



Winter 2008

welcome



Trying to discern



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In much of the world the cost of food staples has doubled in 8 months



Come on then. We'd better get going!

[Guest Editorials] two visitors write:



I have lived in St Heliers for one year working as an au pair. During that time I have enjoyed the St Heliers church very much. I have loved working with the singers and the Youth Band.

In Holland I had not been going to Church. My memory of church was that it was a depressing place. The minister was always saying you were a bad person. I loved coming to worship at your church. I could understand what was being said and the services touched my life. I used to leave the church feeling uplifted and feeling so glad I had come. Thank you. *Eva Noble*

I came to Auckland in February for a four month sabbatical at Auckland Uni. I practice and teach family medicine in Newfoundland, Canada, my wife Linda teaches clinical nursing and my son Peter is in high school (GlenDowie). We attend a nondenominational evangelical church (The Chapel in St Johns).



Greg

We were attracted to St Heliers because of the welcoming sense of community, the participation, focus on all ages and the outreach both locally and abroad.

At our first service the youth presented on their mission trip to Pakpingjai and we were invited to the Sunday school outing at Tawhranui. We were made to feel most welcome and have enjoyed participating. Every blessing.

Love in Christ, Greg, Linda and Peter Sherman

St Heliers and Community Support Trust (“Trust”)

Last year Session approved the formation of the Trust which has now been registered by the Charities Commission and has charitable status with the Inland Revenue Department. This means that those donating funds can claim a rebate for income tax purposes for cash donations of \$5 or more.

The principal objects of the Trust are expressed to be as follows:

- (a) Provide, develop and grow a high quality accessible and user friendly Centre for the area. Centre means the centre at 100 St Heliers Bay Road and area means eastern suburbs area of Auckland.
- (b) Develop, carry out and promote programmes at and from the Centre to meet the family and individual needs, enrich the lives of those living in the Area and encourage service to the Community.
- (c) Encourage and train persons in the recognition and effective use of skills necessary to carry out work at the Centre.
- (d) Assist in the provision and development of education or other resources for the Centre or other community centres initiatives which have charitable purposes.

(e) Solicit donations, legacies, bequests, community funding and government funding and gifts of all kinds to assist the Trustees in the objects of the Trust.

The initial Trustees are: Annabel Mary Cotton (Community Representative), John Lavis Blower, Peter Vivian Reid, Frances Susan Watts, Stanley James Stewart, Braid Cochrane and William Anthony Duncan.

The statutory power of appointment of new trustees is vested in the Session of the Presbyterian Church.

It is believed that the initial purpose of the Trust will be to raise funds for the Community and its growing and expanding needs. There is so much that the Community Centre could do if it had the where with all to do it.

Any bequest to be contained in a Will should simply be named to St Heliers and Community Support Trust, 100 St Heliers Bay Road, St Heliers while any cash donation can be made to the Trustees, Attention: W A Duncan, Box 4139, Auckland. Bill will also be happy to answer any queries readers may have.

Bill Duncan

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Our web site: www.sthelierschurch.org.nz

A number of publications about our Church and Community Centre are available in the foyer

Let us run with determination the race that lies before us...” Hebrews 12:1

The way I read the quote above is, “ Let us help each other out and let’s run for it”.

At the district level of the Presbyterian Church, which is called Presbytery, we are talking about having “Courageous Conversations.” This means we are to talk with other parishes and with other presbyteries about possibilities for mission that we might never have otherwise have talked about.

The subjects could be

- ✂ Let’s work together on some major projects
- ✂ Why not sell up both our properties (which have actually passed their used by date) and create one better more useful facility
- ✂ Are there things we could do together that we have always done separately that will make a difference to the communities we serve?
- ✂ Is there a new mission we could undertake together that we couldn’t do by ourselves?

Generally these questions are never asked when the church is going along just fine and seems to have plenty of resources. It’s as if we don’t ask those courageous questions and have courageous conversations unless something forces us to.

St Heliers is now having to ask some courageous questions of itself. In some areas our community is forcing us to do this.

Let’s take a brief look at just some aspects of our life. We have run out of places for Small Miracles. The waiting list is too long. It is now a discouragement. Parents want to bring their children and give family loyalty. The length of the waiting list will put them off and once they go somewhere else, they won’t come back.

The OSCAR after-school care is full and the same situation exists with the waiting lists. There is a growing need and a long term one for child care in our community. We provide excellent child care and excellent programmes with committed leadership. We can do more. We don’t have to, but the fact is we could and we have the resources to do so!

