



Editorial

The passing of the country's revered icon Sir Edmund Hillary led to sustained reflection on the great man's life. Apart from his remarkable outdoors exploits a recurring theme of the national reflections was that Sir Ed's life was one dedicated to the service of others. A Samoan proverb is:

O le ala I le pule, le tautua which translated is "In order to be a leader, one must first learn how to serve." Sir Ed was a living embodiment of this proverb and we as a na-

tion are better for having had Sir Ed as a role model. The Sunday prior to Sir Ed's funeral at morning worship we stood as a congregation and recited an affirmation of faith that included these words: "In the name of Jesus Christ, we commit ourselves in the service of others."

In this edition of The Messenger we report on the morning tea for Margaret and John Hunt held on 27 January. For Margaret and John personify lives lived in the service of others.

Mark 9 v 33 finds the disciples not for the first time discussing which of them is the greatest. This prompts Jesus to explain the code of conduct which underpins his teaching and ministry: "if anyone would be first, he must be last of all, and servant of all." If we need a simple, easy to remember manifesto for our congregation in 2008 we would do well to remember this one.

Rob Anderson

Angels – As Explained By Children

- I only know the names of two angels, Hark and Harold
- Everybody's got it wrong. Angels don't wear halos anymore. I forget why, but scientists are working on it.
- It's not easy to become an angel. First, you've got to die. Then you go to heaven, then there's flight training to go through. And then you have to agree to wear all those angel clothes.
- Angels work for God and watch over kids when God has got to do something else.
- My guardian angel helps me with Maths, but he's not much good for Science.
- Angels live in clouds made by God and His son who is a very good carpenter.
- What I don't get about angels is why, when someone is in love, they shoot arrows at them.



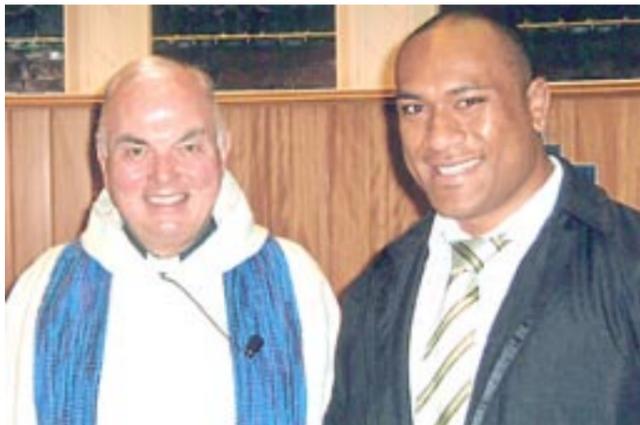
Youth Group Leader Ryhan Prasad washes the feet of the Youth Group at Parachute

Calendar of Events

- 9 March**
Quarterly communion
- 16 March**
Palm Sunday
- 18 March 11am**
Women's Association
Easter service. Followed by lunch.
- 20 March 5:30 pm**
Maundy Thursday service
- 21 March 10:00 am**
Good Friday service
followed by morning
Tea in The Conference
Centre.
- 23 March 10am & 7pm**
Easter Sunday services
- 3 April 5:30 pm**
Fundraising Auction,
- 6 April**
Rev Tom Cuthell returns

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Views expressed in
The Messenger do not
necessarily reflect those of
St John's in the City.



Tom Cuthell meets All Black Neemia Tialata



John & Margaret Hunt



Parachute '08
Ben makes a new friend
& Lulu get a new hat.

John and Margaret Hunt

A young engineer rang a Miramar number in an attempt to contact the young lady he had taken to a ball the previous night. On learning that she was attending evening worship at St John's the young man swallowed his Anglican pride and went along to the service. Some time later the couple were exchanging their wedding vows also at St John's. Thus began John and Margaret Hunt's long and fruitful association with St John's. At morning tea on 27 January the congregation had the opportunity to thank Margaret and John for all that they have contributed to the church, for their association has been anything but passive. John and Margaret's partnership has been one of selflessness and service to others.

John Irvine mused at the morning tea that John Hunt "knows every nail and bolt in the church by name". From the sound system to the sewage system if anything broke down the call would go out: "Get John Hunt". It didn't matter what John was doing, his priority was always "The Kirk". Muriel Ewen

reflected on John's 40 years as a serving elder whose wise counsel was always timely.

