

Light

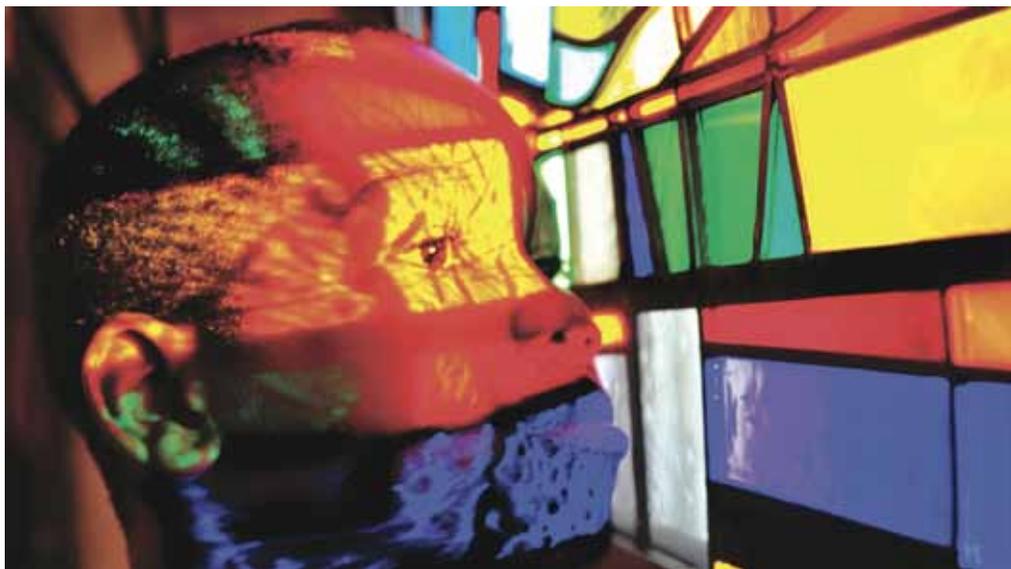
To introduce the theme of 'Light' let me try to offer a parable. Sunlight shines through the stained glass windows at St John's. As it shines, the light reveals the shapes and contrasting textures. We can see figures and faces; characters and scenes of stories. If you like, the truth is depicted; the message is shown. The light also reveals the rich colours – red, blue, gold. As well as the truth, there is beauty revealed. Light brings out the fullness of what is there; showing the potential the creator of the window originally intended. I hope you can see that light shining through stained glass windows this way can offer a parable of how God shines into our lives.

In the Bible 'light' is associated with joy,

blessing and life. In John's Gospel light is more specifically focused on the person of Jesus Christ – light symbolises the revelation of love through the Son of God, and the penetration of that love into lives darkened by sin. Next time you are in the St John's building take a look at the two windows at the south end depicting Jesus Christ as 'the light of the world' (John 8:12). May this light continue to shine upon you all.

Allister Lane

(Allister is one of the ministers at St John's since 2008. He is now also a father of three. His email is a.lane@stjohnsinthecity.org.nz)



'You're as dim as a Toc-H Lamp,' was an admonition familiar to an earlier generation of children. The Toc-H Society was an international Christian movement founded by the Bishop of Winchester in memory of his son who was killed in action in 1915. It was a soldier's rest and recreation centre behind the lines, a haven to help soldiers find respite from the horrors of the trenches. Following the war the Toc-H society was rebranded as an inter-denominational association for social service and also a forum to debate the great issues of the day. Branches were established all around the world. The symbol of this movement was an old oil lamp with a dimly flickering flame known as a Toc-H lamp.

I was reminded of the Toc-H Society by a member of our congregation, Bruce Cunningham. Bruce sent me a copy of a Toc-H publication on The Good Samaritan. In his accompanying letter Bruce wrote: '...about 75 years ago I went to a couple of Toc-H meetings in Masterton and can recall the oil lamp and the regular reciting of Matthew 5 v 16: "Let your light shine before men that they will see your good work and glorify your father which is in heaven," (from the dinkum version-the Authorised!!!)'

