

Are You Being Served?

Having worked in the customer service area of the banking industry, I know how high the standards are set to impress consumers and build business. However, what impresses the first time becomes the expectation the next time. And so, as consumers, we know that businesses are trying to impress us. With a sense of 'entitlement' do we sometimes fall into patterns of demanding high standards of service?

Language of 'service' in our church community is not about something we demand; but something far more gracious. In fact, in Jesus, we see that service is something that is offered. Jesus came as God among us, 'not to be served but to serve.' (Mark 10:45)

When we speak as a community aspiring to meaningful Servanthood, we are looking to pursue our shared willingness to offer our energy, time and care

I've observed that for many in the church community being served by peers can be one of the hardest things, especially when a person has been an exemplary servant of others. God shows us (in person) that servanthood is reciprocal. Guided in our service of God, by the example of Jesus, may we continue to learn what it means to be a community who serve each other



to others; a way of living in genuine humility and grace.

Servanthood under God's influence may look different to what we expect, and we might need to learn more about service. Peter had to learn about servanthood when Jesus washed the disciples' feet. Peter's expectations about who serves who had to be broadened.

in the strength of the Holy Spirit.

One of the hardest teachings of Jesus to live out: "Whoever wishes to be great among you must be the other's servant." (Matthew 20:26)

Blessings,

Allister Lane

Editorial

Once, when the education sector was being assailed by a bewildering array of models for how schools should effectively operate, a wise and respected Principal, Bruce Murray wrote an article on the situation. In the article Bruce Murray wrote: “Self interest is no basis on which to build a school community, but the ideal of service certainly is. In the world in which we work, the best I believe we can offer is our servanthood. I believe these words, first spoken 2000 years ago are still true and applicable today, to us in the work we do, ‘He who would be greatest among you let him be the servant of all.’”

In this Messenger I would like to highlight three members of the congregation who personify servanthood.

When Betty Robertson first came to St. John’s from a suburban congregation in 1948 she immediately noticed a different congregational dynamic. At the suburban church people ran into each other all the time around the neighbourhood and local shops. In the city congregation people mostly only saw each other on

Sundays. Consequently, after church the congregation more often than not gathered in tight little groups to ‘catch up’, sometimes at the exclusion of visitors. Betty decided then and there to talk to those standing by themselves,- a practice that she continues to this day. An initial memory of hundreds of people arriving at St John’s is being warmly welcomed by Betty.

Recently, Sandy Lawson was honoured at a function to recognise his 50 years serving the people of Wellington as a member of the fire service. At the function Sandy was presented with the Double Gold Star Fire Service Award. In presenting the award Wellington Mayor Kerry Prendergast caught the mood of the occasion when she said: “A Double Gold Star tells of a lifetime of service to others, most of them strangers at that. Service to others underpins a huge amount of what makes our society worth living in. It motivates people from emergency personnel, to teachers, to an army of volunteers in so many fields, and even dare I say it, politicians. The great

Muhammed Ali had a lot to say during his boxing career, but here is something he said relating to his community work outside the ring: ‘Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on earth’.”

A younger member of the congregation, Oliver Ibbertson serves the local community in a number of special ways and with special reasons. Oliver’s motivation for giving back to the community is found in a compelling letter that he recently wrote to the editor of The Dominion Post. The letter is reprinted in this Edition of The Messenger.

Betty, Sandy and Oliver personify servanthood and our community is the benefactor of their commitment.

Rob Anderson



Sandy Lawson at the presentation of his Double Gold Star, 31 July

A Sunday Morning in the Life of St J’s Kids

A Sunday morning in the life of the Walker girls (Caitlin, 10 yrs in the Super Strikers Group; Amy, 7 ¾ yrs in the Mad Midfielders Group; Sarah, 5 ¾ in the Golden Goalies Group)

There’s a little bit of nagging at home from Mum and Dad first thing, “Get dressed!” “Do your teeth!” “Have you really brushed your hair? Seriously!”

Anyway, we eventually arrive at church sometime before 10am and grab our name tags from the church foyer, say ‘hi’ to the Greeters, choose the ‘right’ pencil (mum never gets this, it does make a difference which pencil we choose!) and take a children’s order of service, then head in to church.

Before the service begins it’s a competition to see who can spot the ‘pukeko’ first (have any of you adults ever noticed

the random pukeko soft toy often seen in odd places – he’s there for us!). Then it’s straight into checking out the order of service – what’s on today? Is there a secret code to decipher or a maze to solve to tell us what’s happening?

