

Newsletter for Saints A and A

Northcote and Birkenhead Presbyterian Parishes.



JULY 2021

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Haere Mai, Aere mai, Hwan-Yeong, Fakaalofa lahi atu, Afio mai, Ulu tonu mai, Talofa Lava, Foon Ying, Selamat Datang, Vitajte, Bula, Welkom, Welcome

From the Minister

The verse from Leonard Cohen's song, Anthem has made more sense to me recently,

*Ring the bells that still can ring
Forget your perfect offering
There is a crack, a crack in everything
That's how the light gets in*

There is something about brokenness we try to avoid! Is it because we expect perfection and others expect perfection of us? Why are we ashamed of our own brokenness and find the brokenness of others embarrassing?

Brokenness sometimes comes suddenly, shattering the careful balance we make of our lives. We lose a loved one. We receive a diagnosis. We lose a job. We discover an infidelity.

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July 2021

We have taken falls, physically, emotionally. Some are more recent, others have haunted us for many years. The loss of what we once had devastates us, and can make us feel angry, abandoned or alone



An 18th Century Hasidic rabbi wrote:
“There is nothing more whole than a broken heart.”

Most of us don't feel whole in our brokenheartedness, we feel inadequate, sad or even ashamed. Unfortunately, we live in a world in which we are encouraged to keep our broken edges hidden. Mental illness, financial worries, addiction, family strife, we endure all of this in the shadows. We even speak of death in euphemisms: “He passed.” or “She is at Rest,” as if death were just an extended naptime. We have been taught to avoid facing the pain of life straight on.

Sometimes we DO find the courage to accept our broken pieces, only to find that our so-called friends and even loved ones cannot, which can make us feel even more isolated and alone. Most of us would rather just put some putty in those cracks, keep busy, and try to move forward without addressing the heartache.

I know I am guilty of doing this myself. I feel like I have to. I feel responsible for a lot of people. I find that I will often deny, or dismiss, or just ignore the cracks in my own life because I feel I can't afford ever—to be broken, don't want to be seen or known as being broken. But looking back on my life, I know that my essential character and identity, was forged in some of my most painful moments.

I would not have chosen these darker chapters, but without them, I know I would not be the human being that I am. In covering up our cracks, avoiding what feels painful, papering over our losses, ignoring our imperfect or broken relationships—we miss an essential part of our humanity— we CANNOT be whole.

Jewish Mystical Tradition offers a very different creation narrative to the one we are used to. It is one that acknowledges the very impossibility of perfection.

In the beginning—God’s presence filled the universe. Because God was everywhere there was no room for anything else. So, God had to contract, like a deep inhale, in order to make space in which to create the world. In that newfound space, God created darkness. God then poured a stream of Divine Light into ten vessels. But these vessels could not withstand such awesome, primordial energy. They shattered, showering holy sparks everywhere. Human beings were created to find these splinters of divine light, to make ‘a repair’ by helping God gather them together and lifting up these broken pieces, to restore and re-create the world.

What a strange, chaotic, and beautiful narrative.

One that acknowledges without apology today’s imperfect world.

One that asserts that brokenness—not perfection, is our true inheritance.

With this story of creation as our guide, our task is not to search in vain for some lost paradise, but to seek out tiny sparks of light **in the divine debris** that is all around us. To find holiness in the broken and imperfect.

Peace to you and yours **Colin**

From the Church Councils

Onewa Christian Community

Congratulations to all of us. After a long period of discussion and planning, both Saint Andrew’s and Saint Aidan’s congregations voted unanimously at our congregational meeting on June 20th to dissolve our respective parishes and to form our new Church, Onewa Christian Community. A Commission from Northern Presbytery attended our meeting and approved the decision, and we have been congratulated by John Shadbolt on behalf of the Presbytery Commission and by Dr Rod Watts from Northern Presbytery. We have approved our new Mission Vision and Values, our Property plans and Consolidated Guiding Principles, and, as Rod Watts wrote, we have taken “an important step into a brighter future”.

We have taken this step, but there still remains many administrative and practical tasks to be carried out before we are truly functioning as Onewa Christian Community.

- Where will we be in July?

