

God's Language

May was 'NZ Music Month', and one of my favourite songs is by the New Zealand band MuttonBirds called 'Queen's English'. It is a satirical song about how a US Congressman said: "If the Queen's English was good enough for Jesus Christ, it's good enough for me."

What place do we understand language to have for our faith? Although Jesus almost certainly spoke Aramaic, at St John's we mostly speak English. In addition, there are many of us at St John's who speak other languages, reflecting the wonderful mix of ethnicities and cultures within the congregation. On Pentecost Sunday we were treated to hearing several people speak a common prayer in various languages.

Does God have a language?

Well, if language is primarily about communication, then we can affirm the variety of ways God communicates to us. We read in Psalm 19: "All things in creation declare the glory of God... there is no speech, nor are there

words; their voice is not heard; yet their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world."

God communicates in creative and surprising ways. God's language is most clearly articulated through the person of his Son, Jesus – not just the literal words Jesus said while on earth – but the fullness of Jesus as the Eternal Word. Jesus is the Word of God who spoke "in the beginning." Jesus is the Word who gathers us in the sacrament of communion – communicating God's love and grace.

God's language is universal, transforming, challenging, inspiring, life-giving, and uniting. In other words, God's language reflects God's own character.

Unlike many in the St John's congregation, I only know one language. And yet, as Christians, God's language is what we are called to learn in our own lives and proclaiming through our living.

In May we launched the E100 Bible Reading challenge, providing material to encourage personal habits of regular Bible reading. Whilst this particular programme is not necessary to read the Bible for ourselves and to discover God's Word afresh, it has been terrific that well over one hundred people from St John's have picked up these resources and are using this shared opportunity to explore God's Word.

None of us have to be Bible scholars to hear God's Word speak to us. Each Sunday a member of the congregation reads the Bible from the lectern, reminding us that the Bible does not belong to the ministers or scholars, but to the people.

God's language is one we learn together as we fully expect God to communicate with us. We listen and discern together, pressing toward our own articulation of God's love and grace, with one another and with the world.

Allister Lane

A Stranger in a Strange Land

Recently Anwyl Fowler gave me the diaries of the Very Reverend James Paterson to read. James Paterson was the second minister of St John's. His ministry lasted from 1868 to 1903. (See 'From The Archives') The diaries are an invaluable historical resource.

One of the diaries records his four month journey on the ship 'Ballarat' which sailed from Portland, Dorsetshire to Nelson, New Zealand in 1868.



The Very Reverend James Paterson

One passage that I found to be particularly poignant was written on the eve of his departure from England on 26 April 1868. He writes:

"It was but yesterday that I was pastor of a large congregation in the great Liverpool community with a beautiful new church, every stone of which I had seen laid...I had then, too, a comfortable home surrounded with every comfort and many dear friends...I had too a position and reputation in the community. I am now without a church and a congregation, without a home, separated in all possibility forever from

my dearest friends and from all I most loved. The ties are severed that bound me to home and country. I am here a wanderer and an exile, bound for a foreign land in the remotest part of the earth."

I am sure that James Paterson's sentiments have been echoed by countless others and will resonate with many currently worshipping in the congregation of St John's In The City.

For today we have many members who have courageously left behind all that is familiar, comfortable and reassuring and moved to a new country. As a result we have in our congregation people from every corner of the globe. In this edition of The Messenger I shall be interviewing and profiling some of these tauiwi. The community of St John's is all the richer because of the presence and contribution of these members.

Rob Anderson

In His Own Words Trevor Neal

Born and bred in the sunshine state of Wellington City. An old boy of Te Aro School, St Patrick's and Wellington Colleges.

Married to Betsy and have the three most amazing children in the world, Rhema, Ezra and Bishop. I love Jesus, Family, Music, Sports and have a soft spot for biscuits and a nice cuppa.

Absolutely loving being part of St John's and having the honor of leading one of the best Youth Groups EVER!

We have just recently moved back to WGTN after living in Palmy for 2 years, and Sydney Australia for 7. Its not easy being an All Black and Hurricanes fan living in Australia so I am pumped to back in the homeland again.



Trevor Neal

Privileged to be in a position where I can give back to the next generation of world changers here at St Johns.

Looking forward to the future to see some amazing things come from the Youth of St Jays. The future is looking great! WatchOut!

