

2011 Year of ..?

Well, depending on who you ask, 2011 is the Year of the Rabbit in the Chinese calendar, the Year of the Cat in the Vietnamese calendar, and, according to the United Nations, the Year of Forests and the Year of Chemistry. It has been called the Year of the Bible as it marks 400 years since the completion of the King James Bible and, in an attempt to curb child obesity, the Wall Street Journal is trying to promote 2011 as the Year of the Vegetable!

At St John's the Pastoral Care team has identified a theme each year to focus us as a community of faith. The initial suggestion for 2011 was the Year of Giving. But after some discussion it was felt that as Christians we are both givers and receivers. So it was settled; 2011 (at St John's at least) is to be the Year of Sharing.



As with many aspects of our living, our patterns of sharing ought to echo those shown by God, most significantly in the person of Jesus Christ. God has shared in our human situation and shares with us the glory of the Kingdom of Heaven through the forgiveness of sins (Colossians 1:12).

Genuine sharing subverts distorted power dynamics. When one gives something to another it can be easy for subtle power imbalances to creep in and rob our humanity; feelings

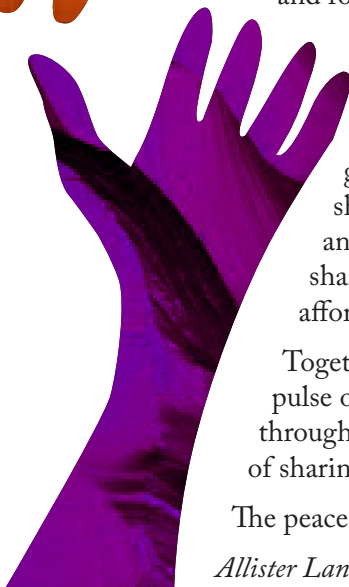
of self-righteousness by one, feelings of obligation by the other.

If we dare to open up to genuine, back-and-forth sharing, together as people and as communities, we all share in the dignity God has afforded us.

Together may we feel the impulse of the Spirit for exploring throughout the year this theme of sharing.

The peace of Christ be yours.

Allister Lane



Editorial - Safer than a Known Way

I expect that many members of the congregation have seen the movie; 'The King's Speech', which relates the story of King George VI and his speech therapist Lionel Logue. With Logue's unorthodox methods the King works hard in order to overcome a speech impediment. The movie concludes with the King making a broadcast speech galvanising the British people upon the outbreak of war. Another speech by George VI was arguably the most memorable royal broadcast ever made. It was December 1939 and amidst 'the bleak mid-winter', the very future of Britain looked equally bleak. For a nation looking for reassurance the King delivered a stunning conclusion to his address when he quoted hitherto little known lines from the poet Mary Haskins:

"I said to the man who stood at the gate
of the year-

Give me a light that I may tread safely
into

the unknown.

And he replied, 'Go out into the
darkness and put

Your hand into the hand of God. That
shall be to you

Better than light and safer than a
known way.'

The final lines are emblazoned on George VI's tomb in St George's Chapel, Windsor.

I remember visiting an elderly member of the congregation who was living in Britain in 1939. The King's broadcast had left a profound impression on her. She had a framed copy of the words on her sideboard.

As we begin another year there is much to anticipate. The Outreach Committee have invited Chris Marshall from Victoria University to deliver a lecture series later in the year. The youth Group energised by their time at Parachute are looking forward to the year ahead. The St J's Kids with their impetuous and contagious enthusiasm continue to delight the congregation. We are grateful to those who volunteer to teach them Sunday by Sunday. Over the last month House Groups have begun meeting as have other church groups. The evening service has recommenced after a summer recess. The Pastoral Committee have deemed that 2011 will be 'The Year of Sharing.'

As we contemplate the rich diversity of people and programmes that collectively comprise St John's in the City we can all heed the words of King George VI. They are as relevant today as when he flawlessly spoke them over 70 years ago.

Rob Anderson

Kupu Whakapono

At last year's General Assembly a new Confession of Faith and Subordinate Standard was approved. This has been 10 years in the making. The Westminster Confession of Faith and Short and Long Catechisms adopted in 1646 will still be part of our Presbyterian heritage. The supreme standard of our church is the Word of God.

From this land of Aotearoa New Zealand

we confess that we believe in and belong
to the one true and living God,
who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
love before all love.