Margaret has a wonderful singing voice. Over the years many services and other church functions have been enhanced by Margaret's solo performances. Margaret was a long serving choir member. It was a source of amusement to the family that shortly after Margaret 'retired' from the choir, John made the decision to join the choir. Margaret's prowess as a cook is legendary. Some years ago Margaret formed a formidable partnership with Betty Robertson catering for church and related functions. I remember a church wedding that they were catering for. The conversation between Betty and Margaret went something like:

"How many pavlovas have we made?"

"I couldn't remember whether we decided to make 3 or 4 so I made 5"

Profits from this lucrative enterprise were ploughed back into buying much needed equipment for the church kitchen.

John and Margaret's hospitality is also legendary. Countless people were; 'taken under their wing'. If you were invited to the Hunts for a meal or morning or afternoon tea it didn't pay to be on any diet. Their generosity in making people feel welcome to Wellington and helping them to settle in knew no bounds. Hunt hospitality was not limited to 24 Krull Street. A Headmaster of a large secondary school was surprised and delighted to have John drop into his office one morning a still warm batch of Margaret's delicious hot cross buns.

John and Margaret have moved 'up the road' to Feilding, a retirement place if you like, but some 20 years after John retired. They still retain their memberships of St John's and will be joining us in worship from time to time. Woe betide any St John's member who passes through or even near to Feilding and doesn't 'drop in' for a cup of tea accompanied by a biscuit or maybe two or....

Rob Anderson

From the Archives

“Serene she stands amid the city highways
Her needled spire uplifted to the sky.
A symbol of faith, though earth be riven,
The love of God for man shall never die.”

So wrote poet and church member of 75 years, Helen Clyde. Since opening in December 1885 the present church building has witnessed a range of societal changes from the corner of Willis and Dixon Streets. Indeed, since opening the sounds along ‘the city highways’ have changed from horses hooves, to clanging trams, to whirring trolley buses and revving car engines, not to mention a variety of horns and sirens. Some 90 years ago the sounds usually associated with a bustling city fell relatively silent for a period of time. At the end of 1918 Wellington became a victim of the Spanish flu pandemic. A relatively mild first wave of the flu reached New Zealand in June 1918. The second wave of the virus began to appear in New Zealand with the arrival of ships from overseas. One of the ships was the Niagara carrying the Prime Minister William Massey and leader



New Zealand Influenza Ward in 1919

of the opposition Sir Joseph Ward docked in Auckland. As there had already been deaths among the crew and a number of ill people were taken off the ship to an isolation ward at Auckland hospital it was claimed that the Niagara brought the deadly virus to New Zealand. Within days of the Niagara’s arrival dozens of cases of flu were reported among the general population. By November the remainder of the country was also experiencing the horror of the killer virus now nicknamed ‘Massey’s Flu’. One person coughing or sneezing could infect a whole town.

In Wellington the influenza crisis was exacerbated by a shortage of Doctors. The flu spread rapidly through the boarding houses and overcrowded cheap housing in central Wellington. During the six weeks of the flu crisis New Zealanders were unit-

ed in shock. About half the population were affected and an estimated 8,250 people died of the flu. It was a time of deserted towns, schools, shops and churches.

St Johns members could not congregate in Sunday worship and the large Sunday School did not meet for the duration of the crisis. The church’s strategic location was utilised during the pandemic. Session agreed that St Johns could be used as a temporary hospital. The Sunday School Rooms in a rambling building along the McDonald Crescent frontage was transformed into a temporary hospital providing beds for 67 flu patients.

The ideal of serving our community is one that St Johns has endeavoured to carry out down the decades. Long may it continue.

Rob Anderson

St J’s Kids – Getting the Goats

Setting up the Challenge

St John’s in the City, Wellington, supports the annual CWS Christmas Appeal. During a Leaders Meeting in October we discussed what we could do to make this appeal more meaningful to the children of our church, “St J’s Kids”. We had heard about the CWS ‘Just gifts’ idea so decided that St J’s Kids could band together to try and raise enough money for a gift to send through to CWS for the Christmas Appeal.

Rather than the leaders deciding how to fund-raise, we decided to make it into a ‘St J’s Kids Christmas Challenge.’ Each of the four small groups were offered a challenge to work out how to raise some money for a gift of their choice. As leaders we aimed at one gift per group. Every group got a laminated poster with information about the gifts to discuss and plan toward.