Recently I visited Dachau Concentration Camp, near Munich. Dachau is a place that between 1933 and 1945 personified the depravity of human behaviour where the Nazis imprisoned, tortured, starved and murdered their enemies. Yet in this place of metaphorical darkness light flickered and stuttered but was never extinguished. One person incarcerated in Dachau from 1941 until its liberation in 1945 was Pastor Martin Niemoller. Niemoller was one of a number of clergyman held in Dachau by the gestapo for 'treasonable statements.' People like

Niemoller and his fellow clergymen ensured that in the most dire of circumstances 'light shined out of darkness.'



Russian Orthodox Church in the grounds of Dachau concentration Camp

Today Dachau is a memorial to those who suffered dreadfully there between 1933 and 1945. It is also a place of worship. On the site is the Roman Catholic Mortal Agony of Christ Chapel, a Carmelite Convent, the Protestant Church of Reconciliation, a Jewish Memorial and The Resurrection of Our Lord, Russian Orthodox Church. The theme is one of memorial to those who suffered and also reconciliation. They are a poignant reminder that: 'The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.'

Rob Anderson

Light of the Nations

It's easy to sing the hymns on a Sunday. I love doing it. You get to know them quite well when you're in the choir. (There's an opportunity for some of you.)

It can be a challenge though. Take the words of Graham Kendrick that Stuart invited us to sing on Sunday 18 August at the 10 am service:

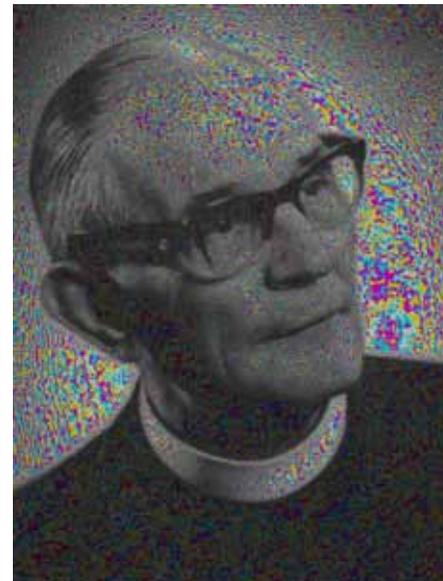
*"Shine Jesus shine
Fill this land with the Father's glory
Blaze Spirit blaze
Set our hearts on fire
Flow river flow
Flood the nations with grace and mercy
Send forth your word
Lord and let there be light."*

It's not hard to pray that our land be filled with the Father's glory or that the nations be flooded with grace and mercy. What a great vision for us to share!

The harder part comes when we pray to God to set our hearts on fire. How much could God achieve here in Wellington if our hearts are set on fire? Because so much of God's work is done through people, that is exactly what is needed for the flood we prayed for in the hymn.

For God's light to shine we all need to do our part. Fortunately at St John's, many are doing so. In a recent estimate, 66 people were giving 130 hours a week of volunteer time between them just to pastoral care, youth, children's and administration work – and that's far from all the time that's given. That's something to give thanks for!

David Galt



“First they came for the socialists
and I did not speak out-
Because I was not a socialist.

Then they came for the trade unionists-
and I did not speak out-
Because I was not a trade unionist.

Then they came for the Jews
and I did not speak out-
Because I was not a Jew

Then they came for me
And there was no one
left to speak for me.”

Martin Niemoller (1892-1984)

Dear Parents with Young Children in Church

You are doing something really, really important. I know it's not easy. I see you with your arms overflowing, and I know you came to church already tired. Parenting is tiring. Really tiring.

I watch you bounce and sway trying to keep the baby quiet, juggling the infant carseat and the diaper bag as you find a seat. I see you wince as your child cries. I see you anxiously pull things out of your bag of tricks to try to quiet them.

And I see you with your toddler and your preschooler. I watch you cringe when your little girl asks an innocent question in a

voice that might not be an inside voice let alone a church whisper. I hear the exasperation in your voice as you beg your child to just sit, to be quiet as you feel everyone's eyes on you. Not everyone is looking, but I know it feels that way.