At the congregational meeting on March 21st it was agreed that we would worship in one Church. It was also agreed that our main worship centre would be Saint Andrews, and that we would maximise community use and income from both churches, holding special events at Saint Aidans. **This will happen – but not just yet.** It had been proposed that we would hold all services at Saint Andrews from July. However, **we are now going to continue as we are at least until the new Onewa Christian Community Church Council has been elected. We will be at the Hinemoa Street Church of Onewa Christian Community on July 4th and 11th and at the Onewa Road Church of Onewa Christian Community on July 18th (café church service) and July 25th.**

- Onewa Christian Community Church Council

Our new Church needs a new Church Council. Nominations have been received for a number of people to form this Council and you will be asked to vote from them to choose 8 to 10 members of the new council. This will happen at a congregational meeting on July 25th. You will get information about the nominated people before that date.

- What about offerings?

There are a number of financial and other processes that still need to be undertaken during July. For the moment, bank accounts for Saint Andrews and Saint Aidans are still in place and will remain for a while. Please continue with your online giving as you do now, until we can give you details of our new bank account.

- Saint Aidan's church building

We will have a special 'last service' at Saint Aidans Church and this will be notified in advance – we won't just slip away. And it is planned that there will be fundraising and other activities for Onewa Christian Community held there. The Resource

Committee will be working to 'maximise community use and income' from the building. Let us know if you have any ideas.

In July, we continue services as we have been doing.

Nan and Rosemary

Au revoir to Jeanne

We are sad to learn that Jeanne van der Merwe will be leaving us. Jeanne is moving to Hamilton; initially she will stay with her daughter there and work as a relief teacher, but she hopes to be able to buy a house and obtain a permanent teaching position before too long. Jeanne has been part of the Saint Aidan's family for about 18 years, and she is an elder and member of Church Council. We have enjoyed her warm friendship, her beautiful smile and her great hugs, and the way that she has shared her strong faith with us all, particularly when she was elder on duty. Jeanne will spend the coming school holidays in Dunedin with her son and his wife and her adored (and adorable) grandsons, before going to start the new chapter of her life in Hamilton. Haere ra, Jeanne. Our love and blessings go with you.



CONTRIBUTIONS FROM OUR READERS.

Attending a Church Service in Santiago (or "The Importance of Knowing the yes word - in Spanish")

It is often said, quite rightly, that knowing a little of the local language can be a big help when travelling. Knowing even a single word can be useful as an experience in Chile some years ago shows.

July 2021

I was in Santiago teaching at the University of Chile. One evening I went for a stroll down a street of nicely restored heritage buildings in which there was a large Catholic church with an impressive spire. I had often thought I would like to see inside it. As it happened, there appeared to be a service on, as the doors were open and some people were going in. I decided to join them, at least for a short part of the service. I followed the people in, and to my surprise the church was about two thirds full, and the service already underway. But what took me aback was towards the alter. I assumed it was some sort of ritual, but not one I expected to find in a Catholic a man lying prostrate on the floor in the middle of the aisle with his hands outstretched in front of him church. He was wearing a suit and no one was taking any notice of him. I quickly sat down at the far end of the empty back pew, making myself as inconspicuous as possible.

The second thing that took me by surprise was how beautiful the church was. It was in classic cathedral style with high arches and domes, brightly lit, and nicely decorated. Because of all the people in front of me I could hardly see the priest but I could hear him clearly, naturally speaking in Spanish. After a while there was a pause and the sound of a beautiful soprano voice filled the church. There is something very wonderful about the acoustics of this type of building, and the music seemed to resonate all around the church. The service went on, and I enjoyed the atmosphere of the place, especially when the same voice sang again. The priest's voice continued, saying things I didn't understand, at least not until I was just about to leave, when I heard another male voice saying "si" from time to time. It suddenly dawned on me where I was. I slid across the pew so that I could look straight down the aisle. And sure enough, there they were, – the bride and groom, in front of the priest, taking their vows. The bride's voice was so soft I could barely hear her "si". Si is Spanish for yes.

