiles, my morals, my dignity. I lost myself. I went to the Mission... I was immediately welcomed. Started by healing. I was scared, I was angry, I was shy, but I thank my children for making me take the first step to become free from 42 years of addiction."

That was a miracle four decades in the waiting, but it happened thanks to the Mission. Corinne said a life-changing result like that was why Mission staff and volunteers came to work every day.

She was thanked for her talk by a number of attendees including Anne McCormick, who said she had enjoyed the privilege of helping poor communities overseas.

"We came to the conclusion that you can't help everybody, you help the person right in front of you and make a great difference to their life and you do it one life at a time. And I can see this is absolutely so true at the City Mission."



AAW Christchurch president Raewyn Dawson says a seed of hope lies in everyone.

AAW Christchurch president Raewyn Dawson said everything was based on hope because without hope there was no continuing. She believed there was always a seed of hope in everyone no matter how dire their circumstances and no matter how small a grain, it was there to grow again.

Sometimes it just takes help from a caring, empathetic and professional organisation like the City Mission to bring it alive.



Thoughts on the theme of Hope

Words: Ven. Mark Barlow

Advent is a precious and important season in our church calendar which, sadly, is all too often overlooked or overshadowed by the demands and requirements of the coming season of Christmas.

This is a great shame not least because the traditional themes of Advent provide us with some wonderful opportunities to pray, reflect and even repent in preparation for the birth of the Saviour.

The first of these themes is that of Hope! The Christian take on hope is very different to the secular view. In our faith, hope is not vain, desperate or a last resort when all other options are exhausted. Our hope, like that mentioned so often in the Psalms, is in the Lord. As such it is expressed as 'confident' or 'sure and certain'; something that we rejoice in rather than resort to. This hope in the Lord is the basis for all of our other hopes. In Romans chapter 8, Paul describes it as 'eager waiting' for the fulfilment of God's promises to us, now and in eternity.

This hope is what assures us that a helpless baby born in the 'middle of nowhere' 2,000 years ago, is none other than the Messiah, the only begotten Son of God, the Prince of Peace, the Hope of Nations and the one whom we delight follow.

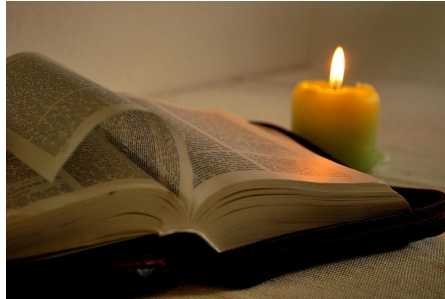


Image by: pixabay.com

This hope, according to Paul in Romans 8, gives us confidence beyond what we already know and have experienced, and assures us that, the one who has been faithful thus far, will be so to the end. Thus, like St Paul, we can patiently hope for that which we, as yet, do not see.

As we consider the challenges that face us as individual disciples, as parishes and ministry units and as a diocese, may we do so with such hope, for it is not vain or desperate, it is not bound by our own limitations, it is not in our own resources; it is in the Lord!



Deeper Camp 2024 Reflections

Words: Rev'd Harry Newton + Amy Clark

**Reflections from Deeper Camp
2024**



Image by: Sammy Mould

Friday evening talk excerpt by Rev'd Harry Newton:

Ephesians 2:8-10 "For it is by grace you have been saved... not by works, so no one can boast."

The story of Saul from Tarsus, who later became Paul the Apostle, teaches us that 'no one can make themselves any more acceptable in God's eyes by being 'good-er' and no one cannot make themselves less acceptable in God's eyes by being 'bad-er'.

There is no one one so good or so bad that they can't experience God's grace in their life.

And when we say 'grace' what we mean is: unearned love.

You are accepted by God because of his grace (because of his undeserved love as shown to us in Jesus). He loves you just the way you are (nothing you can say/do/think/achieve can make him love you more or less), God loves you just the way you are simply because he does.

That's grace: that's Undeserved Love.

But, while he might love you just the way you are, God also loves you too much to leave you that way. That's kinda what the last part of our Bible reading is about, and that's part of what Amy's going to share about tomorrow.

But for tonight, remember: you are accepted by God because of his grace (his love).



Image by: Sammy Mould

Reflection from Amy Clark (Saturday talk):

After already hearing from God individually about what should be shared at Deeper 2024, the team agreed within minutes that the verse was to be Ephesians 2:8-10 "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works; so that no one can boast. For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do".

Rev'd Harry's passionate talk on God's Grace - readily remembered by the youth as 'undeserved love' - set us up to tackle the second half of that verse - what we are to do with that grace.

We looked at the idea of being sparkly and tasty (salt and light) apprentices of Jesus to those around us - so people can see the love of Jesus in us and seek God for themselves.