We believe in God the Father,
sovereign and holy
Creator and Nurturer of all,
Father of Jesus Christ
Sender of the Holy Spirit
And judge of all the earth.

We believe in Jesus Christ our Lord and
Saviour
Truly human and truly divine,
Who lived among us full of grace and
truth.

For our sin he was crucified
and by the power of God was raised
from the grave,
Forgiving us, setting us free and bringing
to birth God's new creation.
Now ascended, he calls us to repentance
and faith,
and restores us to God and to one another.

We believe in God the Holy Spirit the
giver of life,
at work in all of creation,
who inspired the scriptures and makes
Christ known,
and gathers us into the community of
Christ,
empowering the Church in worship and
in mission.

We belong to the triune God,
a resurrection people;
women and men,
young and old
from many nations
In Christ He iwi kotahi tatou, (we are
one people)
witnesses to God's love in word and action,
servants of reconciliation,
and stewards of Creation.

As God's people,
We look forward in hope and joy
to the return of Christ,
to the new heaven and earth
in which evil and death will be no more,
justice and peace will flourish,
and we shall forever delight in the glory
of God.

Around the Bays and 40 Days

I had the wonderful privilege to take part in the Around the Bays Half Marathon recently. It was a great opportunity for me to test myself to see if I was fit enough to run the distance without stopping.

Looking back at 2010 I would never have thought it possible to run more than 5km. The latter months of 2010 found me strenuously running up and down hills around Karori, stretching, pulling muscles, finding muscles that I never knew existed and literally pushing myself beyond, what people call, the ‘wall’. At times I wanted to give up. At times I did give up. At times I improved. At times things seemed worst. I can now say that I have completed, without collapsing, a half marathon.

Paul in 2 Tim 4:6-8 says this ‘As for me, the hour has come for me to be sacrificed; the time is here for me to leave this life. I have done my best in the race, I have run the full distance, I have kept the faith. And now the prize of victory is waiting for me, the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on the Day--and not only to me, but to all those who wait with love for him to appear.’ Throughout his epistles Paul uses the running and racing image at least nine times.

Paul tells us about the race of faith. This race will require training and preparation. It will require us to eat the right food and to rest when we are tired. There will be times when we will want to give up; when we’ve had enough. Paul encourages us to

work on our endurance and not to give up on our faith as soon as it gets too hard. He encourages us to be disciplined in our faith and our following Christ. He also tells us that this race is better run as a community, where we can encourage each other when the going gets tough.

This year, as for every year, we are called to continue the endurance race of faith. However let’s remember we don’t have to run this race alone. As a community of faith, St John’s has many home groups and study groups where we can encourage and support each other. Examples of these groups are the English as a second language study group and wine and theology. It is also a community that provides pastoral care, through many different facets, to those who are wounded on the journey, for example, pastoral meals, prayer support, working bees and the delivering of meals.

As the race of faith takes us towards the season of Lent, we as a community will study the meaning of Sabbath. This will be an opportunity to build our faith endurance and our community supportiveness. It will be a wonderful opportunity to learn more about the race we are running and the reason for it. Most importantly this study will help us see the finish line.

As we run the race of faith this year, let’s do it together, let’s grow in our endurance and work through the ups and downs and like Paul cry out ‘I have done my best!’

Yours in Christ
Stuart Simpson

Photos from Parachute 2011



Photos (clockwise from above)

Group Hug!!!

Grace gets Around

Main Stage

Mainstage on Sunday Evening

Lance, Hyden and Yoon



Bert Shiels celebrates his 90th Birhtday

Congratulations

Congratulations to Bert Shiels who celebrated his 90th birthday with a lunch at church organised and attended by Bert’s friends in the congregation.

Congratulations to Emma Ramsay who is Deputy Head Girl at Queen Margaret College for 2011. If Emma wants any advice, she won’t have to go far. Her Mum, Louise is a former Head Prefect of Queen Margaret College.

Congratulations to all those who received pleasing examination results over the break.

Congratulations to our four new elders, ordained at morning worship on 14 February: Iris Webster, John Atkinson, Ashley Milkop and Anton Ojala.

Congratulations to all those members of the congregation who completed the Round the Bays run/walk on 20 February.

Session Update

On behalf of Session, our very best wishes for the year ahead.

