



Newsletter for Saints A and A
Northcote and Birkenhead Presbyterian Parishes.
February 2021



The Community of St Aidans

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**Haere Mai, Aere mai, hwan-yeong, Fakaalofa lahi atu,
Afio mai, Ulu tonu mai, Talofa Lava,
Cantonese - Foon Ying Malay - Selamat Slovak – vitajte- Welkom**

Minister's comment

Welcome to the New Year. It is wonderful to have new starts, new beginnings, new opportunities. Something is liberating about starting again, learning from our past mistakes, and learning from the sages' wisdom, knowing we have a fertile history of growing a vibrant and robust future.

May 2021 be this and more for us as individuals, families, our New Church, our communities, Aotearoa and globally as human beings who influence the ecology and have the opportunity to treat all peoples with dignity, equality and justice. May we be in tune with the emerging future.

Here is a brainteaser. How can we rethink the economy and nature from "take, make, and throw away" to a user-friendly ethos, in which everything that we take from the earth is returned at the same or a higher level of quality?

Our world is a big place, but we can best influence a portion of it in finding new and creative ways here in Northcote and Birkenhead.

What is 2021 going to be for us? The Genesis Grp. is about to bring considered recommendations to the Church Councils and

Congregations in February. The recommendations are about the shape and expression of the New Church, and your considered thoughts will help shape what is emerging. The Genesis Grp recommendations have been guided by parish consultations, Circles of Trust and research on faith communities facing similar circumstances yet have managed to turn the tide and engage creatively in their part of the world.

There are already fresh expressions happening by us at Saints A & A.

Robyn Allen-Goudge will continue the music development with enthusiastic singers, so please join in. We are about to begin a creative engagement with those children attending worship. On

Sunday morning the Hall at St Andrews will have a creating table as does St Aidans. If you would see yourself helping out in this way, talk to me or those who are engaged with this wonderful ministry with the children. Of course, all the other church activities that bring life and smiles will continue through 2021, so keep an eye out and put them in your diaries and think about who you could invite to any or all of our happenings.

We have many challenges and equally many opportunities to make a difference.

Peace to you and yours,

Colin

Notes from St Andrews Council Meeting 26 1 21

Changes for our two negotiating churches are fast coming to fruition. The Genesis Group, a kind of “think tank” for innovation in the New Church, is providing reports and conversations for us all to be involved in. Question Pauline Fish and Barbara Wadams whenever you can.

Perhaps, each Sunday a month could have a different character eg One could be “a Circle of Community” based on the Circles of Trust some of us enjoyed last year. We are trying to focus on “being a community” where all are welcome, meaningful connection is nurtured and those in need are helped.”

St Andrews Parent-supported Play Group is still in the pipeline. But, meanwhile, Mainly Music will be starting again with two sessions on Tuesday 9 February.

Thanks to all who, though sometimes finding it hard, are contributing to and encouraging change. We can do no other as we cannot just carry on as we have in the past.

BLESSINGS FROM THE CIRCLES OF TRUST MEETINGS

At the last of the 3 Saturday retreats each member of the group wrote a blessing for our joint St Andrews/ St Aidans Venture. Here are 2 of them .

A Voyage in Faith

Now this voyage is underway in earnest. Through the Circles of Trust and the Genesis Group images of hope and new opportunities begin to emerge and coalesce.

May all that voyage on this journey be blessed. May they have the patience to listen to the hearts and heads of others to catch the enthusiasm of their guides, to positively commit to the direction

collectively chosen and work to create a fulfilling and vibrant new community of faith.

And in particular may the guides for this journey be blessed with the wisdom and vision that comes from the teaching of Jesus.

May God bless this new church that is being formed from the two churches, St Andrews and St Aidans.

May we be willing to let go of old ways and customs as we embrace new ways

May we be flexible and creative

May we be ever looking towards helping those in the community who need nourishment, be it physical or spiritual.

May we practise during the week the sentiments we express on Sundays.

In Jesus' name we ask Amen

NOTICES

THE DINNER GROUP

Thanks everyone for making our January barbecue so successful, and we are now getting back to our usual monthly dinner out. Our February dinner will be on Saturday 20th as long as there are no Covid complications.