D. L. Moody spoke about three types of faith in which we picture Jesus as a boat. The first is 'struggling faith'. This is us in the water trying to do life on our own - a particularly perilous place to be in a storm. Next is 'clinging faith', where we hold tight to the side of the boat - knowing the boat is the answer - yet thinking we have to work hard to be good enough. Perhaps thinking we aren't worthy to get in the boat and attempt to earn our place in God's kingdom. This is exhausting and takes most of our energy - leaving little for helping others. Then there's 'resting faith' - climbing into the boat and trusting in the grace Jesus secured for us. This is the only position from which we can effectively reach out and help others into the boat.

Believing we are held and loved in God's grace gives us the energy and freedom to love others as God intended.

We shared practical ideas of how to live as loved children of God. The story that stood out to many, was that even when we fall short and stuff up (of which I have many examples) - we have the opportunity to be sparkly and tasty simply by doing the next right thing. It's what we do next that shows who we belong to. We finished by inviting the Holy Spirit to help us to go out and lead the sparkly and tasty lives God created us for.



Image by: Sammy Mould

As one family drove home from Deeper, they were stopped for breathalysing.

I'm told the children implored their parent to 'be sparkly and tasty' to the police officer. I'm certain the sparkly kindness shown from that car would have made that cop's day!

Deeper Camp is held each year around the first weekend in November and is for families and intermediates. We hope you can join us next year for some family fun and space to go deeper with Jesus.



Image by: Sammy Mould

Celebrating 150 years at St Matthew's Fernside

Words: Rev'd Toby Behan + Photos: St Matthew's Fernside

On Sunday, 29 September 2024 it was a sincere delight to celebrate 150 years of ministry at St Matthew's, Fernside - a church in the Rangiora Parish, North Canterbury.



Image by: St Matthew's Fernside

On a typical Sunday, this small church would normally host around 20 people; on the special day, attendance blew up to 150 people, with Bishop Peter Carrell and Rev'd Teresa Kundycki-Carrell leading the occasion. A number of familiar faces from the past were kind enough to join us for the day,

together with the descendants from the founding families of the church, worshippers from the Rangiora parish, and a number of local community members (including Dan Gordon, Mayor of Waimakariri District).



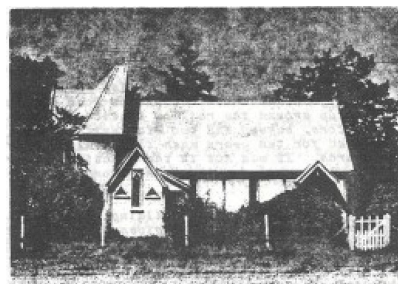
Image by: St Matthew's Fernside

A marquee was erected on the lawn, with an audio-visual link for those unable to find seating inside the church. The bell was rung, the sun shone, and after the service, a picnic lunch and BBQ sausages were enjoyed on the lawn. Memories were shared, old friendships were rekindled, and history was remembered and made.



Image by: St Matthew's Fernside

In 1873, Fernside was a well settled little town in North Canterbury, located on a corner where people turned from Oxford Road into Mt Thomas Road. It is hard to imagine now, but at that time there was a railway station, a post office, a school, a store, a bakery and two blacksmiths. In October of that year, the Church News reported that "some zealous churchmen in this neighbourhood are exerting themselves for the erection of a church, designed by Mr Benjamin Mountfort, and to cost about \$200." In fact, the building cost \$243, and was built a mile away from the little township, on land gifted by Mr Rickman, and funded largely by local parishioners.



St. Matthew's

From One Hundred Years 1874 to 1974 — Image by: Supplied

A booklet was produced for the church's 100th anniversary, which recounted various efforts made by the people of St Matthew's over the years: collections for projects such as Melanesian Missions, for the comfort of men serving in the Trentham Military camp, for the Belgian fund during the first world war, and a famine relief fund in central Europe. Frequent fundraises were made for the provision of a clergy stipend, a new organ, building a parsonage and a carhouse on the glebe beside the church for the vicar (also designed by Benjamin Mountfort) and then purchasing a horse for him too. In 1879, smoke poured into the parsonage whenever the Southwest wind blew. It cost the princely sum of £4.2s.6d to affix cowls to the chimneys to solve the problem. The records detail tea meetings in the railway goods shed, sales of work by the sewing guild, and much more.

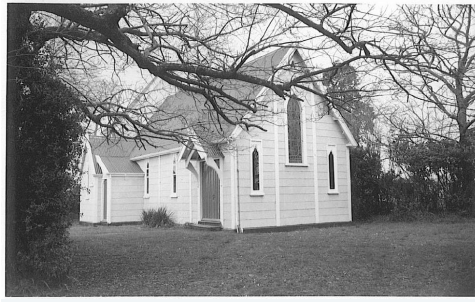


Image by: St Matthew's Fernside



Image by: Supplied

It seems not much has changed! Sunday 29 September was a chance to celebrate the pioneering spirit, faith and generosity of those early families of Fernside, but it is just as easy to pivot toward others who have more recently made a significant contribution to life at St Matthew's.

