

Participating in worship

As you'll see in this newsletter, there are many ways we participate in worship.

Worship is not limited to what happens during church on Sundays, but is any feeling or expression of reverence and adoration for God (according to the Oxford English dictionary). Here at St John's we provide many opportunities to participate in the wider definition of worship.

We don't always have to be in a formal setting (such as in a church) or conducting an intentional ritual (such as communion) when we worship God. For some people, their form of worship is walking through the bush or sitting outside in a garden or on a beach – worshipping God through their appreciation of the natural beauty of our world. For others it may be singing songs that glorify God at any time (not just at church). For example, travelling home the other day from a family outing we sang 'Swing Low Sweet Chariot', and talked about what that meant and where the song came from (and no, it's not just from the England rugby team!)

Stuart and Allister compare a church service with an orchestra, with themselves as the conductors making sure all the parts work together in harmony. Being part of the orchestra is something we all participate

in, and sometimes includes bringing in the 'sheet music' (Bible) or doing a 'solo' (such as leading a prayer or doing the Bible reading). If you'd like to be part of the St John's 'orchestra', please talk to Judi Ferguson or one of the Ministers.

Our series at church where someone talks about 'the other six days' – or what they do when they're not at church – is one I have always found fascinating. It often gives me ideas about what I could do or say in situations where God is not at the forefront of people's minds. It can be as simple as saying 'I went to church' when someone asks what you did on the weekend and letting the conversation go from there. It might include extending an invitation to church for a special Christmas or Easter service (or even a regular Sunday service.) Or it might be demonstrating your willingness to listen to someone and perhaps pray for them or with them.

So I leave you with this challenge – what are you going to do in the next few weeks or months to participate in worship?

Elizabeth Gibbs
Editor

Worship is a Verb

Sometimes it may not feel like it, but the theological reality is that we all participate in worship services – whether we are up the front or not.

Søren Kierkegaard, the 19th Century Danish writer and philosopher, suggested worship is like theatre. So, if worship is like theatre, who is the audience and who are the actors? Instinctively, we might identify the congregation as the audience and the minister as the actor. However what Kierkegaard wants to teach about the nature of worship he does by inverting these roles: God is the audience, the congregation are the actors, and the minister is the prompter.

The activity up the front is not intended to be the focus of our worship, but rather what helps us all to commune with God. That means we are all active. We each have our part to play in focusing on our encounter with God – our collective celebration of receiving and giving. We are collaborators in intentionally focusing on building up our faith by giving God our focus in these encounters. Rather than asking ourselves “Did I like that sermon?” we might ask “What are the implications for my faith from what I heard in that sermon?” Instead of being passive observers, are we participating in worship with our voices, our actions, our intellects, and our hearts – with the purpose of doing our part to commune with God?

Another author suggests a metaphor of an orchestra for worship, with the minister as the conductor and the congregation as players of various instruments. This

helps us see the role of the minister as helping everyone participate in communing with God, as each person takes up their responsibility to play. And to do so in harmony together is to act as the Body of Christ, each with a particular function that is crucially interdependent and complementary. With this orchestra metaphor, we can even imagine an occasional solo; a contribution by someone that works in with the whole movement of the orchestra – perhaps a personal testimony, a reflection, or even the carrying of the Bible.

When we intentionally focus on our responsibility in worship, we think and speak and act as full participants. In doing so we are less likely to feel inhibited by a style that is not our preferred style, or by music that we do not automatically relate to, or even a sermon that is hard to follow.

Finally, we need to say that if it is helpful for us to imagine God as the ‘audience’, it is not helpful or appropriate for God to be regarded as passive either. God’s participation in worship is what makes our worship encounter possible. As someone once said of worship without God’s participation: it would be like planning a dance party for the ‘residents’ at a cemetery. God participates in worship and, for there to be genuine encounter, so must we all.

Recognising our responsibility in worship, and that this is our most important and whole-of-life activity, St Augustine preached: “Sing with your voices, your hearts, your lips and your lives... and you

yourselves will be His praise.”