If you would like to join in for a meal out in the evening contact Dale on 021 02345087 or >adalekerr@gmail.com<

.MASKS:FUNDRAISER for St Aidans.

Re-usable masks for sale. Variety of colour and patterns available or made to order. \$10 for adults, \$5 for children.

Perfect for public transport use. Barbara Westra 021395824

IONA CLOSE

The St Aidan's Presbyterian Property Trust is looking for volunteers to join the Trust which manages the cottages at Iona Close. Meetings are held about four times a year and a very experienced chairperson means meetings are usually one hour or less. Tasks are not onerous – many hands make light work! If you would like to contribute to this community outreach please contact Colin Reid 480 5749 or Cathy Fraser iain_cathy.fraser@xtra.co.nz.

A MESSAGE

from Lesley Farmer the coordinator at De Paul House , Onewa Road, whom we collected Christmas food for.

To the congregation of St Aidans.

Just to update you with the De Paul House Christmas hamper and toy appeal.

We have currently supported 96 families with hampers and treats, and 260 children with toys and gifts.

There will be over 35 families in residence across North Shore and Warkworth for the holiday season.

Thank you to your congregation for supporting De Paul House this year.

Wishing you all a joyful Christmas and safe, happy New Year.

A Quotation worth thinking about:

Religion declined not because it was refuted, but because it became irrelevant, dull, oppressive, insipid. When faith is completely replaced by creed, worship by discipline, love by habit; when the crisis of today is ignored because of the splendor of the past; when faith becomes an heirloom rather than a living fountain; when religion speaks only in the name of authority rather than with the voice of compassion, its message becomes meaningless.

Abraham Heschel

Book recommendation

Barbara Brown Taylor is someone I have only met recently. Dale Kerr sent the following link to Grace Symes who then shared it with me:

<https://www.christiancentury.org/article/how-my-mind-has-changed/finding-god-outside-church-walls>

I found this so interesting that it prompted me to download the audio version of **Leaving Church**, her first book. Of course I had Googled her to find out more about her and was surprised to hear that Time magazine had listed her as one of the hundred most influential people in the world in May 2014. In addition she has been called one of the ten most influential living preachers by the Southern Baptist Convention. In 1996 she was listed as one of the “most effective” preachers. Someone has also described her as a “spiritual Contrarian”. As I regard myself as a bit of a contrarian, I decided I just had to read her book.

I found it down-to-earth, honest and very readable. This made me want to read more. So I down-loaded **Learning to Walk in the Dark**. I found this even more compelling and once again enjoyed her insight.

She is going to be one of the authors whose books I will continue to read. There are also several clips on YouTube should you want to make her acquaintance.

Helene Muller

And a **letter** from Jean Biggers with an **Obituary** for her husband **John Biggers** who served as minister to St Aidans for two spells, the more recent one in 2007.

Dear Northcote friends,

Happy New Year from the Sonoran Desert in Tucson, Arizona. I hope this note finds you healthy, safe and happy.

Since John's passing in November, 2019, I have moved back to Tucson to be near my son and daughter, and their extended families.

We all miss John dearly, but his presence remains among us and continues to enliven us with stories and joyous memories.

As you can imagine, it has been one of the most challenging years of our lives--to deal with the Covid pandemic and the turmoil of the last Trump year--as I try to adjust to a new life in Tucson, where John and I lived from 1970-2011.

Due to the pandemic, I was only able to enjoy returning to our church in Tucson for a few weeks in March, when life essentially closed behind doors for us. Outside of daily walks in my neighbourhood (where we previously lived for 17 years), my world has been limited to very few interactions with neighbours and family.

Thanks to my family, including a grandson who lives nearby, I have been able to see my grandchildren and my kids fairly regularly. My son Doug and his wife Katie live in Tucson (and their son Keegan manages a gym, and son Logan is finishing his final year as an aeronautical student and pilot); my daughter Jennifer and her husband Justin retired to a small town in southern Arizona (near the US-Mexico border), and their son Andrew manages a hotel in San Diego, son Taylor works in marketing in Tucson, and son Dylan manages a produce section at a grocery store--and the big news is their daughter Lindsay and partner Garrett recently had a baby girl, Avery!). And my youngest son Jeff and his wife Carla continue to live in Iowa City (and their son Diego studies piano in Paris, and son Massimo is finishing high school and continues to be a climate activist).