I know you're wondering, is this worth it? Why do I bother? I know you often leave church more exhausted than fulfilled. But what you are doing is so important.

When you are here, the church is filled with a joyful noise. When you are here, the Body of Christ is more fully present. When you are here, we are reminded that this worship thing we do isn't about Bible Study or personal, quiet contemplation but coming together to worship as a community where all are welcome, where we share in the Word and

Sacrament together. When you are here, I have hope that these pews won't be empty in ten years when your kids are old enough to sit quietly and behave in worship. I know that they are learning how and why we worship now, before it's too late. They are learning that worship is important.

I see them learning. In the midst of the cries, whines, and giggles, in the midst of the



crinkling of pretzel bags and the growing pile of crumbs I see a little girl who insists on going two pews up to share peace with someone she's never met. I hear a little boy slurping (quite loudly) every last drop of his communion wine out of the cup determined not to miss a drop of Jesus. I watch a child excitedly colour a cross and point to the one in the front of the sanctuary. I hear the echoes of Amens just a few seconds after the rest of the community says it together. I watch a boy just learning to read try to sound out the words in the worship book or count his way to Hymn 672. Even on weeks when I can't see my own children learning because, well, it's one of those mornings, I can see your children learning.

I know how hard it is to do what you're doing, but I want you to know, it matters. It matters

to me. It matters to my children to not be alone in the pew. It matters to the congregation to know that families care about faith, to see young people... and even on those weeks when you can't see the little moments, it matters to your children.

It matters that they learn that worship is what we do as a community of faith, that everyone is welcome, that their worship matters. When we

teach children that their worship matters, we teach them that they are enough right here and right now as members

of the church community. They don't need to wait until they can believe, pray or worship a certain way to be welcome here, and I know adults who are still looking to be shown that. It matters that children learn that they are an integral part of this church, that their prayers, their songs, and even their badly (or perfectly timed depending on who you ask) cries and whines are a joyful noise because it means they are present.

I know it's hard, but thank you for what you do when you bring your children to church. Please know that your family - with all of its noise, struggle, commotion, and joy - are not simply tolerated, you are a vital part of the community gathered in worship.

A blog from:
<http://iamtotallythatmom.blogspot.co.nz>

Congratulations

New Members:

Jay Walters and Eunbyul Lee, Sandra Hubbard, Alan, Belinda, Hamish, Piper and Oliver Clare, Jo Cribb and Michael Waterman and Isaac and Celeste, Chris and Sonja Wansink, Jeane Pangemanan, Marai biederman and Dion, Chelsea and Luke.

Baptism:

Dana Lee Waters, daughter of Jay Waters and Eunbyul Lee
Hana, daughter of Olivia and Tony tuatoko and sister of Hefrani and Kijiana

Ian McKinnon on the announcement of his CNZM in the Queen's Birthday Honours

During these serious and troubled times, people of All faiths should remember these four great religious truths:

- 1** Muslims do not recognize Jews as God's Chosen People
- 2** Jews do not recognize Jesus as the Messiah
- 3** Protestants do not recognise the Pope as the leader of the Christian world.
- 4** Presbyterians do not recognise each other at the liquor store.

Light in darkness...

One of the many memories I have is walking down the main road of the small village Lala and I lived in while in Madagascar. It was late at night and there were no lights on in the street. It was probably the first time I had ever really experienced complete darkness. Maybe some of you have experienced this kind of darkness as well. It was so dark that we needed a torch to find our way, which we had forgotten. As we stumbled along in the darkness suddenly a flicker of candle light from a window pierced the darkness. The light was enough to help us on our way and in a few moments more candles were lit making the path much clearer. Rather than a bright light that blinded us the gentle light guided us. This memory reminded me of Jesus' words when he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but

will have the light of life." Maybe some of us have experienced the blinding light of Christ that has instantly changed our lives, but I wonder if most of us have instead experienced the gentle light of Christ, which over time transforms us and guides us along the path, the path that at times is full of pot holes, ruts and wrong turns. Furthermore, I believe as followers of Christ, his light is to be reflected from us, so that we too can guide others along the path. Let us follow Jesus and never walk in darkness but rather know the light of life.