One of the hymns we sing together at St John’s, *O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing*, expresses our theology of worship:

*Hear Him, ye deaf; His praise, ye dumb,
Your loosened tongues employ;
Ye blind, behold your Saviour come,
And leap, ye lame, for joy.*

Allister Lane

Allister has been a minister at St John’s since 2008. He is married to Naomi and they have four children His email is a.lane@stjohnsinthecity.org.nz

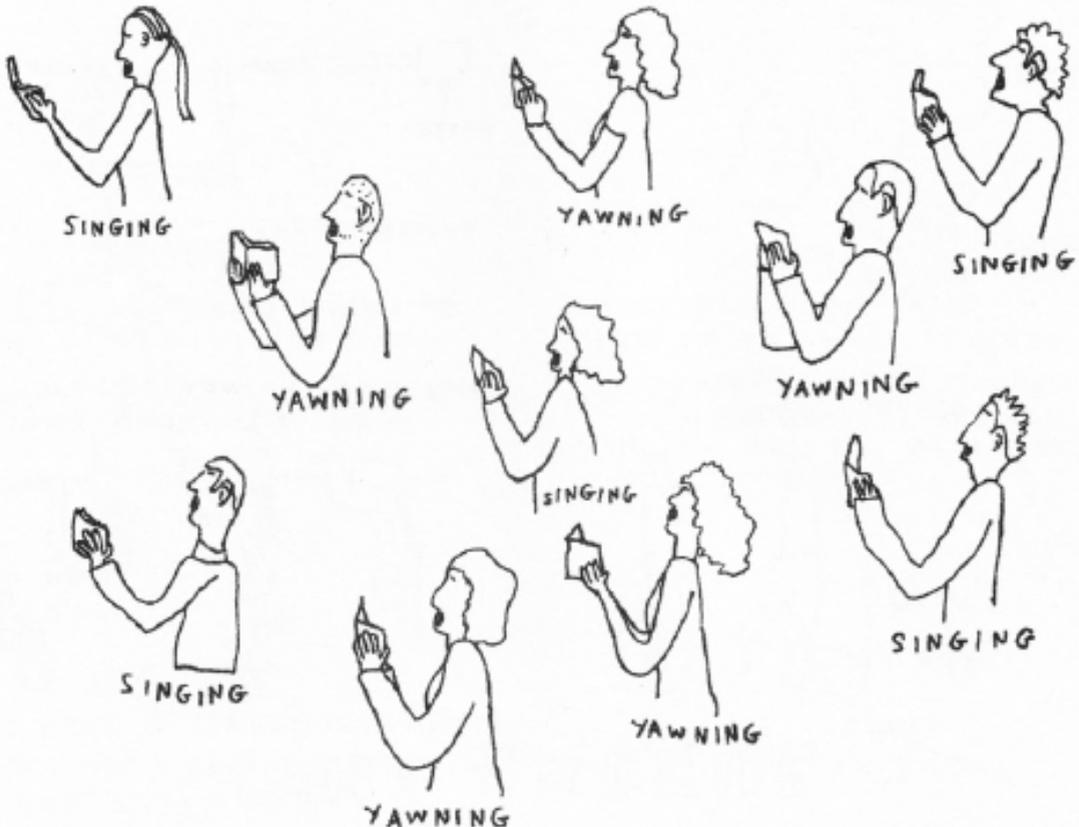
Stuart Simpson

Stuart has been one of the ministers of St John’s since 2009. He is married to Lala and together they have three children. His email is s.simpson@stjohnsinthecity.org.nz

*My gracious Master and my God,
Assist me to proclaim,
To spread through all the earth abroad
The honours of Thy name.*

So when we gather together let us remember our worship as our most important activity, as participants with each other and with God.

THE CONGREGATION



The Lurking Lecturer

Allister has kindly invited me to introduce myself in these brief remarks. In case it isn't obvious, I'm Derek Woodard-Lehman. I'm the newly appointed Lecturer in Theology and Public Issues for the Centre for Theology and Public Issues at the University of Otago. I'm based here in Wellington. I work out of Spinks Cottage. I, my wife Tara, and our two sons Josiah and Eli, also worship here at St. John's.

That's who I am. But what does that mean? What is a 'Lecturer in Theology and Public Issues'? And why do we have one here at St. John's lurking in Spinks Cottage?

