

WOW MEETINGS

A warm invitation is extended
to all women for breakfast on
Saturday 14 March 2020
8.00 am
@ St Columba Church Hall
\$5



Guest Speaker: Viv Jones

Macular Degeneration

This is our first breakfast for 2020. We are hoping to see you all there.

RSVP:

Wednesday 11 March 2020
to the church office 576 6756 ext 1
or email: columba.tauranga@xtra.co.nz
or write your name on the clipboard in the foyer

FRIENDS WELCOME!

All people that on earth do
dwell,
sing to the LORD with
cheerful voice.
Serve him with joy, his
praises tell,
come now before him and rejoice!



THANK YOU JUNE

We would like to acknowledge June Fraser for the many years of beautifying our church with flowers for weddings. What a blessing her handwork has been to so many brides and to us. If you would like to see a sample of some of her work it is in the flower room for you to see.

Thank you June!

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Over the last 12 months we have had very few concerns about the Health and Safety of St Columba church and the congregation, and I want to thank you all for playing a part in that.

Please continue to keep in mind little things such as placement of walking sticks in church, and staying home if you are unwell. Any working bees should refer to the page in the H&S folder for guidance. Lastly, please remember to be responsible and report any concerns you have to either Ruth in the office Neville, Donald or myself.

Best wishes for a happy, safe and healthy 2020.

ST COLUMBA CALENDAR

SERVICE OF WORSHIP Sundays at 9.30 am

MONTHLY MIDWEEK COMMUNION SERVICE:
First Wednesday of month @ 10 am in the Chapel

EACH WEEK—REGULAR MEETINGS

Mondays 7.00 pm Indoor Bowls
Tuesdays 9.00 am Staff Meeting
10.30 am Play Group (excl school hols)
Wednesdays 9.30 am Care & Craft (excl school hols)
Wed/Thurs/Fri 10.00 am Basement Boutique (till 4 pm)
Thursdays 10.00 am Conversation Café (incl school hols)
Fridays 9.00 am Prayer Meeting
10.00 am Cuppa & Chat in Lounge
Sundays 8.45 am Prayers

MONTHLY MEETINGS

1st Tuesday 1.30 pm Session
3rd Tuesday 10.00 am O Team
2.00 pm Service at Mitchell Court
3.00 pm Service at Radius Matua
3rd Thursday 11.00 am Service at Bob Owens Village
every third month
2nd Saturday 8 am (summer)/8.30 am (winter)
WOW Breakfast
Men's Breakfast Last Saturday in March, May, July,

PARISH REGISTER

Deaths:

"In God's presence is fullness of joy"

16.11.19 Nell Eleanor Leith
11.01.20 Hillary Revfiem



EASTER SERVICES

Maundy 9th April 7pm

Good Friday 10th April 9.30am

Easter Sunday :-

7am@Beach Road Reserve

9.30am Family Service in the Church

You are warmly invited to come and join us.



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3110; PO Box 8009 Tauranga 3145;
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Session Clerk: Neville Wilson 576 4814
Office Phone: 07 576 6756 Office Hours 9 am-noon Monday-Friday
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OUR MISSION STATEMENT: To know, enjoy and share Christ.

ST COLUMBA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

THE VOICE OF ST COLUMBA

VOLUME 20 ISSUE 1

MARCH 2020

DEAR FRIENDS

In early December Christine, our son and two of our daughters with partners and children interrupted the service when I was about to announce the offering. It was most unusual and a bit of a shock but Christine had arranged this with Neville Wilson. She announced I was celebrating 30 years in ordained Presbyterian ministry and then they sang as a tribute one of my favourite songs, Cornerstone (a new arrangement of "On Christ the Solid Rock"). What a very special surprise as I hadn't given this much thought! But in reflection I have spent 32 years in ministry as before being ordained I served two years of Stated Supply; one year in Lumsden (home church) after graduating from the Bible College of NZ and then another year at St James South Dunedin between studying for a Bachelor of Arts degree and Bachelor of Divinity.