The Christmas / New Year period is typically a quiet time for Session, with no meeting until the beginning of February. However there have been a few changes over this period, with Charles Stewart stepping down as an Elder and four new Elders being ordained. Charles has been an Elder since 1979, and has faithfully served the church at both a local and a national level, including 23 years on the Church Property Trustees. Charles also played an important part in reconstituting the BGI. In recognition of his contribution, Session appointed Charles an Elder Emeritus at its meeting in December. We are very grateful for everything the Charles has done and continues to do for the church. On 13 February 2011, John Atkinson, Ashley Milkop, Anton Ojala and Iris Webster were ordained as Elders. In addition to their involvement in a wide range of church activities including Council, the Outreach Committee, St J’s Kids and the Evening Service, they also bring their own unique skills and experience to the role. We look forward to their contribution to the work of Session. It is fitting, in this our *Year of Sharing*, that we acknowledge the willingness of all these people - Charles, John, Ashley, Anton and Iris - to share their time and talents. I would encourage each of us to do the same.

May God bless you as we enter the season of Lent and prepare ourselves for Easter.

Paul Ramsay

WGTV♥CHCH

Call **0900 73 327** to make a **\$20** donation to the Red Cross Canterbury Earthquake Appeal

Dear Friends

Even as I write this, Christchurch emergency workers are doing their utmost to rescue people trapped in fallen buildings and crushed cars.

Overnight we have received letters and notes from churches and individuals from around the world representing an outpouring of prayer and concern for the people of Christchurch.

A question we are being asked by many is ‘what can we do?’

Upholding the rescue workers and medical staff in prayer is the most important thing we can do right now. By all accounts, they are working tirelessly and doing an extraordinarily good job.

I am also hearing stories of ministers and church members visiting neighbours and parishioners whose loved ones have not returned from work. We need to uphold them in their anxiety, fear and grief.

As far as ministers and church members are concerned, we have not received any reports of serious injury or death. However some homes, including manses, have been badly damaged.

In terms of our own church buildings, we have reports that Knox, St Giles and St George’s Iona have been badly damaged.

St Paul’s Trinity Pacific has received further and severe damage - but thankfully the workers repairing previous damage were all outside the building having lunch at the time of the most severe earthquake and so avoided the collapse of masonry which would have almost certainly caused injury or death.

I have received several offers from ministers and pastoral workers willing to travel to Christchurch to provide chaplaincy and support. We have offers of accommodation outside Christchurch for any individuals or families who need some time away. The folk at Calvin in Gore have offered to send a bus to bring people back to Gore to enjoy some Southern hospitality.

We will wait advice from Christchurch, but will coordinate all such offers through the Assembly office and provide details to the Christchurch Presbytery. Please email me.

Emergency financial support is probably best given through one of the numerous appeals.

Our Moderator, Peter calls us to come together in prayer and support for the people of Christchurch.

