

Genesis One

In the beginning, God created heaven and earth. Then God said: "Let there be light."

Shortly thereafter God was in receipt of an Enforcement Order and required to apply for Resource Consent. He was granted consent for the light project, but the regional council publicly notified the earthly part. At the hearing, God was asked why he began his earthly project in the first place. He replied that He just liked to be creative. Officials immediately demanded to know how the light would be made. Would it require strip mining? What about thermal pollution?

God explained that the light would come from a huge ball of fire and consent was granted subject to a number of conditions including; 1.1 that no smoke would result from this activity. The authorities demanded the issuance of a building consent. To conserve energy a condition required that the light

be left off half the time. God agreed, saying he would call the light 'day' and the darkness 'night'.

The commissioners replied that they were only interested in protecting the environment, not in the semantics. God said, 'Let the earth bring forth green herb and such as many seed.' DOC agreed, so long as only native seed was used. Then God said; 'Let waters bring forth creeping creatures having life, and the fowl that may fly over the earth.'

However, a submission was received again from DOC, MAF and the Royal Forest and Bird Society. Everything went along smoothly until God declared that he intended the project in six days. Council informed God it would take at least 20 days to review his application for resource consent. After that there would have to be a public hearing, and then could possibly be appealed to the Environment court.....

Calendar of Events

- 4 June**
Session meets
- 8 June**
Quarterly Communion
- 14 June**
Congregational Lunch
- 21 June 9:30 am-3:30 pm,**
Pastoral Care Seminar,
"Loving Your Neighbour as Yourself."
The Conference Centre.
- 30 June**
Tom Cuthell leaves Wellington
- 14 August**
Film evening,
The Penthouse, Brooklyn.

St John's in the City
Presbyterian Church
Corner Willis & Dixon Sts
p: 385 1546
e: info@stjohnsinthecity.org.nz
www.stjohnsinthecity.org.nz

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



The Messenger

June 2008

St John's in the City, Presbyterian Church

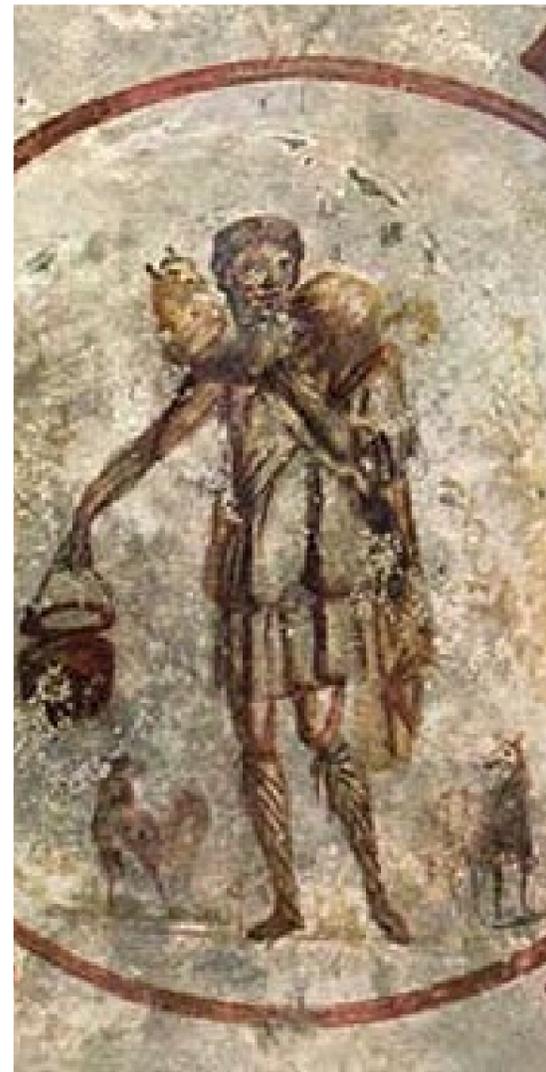
Editorial

When Session approved the pastoral committee's proposal that 2008 should be designated The Year Of The Good Shepherd, they chose well. The image of Jesus as the Good Shepherd is an enduring one.