Then I took a better look around me. The beautiful decorations at the front were large flower arrangements, no doubt made especially for the occasion. Several people were taking photos and – you might have guessed - the outstretched arms of the man lying down were holding a small camera - not quite the pious ritual I had imagined. I returned to my place at the far end of the pew. In the meantime a woman had come in late and was sitting in the empty pew in front of me. Shortly, everyone stood up and started greeting those around them,

presumably while the bride and groom signed the register. The woman in front of me had no one else to greet so she turned around and greeted me very warmly. I apologised in Spanish (I was very good at apologising in Spanish), that I could not understand her as I did not speak Spanish. She smiled in return and said a few more things in Spanish.

When the couple began their long walk back down the aisle, everyone stood up and cheered loudly and clapped. The bride was very beautiful – aren't they always very, very, beautiful! I stayed to watch them pass, assuming they wouldn't notice me, intending to then make a quick exit. However, when they came into view they were walking very slowly, the bride obviously enjoying herself very much (surprise, surprise), pausing regularly to smile and wave to all she passed. Too late, I realised that I might be spotted and could not beat a hasty retreat. The inevitable happened - the bride looked directly at the woman in the next pew, and me (she had little choice as there was no one else where we were) and smiled and waved to us both. Naturally, well not quite naturally in my case, we waved and smiled in return. I then made my quick exit from the side door.

I had inadvertently gate crashed their wedding service. I hope they didn't mind. I am still chuckling to myself about how it happened. I think it must be the only time I have attended a church service and understood only one word in the whole service, and yet that one word told me what the service was all about. Without that "si" word I would have gone home early completely ignorant of it all. I wondered if the woman who spoke to me was a good friend of the bride or groom and would ask them who their casually dressed English speaking "guest" in the back pew was.

Laurie Wesley

A Visit to an Egyptian Nubian Village

(From notes to given to a U3A Travel Group.)

Nubians live along the Nile, from Aswan in the southern part of Egypt, to Khartoum in Sudan. They have their own culture and language. When the Aswan High Dam was built in 1970 much of Nubia disappeared under the newly formed Lake Nasser. Some of the temples were painstakingly removed above the floodwaters. The

Nubians then moved north, and with help from the government built villages based on their traditional architecture.

Christianity spread to Nubia after the 5th century and the last Christian king of Nubia was replaced by a Muslim in 1305. Nubia was divided for the last time at the end of the 19th century with the establishment of the Anglo-Egyptian government in Sudan in 1899.

While our cruise ship was anchored on the Nile an excursion was organised for 15 people to visit a Nubian school and home. We sailed across the Nile in a 'felucca' to the Botanical Gardens on Elephantine Island, which was a wonderful shady and pleasant retreat in the 40 degree heat. We then went on a motorised boat to sail leisurely around other adjoining islands watching the bird life and seeing the lush vegetation all around.

We landed at a little sandy beach and scrambled up the sand hills to where 15 camels were sitting in a row waiting for us!! We were all taken by surprise as we were told to select one and hop on. I couldn't clamber up so a young guy grabbed me by the shoulders and behind the knees and plonked me on like a sack of coal. He didn't tell me that the camel puts his back legs up first so I nearly shot between its ears but was pulled back just in time before the front legs went up and I was thrown backwards.

Laurie was on a front camel and he lay back in a relaxed way with his legs around the camel's neck. The young boys then whacked the camels and we started off. With only a small pedestal back and front to grasp onto it was a most precarious journey. The boys wanted the camels to go faster but I was so terrified of falling off that I spent most of my time telling them to slow down. We plodded along the sandy edges of the hillsides for over 45 minutes by which time I was keen to dismount. Our camel train wended its way through a market and various stalls where Laurie's camel knocked down a woman who stepped back the wrong way when he called out, "Camel coming!" (She was unharmed!) Getting off was easier with the help of gravity and my keenness to descend. I had also worked out that I had to lean back as the front legs went down and lean forwards for the back legs to go down.

Once in the Nubian house we were given some guava juice to calm ourselves, with and then our guide pointed out the various large family rooms, decorations and vaulted ceilings. There were several crocodile cages there and we were invited to hold a baby one, - with a rubber band around its jaw.

We then went to the schoolroom where the Imam (teacher) was waiting with his stick. He pointed to the Arabic alphabet on the blackboard and made us all say it several times. He then tested a few of the front rows and the one who couldn't remember it had to stand in a corner and get a few whacks! We then started on the numbers – made easier because we had studied the number plates as they flashed past on the cars in Cairo. Luckily I wasn't asked to read those by myself but managed up to six quite competently. (Laurie knew them all to ten!)