Martin Baker, PCANZ Assembly Secretary

What's happening at St. John's

March

Wednesday 2, 5:30pm
Session

Thursday 3, 7.30am
Men's Prayer Breakfast

Tuesday 8,
Shrove Tuesday Pancake
Breakfast

Wednesday 8,
Ash Wednesday Service at
St Mary of the Angels

Thursday 9,
ESL Study Group

Sunday 13, 10:00pm
Quarterly Communion

Wednesday 16, 5:30pm
Council

Thursday 17, 7:30am
Men's Prayer Breakfast

Sunday 19, 11:00am
Picnic Church

Tuesday 22,
Women's Association

Thursday 24,
Men's Prayer Breakfast
and ESL Study Group

Sunday 27,
Morning Tea in St John's
Centre after morning service

Thursday 31, 7.30am
Men's Prayer Breakfast

April

Wednesday 6, 5:30pm
Session

Thursday 7,
Men's Prayer Breakfast
and ESL Study Group

Sunday 10, 10:00pm
Monthly Communion

Sunday 10, 7:00pm
Scots College Easter Service

Sunday 17, 10:00am
Palm Sunday

Holy Week

Monday 18,
Monday Night Service

Tuesday 19,
Women's Association
Easter Service
Tuesday Night Service

Wednesday 20,
Wednesday Night Service
Council

Thursday 21,
Maundy Thursday Service

Friday 22,
Good Friday Service

Sunday 24, 10:00am
Easter Sunday

Thursday 28, 7:30am
Men's Prayer Breakfast

May

Wednesday 4, 5.30pm
Session

Thursday 5,
ESL Study Group

Sunday 8, 10:00pm
Monthly Communion

Thursday 12, 7:30pm
Men's Prayer Breakfast

Wednesday 18, 5:30pm
Council

Thursday 19,
ESL Study Group

Sunday 22,
Pastoral Care Lunch

Tuesday 24,
Women's Association

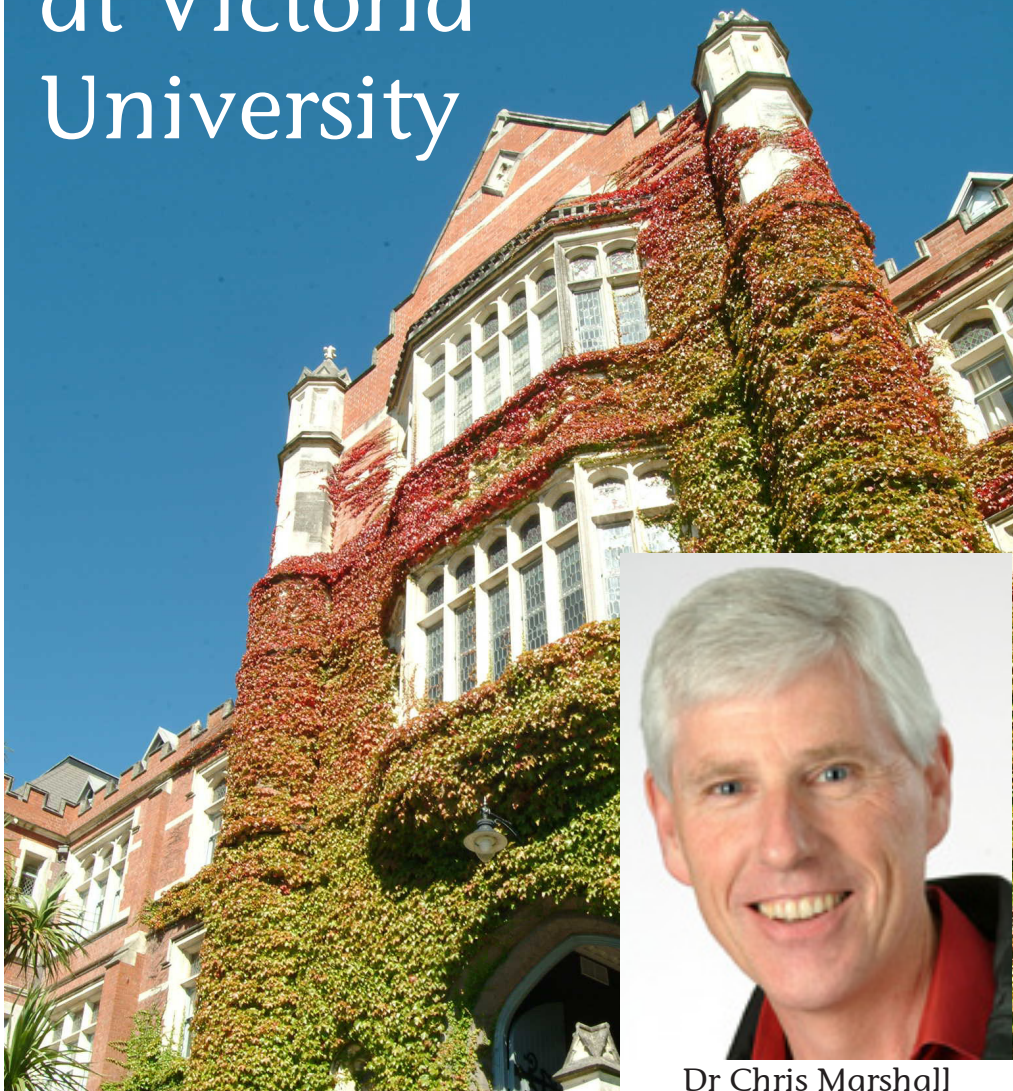
Thursday 26, 7:30pm
Men's Prayer Breakfast

Thursday 29, 7.30am
Men's Prayer Breakfast

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

St John's Lectureship at Victoria University



Dr Chris Marshall

St John's Lectureship at VUW

Our forefathers in the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, from the time of the reformation and as the Church migrated throughout the world, laid great emphasis on education; both the theological teaching of its ministers and its members and the general education of its children in school.