Yours in Christ

Stuart

(Stuart is one of the ministers at St John's, since 2009. He is married to Lala and has three children. His email is s.simpson@stjohnsinthecity.org.nz)

In Praise of.....a helping hand

A church in its broadest definition, is not a building with a steeple, pews and an altar, but a congregation of people who have the same religious beliefs. However, churches need somewhere for their followers to worship. So when Wellington's St Mary of the Angels Catholic Church was forced to close for 18 months to allow the landmark building to be earthquake strengthened, the faithful were left with nowhere to gather. They were not homeless for long. Thanks to the generosity of the nearby Presbyterian congregation at St John's in the City, the Catholics of St Mary's have a



minister of St John's and Priest from St Marys join forces in the chapel



place to come together. Presbyterians and Catholics might not see eye to eye on all matters theological, but the gesture is a tangible sign of one of the core Christian beliefs they share—we are all brothers and sisters, and when some of us need a helping hand, those who can assist reach out. It is something to reflect on as Wellington continues to be rocked by tremors and the reality that we live in an unstable part of the world is brought home. If the big one hits, it will be the emergency services and rescue crews who save lives and the engineers, architects and tradespeople who rebuild. But there is one thing we will all need to do to get the city through—look after our neighbours.

The Dominion Post Editorial,
3 August 2013

What's happening at St. John's

September

| | | | |
|-----------|---------------------------|-----------|----------------------------|
| 2 | St John's Stitches | 11 | Property Committee Meeting |
| | Marriage Course | | Communications Committee |
| 4 | Session Meeting | 12 | Music and Movement |
| 5 | Men's Prayer Breakfast | | ESL Bible Study Group |
| | Music and Movement | 15 | Congregational Forum |
| | Spring Lecture Series | 16 | St John's Stitches |
| 6 | Wine and Theology | | Marriage Course |
| 8 | Quarterly Communion | 18 | Council Meeting |
| 9 | Marriage Course | 19 | Men's Prayer Breakfast |
| 11 | Finance Committee Meeting | | Music and Movement |

What's happening at St. John's

September continued

| | |
|-----------|--|
| 19 | Spring Lecture Series |
| 23 | Marriage Course |
| 24 | St J's Fellowship Meeting |
| 25 | High Tea at St John's Session Executive Meeting |
| 26 | ESL Bible Study Group Spring Lecture Series Outreach Committee Meeting Music and Movement |
| 30 | Marriage Course St John's Stickers |

October

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|-----------|---|
| 2 | Session meeting |
| 3 | Men's Prayer Breakfast Spring Lecture Series |
| 8 | Marriage Course |
| 9 | Finance Committee Meeting Property Committee Meeting Communications Committee |
| 10 | ESL Bible Study Group |
| 13 | Monthly Communion |
| 14 | St John's Stickers |
| 16 | Council Meeting |
| 17 | Men's Prayer Breakfast Music and Movement |
| 20 | St John's AGM |
| 22 | St J's Fellowship Meeting |
| 24 | Music and Movement ESL Bible Study Group Outreach Committee |
| 31 | Men's Prayer Breakfast Music and Movement |

November

| | |
|-----------|---|
| 4 | St John's Stickers |
| 6 | Session Meeting |
| 7 | Music and Movement ESL Bible Study Group |
| 10 | Monthly Communion |
| 13 | Finance Committee Meeting Property Committee Meeting Communications Committee |
| 14 | Men's Prayer Breakfast Music and Movement |
| 20 | Council Meeting |
| 21 | Music and Movement ESL Bible Study Group |
| 26 | St John's Fellowship meeting |
| 28 | Men's Prayer Breakfast Music and Movement Outreach committee |

December

| | |
|-----------|---|
| 4 | Session meeting |
| 5 | Music and Movement |
| 8 | Congregational Forum |
| 9 | St John's Stickers |
| 11 | Finance Committee Meeting Property Committee Meeting Communications Committee |
| 12 | Men's Prayer Breakfast Music and Movement |