The Kids Take Over

The St J’s Kids groups quickly took initiative using their ideas and imagination and the resources that they had. Goats were the goal!

Nifty Norths (ages 2-4)

“We’re going to make Christmas paper with paint and stamps and cut it up and sell it”, said Amy Walker aged 4.

Super Souths (Year1-2, ages 5-7)

“We have a lemon tree with heaps of lemons. Why don’t we try and make lemonade? I want to get a goat, so we’ll have to get \$30”, said Daniel Read, aged 7.

Electric Easts (Years 3-4, ages 7-9)

“We’re going to sell raffle tickets for a Pamper Pack. We’ll all bring something to put in it,” said Josiah Greig, aged 8.

Wild Wests (Years 5-6, ages 10-12)

After many debates the

children decided they would host a games day and ask the adults of the church to pay to play games with them.

Nicki (leader): “I don’t know if it is a good idea at all – I wonder if people will pay to play games with kids? But since the kids came up with the idea we’ll run with it.”

Sales Day After Church

We set aside a ‘Sales day’ and advertised our ideas to the church. The children of St J’s took part at every stage of the organising – making cakes, selling tickets, making signs and setting out tables and games.

We were all amazed at the generosity and support from our church congregation.

- The Super Souths couldn’t pour lemonade fast enough or process the money quick enough for the queues lining up for lemonade.

- The Raffle sellers made a rapid turnover of sales.

- The Christmas wrapping

Reflections on a Three Happy Months

Dear Friends

So it would appear that I am returning to the land of the Kiwi and the Southern Cross!! When I was approached by Denzil and Muriel to see if I would be willing to consider returning to St John’s to do a further three-month stint as locum, I found myself in something of a quandary. Since coming to St John’s at the end of October 2007, I have been overwhelmed by the warmth, kindness, generosity and encouragement that I have received from so many of you. At the same time I have experienced pangs of homesickness in being separated from family and friends. As I get older, family and friends acquire an inestimable value that simply cannot be quantified. However, I am someone who needs to be needed! This has been a major factor in my decision to return to St John’s at the beginning of April thereby releasing me from the quandary in my mind and heart. If I can help you – the good folks of St John’s – at this rather uncertain and insecure time in your history, then so be it! The fact that you appear to have taken me to your warm and generous hearts is another major factor in my decision (and may I add that the feeling is mutual – I have taken you to my heart!!). I was deeply touched by your spontaneous applause on January 6th when Muriel announced my decision to return.

paper sold out in five minutes flat.

- People actually paid to play games with the children – and enjoyed it! They stayed round after church for more than an hour playing games and chatting.

The result

We were astounded to make \$540 from our efforts. The best bonus was the ‘community’ we developed in the process – amongst St J’s Kids and with the people of the congregation. In keeping with the level of involvement we had from the children, we asked them to choose what they wanted to give.

In the meantime, I head back on that horrendously long journey to the icy blast of a Scottish winter – spend two and a half weeks catching up with family and friends (no doubt waxing eloquent about my first three fulfilling and enriching months in Wellington) – head out to the USA, to Birmingham, Alabama to keep faith with another church engagement – return to Scotland to catch my breath – and then head back to NZ to re-connect with all my new-found friends in St John’s at the beginning of April.

Who could possibly have imagined that my first year of retirement would be spent as a jet-setting world traveller! To think I once felt a slight angst as to what retirement might have in store for me!

The style and theological ethos of St John’s has appealed enormously to me. It is unashamedly ‘middle-of-the-road’. It holds together in a creative, if occasionally uncomfortable, tension both liberal and conservative elements. Its warm, welcoming and friendly face – reflecting, as it does, the warm, open, inclusiveness of the grace and love of God – transcends all narrow definitions of ‘liberal’ or ‘conservative.’

When I retired from St Cuthbert’s, Edinburgh at Easter 2007, it was something of a heartbreak to sever connections with people I greatly loved and cherished. At the

same time it was a liberating experience to have done once and for all with church politics – or so I thought!!! Inevitably during these past three months I have found myself becoming aware of the different viewpoints regarding the proposal to create a youth café below Spinks Cottage – different viewpoints that have been robustly and intensely held and expressed. Whatever decision is reached at the Appeal Court on February 11th, it must not be allowed to become a wedge dividing the congregation. It is incumbent on both the ‘winners’ and the ‘losers’ in this debate to ensure that grace and goodwill prevail. However, irrespective of the outcome of the Appeal, it is of paramount importance that St John’s Youth Ministry be re-affirmed and backed and supported by the congregation – for it is a priceless asset. Few churches can boast of such a ministry.