That commitment came with those Scots who established the Presbyterian Church in New Zealand where they had a great influence on the provision and development of schools and teaching in this country.

So in 2004 when St John's followed a vision of joining in partnership with Victoria University of Wellington to establish a Senior Lectureship in Christian Theology, we were building on centuries of commitment to education and theological enlightenment and growth in young women and men.

The four goals of the lectureship are:

- To represent a Christian voice in the university environment
- To offer credible and engaging papers in Christian Theology that are attractive to students
- To offer a public voice from a Christian perspective on issues of the day
- To offer public lectures.

Dr Chris Marshall commenced the St John's Lectureship in Christian Theology at Victoria University in January 2005 and has grown student numbers to over 100 undergraduates annually at the 200 and 300 levels, and up to 10 postgraduate students each year. Dr Marshall is also considered an international expert on restorative justice, regularly publishes, and in recognition of the excellence of his work he was promoted to Associate Professor. In 2010 he received a highly regarded Tertiary Teaching Sustained Excellence Award.



The two primary courses which Dr Marshall delivers during the year are 'Jesus and the Four Gospels' and 'Paul', which have been consistently well attended and received by students. They provide a theology option for regular Religious Studies students, and have brought a significant number of students, both Christian and non-Christian into the programme. In addition people from the wider Christian community have enrolled or sat in on lectures.

The position also sees Dr Marshall monitoring PhD students, assisting research students, teaching in the Honours programme, giving guest lectures in several other religious studies courses and giving public lectures. In recognition of his strong capacity for leadership through research and teaching he was made an Associate Professor in 2006 and in 2010, appointed Head of the School of Art History, Classics and Religious Studies, an academic leadership role. He will continue as St John's Lecturer in Christian Theology in conjunction with his role as Head of School.

If you want to know more about Dr Marshall's work just Google 'Dr Chris Marshall'. You will find a many references.

St John's Lecture Series

The Outreach Committee is delighted to announce that Dr Chris Marshall will be giving a series of six lectures on 'Jesus and the Gospels' at St John's in the latter half of 2011.

Dr Marshall presented these lectures in the Hutt Valley last year, with an attendance of over 70 people for each of the six nights – and not one drop-out over the series. Quite a remarkable attestation of the value of and interest in the lectures as seen by those who attended.

The Hutt Valley group have asked Dr Marshall to do a similar series on 'Paul' during the first half of 2011, so the Outreach Committee has flagged with Chris a booking for the first part of 2012 for that series. Both series of lectures are taken from his main courses at Victoria University, so if you have been regretting they were not able to attend those courses, these series will give you the opportunity.

The Outreach Committee hopes to have a large attendance and will be making the series open to all denominations in the city, as well as student residents and anyone else who might be interested. A good opportunity to invite your friends.

Visiting Scholar in Christian Theology

St John's is to sponsor, in partnership with Victoria University, an annual Visiting Scholar programme, similar to the Burns Lecture Series sponsored by the University of Otago. This will strengthen and expand the goals of the Lectureship and St John's partnership with Victoria University.

The programme will have a strong teaching focus at both the University and at St John's and will include public lectures and seminars. The Scholar will normally be an overseas academic of note or occasionally may be an exceptional candidate from another institution in New Zealand.

The programme will contribute to St John's own ministry goals towards tertiary students and to people who work in the city and will make a positive investment in promoting public theology in New Zealand. The St. John's Session sees it bringing intellectual and spiritual enrichment to the wider Christian community in Wellington. As well as the scholar speaking at the University there will be meetings and presentations at St John's. For the University, a theologian of international repute giving lectures and seminars and meeting with students and staff will bring added value, helping to consolidate its reputation as an international University.

Rev. Allister Lane and Rob Anderson will be working with the University on the development of the programme on behalf of the St John's Outreach Committee which has overall responsibility for the management of the programme in partnership with the University. It is hoped the first visiting scholar programme may be in 2012. Outstanding scholars are often booked many years in advance. It is something exciting to look forward to.