Luckily, also, we did not have to ride the camels back in the dark. We gladly hopped onto the motor boat and cruised back to our ship about 20 minutes away. After the camel smell and crocodile damp was washed off the whole trip seemed much fun – to be recommended to anyone going on the Nile Cruise!

Barbara Wesley

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NOTICES

THE FOOD BANK

Contributions brought to any of the weekly Sunday Services are taken to the Salvation Army depot at 430 Glenfield Road.

They always appreciate

- **toiletries** especially deodorant, shampoo, conditioner, toothpaste and razors
- **cleaning products** eg dishwash liquid and laundry detergent
- **UHT milk**
- NB Fresh fruit or vegetables eg potatoes, carrots, onions delivered to the depot on Monday Wednesday or Friday mornings from 9.30 am would also be appreciated but the weekly collections at church are dry, non-perishable goods only.

DINNER GROUP

will meet on Saturday 17 July. This is an informal group who meet up for a meal out in the evening. If you would like to come contact Dale on 021 02345087 or adalekerr@gmail.com .

OUR NEW THURSDAY CLUB

(pending a more appropriate name)

In the past year Birkenhead has lost its Post Office, KiwiBank, ASB, ANZ, Warehouse, and SPCA Op Shop just to name a few. In keeping with this trend the Kingswood facility run by IDEA Services (an adult's branch of IHC) has also closed its doors. This has left many "differently abled" adults with nowhere to go during the week and has left a massive gap in their lives.

Can we fill this gap?

I believe we can.

These people need a place to hang out – to socialise with their peers, meet others, learn new skills, spend time doing things they enjoy and get out of their homes occasionally.

I propose that we **provide a drop in centre at St Andrews on a Thursday** and invite some of these people and their friends along, plus others in the community with similar needs. We can provide cooking lessons, knitting & crochet lessons, music, art and craft activities, board games to play, a place to chat and interact with others, and other activities or interests they suggest. Their carers may also wish to attend and meet others carrying out these important roles. Support could be provided for them or we could maybe just be a source of respite time for a few hours.

Currently we have had one get together to discuss ideas and suggestions. We have been fortunate enough to receive 2 generous financial donations to cover starting resources.

If you know of anyone who might like to join us, tell them about us or bring them along on a Thursday morning. Coffee, crackers and cakes are at 10.00am, lunch will be made and served sometime between 12 and 1.00pm and things will probably wind down by 2.00pm.

If you would be interested in helping, casually, frequently or to share a particular skill, just call me or pop in sometime.

Pauline 0276665035

Parish Explorers' Group on **Monday 5 July** at the Takapuna Methodist Church lounge 427 Lake Road Takapuna at **3pm discusses current issues and how they relate to our faith.**

The topic is ***Don't forget the planet.***

There will be a video summary of Pope Francis' encyclical "Laudato Si:, the subtitle of which was "On care for our common home".

The central theme of the encyclical is that the earth is to be shared as a collective good, without the wealthy assuming they have greater rights over its bounty than those considered 'the disposable of society'.

PS. If you haven't been to merge Cafē, you MUST!!

LITHUANIAN FILM FESTIVAL IN AUCKLAND 2021

July 18, 2021 starting at 1030.

For the first time ever, Kiwis will have a chance to sample Lithuanian culture through carefully selected films that have already achieved international recognition. The Lithuanian Film Festival will be a 1-day film celebration presenting recent and mostly acclaimed short and feature-length films of all genres and promoting Lithuanian film and culture in New Zealand.

For more information check the Facebook page.

And a report on the very successful

MATARIKI CRAFT AFTERNOON

Although only a small number of children and their families attended the first Northcote craft event the atmosphere was warm and friendly and everyone seemed to enjoy the occasion. There was a scavenger hunt and quiz for children to complete on arrival followed by craft making at tables staffed by church members and helpers from Northcote and Carmel Colleges. There



was a bounteous afternoon tea enjoyed by all and packing up was easy with so many to help. Hopefully we can repeat this event at Christmas time and Easter and ongoing to promote community and family connection in Northcote.