I'm glad you asked.

As Lecturer in Theology in Public Issues, my work sits in the intersection of religion and society, at the crossroads of faith and politics. For that reason, I'm based here in Wellington, the capital of New Zealand, rather than in Dunedin. It also means that my work focuses on building connections between the university, wider society, and the church. That's why I work out of Spinks Cottage here at St. John's.

Still a little vague? Allow me to say a bit more.

As a 'Lecturer in Theology and Public Issues,' I am an academic theologian. I work in and for University of Otago. More specifically, I am a Christian ethicist. That means I work on moral and political theology. In other words, I research and teach about things like freedom and authority, racism and injustice, terrorism and war, euthanasia, and the role of religion

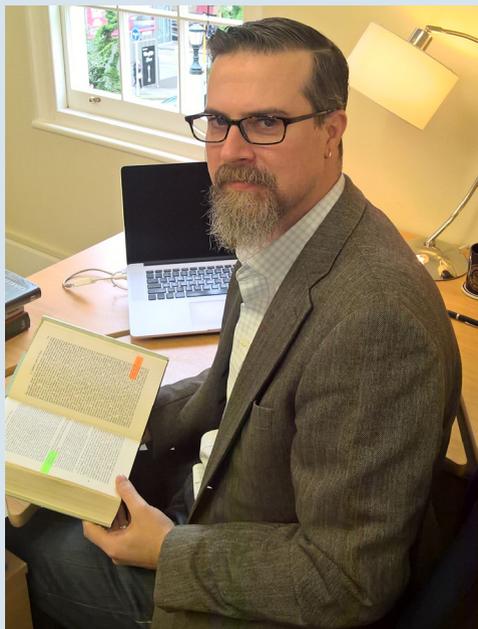
in social movements.

At the moment, I'm working on a book about Karl Barth – a Swiss theologian of the last century, who, among other things, was involved in organising Christian resistance to Nazism. My aim is to give a clearer account Barth's understanding of revelation, which, to my lights, has been badly misunderstood. I'm particularly interested to show how Barth understands the interpretation and application of scripture by ordinary Christians like you and me as practice of moral reflection. And, most importantly, I'm eager to demonstrate how, on Barth's account, our ordinary interpretation and application of scripture within the church is inherently political and intrinsically democratic.

As a 'Lecturer in Theology and Public Issues,' I am a public theologian. More specifically, I am a theologian in residence here in Wellington at St. John's. That means I also work with you and for you. In addition to research and teaching – the 'academic' stuff, you'll find me around St. John's and around town contributing to various discussions about church life and civic life. You may have caught me last month at JJ Murphy's for the conversation about 'The Human in Question.' (That, by the way, is the real work of a public theologian!) And, if you like, you can join me at Parliament on 14 September for a public talk about 'Religious Violence and the Threat to Democracy' (RSVP to ctpinz@otago.ac.nz). Wherever you find me, and whatever I do, my job is to bring theological reflection to bear on the issues of our day. For example, in the run-up to the 2017 Elections, I will be

helping to organise a series of events on the theme 'God's Kingdom, Our Country.' Their purpose will not be ideological. As we say at the University's Centre for Theology and Public Issues: 'Not left or right, but deeper.'

Derek Woodard-Lehman



Welcome to Karin Duncan, our new Property and Administration Manager



To the position of Property and Administration Manager I bring a working background of many years of experience in office and people administration and managements; facilities, property,

constructions, spatial planning and refurbishments both in the public and private sector with an emphasis also on health and safety, contractor, and budget management.

On a personal level I am married to Peter and my passions are church (The Street City Church), family friends, my dogs, knitting, crafts, gardening, reading and music. I was also a volunteer paramedic with Wellington Free Ambulance and a cub and scout leader for many years.

Karin Duncan

Congratulations

The birth of Charlotte Olivia Anderson – daughter of Tom and Hannah Anderson, granddaughter of Rob and Dayle Anderson.

Stephanie McIntyre – Director of DCM – received the Queen's Service Order award.

The birth of Aaron Azarel Honggowidjojo – son of Rio Honggowidjojo and Susianni Lie Djamhur, brother of Matteo.