Above all else, this was an occasion to give thanks and glory to God. It is such a wonderful testament to God's faithfulness, celebrating the people who have loved and followed Jesus for 150 years in this small, treasured spot. What a wonderful reminder as we approach Advent once more, remembering yet again God's constant goodness, faithfulness, patience, and perseverance. To Him be the glory.



Connecting with Whenua, Empowering Whānau

Words + Photo: Anglican Financial Care

Imagine reconnecting with your whakapapa and tūrangawaewae for generations to come. Owning a home on Māori land is not just an investment – it's a legacy. With Anglican Financial Care (AFC)'s new loan product, you can build, buy, or renovate a home that strengthens your bond

with the land.

Meeting the unique challenges of lending for housing on Māori land

Due to collective ownership and specific legal structures, Māori land presents unique challenges for lenders, that prevent many traditional banks from offering home loans in that regard. AFC's new loan product bridges this gap, offering flexible financing options that respect the unique cultural and legal aspects of Māori land.

Eligible borrowers include Anglican clergy, widows and widowers of clergy, employees of Anglican and other Christian organisations, and members of AFC-administered schemes, including the Christian KiwiSaver Scheme. With this loan product, whānau can make the dream of living on ancestral land a reality.

How AFC's loan works for you

AFC's loan solution overcomes the obstacles associated with traditional mortgages for housing on Māori land. Rather than placing a mortgage over the land, which is just too complex a process, AFC's loan is secured solely over the house and registered on the Personal Property Securities Register (PPSR). This allows families to access essential financing without compromising the collective ownership of the whenua.

Whether you're looking to purchase a home, build a new one, relocate an existing house, or undertake renovations, AFC's loan is tailored to meet your needs.

Why this loan matters

For AFC, this initiative is more than a financial offering; it's a way to honour cultural heritage and fulfil

the Christian call to stewardship. As an organisation guided by Christian principles, AFC believes in the importance of connecting with whānau who want to live on their land, in a way that fosters well-being and preserves cultural identity.

4 key benefits of AFC's loan product for housing on Māori land?:

1. **Strengthening cultural connections**

Whānau seeking to stay connected to their land have a viable option with AFC's loan product. This reflects AFC's mission to support communities in alignment with cultural and spiritual values.

2. **Aligning with whānau and hapū**

Māori land is often collectively owned by whānau or hapū, and AFC's loan respects these structures. Families wanting to develop their land without disrupting cultural or legal frameworks can apply to AFC for a loan.

3. **Supporting solutions for housing needs**

Housing accessibility is a pressing issue across Aotearoa. AFC's loan aims to bridge this gap, so AFC can walk this pathway with Māori families aiming to live affordably on their land.

4. **Accessing greater well-being and autonomy**

Living on Māori land supports oranga (well-being) and enables whānau to live in a way that aligns with cultural values. This loan offers a practical way for Māori families to thrive on their own terms.

How to apply

AFC's application process has several important stages, and the AFC team is ready to guide you every step of the way:

1. Talk with the Landowner - confirm your right to live in a house on the land.
2. Apply - submit your application and documents to AFC.
3. Review - AFC assesses your eligibility and initiates the legal process through its legal adviser.
4. Finalise - complete your Whenua Māori Housing Agreement with your own legal guidance.
5. Settle and Register - AFC settles the loan, securing it on the PPSR.

Empowering future generations

AFC is committed to working with Māori whānau on the journey toward homeownership. By offering a loan product that respects cultural values and the unique needs associated with Māori land, we're here to help you empower a lasting legacy for your whānau on your whenua.

Take the first step in your journey to homeownership on Māori land. Reach out to AFC's team to learn how we can help you bring your dreams to life. Visit our [website](#) or contact one of the team today, on [\(04\) 473 9369](tel:04739369) or admin@angfinicare.nz.



Join cbm NZ in celebrating Advent in 2024!

"A Saviour has been born to you; He is Christ the Lord." - Luke 2:11

[Join cbm NZ \(Christian Blind Mission\) online](#), starting on the first day of December to celebrate Advent 2024.

Spread the good news and invite others to join in this free four-week Advent series. You can share the online Advent series with family, friends, and neighbours, some of whom may not attend church.

An online participant said, "I'm really being blessed as I have taken the time to celebrate advent for the first time, in my 81st year!"

[By registering online](#), you will have access to a personalised webpage, where you'll find suggested scriptures for prayer and reflection during the week, **cbm** stories of lives transformed, crafts, colouring-in activities for younger children, meaningful gift ideas for Christmas and more.

During this season, let your hearts be warmed and join [cbm's Advent series](#) to hear transformational stories. Like John who was going needlessly blind from congenital cataracts, and how **cbm's** ministry brings God's Hope, Peace, Joy and Love to adults and children with disabilities in the world's poorest places.