As the number of young families in our community increases so does the number of independent older people; many of them living alone. We could do more with our facilities and the services we offer for them.

Our buildings are stifling our mission and we can settle to be comfy but “average” or we can take a risk and create a better centre for the future that is fast emerging.

In my understanding the Holy Spirit is prompting our community to take some courageous steps.

The progress that the Building Development Committee is making brings a sense of relief; see- pages 6 & 7.

There is a way to make your contribution to the future of our “reaching out and welcoming in”. You can start by taking an interest in the detail of the re-development and begin to take notice of the way our buildings work at present. You can assist by getting to know others who attend programmes or worship at St Heliers Church and Community Centre; invite them to your home or go out for coffee. Make a friend in this community. Perhaps the Garage Sale coming up on 14th June is a way to put one foot forward on this journey. Every parent and grandparent is a stakeholder in the church and community centre; every child and every adult. Don’t wait for an invitation.

In the New Testament we are encouraged to run with determination the race that lies before us, keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus. Paul urges this in his letter to a church facing great opposition and where people were considering abandoning the Christian faith. St Heliers Church and Community Centre is not facing persecution or great discouragement but many in our community are and many who are part of us face a very uncertain future. Jesus is the prize in this race we run and he gives us a vision of a new world when we have faith in him. The running of the race is part of Jesus’ gift.

I am thankful to be the Minister of a Church and Community Centre that seems prepared to run that race. I will run it with you. Will you run it with me? Our prize at this point is that we share a vision that is clearly a call to be a community of faith that must keep leading and nurturing a wider community. How it will flesh out in terms of detail, we will only know if we run the race. Thank you for the way you love your children; for the way you search for meaning; for the commitment to making community for yourselves and those you love. This is part of the race. I truly believe that in this small corner of the world St Heliers Church and Community Centre has a role to lead courageously.

Finally, as you can see we face a new challenge. Part of our hearts are over in Bali with our son Walker, his wife Effie and our new grandchild, Logan.

I am told that grandchildren keep you running.

With love, Pauline Stewart



God's Protection - a big disappointment or is it?

Based on a sermon given by Stan Stewart 20 April, 2008

In a rural district we worked in, a six year old girl who attended one of our programmes was killed. She was run over by a loaded cattle truck shortly after alighting from a school bus. We attended the funeral to show our sympathy. Commenting on the death, the minister said, "God wanted another little angel in heaven and so he took her for himself." I felt physically sick.

The recent death of six students and their teacher in a canyoning accident upset us all. The students attended a Christian school. How are we to understand these tragic deaths? Did God want these students for himself?

Long ago I gave up on the idea that God directly controls all our paths for good or ill. Such a concept is simply not tenable. Any god who because he wanted another little angel for himself allows – or, is it "ordains", that she be crushed under a cattle truck is a monster.

Here are a few verses from one of my favourite Psalms.

I come to you for protection – My life is in your hands. Save me from enemies who hunt me down. Smile on me your servant. Have pity and rescue me. (Ps 31: 1-5, 15-16)

In our New Testament reading (1 Peter 2: 2-10) Paul talks about Christians as a kingdom of holy priests. He writes, "You are God's chosen and special people, members of his royal household." What does all this talk of protection and being part of the royal family of God mean?

We have some idea of what it means to be a member of a current royal family. It means being treated with deference and surrounded by wealth and privilege.

To find out what it means to belong to God's royal family let's look at some of his special family and see how they fared. I have been thinking about Stephen - Acts 7:55-60. Stephen is one of the heroes of the early church. And yet, he was stoned to death. Where was God's protection?

If we are to go to the peak of specialness, then this is obviously Jesus. He is not just a member of the royal household. He is the King, the special, favoured, pre-eminent only son. And yet he was betrayed, deserted, whipped, spat upon, abandoned, and finally crucified.

Here lies a clue to understanding God's protection. It is not protection from calamity. It is protection in calamity. This protection shows itself in the ability to love and keep on loving through the tears. "Father forgive them".

In the Christian understanding the cross is at the centre of the universe. The way God works in everything is not over and above pain and conflict, but right in the middle of it. Nor is God in the conflict in a glass bubble, immune from pain. God suffers with the universe, is humiliated and broken by the universe and yet, keeps on loving. It is in this unbreakable love that hope and healing comes.

This is the divine force. This is the principle of life.

This line of thinking brought to mind a prayer I had read many times, known as the Confederate Soldiers Prayer.