The image is a fresco of the Good Shepherd in the Vault of Lucina in the Catacombs of Rome. It is estimated that the fresco was created some time in the third century. Several centuries later our forebears in St John's chose the Good Shepherd as a motif for one of the stained glass windows in the church. The image of Jesus as the Good Shepherd is as relevant to the twenty first century church as it was to the first century church, as the Good Shepherd encapsulates themes of: compassion, humility, concern for others, caring, looking beyond ourselves. It is a model that we can all follow.

At the end of June we farewell Tom Cuthell. In the relatively short spells that he has spent with us Tom has endeared himself to all members of the congregation. Tom's outstanding and timely sermons, astute management of church affairs, sense of humour and a remarkable ability to relate to all people have been hallmarks of his time with us. We have been truly blessed by his ministry. Thank you Tom.

"Will ye no' come back again?"
Rob Anderson



The Aitken Windows. Now in the Mackay Chapel.

The Aitken Windows

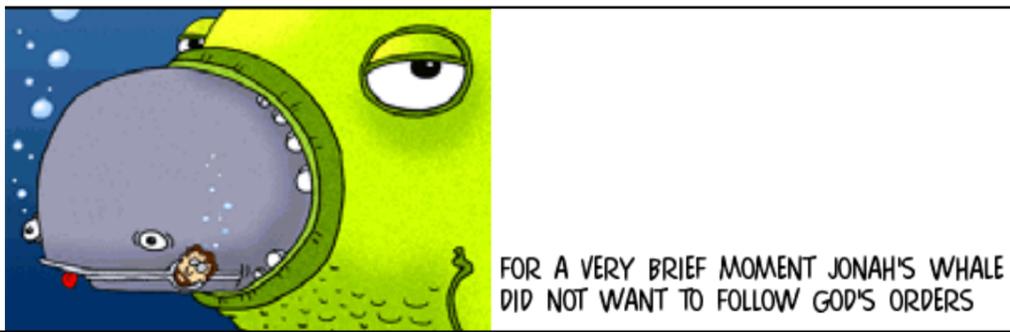
I suspect that few people in the congregation subscribe to or have even heard of The Campbeltown Courier and Advertiser. Yet the 4th April edition of this publication featured an article on St John's complete with pictures. How did this come about? In January of this year while Jock Campbell and Jean Cameron from Scotland were visiting New Zealand they attended morning worship at St John's. They were; ".....most impressed by your church, your congregation and Sunday worship." I suspect that they had another motive to coming to St John's apart from partaking in worship. You see Jean was baptised in and attended Lochend Church, Campbeltown in the county of Argyll, Scotland and they wanted to see a little bit of history. Many of the congregation know the story but it is worth repeating.

In the 1980s Lochend United Free Church was closed and demolished due to "a lack of money and a lack of money." The Lochend church contained a magnificent set of Edwardian stained glass windows depicting the last supper. They were created in Edinburgh in 1903. and became known as The Aitken Windows. The windows were given to Lochend by John Aitken and his brothers and sisters in memory of their parents who had worshipped at the church. John G W Aitken was mayor of Wellington and also an elder in St. John's. When the Lochend Church was demolished the stained glass windows were put into storage. They could have remained there forever, but a New Zealand descendent of the Aitken family suggested that the windows be sent to St John's. The timing was significant as it coincided with the Mackay legacy to build the

chapel. It was decided to put the now restored windows into the chapel. The Mackay Chapel was dedicated at Easter 1994.

It is sad that the Lochend church is now the car park of the local Tesco store. The congregation went and joined other local churches. However, when the Lochend church was closed there was some money left. With that money a trust was set up for medical purposes. Local doctors and the local hospital can call on the trust if they see the need for some special medical equipment that is required for a patient. As for the former congregation: "We all have fond memories of our old church but have settled well wherever we went and of course all had friends in the other churches. We are all so happy that the Aitken windows went back home."