Image by: cbm nz

A star-pupil at school, John dreams of becoming an engineer. He lives with his Mum Mary, his Dad Wilson, and his baby sister Alexa in the Philippines.

He loves maths most of all. Being top of his class, his teachers say he has an incredibly bright future ahead of him.

But his hopes and dreams were fading away – because 8-year-old John was going needlessly blind from congenital cataracts.

"I can't read well when my eyesight is blurred and I can't study well. I feel sad. I get upset when I can't read. I love reading books," he said.

It's heart-breaking to hear how John's fading sight was stopping him from doing what he loved.

John needed a miracle. And it needed to happen soon, while it was early enough for cataract surgery to be successful. His parents were trying so hard just to earn enough money to buy food and other basic needs, how could they possibly afford to pay for specialist eye surgery...

"We prayed for the miracle of healing for John. And at the same time, we prayed that someone could be used by God to help us out of this. And that's the only hope. We want John to be happy to enjoy all those things that he used to enjoy without limitations, because of his eye problem." – John's parents.

But there is hope for John. [Join cbm's advent series to hear more](#) or scan the QR code below:



Image by: cbm nz

The creative among you will find joy in the Advent colouring-in templates and learn how to create your own Advent wreath using the guide.

Designed to create special moments at home, you can enjoy and deepen your experience of 'Advent at Home' or share these thoughtful online activities with your Home Group.

If you feel moved by the Holy Spirit, kindly consider sharing this inspiring series, complete with slides, with your church leadership. Together, we can unite with [cbm](#) and other churches in Aotearoa to celebrate Advent, the true meaning of Christmas.

Previous participants say:

"The stories themselves and the reality of what they spoke of were really a good focus for us heading into Christmas."

"...weekly PowerPoint slides were a blessing for busy clergy."

"...beautifully crafted, reflective and meaningful."

If your Church would like to view the Week One Advent presentation to see how it could support your Advent services (including the short video), or receive the whole series, please email Elizabeth **immediately** at elizabeth@cbmnz.org.nz.

"For unto us a child is born... and He will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." – Isaiah 9:6

May God bless you during this Advent time.

Elizabeth Viljoen, Church and Community Engagement, [cbm New Zealand](http://cbm.org.nz)



Image by: cbm nz

Recipe: Coffee and Walnut Slice

Words: Essie Boyce + Photo: Edwin Boyce

Essie's Coffee and Walnut Slice

Ingredients:

150g of salted butter

2 teaspoons of vanilla essence

1 egg



$\frac{3}{4}$ cup of brown sugar

1 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups of plain flour

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons of baking powder

1 tablespoon of instant coffee

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup of walnuts (whole or halves)

Coffee icing

Method:

Have a saucepan that will hold all of the ingredients.

Melt the butter in the pan.

Take the pan off the heat and add the brown sugar, egg, and vanilla essence.

Mix all of the ingredients.

Sift the flour, baking powder and coffee into the mixture.

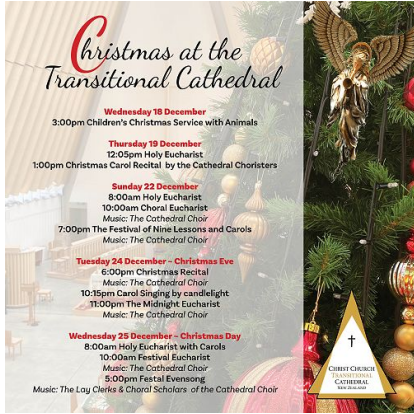
Add and mix in the walnuts.

Line an 18 x 28cm slice tin with baking paper.

Add the mixture to the tin.

Bake at 190C for 20 to 25 minutes.

Leave to cool. Then cover with coffee icing and cut to serve.



Christmas at the Transitional Cathedral

Words + Photo: Chris Oldham

Christmas at the Transitional Cathedral

Wednesday 18 December

**3.00pm Children's Christmas Service
with Animals**

Thursday 19 December

12.05pm Holy Eucharist

**1.00pm Christmas Carol Recital
by the Cathedral Choristers**

Sunday 22 December

8.00am Holy Eucharist

10.00am Choral Eucharist

Music: The Cathedral Choir

7.00pm The Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols

Music: The Cathedral Choir

Tuesday 24 December ~ Christmas Eve

6.00pm Christmas Recital

Music: The Cathedral Choir

10.15pm Carol Singing by candlelight

11.00pm The Midnight Eucharist

Music: The Cathedral Choir

Wednesday 25 December ~ Christmas Day

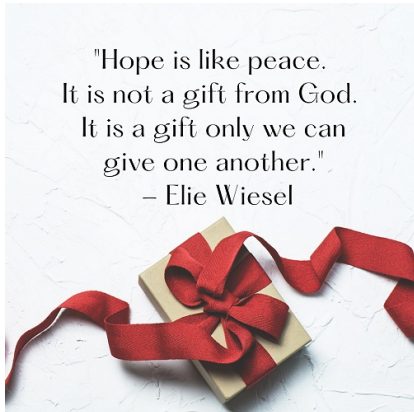
8.00am Holy Eucharist with Carols

10.00am Festival Eucharist

Music: The Cathedral Choir

5.00pm Festal Evensong

Music: *The Lay Clerks & Choral Scholars of the Cathedral Choir*



"Hope is like peace.
It is not a gift from God.
It is a gift only we can
give one another."
— Elie Wiesel