The Confederate Soldiers Prayer.

Found in the pocket of a dead soldier at Gettysburg.

I asked for strength that I might achieve; I was made weak that I might learn humbly to obey.

I asked for health that I might do greater things; I was given infirmity that I might do better things.

I asked for riches that I might be happy; I was given poverty that I might be wise.

I asked for power that I might have the praise of men; I was given weakness that I might feel the need of God.

I got nothing that I had asked for, but everything that I had hoped for.

A few weeks ago, Tony Blair announced that he has dedicated the rest of his life to enabling positive dialogue between religions. To this end he has set up a foundation to provide resources to promote understanding between religions.

Understanding other faiths has always been an interest of mine. I have on many occasions sensed deep and loving spirituality in persons whose faith journey differs greatly from mine. At this stage in my life, I feel ready to try and understand other religions. I am ready to do anything that will help me to understand other religions. But...!

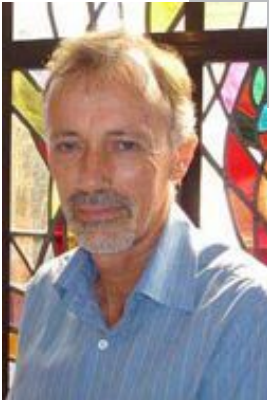
Guess what has just happened in our family? Because my son loves a Moslem girl, he had to convert to that religion in order to marry her. On our recent trip to Bali, the main purpose was to be with our son, Walker and his wife Effie and our new grandchild, Logan. For two weeks we found ourselves immersed in Moslem and Hindu culture. How very bizarre. How unexpected.

My idea had been to join Tony Blair's team or something like it, and read the books. I had never expected to come face to face with other faiths in my own family. It put me off balance. My head spun with confusion and complaint. My thoughts kept going to the Confederate Soldier's Prayer.

Bewildering life events and tragedies come, often without warning, into the lives of many. But, be sure of this. God has not sent these painful things so don't blame him. In fact God's protection is his offer to journey with us through "the deep waters".

I got nothing that I had asked for,
but everything that I had hoped for.

I think this unknown soldier spoke the truth. *Stan Stewart*



[Session Notes - Paul Williams

This is my first “Session Notes” since being appointed Session Clerk so I first want to acknowledge and thank my predecessor, Graham Mathieson, for his excellent work in this role over recent years and for his careful inducting of myself into the job.

An Active Church: One of the things that has come home to me since I was appointed Session Clerk is how much happens in this Church – and I include the Community Centre here as it is not a separate entity but is very much part of who we are. On almost every day of the week there are a number of events taking place that are connected to the ministry of our parish. Behind this activity are hundreds of hours of planning, service, leadership and administration. The results of this impacts on people in many ways but all of which is an expression of our commitment to serve God and people. Many of you who do this work do so in small and hidden ways but all are important and so thank you.

Reflecting on Loss: Recently we at St Heliers shared with the rest of the country a little of the grief of the families who lost loved ones in the Outdoor Pursuits tragedy in the Tongariro National Park. This event was closely followed by the disasters in Myanmar and in China. These immense events of grief and loss have caused us to reflect on many aspects of our faith. Our two ministers have supported us in this through what they have shared at Sunday services over this time.

Small Miracles and Oscar Gillian Blower reported that demand for places in Small Miracles far exceeds our capacity and a similar situation exists for Oscar. Whilst noting the limitations of our site, the session encouraged Gillian to explore options for expansion. We look forward to further discussion of possibilities for this highly

regarded part of the church’s work.

Building Redevelopment The session and managers are awaiting a full report from the architect who is working on the initial phase of investigation into the possibilities for redevelopment of the Church buildings. This has taken longer than anticipated but we expect the report to be ready for the June session meeting. The congregation will then be briefed and given the opportunity for formal input at the Annual Meeting in September.

Who are the Elders and Managers? At our last meeting, the elders and managers spent some time discussing what it means to be an elder or a manager. We looked at this from both a group and an individual perspective.

For those of you new to the Presbyterian Church, the main role of an elder, along with the ministers, is to lead and support the ministry of the church and each elder has a spiritual and pastoral role to play. In practice, each elder has their own particular gifts (as does everyone in the congregation) and will tend use their own special ones to serve the church, be it in planning, administration, leading a study group, pastoral visiting, etc. Elders are ordained (appointed) for life but usually have periods of “rest”. Managers are elected for a three-year term by the congregation and have a specific role to play in overseeing and administering the finances and church property. When the elders meet together they are called “the session” but in this congregation the elders and managers always meet together to give a more holistic approach to the leadership of the parish. In addition, we have a sub-group of the session called “the Executive” which meets in the month between session meetings. This group deals with issues of Governance as well as small or urgent matters to keep the larger session meetings free to focus on the bigger picture.