Rob Anderson



Reflections on Six Months as Locum at St John's

As I write this article for 'The Messenger', I am only too conscious of the fact that I have just passed the midway point in my second three-month stint as locum Minister at St John's. Where does the time fly? Returning to Wellington at the beginning of April I very quickly slotted back into the familiar routines – almost as though I had never been away! What was there when I left and what was there when I returned is the warmth, friendliness, kindness, generosity and encouragement – qualities and attributes that you, the good folks of St John's have in abundance and are given to wearing on your sleeves in season and out of season. To be greeted on my first Sunday back with the words 'Welcome home' moved me immensely.

What now follows are a few random reflections and observations gleaned from my six-month sojourn among you. I have been hugely impressed by the church life of St John's – its richness, variety and vibrancy. Don't be too hard on yourselves, or too self-critical. While there is always room for both movement and improvement, St John's is, most decidedly, not irretrievably stuck in a rut. I sense it stands poised, ready to risk new paths, to pioneer new approaches for the sake of Christ and his King-

dom – in partnership with a new minister – whoever that happens to be! Hence I cannot but applaud the initiative shown by the Kirk Session in organizing a day conference recently to devise a strategy for the future. 99.9 per cent of Kirk Sessions would have waited for a new minister – not the St John's Kirk Session!! – an indicator perhaps of an inherent spiritual maturity.

Speaking personally, the 'style' and theological ethos of St John's has appealed enormously to me. It is unashamedly 'middle-of-the-road' – holding together in a creative, if occasionally uncomfortable, tension both liberal and conservative, traditionalist and 'modern' elements. Its warm, welcoming and friendly face, reflecting, as it does, the warm, open inclusiveness of the love of God – transcends all definitions of 'liberal' or 'conservative', 'traditionalist' or 'modern'.

One of the strengths of St John's – as I see it – is its rich cultural and ethnic 'mix'. While Europeans or pakeha are there in considerable numbers, the congregational 'mix' is seasoned with Pacific Islanders, Indonesians, Malaysians, Sri Lankans, Indians, Chinese and Koreans. (if I have omitted any nationalities – my sincere apologies!)

When on a Sunday I look out from the pulpit, I feel as though I am looking out at a representative microcosm of the world Church! Hence it could reasonably be argued that what St John's needs is a 'non-pakeha' Associate minister. Just a thought!

Another of the strengths of St John's is the encouraging number of children and young people. Yes, there are the 'wee buddies' and a substantial representation of Wellington's 'movers and shakers', past and present, but what really lifts the heart is the significant presence of young families. I have been in my element when surrounded by 'kiddy-winkles', as I have called the kids – especially at baptism. And while I readily acknowledge the fact that the church's life and mission is, for the most part, rightly dependent on the voluntary giving of people's time, skills, aptitudes and energies, I also happen to believe that St John's should consider making the post of St J's Kids Leader a paid one on a part-time basis – irrespective of personalities!! Such a move would, I believe, be tantamount to investing in St John's future. I am also aware of the enormous opportunities that could come St John's way by tapping into the vast number of student flats and halls of residence

that lie within the vicinity of the church. With the presence of the BGI and its considerable experience and expertise in youth work, St John's is well equipped to engage with the student community, and with young people in general, for the sake of Christ's Kingdom. Perhaps the Sunday evening service has ceased to serve any meaningful purpose in its present form. Perhaps the time has come to ear-mark Sunday evening as Youth Night, devising a creative and imaginative programme of events e.g. experimenting with patterns of worship specially geared towards students and young people, encouraging the cut and thrust of dialogue and debate by exploring the big questions of life (using as a starting-point the questions that are uppermost in young people's minds). A good 'feed' too might go down well with impoverished students!! Earlier on in this article I was thinking aloud about the possibility of a 'non-pakeha' Associate Minister. It may be that the more pressing priority for St John's is to engage an Associate minister with the flair, personality, skills and aptitudes to reach out to the young.

From what I have observed, I believe the time has come for St John's to exploit its strategic position as a city-

centre church by taking a long, hard look at its 'parish' and devising new, creative and imaginative patterns of outreach, being less inward-looking and being more focussed on engaging with the world on its doorstep. The church needs to be geared up for a Monday to Friday ministry, e.g. organizing lunchtime dialogues with high-profile people drawn from different walks of life – devising gentle, reflective styles of lunchtime worship which will enable people to have an 'oasis' experience in the midst of the pressures of a workaday world and the hurly-burly of city life – organizing series of talks on subjects relevant to office workers – initiating programmes of 'live' lunchtime music in different genres – and so on. To link in with all this potential activity, would it not be possible to develop Spinks Cottage in its present form as an attractive, tasteful café offering morning coffee and light lunches? At the same time there may still be a place for a Christian youth café – but why not position it slap-bang in the middle of the café culture in the Courtenay Place area, yet having its own distinctive ethos and atmosphere. Of all the options that have been mooted, I see that as the most radical one!!