Meanwhile, let me put on record my special indebtedness to Denzil and Margaret for taking me under their wing, to Muriel for her unstinting support and encouragement, to Jan and Barbara in the church office for their invaluable help and advice – and for brewing up regular cups of coffee!!

May God continue to bless you richly and abundantly until I appear in your midst in the not-too-distant future.

Tom Cuthell

They chose:

- 7 Goats for families in Uganda;
- 12 fruit tree seedlings (four lots of three) for families in Zimbabwe;
- 3 marvellous mangroves for the Philippines;
- 1 rainwater water tank for whole village in Zimbabwe.

Now how’s that for changing the world for a few people from our small group of St J’s Kids with big imaginations!



St John's Youth Group at Parachute 2008

Early Thursday morning a group of young people and "wannabe young people" (such as my Dad) gathered at the front of St John's, getting ready to embark on another trip to Parachute.

Parachute is this amazing Christian music festival at Mystery Creek in Hamilton. It's packed with all sorts of talented speakers, singers and bands from New Zealand and around the world. Soon after everyone had arrived, we were on the road. The van I was in (it was an "all girls" van besides my Dad) was chatting away happily like there was no tomorrow, while it sounded like the boys in the other vans could only muster the occasional grunt. This was proof of just how big the excitement was ... it was HUGE!

After a few hours we made it to Bully Point by Lake Taupo. At Bully Point you can jump into the lake and it really gets your heart pumping. It was awesome to see

people face their fears – like Jessie Boston who jumped off for the first time ever! After a bite of pizza and a drink of fizzy, we were off to St Andrew's church in Hamilton where we spent the night.

The next morning was a quick start for us girls, but the boys seemed to be trying to catch up on as much beauty sleep as possible. Luckily we girls had bought along an electronic dog "Smitle" who went to wake the boys up.

In no time the vans were packed and we were on the road to Mystery Creek a few hours before the gates opened to get a good place in the line. After a while we were in setting up our tents and unpacking. Once that was finished, we went to check out the site and for me and Liam Seear-Budd we were on the search for some "freebies". A couple of slushies, a few free cokes and a free hat later, we were back at camp for a yummy

tea.

The next day was when Parachute really began. Morning meeting at the Mainstage was fantastic. Tony Campolo spoke to us and Parachute Band played a few songs. The heat was intense, but we were well-prepared with water bottles and a sheet for shade. Afterwards we split into our small groups to discuss the morning meeting (my small group leader was the wonderful Alice Potts!) and then after a bit of food, we split to go and have a little nap, to see our different bands and events, or to practice for a "krump" battle. Then at night, the main band Switchfoot played. They were fantastic.

Next morning after a quick breakfast, we went to morning meeting where Reggie Dabbs spoke. He was incredible and there wasn't dry eye in sight. After small group and lunch, we went to see more bands and singers like Kimbra, Leigh Nash



and the acoustic duo Shooting Stars.

At night on the Mainstage, there was a worship session with Hillsong United and Israel and The New Breed. In between the bands was this "gladiator" showdown against Australia and New Zealand on a blow-up ring with padded sticks. Amazingly I was one of those chosen to challenge Australia and won!

After worship we had a farewell for Colin Dumbleton and my older brother Daniel who are leaving for

University. It was very sad but awesome to hear how much everyone truly appreciated the two of them and how amazing everyone thought they were.

Afterwards some of us went to the village (the area at Parachute where all the stalls and shops are) and played the most hilarious games including a mass chair race with about 50 people! At about 2am, we went back to camp for a sleep.

The next morning we packed up all the tents and picked up all the rubbish.

We then walked to the vans and piled into them. It was time to go back to Wellington. We were sad to leave but already excited about next year.

Parachute for me was about having fun with friends (my St John's whanau), listening to wonderful bands, and coming closer to God. It truly is a fantastic experience and I'd like to thank everyone who made this trip possible!