In this time God has been amazingly faithful as I haven't always felt that I had the strength of character to continue. But, through God's strength and the support of a wonderful wife and God's special people I have continued. I feel so blessed in my life as a husband, father and now grandfather in having been surrounded by God's wonderful people. As I look back, I believe God has quietly and gently ushered us to St Columba. For many years a friend in ministry had encouraged me to come to Tauranga. He said I would love it here. I made light of his suggestion as I was happy in my previous parishes, but now that we are here we feel so blessed! You are a wonderful congregation and it is a wonderful place to live. That we have all our children living here, and my mother-in-law, is also a special blessing.

This brings me to the point of officially saying that I will be retiring on January 31st 2021. I spoke about this with Session and the Kaimai Presbytery in 2019. It probably is a very poorly kept secret! I will be turning 65 on the 13th of February of that year. It has been a hard decision to make, as St Columba is a delightful family to us and we feel so at home with you. You have also been very generous to us. We would never have been able to buy a home in Tauranga if it wasn't for the support of the trust. In April of this year we will have repaid the loan completely. God has indeed been good and faithful.

There was a point in ministry I thought I would continue past 65. One of the reasons was that through the struggles of ministry, like Joseph of the Bible, I believe I have learnt to be more effective and better as a servant of God. I remember enduring one particular heart breaking experience and reflecting that God had taught me so much about myself and how to be a more godly person. Yet now I see that my mental energy is not what it used to be and I believe it will be beneficial for the church to have a new and fresh approach.

This has been a difficult decision, as part of me wants to continue to encourage and support ministry here, but this church has a very caring heart and will continue to do this without me. Our goal now as a church is to prepare ourselves for the next phase of ministry. I am not sure how Christine and I will work out our remaining association with the church, as it is critical that the retiring minister not impede or be seen to impede the incoming ministry, allowing the new minister to get established. In this regard I have been indebted to the Rev Bob Maslin, the previous minister, for his gracious, caring manner. He and Josie have always been very careful not to interfere in any way, but to support us.

Both Christine and I want to say it has been a very special privilege to be your team leaders in this warm and caring church family. You have been such a blessing to us. I am not sure what the future holds for us except that Christine will continue in her role at St Peter's House. In the meantime we will work together to ensure a smooth transition.

May God bless you all and again a big "thank you" for all your love and care.

Donald & Christine Hegan

GO DONALD GO!!

Donald is climbing the Mount 38 times in 50 days to raise money for the TECT Rescue Helicopter, helping raise money to save lives.

Would you please consider donating on his Give a Little Page.

<https://givealittle.co.nz/fundraiser/tect-helicopter>



SUMMER WALKS

7th March

Tongariro Crossing

22nd March

Mount Challenge walk around or up, finishing with a picnic on the beach.

QUARTERLY COMMUNION

An invitation is extended to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ to join us for the Communion Service

Sunday 8th March @ 9.30am

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NEW ADMINISTRATOR

My name is Ruth Scott. I am blessed to have been accepted for this role of Administrator for St Columba Presbyterian Church.

I am a mum to 3 wonderful children Timothy, Alisha and Joshua who are all married and have given me 3 terrific children-in-law, Naomi, Samuel and Jordyan and 4 beautiful grandchildren who call me Nana; Rebekah, Hayley, Benji and Autumn.

I have lived in Tauranga since May 2017 having moved from the beauty of Dunedin where I had lived since 2003.

It was here that I worked at Donald and Christine's old stomping ground of Kaikorai Presbyterian Church. This I did for 10 years and loved it.

I sing in the Tauranga Civic Choir as an alto, sing in the Bethlehem Community Church music team and lead on a rostered basis.

One of my long term hobbies is stamp collecting and I have a wide variety. Thematically, I collect butterflies, trains and triangle stamps.

I live in Bethlehem with my awesome Mum and we are about to embark on a trip of a lifetime to the top of Norway to see the glorious Aurora Borealis then to Sweden to visit my sister and her family.