Paul Williams Session Clerk

Elders – their role in the Church - Excerpts only from a paper given by Stephen Harland-Smith to the Session - full text is available from Paul Williams, Session Clerk.

Elders (by no means all elderly) are ordained (as are ministers) to a special leadership role in the church. Elders, sometimes with church Managers, meet regularly as the Session, or as some churches prefer now days, as the Parish Council.

The Terms: Loosely and colloquially – Elders care for people - spirituality. Managers care for plant - property.

The Bible states clearly the character required of an Elder and gives guidelines for governance. Three different Greek words are used synonymously in the New Testament – **presbuteros** and **episkopos** have similar

meanings of presiding over and supervising, **poimen** means shepherd.

Qualifications for Eldership are found in 1 Timothy 3:2-7 & Titus 1:6-8 – for example -

- Blameless as a steward of God
- Temperate, sober, vigilant, patient and gentle
- Hospitable
- Self-controlled, just, not self-opinionated
- Not a new convert (mature in the faith)

Duties are found in 1 Peter 5: 1-5, 1 Thess 5:12, 1 Timothy 4:14, 5:17, Hebrews 13:17

- Shepherd of the flock
- Teaching, preaching sound doctrine
- Rule, lead and train others.

Why are we doing this?

BACKGROUND

◆ A Church and Community Centre which grew like Topsy. Consequently there were lots of make-dos, make-overs, add-ons, adaptations etc...

◆ A major re-design of the sanctuary followed by minor additions and alterations tending to a culture of ad-hock-ism.

◆ Halt: In May 05 Session was challenged to shelve alterations pending a master plan.

◆ As part of the search for a master plan, relocating the church on another site was examined and discarded. The fore-runner of the current Building Development Committee was formed.

◆ We have been engaged with a professional planner for years and architects for over a year. The project has been considered from every possible angle.

◆ One concept was shared with the Sept 07 Annual Meeting. This has now been superseded.

◆ Shortly a new concept will be presented which in the view of the Committee, the architects and the planners, is the best, and perhaps the only, way forward.

◆ To take the concept further will require the support of Session and of the whole parish.

The Cost so Far: By the time the next set of concept drawings arrive we will have spent \$15,000 on professional services. This money has been donated by interested parties and has not come from the Parish budget. To date most of our professional help has been supplied pro bono – without charge.

THE NEW CONCEPT

As we go to press, the concept is fairly fixed but meaningful drawings are not yet available. I will list for you the salient points.

What we will gain

Usable space will significantly increase - by some reckoning almost double.

Many difficulties and inefficiencies which currently relate to previous make-dos can be eliminated by purpose-built facilities.

New spaces/rooms will be created - for centre and church.

Access will be vastly improved -pre-school/disabled.

Flexibility of space will enable new uses and activities.

Storage integral in all new spaces enabling variety of use.

Simplified traffic flow.

Room to move, to experiment and develop.

Constraints:

We must build within the current footprint of our buildings – or less. If possible we should provide more parking and better access. As will be seen the extra parking is only a few car spaces but there will be considerable improvement to access.

The additions should not breach Council regulations.

Key Points in the new concept

○ The sanctuary floor and the lounge floor will be brought to the one level. This will be achieved by lowering the sanctuary floor to the same level as the lounge.



○ The church will be turned side on – that is, the focus of the church will then be on the wall adjacent to the Johnston Hall lane. The internal enclosed deck will be removed and this space will be incorporated into the lounge floor space. The wall with the current entrance to the sanctuary will become a wall of doors, which can be opened to provide for an overflow crowd when required. *An important point to note is that this reorganised space will become the auditorium for all large gatherings, which currently meet in the lounge.*

○ Entrance to the church will be extended and the current Daisy Dempsey room will go (replaced by one of the new spaces). Offices will be purpose-designed and remain approximately where they are. A fully equipped reception desk will be prominent in this area.

○ The current Johnston Hall will be demolished and replaced with a similar space which will extend behind the church and on the same level as the lounge.

○ The kitchen will be relocated to serve the auditorium, the lounge and the new Johnston Hall.

○ Toilets will be relocated to serve these same spaces.

○ A permanent open plan lounge area with tea and coffee making facilities will be located towards the back of the present lounge.