I could go on sharing with

you my thoughts, reflections, observations and suggestions. Suffice to say – when I leave Wellington on 30 June to return home, I shall take with me a veritable host of happy and delightful memories – memories of lovely people and equally lovely experiences – memories that I know will remain fresh and evergreen and new every morning. I have been greatly enriched by my time among you and I feel privileged to have had this opportunity to minister to you. I also know that we shall keep the channels of communication in good repair and I shall look forward to hearing how St John's continues to progress and do great things for Christ and his Kingdom under your new minister. I hope that, if any of you happen to be in Edinburgh, you will not go past my door!! Who knows – perhaps in 2009 some of you will join my Assisi group!! In the meantime, keep well – keep together – keep trimming your sails to the breezes of the Spirit and go forward with the hand of Christ on the tiller.

May God richly bless each and every one of you.

Your minister – for six months! – and, I trust, your friend!

Tom Cuthell

The Year of the Good Shepherd Women's Association

The Year of the Good Shepherd – the designated theme for St John's for 2008 – a year in which we want to draw attention to what it is to be a "good shepherd".

Why? Because pastoral care is one of the central features of any community that truly wants to call itself Christian. It comes out of our relationship with God and with each other. With that as our focus, we can see that every human need creates an opportunity for caring, both as individuals and as a community. It is best described as "being there for others". We offer ourselves because we share a common humanity with all the splendour and all the fallibility which that implies. In other words, if we can find courage or hope, or if we have been helped to find these things, in the midst of life, then we can help others find the same wholeness. It is sharing with another in the experience of grace.

So what has the Pastoral care committee been up to?

Geographical Pastoral Lunch-

es: The purpose of these lunches is two fold. Firstly, it is a wonderful opportunity to get to know others who live on your side of town. Secondly, should there be a civil defense emergency at any stage; networks will be easier to set up.

To date we have had lunches for the Karori, Southern and Northern districts.

Next one: For all those who live in Central Wellington, Sunday, 27th July, in the Conference centre, after the Church service.

Volunteer Register: Pastoral care is a team effort. We have set up a register of people willing to offer their services in various ways in times of need. This is coordinated by Judi Ferguson and accessed through Margaret Gilkison (Pastoral Care Worker). This register is an example of how we can extend ourselves to others. If you haven't already done so, and think you can, please help us by filling out the yellow questionnaire in the Church foyer and put in the box provided. Saying you

can do something does not commit you to doing it every time you are asked. We need many people to make up the team. Any small amount of help you can give is valuable. Please phone Judi Ferguson if you want further information. Ph 972 9901.

Newcomers: Extending a warm welcome to strangers is of paramount importance if we want to show that we are a congregation who is interested and caring. We have set up a "newcomers pack" which provides information on all aspects of life at St John's. These are an excellent resource and we hope they will give an immediate sense of belonging and ownership.

Pastoral Care Seminar: "Loving Your Neighbour as Yourself"

This will be held on SATURDAY, 21ST JUNE, 9.30am – 3.30pm at the Conference Centre. Everyone is welcome. This is a great way to learn how to strengthen your people and pastoral skills.

Topics include:

- Developing a Healthy Self Esteem
- Communication Skills
- The Challenge of Change
- Being Effective in Pastoral Care

Speakers include:

- Reverend Tom Cuthell (Ex St Cuthbert's, Edinburgh)
- Anne Simpson, Anna Davis, Sue Riddle (St John's)
- Virginia Lee (Mary Potter Hospice)

Cost:

- \$10 waged
- \$5 unwaged
- Payment on the day.