My brother and sister in law and nieces live here and it is a joy to be living in the same city. I also have cousins and aunties and an uncle here. None of us originate from here, but have gravitated to the land of eternal sunshine.

I have experienced the wonderful healing power of Christ in my life through my health and the health of others in my family and have seen His hand powerfully moving among his people. I look forward to building relationships with you here and providing this space with love and compassion.

Ruth Scott



"It makes baptisms a lot more fun for everyone."

WHITE RIBBON



THE FIGHT AGAINST FAMILY VIOLENCE

For a number of years now, St Columba has stood up and made a visible stand against violence towards women. This violence has not been really recognised in its true entirety, as violence towards men and children is also very prevalent. While we are aware that more women are greatly affected, so too are members of the whole family, hence the term FAMILY VIOLENCE. Men and children are victims too.

For the last four or five years, we at St Columba have taken our stand against this violence, and for the last two years out into the public arena by having a manned stall in the Cherrywood shopping area. We have been very well received by the public, and have in fact heard some horrendous stories of abuse over many years in some cases. These people who have told their stories have obviously felt comfortable in being able to talk openly to us. Lots of passers by would say, yes, we have heard of White Ribbon.

The donations given last year were donated to Shakti, our local Women's Refuge, which St Columba supports with gifts given by congregation members.

Although the local community is aware of what we do for White Ribbon, and generously give to the cause with our visual street appeal, it is difficult to get them to the Sunday service to partake in planting a small white ribbon. However, some do place a ribbon given to them after visiting our stall, by the large ribbon at the front of the church.

This is a great outreach into the community by St Columba, and a big thank you should go to Rev Donald for his dedication to this great cause, and also to those who volunteer to go out into the public arena and spread the word, "THAT FAMILY VIOLENCE" will not be tolerated.

Neville Wilson

YET TO BE HEARD AT ST COLUMBA

"Hey! It's my turn to sit in the front pew."

TENSION MAKER - TENSION BREAKER

"Eric, there's something wrong with this car!"

My brother, the driver, took no notice of our mother - who was sitting in the front passenger seat.

A little further into our journey.. "Eric, there's something wrong with this car!" Again, my brother failed to respond. After all, the car was still moving, wasn't it, and besides, our mother did not have a driving licence. She was hardly an authority. Then, predictably, the engine spluttered and the car came to a halt.

Now our dear mother could be forthright, and was never short on words when the occasion warranted them. On this occasion she let it rip, telling my brother in no uncertain terms just what she thought of him for ignoring the warning.

Now sitting beside me in the back seat was our dear old friend, Margaret, who was in her eighties. She waited until there was a lull in the storm. She picked up a race book that was still there from the races we had attended two days before.

She opened it and said, "And the Lord said unto Moses, "Come forth - And he came fifth and was disqualified." Eric was spared any continuation of the lecture. Laughter had broken the tension. Margaret had an amazing sense of fun and good humour. It endeared her to all who knew her.

Margaret has been dead since 1973, but I still think of her at times, and when I do, it is with a smile, for there were always smiles and laughter when Margaret was around. She had no children, and her husband predeceased her by many years, so in a way, we were her surrogate family. She sometimes came with us on our holidays, she attended my cousin's weddings and other celebrations, and she was Auntie Margaret to my extended family.



Margaret was a peacemaker. You couldn't stay angry when she was around. Consider what might have happened had she not been in the car when it broke down. Would my mother have continued her tirade until my brother became angry and snapped back in retaliation? And when all is said and done, what was the point of a prolonged lecture anyway? Would it have changed the situation? Would it have made the car move?

On this occasion, my mother was a tension-maker, and Margaret was a tension-breaker.

Ladies and gentlemen, there will be times when you have such a choice to be a tension-maker - or to be a tension-breaker.

I believe that our homes, our communities, our country, our world would be a happier place if there were more tension breakers, more who valued peace rather than confrontation.