Concept Two

The Committee: Bruce Anderson, Don Bain, Braid and Patsy Cochrane, Paul Kayser, Rev Pauline Stewart, Stan Stewart (Convenor), Hadden Vernon, Peter Young, Article by Stan Stewart

○ Underneath this space will be another floor – all on one level to serve the needs of pre-school, Toy Library and perhaps an Op Shop. It would become the entrance for the pre-school and OSCAR programmes.

○ With Johnston Hall gone, a full turning circle will be possible at the bottom of this two way drive and additional parking can be located.

○ In addition to items mentioned, attention would be given throughout the whole project to ceiling height, lighting, sound, ventilation etc..



Re-assurance:

Everything we have done to date has been broad brush. That is it has been light on detail. However, there is no intention to have the congregation commit to a broad brush concept.

Before we come to finally voting on a development plan the positioning of doors cupboards etc. will need to be taken into consideration. People will have their say on the details, though it goes without saying that in the end there would have to be compromise.

What will it cost? Lots! This is a major rework that will effect every part of our buildings. However there will be no commitment to the project until we can see where most of the money will be coming from.

Underlining Agreement

Four points of agreement underpin and to a large extent drive the work of the Building Development Committee. As far as the Committee knows, the four points are widely agreed upon within the parish.

■ Currently, we are full up – we cannot expand community programmes or any new church activities in the present buildings. The best we can hope for is to maintain the status quo, a course of action, which usually leads to decline.

■ No one wants to move from our present site.

■ We have the potential to do more and perhaps should do more in terms of leadership for the wider community and the wider church; (eg. the parable of the talents). In many respects our buildings inhibit our ability to give this lead.

■ The congregation cannot meet the major cost of any redevelopment. Redevelopment can only go ahead as a joint project with major stakeholders – possibly the ones who already work with us.

Objections & Disagreements

We are aware of several objections and disagreements to the whole notion of redevelopment:

We could spend the money on local mission; the needs of Glen Innes are often mentioned. **Comment:** The vast proportion of the re-development money would not be available for this kind of work. Also, the key purpose behind the re-design is to facilitate mission.

Our facilities are not fully utilised. For instance, the 10.30am worship service is by no means full. **Comment:** Nor is it ever likely to be. Services of this kind are in decline across the country and the world. None-the-less, we shall continue to provide this style of service as long as there is a need for it. Different kinds of Christian gatherings for fellowship and worship are gradually emerging.

We will lose our dedicated church building. **Comment:** Correct, if what you mean is a building that is reserved for religious services, principally on one day a week. But, if you see the church building as a beautiful space to serve and welcome the whole community we can achieve this.

Next Steps: 1. The developmental sketches of what is described here will be presented by the architects to the BD Committee. 2. If agreed upon these sketches will be forwarded to Session.* 3. If the Session approves the concept and sketches will be presented to a congregational meeting.* 4. If this meeting agrees the next step will be to search for funding, to secure the approval of Presbytery and the development of detailed plans. * One of our architects will attend to answer questions. Questions or comments welcome: Stan 585 1084 or any of the BD Comm top of page.





For the 10 months up to 30 April, 2008 (Church year runs from 1 July, 2007 to 30 June, 2008) we have received \$156,650 in Offerings and Donations. This compares to budgeted Offerings and Donations for the ten months

of \$144,157. Given that our expenditure for the ten months of \$193,447 is below the budgeted expenditure of \$201,149 the Church (at this point of time) appears to be on track to show a small surplus for the year.

So far this year a sum of \$24,447 has been gifted to the Girls Hostel for Pakpingjai. The Church has remitted \$24,000 to the project during the year. \$12,307 has been gifted during the year for a social worker in Glen Innes. This project (which is administered by Presbyterian Support Northern) is a joint project with them and the Presbyterian Churches of Kohimarama, Somervell, Glendowie and ourselves. Our contribution for calendar year 2007 of \$9,000 has been remitted to PSN.

A major project during the last three months has been the Stations of the Cross Easter exhibition held at the Fisher Gallery. Funding was attained from the Lion Foundation, the Presbyterian Foundation and Auckland City. Special thanks to an anonymous donor whose contribution ensured that the project broke even.

Every church is a work in progress. We can only minister because people support what we are doing with gifts of money. Thank you.
Andy Picot - Treasurer.



YADS - St Heliers Youth Ministry - Fran Sawtell

We have a great group of young people.