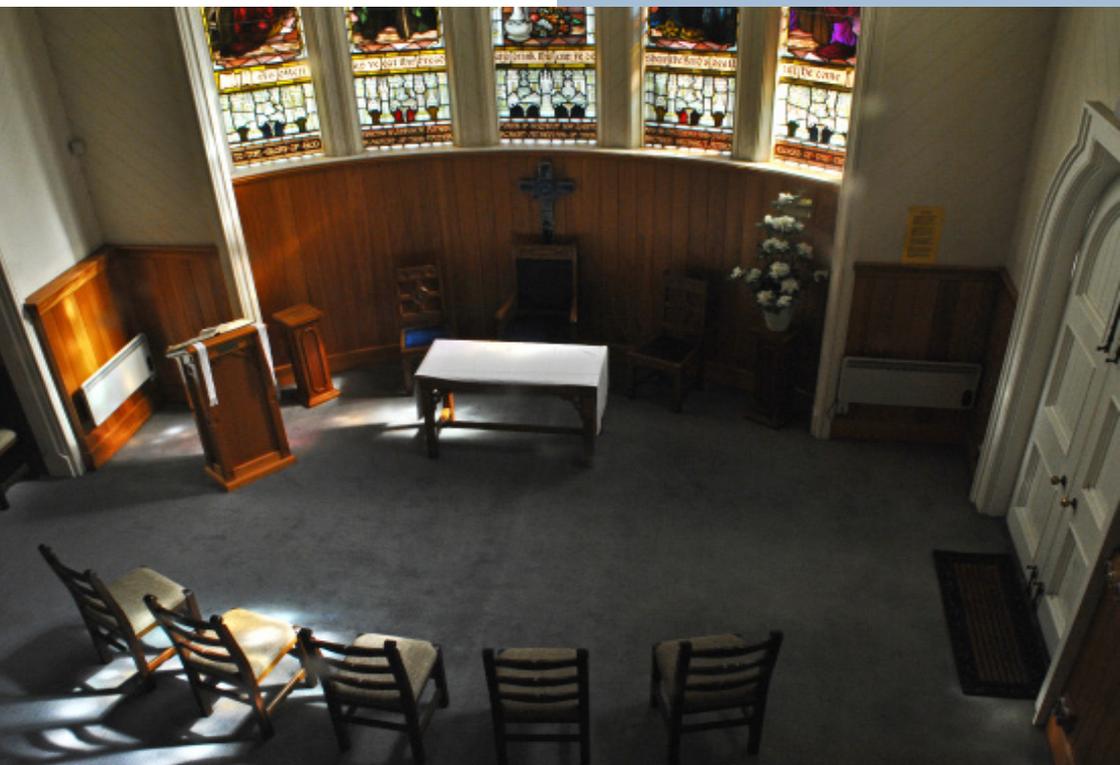
Jenny Adams received her Gold Duke of Edinburgh award.

Amy Walker was part of the winning squad at a Cheerleading competition in Auckland.

Jocelyn Martin celebrated her 100th birthday.

Russell Gould has a new home at Village on the Park.

Henry and Netty Hendaryo celebrate their Golden (50th) Wedding Anniversary.



What's Happening at St John's?

September

7	Session Meeting The Church in Question, panel discussion 7.30pm (JJ Murphy)
11	Quarterly Communion & Shared Lunch
17	Pantry Raid
18	Souper Sunday (M-R) Bring a friend as part of Worship (5pm)
21	Council Meeting

November

2	Session Meeting
13	Monthly Communion
16	Council Meeting
22	Fellowship Group Lunch & Christmas Service
27	Scots College Christmas Carol Service 5pm Combined Advent Service with St Marys of the Angels 7pm

October

5	Session Meeting
9	Monthly Communion
16	Souper Sunday (S-Z)
19	Council Meeting
28	Church Camp
29	Church Camp
30	Church Camp

December

7	Session Meeting
11	Quarterly Communion & Shared Lunch
24	Christmas Eve Service
25	Christmas Service
26	Boxing Day

Church Camp

Get to know your Church neighbours by taking part in the Church Camp from 28-30 October. Register now on the St John's website

