

Farewell to Helen Martin

"St. John's in the City could not have been a better place for me to be in my first Presbyterian parish ministry position. I am very appreciative of all I have learnt from Graham and from you all. Thank you for your warmth and support."

With these words **Helen Martin** concluded her 39th and final report to session on 4 April. A few days later on Easter Sunday it was the congregation's turn to ex-

press appreciation for all that Helen had done for us during her three and a half year ministry as our Assistant Minister. Following the speeches Helen was presented with a piece of pottery and a cheque as expressions of our love and thanks.

On 26 April Helen was inducted as Minister of Trinity Church, Temuka. We wish her all the best in her new position. Our loss is Temuka's gain.



Helen Martin says 'goodbye' to the congregation at her farewell lunch, Easter Sunday

Editorial

Welcome to this, my first Messenger as Editor. First and foremost, I would like to thank my predecessor **Wyn Beasley** for his great service to the congregation during his term as Editor. I take on this task at a peculiar time in the life of the congregation as we no longer have a minister nor an assistant minister. Although we may be 'ministerless' we are certainly not rudderless. As a church we

have a wise and sensitive interim moderator in **Denzil Brown**, a proactive session, thriving youth work, vigorous social calendar and a Ministry Settlement Board, convened by **Chris Nichol**, who, aware of the large responsibility with which they have been charged, are conscientiously going about their task. Above all we have the Holy Spirit to guide us in all that we do.

In times of uncertainty, for

that is what vacancies invariably are, I am always comforted by the words of the prophet Jeremiah speaking to a people in exile.

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

Jeremiah 29 v11 (NIV)

Robert Anderson

What's in a Fair?

Are we allowed to have fun at church?

On March the 31st from 9am until 1pm many folk from St Johns laughed, spent money, chatted, bargain hunted, shared time, worked together and enjoyed each other. In other words, we had some fun!

We sold clothes, plants, cakes, sweets, furniture, books, white elephant and delicious food. It was a great opportunity to work together and learn new things about each other. It was humbling to see the hard working and talented bunch of people who are part of St John's in action.

We are fortunate at St John's to have people who promise to do something and follow through in an organised, capable and generous way. Everyone from stall leaders, cooks, those who donated goods and many willing helpers contributed to the success of the day. The money raised was \$7000 which was an excellent amount but the true value is in the lasting memories of the time together.

Some sights to delight...

- The fantastic range of cultural food. We have great cooks in this congregation!

- **Betty Robertson** having her first foot rub in her life
- hearing **Ian McKinnon** had to pay \$7 to buy back his own umbrella!
- watching **John Hunt** clamber up ladders to put up awesome signage
- kids wandering round with the special treasure they had bought
- a conversation with an older woman from the flats across the road about her grand children.
- The inspiration of working together regardless of our age
- **Meg Doughty** and **Alex Read** painting **Claire and Eve Davis'** nails and selling bracelets they had made
- groups of friends taking time out in the cafe
- kids' faces lit up as they tried to capture a biscuit while blindfolded
- Ailsa and her crew ironing a mountain of clothing!
- People trying to resist buying more plants from the huge choice that Mary had accumulated.
- The White Elephant team almost buried in the amount of donations

- Kids and adults trying to choose the 'best' choice of sweets.
- Lesley convincing **James Ramsay** he needed every ornament he picked up
- **Sue Riddle** and **Mary Hutchison** selling sweets in Cuba Mall

The list is endless as there are so many moments which combine to make us reflect and smile. Thank you for the willingness to help, the encouragement and relaxed capable organisation. These all contributed hugely to the Fair being an event not to be missed next time!

If you did miss the opportunity to be involved in the Fair then put your hand up for the next community event. Remember though, be prepared to make new friends and have fun!

Nicky Read

On behalf of the congregation I would like to particularly thank Sue Riddle and Nicky Read for the huge investment of time and effort they made in organising the fair. Their magnificent organisational skills ensured that the fair was such a great success. Ed.



Left
Nicki Read and Betty Robertson have a well earned break at the church fair, while Pip Ranby provides some welcome relief.