* Ally Thomson, Hannah Plom and Mel Cottrell are continuing a splendid dance ministry, SHAYDZ, teaching a growing number of children and young people the art of Hip Hop and Jazz.

* Several of our youth group enjoy helping out with Kids' Club and Friday Night Friend-zy.

* Alina Gustensov is our Godzone Angel, guaranteeing our younger children a great Sunday morning, and making sure that birthdays don't go unnoticed!

Other members of our Youth Team will be helping with teaching in Godzone this term.

In March, Brenda Holloway, Alina Gustensov, and Slav Bakiev spent an exciting weekend at a leadership camp "Going Somewhere". They met with young people from Presbyterian churches from the Auckland and Waikato area, exchanging ideas while learning and developing their leadership skills together, under the direction of a dedicated team of Youth Leaders. Friendships were made and promises made to meet up later in the year.

YAdS continued p9

Munching with Matthew

In late March some of you received a letter from a family who has decided to leave our church. One reason for their decision was reference Jill Kayser and I made, in recent church magazines, to Bishop John Spong. Another was my comment in the Autumn edition, that within the Worship Focus Group we have a range of views on "who" we worship. I stand by that comment and know it to be true of our wider congregation. I believe that this is quite legitimate – a sign of growth and questioning, born out of our journeying with a God of love.

Obviously, some of the influences come in worship. Have you ever wondered where the sermon theme is found? Have you ever wanted to talk about the sermon but couldn't find an opportunity? Like me you will sometimes have come out of church uplifted or comforted by some thought - phrase – quote – or the theme of a sermon; or sometimes have come away questioning something you have heard and wishing you could explore the idea – or challenge it.



The Faith Development, Worship and Music Focus Group is preparing opportunities during August for discussion, challenge and questioning of the sermons for that month. We will be providing the lectionary readings for each of the five Sundays in August, and some background to the themes. There will be a light lunch following the 10.30am service; there

will be child care; we will have hosts, group leaders, panelists, Biblical characters – and more. Each Sunday's programme will be different but all will focus on the day's sermon and will provide opportunity for sharing and growing in our own faith community.

Do try to take advantage of these opportunities to "walk into the mystery of a God who is beyond words, concepts or human perception. Jesus is for me a doorway into that mystery." (John Spong) Come and share in discussions of this Jesus as he is known according to Matthew.

*Barbara Spiers
Convenor*

Hanging Out in the Holidays



On "Round the Bays Sunday" I made it. Our church team rewards me (and a thousand others) with watermelon. Bill Duncan serves me with style.

The last two weeks of April was a busy time with over 50 children each day attending the holiday programme and 40 children off for four days at Camp Adair.

The Holiday programme was a good one with children trying out everything from ceramic craft to planting their own herb. A very successful Fashion show day for Hardcore saw every child leaving with a black and white portrait of themselves to remember the day.

With both events, the general consensus was that over all the activities Hanging About was the best. At both events this involved doing so at great heights, from the top of the Super Fox at Camp Adair to the challenging walls on offer at Mt Wellington's Extreme Edge Climbing Centre.

Having just got over April, it's on to the July. Holidays start 7th July, Holiday Programmes will be available from 3rd June.

Small Miracles

Several bits of good news within the Pre School. Firstly we have been awarded \$15,000 from the ASB Community Trust which along with a contribution from Small Miracles will allow for the completion of works within the outdoor play area.

Secondly a big big thank you to Leanne Borich and her team of parent and staff helpers who ran an incredibly successful fashion sale. A total of \$2000 was raised which has been used to purchase both indoor and outdoor play equipment for the centre.

The children had a special visit from one of New Zealand's top children's author, Tessa Duder last week. It was a wonderful day for all and focused on Pacific Lullabies and about being a writer.



At present our very popular Pre School has a waiting list of 200 which is down in no small part to the dedication and hard work that Susan Piaggi and her team put into making it a warm welcoming centre. We are working with the Ministry of Education to try and work towards a way of accommodating some of the list of waiting children.

The children are continuing to enjoy their links with the Church and Community Centre, with regular visits from Pauline Stewart to tell stories and attend 5th Birthday parties.