Snippets

"Hope is like peace. It is not a gift from God. It is a gift only we can give one another."—Elie Wiesel



Clergy Retreats 2025

Words + Photos: Antje Duda, Director, Sister Eveleen Retreat House

Clergy Retreat Days 2025: A Time to Pause, Reflect and Recharge for Ministry

"And He said, 'Come away to a quiet place and rest for a while'." – Mark 6:31

In 2025, clergy across the Anglican Diocese of Christchurch are warmly invited to Sister Eveleen Retreat House for one of four dedicated Clergy Retreat Days. These retreats provide precious time away from the demands of ministry—a space for clergy to renew their spirits through prayer, quiet reflection, and restorative rest.

As Jesus urged His followers to step away from their work, these days are set aside for you to do just that, embracing the gift of uninterrupted time with our loving God.

Each retreat offers a self-directed experience, allowing clergy to shape their own days of prayer, contemplation, and personal renewal. Without a set programme or leader, participants can tailor their time to meet their unique spiritual needs.

Whether through quiet walks, moments of stillness, or prayers, each retreat invites clergy to step back from their daily routines and immerse themselves in the presence of God.

The retreat schedule is designed with flexibility, ensuring space for reflection and fellowship as desired.

On Sunday evenings, retreatants can gather to discuss the flow of the days, including options for communal silence, shared mealtimes, or evening conversations.

There is also an opportunity to join the house's regular midday prayer service, and, if desired, clergy may arrange to celebrate the Eucharist together. This combination of structure and autonomy supports a meaningful retreat experience tailored to each guest and the group.

Retreat Dates:

1. Clergy Retreat Days I, Sunday, 25-Wednesday, 28 May 2025. [Follow this link.](#)
2. Clergy Retreat Days II, Sunday, 15-Wednesday, 18 June 2025. [Follow this link.](#)

3. Clergy Retreat Days III, Sunday, 20-Wednesday, 23 July 2025. [Follow this link.](#)

4. Clergy Retreat Days IV, Sunday, 12-Wednesday, 15 October 2025. [Follow this link.](#)

Location and Accommodation

Sister Eveleen Retreat House offers a peaceful retreat environment in Scarborough, Sumner. The retreat days are fully catered. Each retreatant will have their own room, either in the Main House or the Annex.

For those seeking additional time for rest or self-guided reflection, there is an option to arrive earlier or stay longer on a self-catered basis. Spiritual Direction can also be arranged during those days.

Cost and Registration

Each four-day, three-night retreat is available at a cost of NZ\$450, covering all meals and accommodation.

Attendance is limited to seven participants per retreat to maintain a personal and focused environment.

We invite you to pause and reconnect with the heart of your vocation.

Whether you come to pray, walk, or simply rest in God's presence, this retreat is a dedicated space for you.

Don't hesitate to get in touch if you have any questions.



The Incarnation: A Call to Hope and Action

Words: James Beck, Eco Church Project Manager, A Rocha Aotearoa New Zealand

As Advent approaches, we enter into a time filled with anticipation leading us to the joyous celebration of Jesus' birth. Christmas marks the moment that we pause to celebrate the fact that God became human, entering into his creation in

order to redeem it. The incarnation—while mysterious—is a profound statement of hope. It declares that God has not given up on the world. If God would take on flesh and enter the messy, fragile, and beautiful reality of life, then creation itself is sacred, loved, and worth redeeming.

But the incarnation doesn't just inspire hope; it also calls us to action. When God became human, He didn't arrive as a self-sustaining, independent being. He came as a baby, entirely dependent on creation—on Mary for nourishment, on the earth for food, and on a stable made of trees, mud and bricks for shelter. The Creator became interdependent with His creation, inviting us into a new way of seeing our world that is deep and profound: we are not independent beings. Our survival and flourishing depend on the health and well-being of God's good creation. Because we are interdependent beings, how we move through the world can either make the world better, or harm it.

As we celebrate Christmas, it's easy to lose sight of this reality. Each year, many of us celebrate the birth of Christ with excess—mountains of wrapping paper, disposable decorations, and plastic waste. If we aren't careful, our celebrations can unintentionally contradict the very message of the incarnation. How can we honor Christ's coming while neglecting the whole of creation He came to redeem?