We continue to read good things about New Zealand, and hope you and the congregation thrive and grow in 2021.

With much love,

Jean Biggers and family



JOHN W. BIGGERS

A 17-year resident at Northridge (1993-2011), JOHN BIGGERS loved living in this community, took an active part in the association and served as president of the Northridge board.

John was born on September 16, 1930 in Harrisburg, Illinois, and earned degrees in journalism and law from the University of Illinois. He married the love of his life, Norma Jean (Jean) Followell, on July 1, 1956, and pursued a law career until deciding to attend the Methodist Theological School in Ohio, serving as an ordained minister in Moline, IL for four years.

Returning to law, he and his young family moved to Tucson in 1970, where he would spend the next 40 years. John worked for Southern Arizona Legal Aid; was executive director of Tucson Lawyers for Housing, a nonprofit organization he founded; pursued a private legal practice for many years; and ended his career as a Pima County Public Defender in both the adult and juvenile divisions. Inspired by his work with juveniles, John published a book entitled 'Kids Law,' a practical manual on the legal system, and spoke at conferences around the country about juvenile justice. He and Jean enjoyed two memorable sojourns to New Zealand, where he was an interim Presbyterian minister in Northcote, a suburb of Auckland. In 2011, he and Jean moved to Sedona, Arizona, one of his favorite places, where they resided until 2019. His marriage of more than 63 years was a constant source of joy, adventure, and pride.

JOHN BIGGERS, 89, died in Tucson on November 20, 2019, after a brief illness, surrounded by the love of his family. John loved this life immensely and was singing his song until its very end. He was known to serenade overnight guests with a spirited rendition of "Oh, what a beautiful mornin,'" to call them to breakfast. His Christian faith informed his deep commitments to social and environmental justice and kept him engaged in the community as a volunteer and inveterate writer of letters to the editor. The love of family was his greatest passion, however, and he was immensely proud of his three children and eight grandchildren: Douglas (Katie Gannon), Tucson; Jennifer DeMello (Justin), Hereford; Jeffrey (Carla Paciotto), Iowa City; and Lindsay, Andrew, Taylor, Dylan, Keegan, Logan, Diego, and Massimo. Our gratitude for his meaningful life knows no bounds, his song resounding in our hearts forever.

The End of Summer Holiday 1944. Part 2

(Continued from December/Jan Newsletter)

Pam. She was one of twins. I was two years older than them. The first time I remember seeing them...two little bundles wrapped in white shawls, was on the day of their baptism.

I had been behaving deplorably badly on my first visit to the big St Johns Sunday School. Nice Kit Lemont had sought out my father in desperation and handed me over to him, the expectation of which, was exactly why I had been behaving deplorably badly. We spent a pleasant half hour in the Manse garden, me chasing butterflies and he, having a quiet smoke. I expect after he and my mother had suffered the sadness of a string of miscarriages and one stillbirth, he was quite content at age fifty five to take a little time out with his only child.

My Mum came out of Church and said "Why didn't you come in and see the Twinnies baptised?" Well! Nobody had told me about that! I began to regret butterflies in the sun with my Dad.

Pam came to stay with us every couple of years after that, whenever her mother was adding to her brood. She was a nice kid with big brown eyes in a small anxious face and very fine straight brown hair. Joy, her twin was a confident blonde.

At the end of the Summer holiday in 1944, when most of the holiday makers had gone home, Pam and Joy were staying at their Grandad's bach just around a bend in the road from us.

As I set off to play with them, my Mum's parting words were, "Try to keep that dress dry Margaret, see you keep out of the water. I'm sick of washing your clothes all the time and the tank water is getting low."

The twins and I spent a happy morning on the beach at the edge of the tidal river, the last curve of the river where it moves slowly before straightening and gathering speed in its final dash to join the thundering Tasman Sea.