Cathy Fraser



OBITUARIES

July 2021

Gilmer Howard Knell (Gil)

Gil Knell passed away on 11 May 2021 aged 91 years.

Gil was a faithful member of the Presbyterian Church in various places in NZ. He was an elder at St Philips church, Birkdale, and was a valued member of the Board of Managers at many churches. When they retired, and shifted to Milford, they started to attend St George's Church, Takapuna, where they were much loved members.



The funeral was held on 14 May attended by quite a large number of friends and family. A large carved wooden mallard duck was up on the table along with a woollen blanket, and two oars. We learnt

of Gil's love of duck shooting and that was why his plywood casket was painted with reeds in the manner of a maimai. Rosaleen used to accompany him on these excursions and made sure the ducks were plucked and cleaned before they came home to be cooked, along with lots of bacon!

Their children spoke of the various homes they had had with their parents as Gil worked in the Bank of New South Wales all his life, and shifted around the country. They were greatly loved and respected parents, loyal church members, and keen supporters of the APW, giving a lot of their time to helping with the fundraising fairs, finances and meetings.

Both Gil and Rosaleen have been residents of *Bert Sutcliffe* for some time now, and this was where Gil was looked after latterly in the Care Unit.

A card was sent from St Andrew's Pastoral Committee, who were able to represent the many friends they had both at St Phillip's and at St Andrew's Church.

Thuten Kesang QSM
1944 – 2021



It was with great sadness that we learnt of the passing of Thuten Kesang, on 23 May, the beloved husband of Gwen Kesang, our pianist at St Andrew's Church.

Thuten came to NZ more than 50 years ago after completing an apprenticeship in printing. He was the first Tibetan refugee, and for many years the only Tibetan living here, arriving in January 1967. He lived a life full of compassion and purpose, and was the face of Tibetans in NZ.

In February 1971 he married Gwen at St Cuthbert's Church in Browns Bay. They have two daughters, Tsering and Elizabeth, and three grandchildren.

His autobiography, "*TIBET, the Home I left behind but will Never Forget*" was launched at St Andrew's church hall in 2017 in front of a large crowd of friends and family.

Thuten was awarded the *Queens Service Medal* in the New Year's Honours list in 2002. In 2015 he received the prestigious *Peace Award* from the Peace Foundation in Auckland. Thuten will be greatly missed by his family and wide circle of friends.

We send our loving prayers and sympathy to Gwen and her family.

Rosters for July 2021

Date	Elder	Door Duty	Reading	Prayer	Morning Tea
July 4	Rosemary Bold	Helene Mullar	Rosemary Bold	Helen Mullar	Jocelyn C Robin B
July 11	Laurie Wesley	Rosemarie Dawson	Rosemarie Dawson	Laurie Wesley	Pauline F Nan Inkson
July 18	Rachel Hurr	Jocelyn Collinge		Rachel Hurr	Karen Davies Cathy Fraser
July 25	Barbara Wadams	Mary Boyd	Mary B	Barbara Wadams	Glenys S Paquita R

Dates for June 2021

Sun 4 July	10 am	Eucharist Service	Rev Penne Otto	St Andrews
Sun 11 July	10 am	Service		St Andrews
Tues 13 July	7 pm	Come To Quiet		Lindisfarne Lounge, St Aidans
Sun 18 July	9.30 for 10	Café Service breakfast	Cafe Team	St Aidans
Sun 25 July	10 am	Contemplative	Rev Colin Gordon	St Aidans

NB Sunday School hmmm a prize to anyone for a new Name other than Sunday School **eg: Messy Church**. 'A rose by any other name would smell just as sweet', and "sweet as" is the now wonderful regular 'time zone' for young'uns on a Sunday morning, beginning with Worship altogether and moving out to a 'fun and learning time' with a growing dynamic team. Please feel encouraged to bring children of all ages, grandchildren, neighbours children, children's friends ... personal invitations and the company of friends is the best way of being together.

NOTICE OF:

Congregational meeting 25th July 2021. This congregational meeting will be to vote in a new Church Council and appoint office bearers for Onewa Christian Community.

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: 02-0112-0024701-00