After joining in the service with the adults for a bit we go up the front for our Kids Talk – that’s the special time with the Minister. We sing a song with everyone and then it’s the blessing (we almost know the words for it now!) and off to St J’s Kids – making sure you don’t get in front of the child leading out with the bible.

In the St John’s Centre we (kids and leaders) all gather together and have a few notices of our own (just like in church), then we get the ‘heads up’ from Anna on what’s happening today and follow up with a bit of singing.

At the moment we’re having an ongoing competition to see who are the best singers – the girls or the boys. Of course, we think the girls are best! Whoever wins will get to share a massive rainbow lollipop in the shape of a heart– the rainbow reminds us of God’s promise to be with us always. Meanwhile, if you’ve had a birthday you get to choose a treat from the birthday box. Then we break into groups depending on what year you are at school (or pre-school) and go off into our own rooms with our own leaders for a story and craft or activity or a game linked to the story. About 11.15am we wind up and can either go find mum (usually finishing up with the pre-schoolers) or hang around in the gym with our friends for soccer, skipping, or just hanging around.

Sandy Lawson, Double Star

On 31 July a special function was held in the Council Chambers to present a Double Gold Star Fire Service award to Sandy Lawson. The award was in recognition of Sandy’s 50 years of outstanding service with the New Zealand Fire Service. In attendance were representatives of the Fire Service, Dame Margaret Bazley, Chair of the New

Zealand Fire Commission, and Mayor, Kerry Prendergast. Appropriately, guest of honour Sandy was piped into the Council Chamber to receive his award. As the Mayor stated in her speech: “50 years service to the community is an amazing achievement.” To put it in context the Mayor said that approximately 75% of Wellingtonians were not

yet born when Sandy entered the Fire Service. Following the official function Sandy and the guests were treated to a meal in the Civic Suite.

The congregation extends its thanks and congratulations to Sandy.

Rob Anderson

Blackboard Concert Living Treasures - Betty Robertson

The second annual Blackboard Concert was held in the St John’s Hall on Saturday 7 August 2010. The concert was an audience-participation event, designed to allow everyones “inner performer” to be expressed. Participants were invited to sign up to entertain the audience for up to ten minutes with whatever artistic expression they wished.

The audience was greeted at the door with a cup of mulled wine or fruit juice, and there was a lovely supper provided by the Social Committee (thanks D. Ensor et al!) at the intermission.

Performances included :

David Galt playing Bach on the piano (well done David!)

Benjamin Galt playing piano and clarinet (also well done!)

The usual Sunday morning music group (Dayle Anderson, Tony Fuell , and Ted and Beth Cizadlo) indulging their Carole King/James Taylor side, with a nod to John Denver

Debussy four-hand piano pieces by Mary Gow, John Broadbent and Paul Romero

Stunning acapella solo singing by Lala Simpson

Mara Davis, Madi Ojala, and Alice McEnany bringing us some Taylor Swift selections, singing and dancing

Energetic dancing by Aina, Manda, and Harena Simpson

A dramatic interpretation of Lewis Carroll’s Jabberwocky by Lesley and Malcom Shaw

Standup comedy with our usually dour and reserved ministry team, Stuart and Allister.

Widdcombe Fair (Uncle Tom Cobley) sung and dramatised by Pete Ballinger

Humourous original poetry by Brigitte Hicks-Willer

Serious and beautiful poetry recited by Wendy Bengé

David Wood reading a monologue with a marvellous accent

Lovely vocal solos by Robert Gray

Hip-hop dancing by SOAK (a BGI-related dance crew)

The performers were of all ages and levels of experience. The Blackboard Concert provides a great opportunity for parish members of different generations to see and appreciate each others’ talents and strengths in a fun and mutually affirming atmosphere. I was particularly pleased with the number of (ahem!) mature performers we had in the show. This year, like last year, more than one young member of the audience remarked that his/ her favourite act was one of the older performers. The opportunity to cheer, clap, and most of all to laugh together as a community is priceless.

The ad hoc committee for the Blackboard Concert is planning another one next winter. We invite you to start planning your performance now!

Beth Cizadlo

Betty Robertson’s membership at St John’s now spans eight decades. A Rongotai girl, Betty attended Wellington East Girls’ College and St. Giles’ Church. An abiding memory of her time at St. Giles’ was catching a tram to a Bible Class dance. Just as the tram entered the Kilbirnie shopping precinct it was involved in a terrible accident and overturned. Betty was trapped under the tram. Badly injured she spent months in hospital and many more months learning to walk again. Betty was lured to St John’s from St Giles’ by her husband to be, George. Betty and George were a team; in every sense of the word. George was the church treasurer for many years and then spent ten years as Session Clerk. During this period the front room of the Robertson’s Karori home became, in effect, the church office. Here, Sunday notices and annual reports were written, typed, printed and collated, meetings were held and records stored. George and Betty’s hospitality was legendary. An invitation to a

meal at the Robertson’s was something to be savoured.