Registrations: please phone the Church Office, 385 1546 during business hours, OR Margaret Gilkison (evenings) 476 3144 OR email Margaret.gilkison@xtra.co.nz

Morning tea and lunch provided

.....And Later in the Year - more pastoral lunches, a morning tea and a Church picnic! Watch out for the next Messenger!

Margaret Gilkison

Meetings are usually held in the Conference Centre at St John's in the City on the 4th Tuesday of each month, but occasionally this may change, so please check details if coming for the first time.

We meet at 11 am, starting with a brief business meeting, followed by a guest speaker. We then have a shared lunch where we can get to know each other more informally.

There is also a sales table, with the proceeds going towards the Association of Presbyterian Women's special Project. This is selected by the National Executive and for 2008 the theme is

Opening Doors. We are supporting the house of Passage in Brazil, and the Chaplaincy in State Schools in New Zealand. More information on the Special Project is available on request.

Membership is open to all women of the congregation- and men are also very welcome to attend

For meeting details or further information on the women's Association, please check the weekly church Bulletin, contact Mary Gibbs on 380-0516 or e-mail enquires@stjohnsinthecity.org.nz

Mary Gibb

Leprosy Mission Money Box Programme

Every dollar given by you will be matched by \$4 from The New Zealand Government. We have money boxes available for you to take home and fill with your loose change. Donations are collected in April and October.

Receipts are issued so you can obtain a tax rebate. Ask Judi Ferguson for a money box and Leprosy Mission magazine. You can contact Judi on 972 9901.

WHNI VRI NHOJ ORSMNN
 LGOLDAZICDETSDAIA
 NOSNIKLI GTERAGRAM
 YRRBLLSGTSOVIYGDW
 SKENEYDIESI LSAANE
 FABLSGYRSDLGLSRI S
 OIOLLACGINIAMEOL
 AHRIERHAMOCR NATTI
 ATYBYELNEEPANRGE G
 INTBSTAEPNWNALAGY
 LYTNHVEOAEARFULIM
 SCEVAETHBDSBFATDR
 AYBDWTYOALATOPASS
 SENSRRVDHVI EYRAI
 AIIENDIAMARYGIBBS
 LRROSSDAVISYDRSLT
 TAEMRORASATEBALAI
 RASTDYKLDNTAAAGIA

Find the Convenors/Contact people for these committees/groups.

St J's Kids

Communications

Flowers

Womans' Association

Junior Youth Group

Stewardship for Mission

Finance Committee

Website

Moring Tea & Greeters

Senior Youth Group

Christian Education

Monday Night House

Group

Garden Roster

Tuesday night House

Group

Library

Bell Ringers

Pastoral Worker

St John's Council

Pastoral Committee

Property Committee

The answer will be printed in the next issue of The Messenger -if I can solve it by then (ed.)

From the Session Table

At the end of March, Session spent a day dedicated to planning for the future by answering three key questions:

•Who are we and where are we at (what is our identity)?

•What has God called us to be and do (what is our purpose)?

•How do we get there and what are the implications for this journey (what is our direction)?

There was a lot of positive and constructive discussion throughout the day, and, over the lunch break, there was an interesting exercise where each person had to prioritise their spending of a fixed budget across fourteen "buckets" that represented the different areas of expenditure within the church.

As a result, five areas were identified that we wish to focus on over the next twelve to eighteen months.

These are:

- Children and families
- Young people (intermediate and secondary)
- 18-30s
- Pastoral care, and
- Outreach (local, regional, national and international).

Specific action plans are now being developed in each area. These are generally focused on:

- helping people to realise their full potential in Christ
- celebrating and supporting the diversity that we have within St John's
- encouraging greater participation in the life of the church
- establishing a specific ministry programme for 18-30 year olds
- growing and supporting

our leaders throughout the church

- seeking opportunities to engage with our own local 'neighbourhood' and the various apartments, hostels, flats and businesses that now surround St John's, and
- actively supporting the wider work of the church.

This is an on-going journey - one that we share together - and your comments and suggestions (as a vital member of the body which is the church) are welcome at any time.

The success of the planning day will ultimately be seen in what is achieved in the months ahead. However, it gives us a clear focus and direction as church - one which will be further strengthened by the appointment of a Ministry team.