Image by: pixabay.com

The incarnation reminds us that the world is not disposable. God's decision to enter creation in the

form of Jesus, the Son of Man affirms its value and intrinsic goodness. If God chose to rely on creation to sustain His life as a human, then we, too, must acknowledge and embrace our dependence on the earth. Our interdependence with creation mirrors our dependence on God and one another. We are part of a vast, interconnected and complex web of relationships that sustains life—plants, animals, soil, water, and air. Recognising this interconnectedness invites us to live as stewards of creation with greater care, and to protect the very systems that sustain us.

Advent is a season of anticipation, and a time of preparation. As we reflect on the hope of the incarnation, we are called to align our lives with the realities it embodies. This may mean making tangible steps to care for creation and to ensure our celebrations reflect the sacredness of God's world. What might this look like? It could mean reducing waste by wrapping gifts in reusable materials, or choosing experiences over things such as supporting local and sustainable businesses. It might involve using natural decorations or planning a community cleanup as a parish activity. These small acts can honour the God who entered creation and affirms our commitment to care for His good earth.



Dunedin — Image by: A Rocha
Aotearoa NZ

The incarnation reveals to us that God's love is not distant or abstract—it is embodied, relational, and engaged. This Advent, may we embrace the hope of the incarnation – Christ's birth, allowing it to transform not only our hearts but also our habits. As we celebrate the birth of Christ Jesus, may we also honour His creation by living the good news of redeeming creation and interdependence. For in caring for creation, we embody the love of the One who came to dwell among us.

Visit our website for [a creative and sustainable Christmas](#).



Our 2025 Lent study is ready to preorder!

Words: Theology House + Photo: Sarah West

In the Spirit of Lent

This study centres around the Gospel readings from the Lectionary, with a series of striking artworks by Sarah West, and a written reflection for each week. Including prompts for deeper discussion and simple prayers, this is an ideal resource for small groups.

[Click here to order now](#) for delivery in the New Year.



Honouring the Past, Enabling the Future

Words + Photos: Anne McCormick

How God redeemed an unexpected challenge in the life of an NZCMS Mission Partner to continue His work in Cambodia.

My late husband, Anthony, and I were mission partners with NZCMS working in Battambang, northwestern Cambodia between 2011 and 2020. We both had voluntary roles at the World Mate Emergency Hospital, a trauma hospital, set up in 1998 to treat victims of landmines, the terrible legacy of the Pol Pot regime which overtook the country between 1975 and 1979. There are still many unexploded landmines throughout the country, particularly in rural areas.

Anthony, a social worker, started a social work department at the World Mate Emergency Hospital and I started an activity programme for patients and their caregivers. We were both blessed to have Khmer assistants to work alongside us. That work continued until coming to an abrupt end early in 2020 when Anthony was diagnosed with cancer. He had been unwell for several months, and, following his diagnosis, we left Cambodia abruptly for him to begin treatment in Christchurch.

This was the beginning of a huge change for us both. It meant the end of our life and work in Cambodia and came as a real shock. **But God was faithful!** Our unplanned return to New Zealand marked the start of an amazing 15-month journey, during which we saw God's love and provision for us in so many ways.

Two miracles in particular stand out – first, that God met our financial needs and, after exhausting the possibilities of treatment in the public system, we moved to private cancer care at a cost of \$3,600 per week – money we simply didn't have after almost 10 years serving God overseas. The second miracle was that Anthony lived 15 months after diagnosis – extremely unusual for pancreatic cancer patients. Anthony's oncologist could scarcely believe the good results initially gained from the treatment, much of which we attributed to God's faithfulness in response to many praying friends around the globe.



Anthony at WMEH — Image by: Anne McCormick

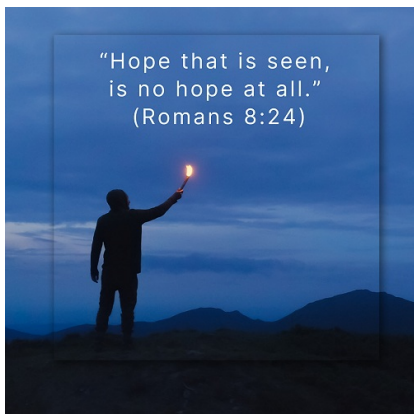
It is now 3 1/2 years since Anthony's death and, amazingly, the legacy of his work in Cambodia is continuing with ongoing involvement by our previous Khmer colleagues. It is such a joy to see how God has redeemed Anthony's illness and subsequent death to bring light and hope into the lives of Cambodians. This is possible through the **Light of Hope Legacy**, launched in November 2024, which is a funding portal for small, grass roots projects that don't qualify for other funding. The legacy fund has been established to honour the work of Anthony McCormick and Carolyn English, a CMS Australia short-term mission partner, who died unexpectedly in 2016.

Integral to this project, is a partnership with Lighthouse Battambang, a dorm for village young people enabling them to live in Battambang to complete their schooling. Without this facility, their parents could not afford to pay for accommodation for them in the city so they would be unable to finish their education. Instead, they would have to remain at home in their village, working alongside other family members and contributing economically to their family. The motto of Lighthouse is "*Where hope is possible*", encapsulating so well the aims of the legacy fund.