The tide was coming in, swelling the height of the river water and covering the two cone shaped holes that had been scoured out in the Winter storms

Joy and I were lazily lying on the sand and Pam was poking around in the water. Suddenly there was a splash and flailing of arms and Pam disappeared down the hole. Joy ran screaming down the beach for her folks and I stood peering down in the water.

For a split second I remembered my Mum and my dress and then I saw her. The light was just right for me to see her rising slowly up in the deep brown water. As she rose nearer, I reached down, standing at the edge of the hole and amazingly managed to grab a handful of her hair.

It surprised me, as I kept dragging her, how light the water had made her. When we both managed to get back onto the sand we both just sank down in it. Pam said "You saved my life." I was really surprised that she realised that, because she was only a little kid of four and I was a big girl of six.

Joy came running back down the beach, but stopped when she saw us lying there. Her Mum and Dad appeared at the beach entrance to their bach, saw us, shrugged and went back to their bach.

I went home for lunch. My Mum and I ate it on the verandah looking out over the river to the beautiful crashing surf of the Tasman. The sound of it was the background to our days.

As I headed back to play, my Mum said, "I'll be coming to have a swim with all of you shortly." As I waved to her I could see my morning's dress hanging on the line.

Pam stayed with us again shortly after that. Mum took her to the Methodist Hall for a morning's play, led by a lady from Christchurch who had come to Greymouth to interest the locals in a new idea for pre-schoolers to learn and play together. I was intrigued by it, it sounded such fun. Pam said it was called a Kitten Garden. Lucky Pam, fancy playing in a Kitten Garden while I had to go to school!

I knew her family was leaving the Coast some years later. I heard they had a car accident. When I came out of school Pam was waiting for me to say goodbye and ride our bikes home together one last time. Her poor little anxious face had been knocked about in the accident and she had a black eye. It felt like talking to someone I didn't quite know.

That's the last time I saw Pam. She was 10 and I was 12. We didn't write, but one evening her mother and Joy came to visit us in Auckland. I was full of marriage plans and didn't take down their address.

Lately I have been troubled about Pam, wondering if she has nightmares about that watery experience that she probably doesn't remember. We didn't tell anyone at the time. I hope it doesn't haunt her. I always felt guilty that I hesitated for that split second thinking my Mum would be cross about another dirty dress, but later I thought, one step closer and I would have been down that slippery slope myself and there would have been a double tragedy. Life is so fragile and so precious.

Margaret Larsen.

ROSTERS FOR FEBRUARY 2021

Date	Elder	Reading	Door Duty	Prayer	Morning Tea
Feb 7	Pauline Fish	Pauline	Helene	Helene	Rosemary /Gwen
Feb 14	Robin Baxter	Robin	Glenys Skudder	Glenys	Barbara Wesley/Karen
Feb 21	Rachel Hurr	Rosemary Bold	Rosemary	Rachel	Lynda Burkett/Isabel
Feb 28	Robyn Bogue	Mary Boyd	Mary	Robyn	Paquita & Keith
March 7th	Greg Skudder	Greg	Nan Inkson	Nan	Robyn Thornton/Pauline

DATES FOR February 2021

Sun 7 February	9.30 am	Zoom Service	Rev Colin Gordon	Andrews
Tues 9 February	7 pm and following 2 nd Tuesdays	Come To Quiet		Lindisfarne Lounge, downstairs St Aidans
Sun 14 February	9.30am	Service	Rev Colin Gordon	St Andrews
Sun 21 February	9.30 for 10	Café Service breakfast first	Rev Colin Gordon	St Aidans
Sun 28 February	9.30am	Service	Rev Colin Gordon	St Aidans

DONATIONS AND OFFERINGS

FOR THOSE WHO WANT TO USE THEIR INTERNET BANKING TO MAKE DONATIONS.

PLEASE USE THE FOLLOWING BANK NUMBERS.

BOTH ACCOUNTS ARE AT BNZ BIRKENHEAD.

PLEASE BE SURE TO PUT "DONATION " AS THE REFERENCE AND YOUR NAME IF YOU WISH TO HAVE A RECEIPT.

St AIDANS 02-0112-0024699-00

ST ANDREWS

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