Trevor Neal

The Session Planning Day 2010

At the end of March, Session held a planning day with members of Council and others involved in the wider ministry of St John's.

After a superb cooked breakfast, the day began with opening devotions which reflected in word and music the diversity of worship within our church.

We then worked through four different workshops which looked at:

- What we have achieved in our Children and Families, Youth, and 18-30s ministries
- Our mission as God's church locally, nationally and globally
- How we can help people to share their time, talents and gifts as stewards of God's resources, and
- Sharing our hopes and dreams for the future.

While there is still much to be done following the Session planning day, there were a number of important observations. These included:

- We have achieved a lot in the last two years by being more focused and intentional in what we do.
- Even though our Children

and Families, Youth, and 18-30s ministries have been very successful, there is much that is still "fragile" which needs to be strengthened and supported. There are also further opportunities for outreach in each of these areas.



Elders take a break during the planning day

• An important part of this "strengthening" is encouraging people to give of their time and talents to support these and other ministries within St John's. Everyone has a part to play and a contribution to make. The more volunteers we have, the more we can achieve together while sharing the work involved.

- Effective pastoral care is a key part of our life together as a Christian community.
- Encouraging and developing the use of our facilities as a "hub" to reach out into the wider

community. The activities as part of our community day each Thursday are a good example of this.

• The need for a greater focus on our mission as God's church. How can we as a congregation become more involved in, and more effectively support, the wider work of the church both nationally and internationally?

• The importance of good communication within St John's, especially as we are a widely-dispersed community. We also need to improve the way we communicate, particularly in terms of explaining our needs as a church and the reasons "why" we do the things we do.

So many people contributed in so many different ways to the success of the day. Thank you for all that you did and for all that you do.

Not only was there good food to be shared, there was also good food for thought and reflection! I would also encourage you to share any thoughts or suggestions you may have with your Elder, the Ministers or me, as we continue this journey together.

Paul Ramsay

L'introduction de... 引入... Memperkenalkan... Introducir...

The Joeng Family

Kai, Indri and Kevin Joeng are very much part of the fabric that is the St John's congregation. Kai's home town is Bogor, Indonesia and Indri is from Moulobah in Aceh, It was one part of Indonesia that was devastated in the Boxing Day tsunami. Kai and Indri both came from the small Indonesian Buddhist community until they converted to Christianity. They were introduced to one another in Jakarta by Kai's cousin. It was Kai who first came to Wellington back in 1988 for a year to study English. He moved back for a year in 1991. Before they were married in Indonesia Kai and Indri decided to



Top left: Lala Simpson, Top right: The Jeongs, Bottom left: The Tays, Bottom right: Harriet Johnston (with Dame Catherine Tizard)



Lala Simpson

When Lala Simpson tells children that she is from Madagascar they often refuse to believe her. Their image of Madagascar has been fashioned by the popular children's animated movie 'Madagascar'. But it is in the real Madagascar that Lala was born and raised, the eldest of 6 children. Madagascar is a fledgling country of 19 million people. It became a French colony in 1895 and after an at times bitter struggle with the colonial power Madagascar won independence in 1960. Lala would like to be home this year with her family as Madagascar celebrates its 50th anniversary as an independent country. Growing up Lala loved her school days, especially the study of languages. As well as her native Malagas and English, Lala is also fluent in French. After high school she would have liked to have gone on to university, but

make New Zealand their home. First, Indri came to Wellington to check it out- she liked what she saw. It was Kai and Indri's friend Johnie Hidayat who invited them to St John's. They were impressed by the friendly people they met, felt 'at home' and stayed.

Kai and Indri have one son, Kevin. Kevin is a stellar Year 10 student at Wellington College. He is a keen badminton player. Kai taught Kevin how to play badminton and now he can't beat him! Kai, Indri and Kevin are happily ensconced in Lyall Bay. Every now and then they return to Indonesia to see their family. They consider the people at St John's their

as the oldest child she was obliged to join the workforce in order to support her siblings through their education. However, next year Lala hopes to realise her ambition when she applies for an Early Childhood teaching qualification at Victoria University.

One of Lala's early memories is singing in church. She enjoys singing and has sung in a lot of church choirs, beginning with a Sunday School choir. She also sang in a band that used to perform at corporate functions and church events like weddings. Her favourite singers are Patricia Kaas, Ella Fitzgerald, Edith Piaf and Aretha Franklin. Lala also enjoys dancing, cooking and reading mystery novels.