The in-country work funded through the Light of Hope Legacy will be done through Healthy and Sustainable Villages Cambodia, a partnership of experts already working in the areas of providing clean water, building toilets, extending medical care and education to people in three villages in which Anne and Anthony already have connections.

The needs in Cambodia are many and the resources are insufficient, yet the Light of Hope Legacy, in conjunction with Healthy and Sustainable Villages Cambodia will bring about positive change, making a difference one life at a time, enabling a brighter future for those amongst whom Anne and Anthony worked during their time in Cambodia.

It is both redemptive and encouraging to realise that Anne and Anthony's unplanned return to New Zealand facilitated the formation of the Light of Hope Legacy and Healthy and Sustainable Villages Cambodia. What an amazing God we serve!



Embodying Hope

Words + Photos: Cole Yeoman

"Hope is not naïve - it doesn't gloss over the facts or turn a blind eye to the harsh realities of the world; it is deeply rooted in the gritty circumstances of human existence.

Hope is honest - it's not mere optimism or wishful thinking; it doesn't rely on the likelihood of positive outcomes.

Hope is not passive - it's not shallow sentimentality or idle waiting; it's a transformative force compelling us to act."

These are the words of my dear friend Dr Lamma Mansour, a Palestinian Christian from Nazareth - a minority of a minority within the Israeli state as it continues slaughtering families in Gaza and imposing a system of apartheid on all Palestinians across the land. Even with 'citizenship', speaking up risks arrest, violence, house demolition, surveillance and threats. Hope is not easy.

I was privileged to meet Lamma, and many other Palestinian Christians during two months in Palestine earlier this year. Farah, Marah, Saleem, Lourdes, Wissam, Omar, and Samuel are just some of those I'm

now fortunate to call friends. Omar can recount the origin of his family's faith, the fifth of thirteen families to convert at Pentecost! These communities have carried the flame of our faith since Acts chapter two - yet many don't even know Palestinian Christians exist.



A view of the settlements from the Nassar Farm. — Image by: Cole Yeoman

Near Bethlehem I visited the Nassar family, Christians who've worked their hilltop farm for generations. They've faced death threats and violence from surrounding Israeli settlements, their trees and crops often burnt or uprooted, all during a 34-year legal battle for their land. Still, they persist; *"we refuse to be enemies"*.

In Ramallah I met Lulu. Her 24-year-old daughter Layan, a fellow Anglican, will spend Christmas in Israel prison. She was taken from home at gunpoint in April, imprisoned without charge or trial, one of over 3,600 Palestinians held in this 'Administrative Detention'.

I visited Aida refugee camp, the most tear-gassed place on earth, facing Israeli military raids almost nightly. The community were forced from their homes in 1948, fleeing Zionist militia as the modern Israeli state was violently established in their land. In defiance, they craft jewellery from the teargas canisters.



Residents forced to watch their homes destroyed in Umm Al Khair village. — Image by: Cole Yeoman

In Jerusalem I toured the remains of Lifta village, where Yacoub fled Israeli militia at the age of eight. Now 84, he recounted rich memories as we walked the empty streets - racing his friends after school, swimming in the spring, snagging bread from his mother's bakery. Today he lives just fifteen minutes away, but this will be his seventy-sixth Christmas waiting to return home.



Yacoub standing in a house in Lifta. — Image by: Cole Yeoman

In Masafer Yatta, the Hureini family face armed settlers coming onto their farm almost daily, last night alone their house was raided three times, Hamoudi was beaten and his father Hafez detained. His cousin Zakariya was shot point-blank last October; the settler remains free and armed. Israeli military, police, and settlers work as one.



Hamoudi faces the occupation soldiers armed with a cup of tea. —
Image by: Cole Yeoman

In Umm Al Khair, Eid's family now live in a tin shed after eleven homes were razed by Israeli authorities in June. His cousin Odeh keeps watch all night in case military come to arrest the children or wider family.



Umm Al Khair - where can the children now shelter? — Image by:
Cole Yeoman

Finally, I met Rev'd Dr Munther Isaac, a Palestinian pastor from Bethlehem who preached a powerful message last Christmas that if Christ were born today, he would be born under the rubble in Gaza. Jesus arrived 2,000 years ago in a cave-come-stable, to an un-wed family, living under a brutal military occupation, soon-to-be refugees in Egypt. If he were born today, would he not come in a similar context of persecution? Would he not starve and struggle amongst the families of Gaza?

I lose hope when I see a world so unmoved by these atrocities that Munther's sermon echoes one year on. Over 400 days of bombing, starvation, and war crimes; 43,000 confirmed dead, with conservative estimates upwards of 150,000; over 70% women and children. The world's experts say this amounts to genocide, and apartheid, yet too often all we offer are vague prayers for 'peace in the Holy Land'.