Far Left
Ian & Gail West with Paul Ramsay running the book stall at the church fair

From the Archives

The year 1975 was something of a watershed year. The New Zealand economy wilting under the weight of exorbitant prices for imported oil, was sliding inexorably into recession. Images of North Vietnamese tanks rolling into the recently abandoned United States Embassy compound in downtown Saigon effectively signalled the end of the bloody and bitter Vietnam War. In New Zealand Channel Two was launched, doubling the number of TV channels available. While some applauded the greater choice of TV programmes to watch, others wondered at the extravagance of two channels. The All Blacks played just one test in 1975. On an Eden Park resembling more a lake than a rugby pitch the All Blacks defied the appalling conditions to play sublime rugby and defeat Scotland 24-0.

In 1975 St John's found itself in circumstances that today's

congregation can relate to. The Rev. **Jock Kinloch** had left at the end of 1974 to take up a position as chaplain at Tauranga Hospital. A vacancy existed for the whole of 1975. It wasn't until February 1976 that the vacancy was filled with the appointment of the Rev. **David Steedman**. It is worth noting the comments made by Interim Moderator the Rev. **Arthur Kitto** who wrote in the 1975 Annual Report:

“But what of the future? With the deliberations of the Board of Nomination going quietly ahead, we are hoping for action in the near future, though we can take nothing for granted. Both the parish and Presbytery appointed strong representatives who have entered with ability, insight and concern to the selection of a Minister with the ability, stature and all-round gifts to give the kind of ministry needed by St. John's. Many may won-

der at the delay, believing that there are men readily available to come. We must not, however, forget the position of the ministry today, with many vacancies and a shortage of students for training dictating possibilities in selecting the right man. But of course, our chief concern is to find the man of God's choosing. We have tried by prayer and the examination of all the available evidence to find the man we could choose, but then we have sought the mind of God, and then have made our approaches. In God's time, we will bring to you our nomination for consideration, but only when we are able to say to you,

“This is God's choice; we commend him to you”

It is also worth noting that during the 1975 vacancy the church's membership increased in number.

-Ed.

~A Puzzle~

Can you find the names of 25 books of the Bible in this paragraph?

This is a most remarkable puzzle. Someone found it in the seat pocket on a flight from Los Angeles to Honolulu, keeping himself occupied for hours. One man from Illinois worked on this while fishing from his John boat. Roy Clark studied it while playing the banjo. Elaine Victs mentioned it in her column once. One woman judges the job to

be so involving, she brews a cup of tea to help calm her nerves. There will be some names that are really easy to spot...that's a fact. Some people will soon find themselves in a jam, especially since the book names are not necessarily capitalized. The truth is, from answers we get, we are forced to admit it usually takes a minister or a scholar to see some of them at the worst. Something in our genes is responsible for the

difficulty we have. Those able to find all of them will hear great lamentations from those who have to be shown. One revelation may help, books like Timothy and Samuel may occur without their numbers. And punctuation or spaces in the middle are normal. A chipper attitude will help you compete. Remember, there are 25 books of the Bible lurking somewhere in this paragraph.

For answers see back page.



The Very Rev. David Steedman

Quiz Night

A quiz for people of all ages

The Conference Centre

7:30 p.m. Saturday 16 June

Organise a team of 5 or 6 people or come along on the night and be part of a team.

Supper will be served.

Following the quiz a replay of The All Blacks versus Canada

Test will be played on the big screen.

Cost:\$10 for adults and \$5 for students

Another Stewardship For Mission project

Allie Crombie Writes from Samoa

Talofa to all at St. John's. God works in mysterious ways. My departure from St. John's was rapid and I apologise for not saying goodbye to you all. Doug was offered a position as CEO of The National Bank of Samoa for two years and the selling of our house happened at the same time. We saw this as an opportunity to experience a new country and hopefully we will contribute something. It all happened quickly. We're here! It is very hot and humid with temperatures in the mid-thirties every day so we're out of our comfort zone! We have found a rental

house and apart from the usual moving hassles, we are doing well. We have met so many people and find everyone so kind and helpful. Doug is enjoying his new challenge to date and looks smart in his pacific-print shirt and lavalava.