In 1997 Lala was selected to represent Madagascar at a Council of World Mission training course in England. Following the four month course she went off to the

Harriet Johnston

Before Harriet left Dumfries, Scotland and set sail for New Zealand as an assisted migrant, her minister gave her a piece of advice, "When you arrive in New Zealand, visit a number of churches and then join the one where you feel at home." When she first arrived to a job in the tourist and Publicity Department, Harriet first stayed at the spartan immigration hostel at Trentham. She then moved to the Girls' Friendly Society hostel in Vivian Street.

Harriet remembers Saturday nights in the hostel sitting in front of the fire, regaling the other girls with stories of

mission field in India. It was at this course that Lala met the PCANZ representative, Stuart Simpson. When Lala announced to her family that she was going to marry this young man all the way from New Zealand, her father was less than impressed. A letter from Stuart's parents vouching for their son's character and reputation put his mind at rest. Lala flew all the way by herself to New Zealand to marry Stuart. After marriage Stuart and Lala lived in Madagascar for 3 years before coming to Auckland in 2001. Aina was born in Madagascar.

And her name? Lala is short for Harilalao Rasaovololona. In Malagase culture parents choose not only the first name but also the surnames for their children. The name they select is one they want to reflect the character of the child. Lala's name means, 'wonderful offspring created to love and be loved.'

haggis hunting!

Eventually one of her 'church shopping' visits brought her to St John's. She was welcomed at the church door by a smiling man called Bill Duthie. He said to her in a familiar brogue, "come awa' in an' enjoy yersel'." The minister was the Rev. W.P. (Bill) Temple who a few years before had been called to St John's from Glasgow. All of a sudden Harriet felt right at home. She threw herself into the life of the congregation joining the choir, badminton club, Evening Guild, drama club, and tennis club. Bill Temple had established the Boys' Brigade at St John's in 1949. The first captain was Duncan Fowler. After joining the church, it wasn't long before Harriet was asked to assist with Boys' Brigade...the rest as they say is history....

The Tays

David Tay's Christian roots go back three generations to nineteenth century China where his great grandparents were converted to the Christian faith by missionaries. They migrated to Muan, Jahore on the Malay Peninsular and made it their home. They were initially farmers and then were successful in business. They poured their money into the local community as well as sending money back to China to build a church. Life was good. Then, during the Second world War both David's grandfathers were killed on the same afternoon by the occupying Japanese forces. David tells the story of his family intently. It is clearly important to him.

The present generation of Tays have continued the migration south. First, David and Daphne's son, Mervyn came to New Zealand in 1995 for his secondary education. A couple of years later David and Daphne decided to move here with their two daughters Joanne and Jolynn and make Wellington their home. When they looked for a church to attend they wanted one with a thriving youth programme for their children. A work colleague recommended St John's. They have been attending ever since.



It Floats!! Home made boats in the BB regatta 23 May

Many Families, One Father

How many of us are aware of the different cultures within the St John's community? Our first answer to this question may be 'a few'. When I first arrived from Auckland earlier this year our family had been very used to worshiping in a multicultural church. St Andrew's Community Presbyterian Church in Otahuhu is a worshipping community that consists of many Samoan, Cook Island and South African members, along with a number of other cultural groups. However when I first began to worship with the St John's community of faith, I witnessed, or so I thought, the primary cultural group as being Pakeha or as our Pacific brothers and sisters call us, Palagi. Now in some senses this is the case; however I have become aware of the plethora of other wonderful cultures that are part of this faith community. These cultures bring new dimensions to worship, to fellowship and our understanding of the 'gathered community'. Not only is St John's a community gathered from around the Wellington district, we are a

gathered community from around the world.

The English as a Second Language group is a fine example of the people who worship at St John's. The group consists of, to name a few, people from South Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia and China. Each time the group meets I am struck by their faith and ability to delve deeply into God's word. The group gathers once a fortnight for a couple of hours to explore the scripture verses that will be used the following Sunday. The ESL group has been gathering for many years and was started by Rev Graham Redding. It continues to grow strong and remains one of the highlights of my week. This group is a small reflection of the Church universal and a reminder that St John's does not worship in the 'vacuum' of Wellington but is a community gathered in Wellington from the four corners of the globe; this is something we should all celebrate!