As mentioned in the Editorial, Betty made it her priority each Sunday to speak to and welcome visitors. Betty told one visitor that she had met her before, but couldn’t recall where. The visitor was adamant that she hadn’t and then confided to Betty that she may know her face from television. The visitor was Jill Gascoigne, female lead in many ground breaking BBC TV series such as The Onedin Line and The Gentle Touch, in which she played television’s first female detective. For the duration of Jill’s stay in Wellington, she and Betty became firm friends. She even asked for Betty’s muffin recipe prior to leaving Wellington.

As well as serving the church, Betty has also served the wider community. In 1985 she was awarded the Queen’s Service Medal as Wellington’s longest serving volunteer driver for meals on wheels. One day she received an unusual request from a parish priest. He asked Betty if she would take

one of her meals on wheels ‘customers’ to the Winter Show building to a gathering to meet a special visitor. The visitor was Pope John-Paul II. As he walked around the group, he came over to Betty and blessed her. Not too many people in St John’s can boast that they have been blessed by a pope!

Over her years at St John’s Betty has seen many changes. She says that St John’s has always been a family friendly congregation, although it is much younger congregation now. Another positive change that Betty notes is that the congregation is more mutli-cultural now than at any time in its history.

Betty Robertson has been attending St John’s for over 60 years. These have been years of great societal and congregational change. One constant over these years has been Betty’s cheerful greeting to visitors:“Good morning and welcome, now where have you come from...”

Rob Anderson

~ August Session Update ~ Dear Editor - Dominion Post

At the end of July, Louise and I had the honour of attending the presentation of the United Fire Brigades’ Association ‘Double Gold Star’ medal to our very own Sandy Lawson.

Only 50 people have been awarded this medal since its inception - a medal which recognises 50 years service. The evening was hosted by the Mayor of Wellington and the Wellington Fire Service Support Unit, and was an acknowledgement of Sandy’s outstanding contribution to the New Zealand Fire Service.

Sandy, like so many others at St John’s, is not only actively involved in the life of the church but also in the life of the wider community, and we are all the better for it.

The theme of service and vocation is one that we as a church have been reflecting on recently as part of our Sunday services. To paraphrase Julia, when she spoke about the personal challenge of mission and outreach, “are we ‘givers’ or ‘receivers?’” This is a question we all must answer in our own way. As James writes in his Epistle, we are called to “be doers of the word, and not hearers only” (1:22).

Another person who has given so much to the life of St John’s is Robin Ferrier. Robin recently stepped

down from Session, and at his final Session meeting, Rob Anderson gave a well-deserved tribute to Robin’s contribution and character during his 36 years as an Elder. This included being Session Clerk and chairing the Mission and Outreach Committee. Robin was presented with a miniature cricket bat in acknowledgement of “an outstanding innings”, and his service was also recognised in his appointment as an Elder Emeritus. An Elder Emeritus is an Elder who has officially retired from Session, but “whose wisdom and leadership is still drawn on by the congregation”.

So when you next see Robin or Sandy (another Elder Emeritus), please take the opportunity to thank them for all that they have done and continue to do.

It is also fitting, on behalf of Session, to acknowledge and thank each one of you for everything that you do to support the life of the church and the wider community. Through each act of service, generosity and love - no matter how small or insignificant they may seem - may we be worthy representatives of Christ’s kingdom here on earth.

Paul Ramsay

Sir,

Ten years ago today (June the 29th) the family of a deceased individual made the tough decision to donate their family member’s organs. This was my second kidney transplant and has enabled me to live a rich life. At the age of 20 I am almost finished my accountancy degree, have sat on the board of the Wellington Regional Kidney Society, worked on strengthening NZ’s relationship with Asia in the Asia:NZ Youth Leadership Network, and endeavoured to

give back to my community in whatever way I can. This wouldn’t have been possible if it weren’t for the amazing generosity of one family. I would like to thank them, wherever they are, from the bottom of my heart as they have given me the ultimate gift which is life. To everyone reading this please have a talk with your family about whether you too would like to donate your organs and save a life.