Church plays a huge part in Samoan society so I am quizzed frequently on my faith. We have worshipped at the Apia Protestant Church so far but intend to visit others. How reassuring to find God's love everywhere and anywhere in the world.

I will be watching from a distance as St. John's moves to appointing a new senior

minister and farewelling Helen. What a great church we have in St. John's...to be treasured.

I have loved working as a pastoral worker among you. It has been a total privilege. My friend and colleague **Margaret Gilkison** is a perfect replacement and I know she will care for you all.

My heartfelt thanks for the devotional Bible given to me on departure. It has been good to use especially at this time of great change. I will treasure it.

See you in two years. I will be back!

God's Blessings to you all.

People are funny creatures. They want to sit in the front of the bus, drive in the middle of the road and sit in the back of the church.

Anon.

Articles for the next Issue of the Messenger due August 12.

Send articles to the church office.

p: 385 7546

f: 351 3204

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NOBODY IS LEAVING THIS ARK UNTIL YOU TWO TELL ME WHAT YOU DID WITH THOSE CATERpillARS

Memorial Minute: David McGregor Steedman

Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand 1982- 1983. Born in Dunedin December 3rd 1919; married Elaine Cooper; died Wellington February 2nd 2007, aged 87.

On the 9th February 2007 a large congregation gathered in John's in the City, Wellington, to honour a much loved and highly respected minister whose life of compassion, warm good humour, peacemaking, and creative leadership had influenced the church in New Zealand and overseas throughout his life as an ordained minister.

David's ministry is recognised as one of quality in every aspect; pastoral, teaching, preaching, moderating and sharing his vision of the kingdom of God. Many ministers, elders and parishioners remember David's wonderful friendship, wise counsel, and his deep humility. Ministers of the church found in David a person of depth and understanding and many have recalled with gratitude his personal support of students, licentiates and in parish ministry.

To highlight one major aspect of David's ministry should not detract from a wide range of areas of his continuing concern, but in each parish the place of youth and the importance of nurturing young people in the faith stands out and has left lasting results. This began in 1944

when as associate minister in Ashburton David worked with Stan Murray then Sam Baird. Boys' Brigade, Bible in Schools, Church Schools, youth groups, bible classes and young marrieds and later in Andersons Bay support of orphans in Glendinning Home all absorbed the energy of a model pastor. The church recognised David's special gifts and commitment to youth when he was appointed Convenor of the Assembly Church Schools Committee.

In the 1950's and 1960's David was a strong supporter of the New Life Movement which resulted in the development of 66 new parishes in 10 years. He considered this development to be one of the most significant periods during his time as minister. David served in the parishes of St. Andrew's Ashburton as assistant then associate in Geraldine, Andersons Bay Dunedin, Cashmere Hills, and St Andrew's in Christchurch, then finally St John's in Wellington.

Overseas mission work always engaged David's keen attention and in 1967 when the Revd Paddy Jansen became Moderator of the General Assembly David stood in for him as acting Principal of the Tangoa Training Institute in the New Hebrides where he worked with future ministers of the church in Vanuatu. During this period David extended his study of

theology and history which after retirement was to culminate in graduating with a PhD in history at Victoria University. His thesis was on the contribution of the Presbyterian Church to education in New Zealand which wove together his three life time interests: the Church, history, and young people.

The General Assembly elected David to be Moderator of the 1982 Assembly in the PIC in Edinburgh Street in Auckland. Those who attended that Assembly remember David's particular skills and great wisdom as he steered an Assembly strong in International representation requiring a moderator who had Solomonian Wisdom to steer the ecumenical ship through potentially divisive currents of deep theological and philosophical waters.

Throughout David's ministry he was always strongly supported by Elaine whose musical gifts enriched each congregation. David and Elaine's hospitality is remembered with deep gratitude.

David will be remembered as a courageous statesman, outstanding preacher and pastor of the church who during his ministry never put himself before others. He loved mercy, and kindness, and walked humbly with his God. The church thanks God for David and prays for comfort, peace and renewed hope for Elaine, Lynette, Fergus and Fiona.