Yours in Christ Stuart Simpson

From The Archives

The following is an entry on The Rev James Paterson (Minister of St John's from 1868 to 1903) from 'THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF NEW ZEALAND, WELLINGTON PROVINCIAL DISTRICT' which was published in 1897.

The Rev. James Paterson is a native of Ayrshire, in Scotland. Born in the parish of Kirkoswalde, he was educated at the Grammar School, Girvan, and studied at the Universities of Glasgow and Edinburgh. His theological education he received at the Free Church College, Edinburgh. Having passed through the regular course of study prescribed by the church, he received license as a preacher of the Gospel from the Free Church of Scotland, and having received a call to St. Peter's Liverpool, in connection with the Presbyterian Church in England, he was ordained and inducted into that charge in April, 1857. In 1866 he and a large body of his congregation moved to a new church in Everton Valley, where he continued to minister till 1868.

He then resigned the charge, having received a call to the pastorate of St. John's. He and his wife arrived in Wellington in August of that year, and in November he was inducted into the charge of St. John's, which he has held ever since that time. Mr Paterson is one of the trustees of the Presbyterian Church, and also the convenor of the Church Extension Committee of the whole church of New Zealand, excluding Otago and Southland. He has held the position of Moderator of the Presbytery, and in 1876 was Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in New Zealand. The reverend gentleman has been prominent in education matters since coming to Wellington. He is a fellow of the New Zealand University, and has long been a member of the Wellington Education Board, and of the Board of Governors of the Wellington College and Girls' High School. Mr Paterson was married in England to Miss Margaret Patterson, of Castle Douglas, Scotland and has two sons and daughters.

Adventures for The Boys' Brigade, a Home Made Regatta

After the all age worship service on 23 May the company met at Frank Kitts Lagoon. Over the past few weeks at BB the boys have been building boats with tape and core flute. All junior

and senior boys have been involved. The regatta was a very successful afternoon. Many doubted, but all the boats floated. There were a few trips the length of the lagoon, one boat holding up

to three boys (or one leader). It is great to have leaders and parents that support the boys' adventurous nature. We are all looking forward to our next adventure.

David Jackson

Views expressed in The Messenger do not necessarily reflect those of St John's in the City.
Church office: 385 1546

What's Happening at St John's This Quarter

June 2010

Wednesday 2

5:45pm Session

Thursday 3

7:30am Men's Breakfast

6:15pm ESL Study Group

Friday 4

7:30pm Wine and Theology

Sunday 6

11:30am Badminton Club

Sunday 13

10:00am Quarterly Communion

Wednesday 16

5:30pm Council

Thursday 17

7:30am Men's Breakfast

6:15pm ESL Study Group

Sunday 20

11:00am Congregational Forum

11:30am Badminton Club

5:00pm Children's Service

Sunday 27

11:45am Pastoral Lunch

11:30am Badminton Juniors

Wednesday 30

5:45pm Session Executive

July 2010

Thursday 1

7:30am Men's Breakfast

6:15pm ESL Study Group

Friday 2

7:30pm Wine and Theology

Sunday 4

11:30am Badminton Club

Wednesday 7

5:45pm Session

Sunday 11

10:00am Communion

Thursday 15

7:30am Men's Breakfast

6:15pm ESL Study Group

Sunday 18

11:30am Badminton Club

Wednesday 21

5:30pm Council

Wednesday 28

5:45pm Session Executive

Sunday 25

11:45am Pastoral Lunch

11:30am Badminton Juniors

Thursday 28

7:30am Men's Breakfast

6:15pm ESL Study Group

August 2010

Sunday 1

11:45am Pastoral Lunch

11:30am Badminton Club

Wednesday 4

5:45pm Session

Friday 6

7:30pm Wine and Theology

Sunday 8

10:00am Communion

Thursday 12

7:30am Men's Breakfast

6:15pm ESL Study Group

Friday 13

5:45pm Starlight Story Time

Sunday 15

11:30am Badminton Club

Wednesday 18

5:30pm Council

Sunday 22

11:30am Badminton Juniors

7:00pm Scots College and Queen

Margaret College Founders' Day Service

Wednesday 30

5:45pm Session Executive

Thursday 26

7:30am Men's Breakfast

6:15pm ESL Study Group

* excludes school holidays

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)*

7:00pm - Marriage Course

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*