What kind of hope do we hold if it requires sanitised prayers and a diluted reality?

Prayer is not a passive conversation, it's a radical act in which we *practise* hope. If we are not good news to the poor, the orphan, the widow, the oppressed; if we are not liberation to the prisoner and comfort to the stranger, then the church has lost its credibility, and we carry an empty hope. But if we *embody* those things, if we *outwork* the gospel in how we live, we will see a world transformed by goodness and justice.

Prayer is more than just words; if we claim to follow Christ, let us not just speak of hope, but *embody* hope through making costly sacrifices for those around us. In our neighbourhoods, in our motu, in our world.

To mirror Lamma's words, "*I want you to give me hope.*"

In Endings are the Possibility of New Beginnings

Words + Photos: Liz



Seventy Years of Hostels in Sindh

If you visit (please do!) one of the many churches or Christian development organisations linked with the Diocese of Hyderabad today, it is very likely that you will discover that this person, their boss, or at least one of their colleagues is a hostel graduate from one of the diocesan hostels.



Image by: Liz

Padre Shamoan, one of the first hostel students is now a senior leader in the Diocese. He is having a huge impact not just on his own community, but among many people groups. The Diocese now has a hostel graduate serving as their accountant. Past hostel students are found in roles ranging from clergy and outreach workers to teachers, police, nurses, community mobilisers, women's empowerment leaders, and project heads, some are even abroad.

If you were to visit the remote villages where most of the students were born, the significance of this impact on their lives becomes so much greater. Past students say,

"If I hadn't come to the hostel I would still be working for a landlord in his fields, with little hope of change for myself or my family."

In 2024, Ramesh and Sohail were the last two senior students at the Mirpurkhas hostel. Their exams were due to be completed late May, but with a heat wave and various other factors their exams were finally held mid-June. They both have bright futures, one hoping to be ordained, the other to further develop the computer skills he learnt in the small hostel laptop lab.

Sadly, Ramesh and Sohail were the last students to study from this hostel (for now). After nearly seventy years of this hostel a time of completion has been reached. But the story does not end there...

Vision and development

A decade after the creation of Pakistan, NZCMS partners Peter and Marjorie Tovey envisioned a hostel for boys near Mirpurkhas, in rural Sindh. At the time of Pakistan's creation, mass migration occurred. However in Interior Sindh, many families remained as field labourers under feudal landlords. Among these a number were coming to faith. In 1958, the sons of these families were given the opportunity to attend school and learn of the fledgling faith of their families from this hostel.

These and subsequent children now count among the leaders of many community facing ministries in a region with unique challenges. Feudalism, poverty, malnutrition, extreme weather, marginalisation, lack of basic facilities, and lack of access to education remain major challenges. This is in a hot arid province with both deserts and agricultural lands.



Image by: Liz

The hostel programme has seen generations of children access schooling, otherwise inaccessible. Beyond formal education the hostels have had strong discipleship programmes, amazing drama and music opportunities, life skill development, and vocational trainings.

By 1990 there were four hostels, located in Sukkur, Hyderabad, Mirpurkhas and Khipro. NZCMS partners Keith and Joan Mitchell were to play a role in these hostels in the 1980s, including as hostel in charge at Mirpurkhas 1983-1989 (along with their many other involvements).

The rich legacy of people such as the Toveys and the Mitchells can be seen in the church in 2024; their love and commitment are remembered and spoken of with affection. Boys they nurtured are now nurturing others.

Expansion and contraction

In the 1990s, the Diocese expanded its hostel programme, including by this time hostels for girls in three locations. A number of satellite hostels were also trialled across the province.

However, by the new millennium with donor priorities shifting (impacting funding) the work needed to be consolidated to the four larger hostels. By 2024, the resources to run the last hostel (in Mirpurkhas) had also come to an end. So, in June 2024 the final hostel students completed their exams bringing to an end nearly 70 years of diocesan hostel ministry.

But the story continues, because in endings are the possibility of new beginnings, and that is the story of how God is moving in the hostel ministry. The word 'hope' is central.



Image by: Liz

Endings and beginnings

Emerging out of this time a new breath of life is blowing. Instead of empty hostel buildings, the hostels in Mirpurkhas, Khipro, and Hyderabad will again be full of students receiving life changing opportunities. Two new international partners have taken responsibility for the running of these

hostels long into the future.

Foundations have been already dug for a new hostel building in Mirpurkhas, with capacity for 100 boys. The sounds of girls' voices are heard again in the Hyderabad hostel since August 2024.

The hostels of Mirpurkhas and Khipro are both including the word 'hope' in their new names - and that is what we hold, hope for many more marginalised children and families to be blessed through the hostels... hostels which even after 70 years remain relevant and of value in the challenging context of rural Sindh.

To God be the glory for all the lives touched over these years, and into the future.

Liz is from Christchurch and works as an education consultant in Pakistan.