Maurice Brown, March 07

Statement of Interim Moderator

Statement of Interim moderator Rev. Denzil Brown to congregation

On Sunday 15 April, following morning worship, the Interim Moderator the Rev. Denzil Brown was formally welcomed. Denzil will hold this position for the duration of the vacancy. Denzil took the opportunity to make the following statement to the congregation:

I once read in an American church journal of 278 different ways you see people trying to spell “Presbyterian”. Certainly my word processor has great difficulty with the word.

But then it does also with my maternal family first name, Denzil, suggesting instead Diesel or Denial. The word presbytery may also present difficulties. So, on a day when you will be grieving the loss of Helen, following so soon after the loss of Graham, and wondering where you go from here, you might well be feeling you could do without two strangers from the Presbytery of Wellington. Let me try very briefly to give you some sense of encouragement at this point in the vacancy.

Under our Presbyterian form of church government, when a parish minister moves on, the parish is never left without ministerial supervision. In consultation with the Session, Presbytery appoints an Interim Moderator to give oversight during the vacancy. This is how I come to have a role in sharing with you until you are ready to call a new parish minister.

My task will be to preside as moderator of Session, and I will attend St. John’s Council, in order to have the full picture of life here.

I will be responsible for worship in St. John’s, and for ensuring Sunday services are taken by suitable people. I am grateful for Helen having put together a roster of those taking services till the end of July. At the request of St. John’s I will take at least one service a month, mainly but not always, the second Sunday. I will be responsible for ensuring that pastoral care continues, as well as providing for weddings and funerals. In this I will also enlist the help of other ministers and key lay people.

What may you hope and expect of me?

It is not my task to be part of the search for a new minister.

But, you can expect me to try to keep the good ship, St. John’s in the City, happily on course, and to maintain its momentum. So you may be assured I will not be an innovator of new policies or try to change decisions arrived at by the congregation.

Rather you may expect me to encourage a ‘steady as we go’ spirit, because that is surely what our Lord wants for St. John’s at this time.

Now what may I expect of you?

I hope and expect that the support that you give me, and you will give one another will make me glad I accepted the invitation to take on this pretty heavy task.

I do not anticipate in such a large and diverse congregation that all members will think alike on every issue that may arise from time to time. I do expect that even when there might be differing deeply held convictions expressed, we do so in a way that shows each of us, and all of us, are yet willing to be ruled by something bigger than ourselves which commands our final loyalty: namely, the mind of Christ.

So I put to you what the apostle Paul asked of the church of Philippi. You will find it in Philippians chapter two, and the first five verses, and particularly three verses which I dare, with no hesitation, ask of each and all of you.

‘Make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same Love...Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others.

Let the same mind be in you that was also in Christ Jesus.’

Can you for a moment doubt this is what God is ready to honour and bless us at this time?

A Poem

One day – lying alone in the lawn on my back
With only the drone of a distant train
On some far off track
I saw before my eyes, 5000 feet high or more,
A sight – which to this day, I must say,
I've seen nothing like before.
The head goose – leader of the V –
Suddenly veered out, leaving a vacancy
Which was promptly filled by the bird left behind,
The former leader then flew alongside,
The formation continued growing wide –
And he found a place at the back of the line.
They never missed a beat.
So that's how I found out the goose can fly
From way up North to way down South
And back again.
But he cannot do it alone, you see.
It's something he can only do in community.
These days it's a popular notion,
And people swell with emotion and pride
To think of themselves on the eagle's side,
Solitary

Self – sufficient

Strong

But,
We are what we are, that's something we cannot choose.
And though many would wish to be seen as the eagle,
I think God made us more like the goose

Bob Stromberg (1982)

Calendar of Events

6 June

Session meeting

10 June

Quarterly Communion

16 June

Quiz Night

22 June

Last day of school term

4 July

Session meeting

8 July

Monthly Communion

16 July

School Term begins

1 August

Session meeting

12 August

Monthly Communion

18 August

Challenge for Change
finale

St John's in the City
Presbyterian Church
Corner Willis & Dixon Sts
p: 385 7546
e: info@stjohnsinthecity.org.nz
www.stjohnsinthecity.org.nz

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