Pictured: Ashleigh Headley at her graduation

YAdS continued from p8

YAdS, (Young Adult Sundays) meets regularly each Sunday. Sometimes there are three and other times 15. Keeping track of them all is a challenge. Our young people have more commitments than any previous generation and organising a regular programme has proven impractical. As with the programme, the venues of our weekly Sunday YAdS meetings have been varied! We have been hosted by parents, spent evenings at the church and last week our families enjoyed a BBQ at the Manse. Lively debate about responsibility, a DVD and discussion about Jesus' last walk into Jerusalem and Palm Sunday and "Movie and popcorn at the church". So what is the answer? How is this Ministry meeting the spiritual needs of our young people? Reflecting on this last term, the "Swiss cheese approach" – a nibble here and a nibble there - we find we are achieving more than seems apparent.

We are establishing that the 9am service of the first Sunday of each month will be a Youth led service; a Youth Band and members of YAdS and Teen Team leading worship.

Developing Christian Leadership Skills in our young people is an integral part of our Youth Ministry. We must acknowledge that without the commitment of our Youth, the 2008 Bush Camp would not have succeeded. Our youth did an amazing job and we're looking forward to the July holidays when we will be running the "Ideas Explosion" programme again.

We congratulate Andrew Harland-Smith on winning a scholarship from AFS (American Field Scholarships) to study for a year in Albany, New York State. We wish him every success.

The St Heliers Presbyterian Youth Scene is alive and well. There are plenty of activities and we welcome new ideas - adult help. Call me -

Fran Sawtell Youth Ministry 027 279641 or fran_sawtell@ihug.co.nz

piano@stheliers

Piano at St Heliers

May was a great month for exceptional music with three young students of Qu Yong playing for us. One was our own John Chen playing in both Mothers' Day services. In a short concert between the services his playing of Beethoven's Piano sonata no 17 in D Minor had us all on our feet.



A week later in an afternoon concert the smaller-than-we-hoped audience were absolutely blown away by the talent of Rebekah Kim from South Korea and Sam Huang from Taiwan. Their playing was a joy to hear, they were charming guests at afternoon tea and Qu Yong is keen to have more similar occasions in our church using the Yamaha piano which he and others regard as a very fine instrument.

Keep an eye out for news of the next concert.

Stations of the Cross

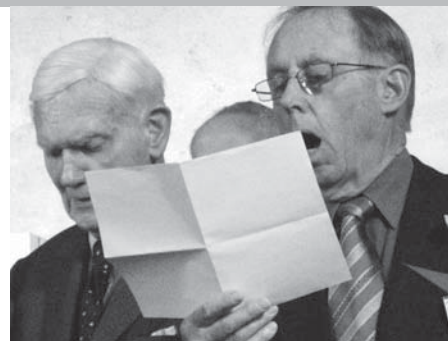
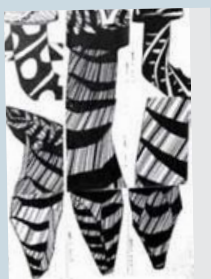
Barbara Spiers

Many months in the planning, a few days on show, an experiment in taking the Easter message to a wider public. Was it easy – not really. Was it worthwhile – yes. Who did it reach – folk from churches, the general public, art lovers and five school groups.

“Stations” was professionally curated, drew on the work, specially commissioned for the exhibition, of 15 NZ artists and 10 of our top composers. It was supported by the Presbyterian Church through the Presbyterian Foundation, by a small grant from the Lion Foundation and from private donations, food and wine donated (Montana) for the opening. The idea was Pauline's and she and I were most closely in contact with our curators while a number of church folk helped by volunteering at the Gus Fisher Gallery, and with publicity.

Artists and composers were randomly matched to one of the stations – a move intended to test the idea that in each station there is an essential human experience that can be explored regardless of religious belief. In his opening address Rev Martin Baker commended the artists involved for creating works that speak to the viewer whether they are moved by religious art or not. We hope there will be future exhibitions – we're thinking!

Faith Development, Worship & Music Focus Group



Music matters in our church. We love to sing and to listen; from the classics to new pop. We praise God through it all. Above our men serenade the ladies on Mothers Day. Below music which really rocks.

‘We Are All One’ is now well underway with thirty children participating in the cast, and many more helpers. We are now selling tickets to the two performances July 4th and July 5th. Contact Lesley 521 5145 for tickets, and come along to this original, inspiring production focusing on the world in 2008, with great music and for all ages to enjoy! **Don't miss out!**

“Make way for Easter” – 2008

It was about five years since we had performed “Make Way For Easter” at St Heliers Church and I thought it was time to do it again. It is the story of Easter with music and dance by Graham Kendrick. Lesley Thomas brought it to us from her UK church. Lesley organised the dances and singers – and everything else apart from the music ! We wanted to include all ages, and needed singers (adults and children), instrumentalists, dancers, a boy to be Jesus, a narrator, and a participating congregation.