By Emma Ramsay

Giving

We often hear the saying "what goes around comes around". It is another way of saying that by giving you will receive more in return. In Luke's Gospel Ch 6 v38 we read Jesus words "give, and it will be given to you. A good measure pressed down, shaken together and running over will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be given to you." These words seem to be an appropriate reflection for this time of year where the St John's council and the Stewardship for Mission Committee are reviewing levels of giving to date against budgeted forecast. In both giving and fund raising we are behind budget.

It is a fact in an organisation such as St John's where membership is voluntary, that giving is not restricted to money. Giving of time and talents - SERVICE- is also very important and in our case very generous from many members. This has been especially obvious during our parish vacancy. Nevertheless, each of us needs to consider from time to time where we stand with our financial giving to the church in the context of our relationship with God.

Two years ago, Rev Dr Graham Redding preached at St John's on the topic "Responsible

Generosity". The following is an extract from his sermon.

Firstly, giving as a theological category is derived from and grounded in God's activity and character. "for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son" (John 3:16). Remarkably, God is simultaneously Giver and Gift – the One who gives and the One who is given.

Secondly, God's giving is neither coercive nor calculating, but rather free and generous.

It is instructive to observe just how many of Jesus parables have as their central character a person who gives in a free and generous manner, whether it be a father who allows his son to squander his share of the inheritance, or a king who invites to his banquet the town's riff-raff, or a landlord who is disproportionately generous to labourers who turn up when the day's work is almost done.

If freedom and generosity say something important about the Kingdom of God, they also say something about the Christian life. For this reason, I have coined the phrase "responsible generosity" to denote the form of giving the Gospel requires of us.

The third and final point has to

do with the way giving is given liturgical expression. When the offering is collected in a worship service, most people tend to assume this to be an entirely pragmatic act – we give money to support the work of the church. Occasionally, we are asked to raise our level of giving so that the budget can be met.

From the earliest days of Christian worship, however, the offering of the people was closely linked to the eternal self-offering of Christ. This meant that the offering was closely linked to the Eucharist, or Holy Communion as it is known in our tradition, for it is there that the eternal self-offering of Christ is given its clearest and strongest liturgical expression.

When these theological affirmations are absent there is a danger that our giving becomes a formality, driven by pragmatic considerations rather than theological convictions.

If you would like to review your giving or become a committed giver through the weekly envelope or direct credit systems, contact the church office for guidance about how this can be done.

The Stewardship For Mission Committee.

The Year of the Good Shepherd

The "Year of the Good Shepherd" has been designated the theme for St John's for 2008, by Session. Pastoral care is one of the most important aspects of any Church. By learning to care for one another, we equip ourselves to reach out to others in the wider community and become an example of God's infinite and unconditional love.

Pastoral care involves many people – the Ministers, the Elders, the Pastoral Care Worker, the Pastoral Care committee, all groups within the Church....in fact all members of the congregation. Pastoral care is a team effort.

At St John's, pastoral care is being achieved in many ways, but we would like to do better!

The "Year of the Good Shepherd" theme will highlight events we will have through the year and hopefully make us all more aware of how we can "love our neighbours as ourselves". So what is happening? Ses-

sion has approved the appointment of Judi Ferguson to the position of "Volunteer Coordinator". Judi will be developing a pool of congregational members willing to offer their services in various ways, for those in need.

Throughout the year the pastoral care committee will be organizing some geographical lunches, which will encourage friendship and familiarization for people living in the same district.

Other events for the year will be a pastoral care seminar on Saturday, 21st June, a pastoral morning tea on Sunday 28th September, and a Church picnic on Sunday 9th November. (16th if wet).

We hope to keep you updated through the year with notices in Church, the Bulletin and the Messenger.

We hope everyone will become involved reaching out to those in our congregation and the wider community.

Good pastoral care is important for the on going

harmony of the Church family, strengthening fellowship and enhancing a sense of belonging.

Good pastoral care fosters relationships in the love of God and worship.

Good pastoral care is our responsibility to God.

Good pastoral care increases faith and encourages spiritual growth.

Good pastoral care increases congregational attendance.

Good pastoral care assists with on going outreach in the wider community and demonstrates to "others" what Church really is.

Good pastoral care fulfills the law of Christ – to love one another as God loves us.

Good pastoral care shares the burden and heals the wounds.

Good pastoral care celebrates the joy by walking the road together.

Margaret Gilkison
(on behalf of the Pastoral Care Committee)