Hei kona

Oliver Ibbetson



Starlight Story Time

Starlight Storytime was held on Friday 13 August. This year we decided to use the church so we could fit everyone in, plus it meant we got to use the pulpit in unusual ways (flying pukekos anyone?) Over 90 children and their accompanying adults got to laugh at the antics of Daddy Bear trying to teach his son how to ride a bike, see what can happen to a dog who believes he can fly, find out that stickers and dots are overrated, see what can fit into pockets and cheer along a world soccer team. And that was just the stories! There was also a spooky trail, dancing and supper in the conference centre, with balloons to take away.

A massive *thank you* to all those who helped out in so many ways at Starlight Storytime - we couldn’t have done it without you. Greeters, ushers, actors, narrators, trail blazers, singers, dancers, bakers, supper servers, plus all those who helped behind the scenes with selecting stories and setting up for the night - you all helped make a magical evening for everyone who watched, listened and laughed.

We look forward to doing it all again next year!

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

For all the teachers in the congregation

The Lesson

Then Jesus took the disciples up the mountain and gathering them around Him, he taught them saying:

Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven

Blessed are the meek.

Blessed are they that mourn.

Blessed are the merciful.

Blessed are those who thirst for justice.

Blessed are you when persecuted.

Blessed are you when you suffer.

Be glad and rejoice for your reward is great in heaven.

Then Simon Peter said, “Do we have to write this down?”

And Andrew said, “Are we supposed to know this?”

And James said, “Will this be in the exam?”

And Philip said, “How many credits is it worth?”

And Bartholomew said, “Can I have an extension?”

And John said, “How long is it until the end of the period?”

And Matthew said,” Can I borrow a pen?”

And Judas said,” Will knowing this get me a job?”

Then one of the Pharisees present asked to see Jesus’s lesson plan and enquired after his specific learning intentions and whether or not they had been shared with the students.

And Jesus wept....

What's Happening at St John's This Quarter

September 2010

Wednesday 1

5:30pm Session Meeting

Friday 3

7:30pm Wine & Theology

Saturday 4

6:30pm International Dinner and Auction

Sunday 5

10:00am All Age Worship

Thursday 9

7:30am Men's Prayer Breakfast

6:15pm ESL Study Group

Saturday 11

9:00am – 4:00pm Family Portrait Photo Shot

Sunday 12

10:00am Quarterly Communion

Monday 13

7:00pm - Marriage Course

Wednesday 15

5:15pm Council Meeting

Thursday 23

7:30am Men's Prayer Breakfast

6:15pm ESL Study Group

Wednesday 29

5:30pm Session Executive Meeting

October 2010

Friday 1

7:30pm Wine & Theology

Wednesday 6

5:45pm Session Meeting

Thursday 7

7:30am Men's Prayer Breakfast

6:15 ESL Study Group

Sunday 10

10:00am Communion

Saturday 16

4:00pm St John's AGM

Sunday 17

11:45am Pastoral Lunch

Wednesday 20

5:15pm Council Meeting

Thursday 21

7:30am Men's Prayer Breakfast

6:15pm ESL Study Group

Tuesday 26

10:00am Women's Association

Wednesday 27

5:30pm Session Executive Meeting

November 2010

Wednesday 3

5:45pm Session Meeting

Thursday 4

7:30am Men's Prayer Breakfast

6:15pm ESL Study Group

Friday 5

7:30pm Wine & Theology

Wednesday 10

5:00pm Property Committee Meeting

6:00pm Finance Meeting

6:30pm Committee Meeting

Sunday 14

10:00am Communion

Loaves & Fishes Morning Tea

Wednesday 17

5:15pm Council Meeting

Thursday 18

7:30am Men's Prayer Breakfast

6:15pm ESL Study Group

Tuesday 23

10:00am Women's Association

Wednesday 24

5:30pm Session Executive Meeting

Weekly Events

Sundays

10:00am - Morning Service

10:00am - St J's Kids*

10:00am - Youth Group*

5:45pm - Evening Service

Mondays

3:25pm - Lil' Phat Cs Dance (boys 5-9)*

4:15pm - Influence Dance (boys 11-13)*

5:45pm - Boys' Brigade (Juniors, 7-11)*

6:30pm - Boys' Brigade (Seniors, 11-17)*

* excludes school holidays

Tuesdays

6:00pm - Girls' Brigade (5-17)*

Thursdays

10:00am - Music and Movement*

10:00am - Company and Coffee*

12:00pm - Move It or Loose It*

4:15pm - Souljahs Dance (boys 11-13)*

7:00pm - Hot Mamas*

Fridays

3:30pm - Mini GuiDance (girls 8-12)*

4:30pm - GuiDance (girls 12-18)*

6:30pm - Youth Group*