Easter was early this year and therefore we didn't have much time to rehearse. The children and young people learnt by using time in Godzone, Friday Friendly and other activities they attend in our church. The instrumentalists learned their music at home. Well done everyone!

Make Way For Easter was performed on Palm Sunday evening, following the Passover Meal. *Raeywn Dakers*

West meets East

Jeanette Johnston in Saudi Arabia

Five am, and the dawn call to prayer, sounds wistful, reverent, as it winds its way through an almost deserted arrivals hall at Dubai airport. While I can only guess its message, I clearly hear the message for me – “you are now somewhere very different”. Open your eyes, your ears and your mind!”

So here I am in late November 2008 at the start of three weeks in the Middle East, ready for a 21st century magic carpet ride. Dubai, Egypt and Saudi Arabia - my destinations turn out to be points on a continuum - from “Arab-lite” through to the more authentic and traditional. You can measure it by the women. In Dubai, they are very visible: out and about in malls, in banks, in cafes; some fully veiled, some just their heads covered and some in western dress. Cairo is similar to Dubai, although the cafes still seem to be men only! And in Riyadh women are almost invisible – swathed in back, mostly veiled and not much in evidence in any public spaces.

So what’s it like being a woman in Saudi Arabia?

Putting on the abaya (cloak) and hijab (headscarf) every time I went out took some getting used to. Although as western women we didn’t have to cover our heads with the hijab, you do get stared at and I felt much less conspicuous covered. And I found myself scuttling from the car into the building as though I was somehow illegitimate. However as I became more adept at putting on the abaya, I became quite fond of it. After a week of wearing this in public, I felt very strange and self-conscious about taking it off and waited until I was on the plane to Cairo rather than “strip” in the departure lounge!

The women varied in their approaches to traditional dress. They all have to cover their heads in public or risk arrest, but some were strongly opposed to wearing the veil. In private settings there is huge variation. Most I met were bareheaded and wearing western dress in their own homes, but my sister has met people who have never seen their mother’s face.

The people I met (men and women) and who welcomed me into their homes were well-educated, well-travelled, loved life, were thoughtful about their religion and culture and interested in mine. Most of them wanted to see a degree of change – one laughingly welcomed me to Saudi Arabia, “the most conservative country on earth!” But at the same time there is something special about living somewhere that revolves around prayer five times a day, where family is so strong and hospitality so warm and generous. I feel that my travels did open my mind in many ways, and I can’t wait to go again!



Jeanette outside the Mustak Fort

Don’t worry! They did not have to ride in the luggage compartment of the bus the whole way.



Coaching to the Sea Bird Coast

On Wednesday 21 May, a bus trip to the beautiful “Seabird Coast” was enjoyed by 35 people. Three groups from the Church were represented; Arty Crafty, Friday Lunch Club and Caught-in-the-middle Group - plus friends and neighbours.

The first stop was for a picnic morning tea at Kawakawa before heading to Kaiuaa for a lunch of fish ‘n’ chips at the well-known restaurant. From there it was only a short distance to Miranda and the “Shore Bird Trust” centre. This proved to be an interesting visit with a lecture about the types of shorebirds in the area and the migratory feats of some of them. Our thanks to Pauline and Stan for arranging this trip, non-stop snacks, and for entertaining us. We look forward to future outings and hope others will to join us. All of our groups welcome new members - call the Office 575 6098 for meeting details.



Our Coach Captain in uniform.

We are all trying to discern the future. Some of these events may help?

Upcoming Events

- 14 June 8am – 1pm – Monster Garage Sale at the church
- 22 June 5.30pm “Tea Party Church” begins with a Jigglers Tea Party – a meal for children and time for parents to enjoy.
- 4th and 5th July – “We Are All One” concert show with children by Amy Gulvin
- Sat 26 July 8.00am Breakfast \$10: “Tomorrow’s Communications - planning for a wireless world”. Alan Jamieson – Alan is NZ Telecom’s representative on the World Telecommunication Committee.
- 27th July – Celebrating the British Isles and Eire Day – 10.00am Worship, traditions, Costumes, music, dance and food at the St Heliers Primary School Hall.
- “Hot August Sunday Lunches” – Sunday lunch and discussion on the sermon - see details in article on page 8
- Last Friday of the month - Morning tea for Mums with preschoolers
- Ideas Explosion – Children helped to create and finish wonderful ideas. Second week of the School Holidays

Need more information?

Office - 575 6098

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