Peace begins with individuals - and as the good book says, "Blessed are the peacemakers."

Avis Currie

LIFE IN THE GARDEN
A STUDY FOR LENT

Tom and Dorothy Innes are the authors of this 8 week study. They live in Springfield, Canterbury where they are developing a large garden. Behind every word in this set of studies on the biblical theme of "garden" is their lived out experience as they have established and nurtured their fabulous garden; the soil of these studies is the biblical text itself, from Genesis to Revelations.

Peter Carrell comments " In a world sensitive to changing climate and consequential challenges concerning care of God's creation, these studies offer inspiration to action as well as illumination of God's message to the church today"

These studies are written for use by Home Groups but may also be enjoyed as a personal study. St Columba's Home Groups begin on Sunday 23rd of February with 6 studies through to Easter week. The last 2 studies are to be followed up as personal study. Rev Donald's sermons will follow the themes for the 8 studies. Please prayerfully consider this study as your Lenten gift, either in shared fellowship with a group or quietly on your own. The booklets cost only \$8 and can be purchased from the Church Office.

Please contact Pam Gordon on 576 4073

Study One: The First Garden - Gen. 2:4-25

Study Two: Life Outside the Garden - Gen. 3:1-4, 26

Study Three: The Promised Land -Jer. 29:4-14

Study Five: The Blessings of the Land - Luke12:13-21, 22-34

Study Six: From Death to Life in the Garden - John 18:1-12, 20:1-1

Study Seven: The Gift of the Garden - 2 Cor. 9:6-15

Study Eight: The Garden in the New Creation- Rev.21:1-



*But in keeping with his promise we are **looking forward** to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells.* 2 Peter 3:13

*So then, dear friends, since you are **looking forward** to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him.* 2 Peter 3:14

THE DUNEDIN PULPIT REBEL AND ‘THE SIN OF CHEAPNESS’

The Rev. Dr. Rutherford Waddell (1850–1932) was a notable New Zealand Presbyterian minister, social reformer and writer. He settled in Dunedin where he led St. Andrew's Church for forty years from 1879 to 1919. It was unusual for an Irishman to be selected to lead a Presbyterian church in Dunedin, where Scottish kilts were the norm. The Ulsterman arrived as a reliever for a Minister who had disgraced himself with drink, while a search was made for a suitable applicant in Scotland. His first sermon woke up the church, to the extent that parishioners hung around for hours discussing his message. It didn't take long for his soft Irish accent, intellect and fund of interesting stories, to win the local congregation over. He got the job.



Moving to Dunedin in mid-1879, Waddell threw himself immediately into parish life, re-invigorating St Andrews after its hiatus without a minister. By the end of 1880 the debt on church property had been halved, the session strengthened and the Deacon's court reorganised. An active believer in the value of the ministry to promote social justice, he was a founder of the Dunedin and Suburban Reserves Conservation Society, and aided the setting up a mission hall, savings bank, free library and free kindergarten (New Zealand's first) within his parish.

As minister of St Andrews, Waddell was confronted by some of the worst examples of poverty, slum housing and unemployment in Dunedin. St Andrew's neighborhood was as grim and sinful as it gets; often referred to it as the 'Devil's Half Acre.' The churches of the day saw the root cause of poverty, drunkenness, and Sabbath-breaking as being the weakness of individual character rather than the product of social phenomena. This focus on individual morality compromised the churches' capacity to confront social issues. Angered by the level of poverty and exploitation, Waddell saw things differently.

On one Sunday in October 1888, Waddell preached a sermon on the 'Sin of Cheapness' to a congregation that included many of the towns leading citizens. He argued that a lust for bargains was forcing prices down to a point where wages fell below subsistence level. It didn't take long for his message to sweep around the city by word of mouth. Within a few weeks, it jolted the consciences of New Zealanders throughout the country and impacted on the attitude of politicians for generations to come. This sermon was just the start of his crusade against 'the pernicious sweat shops.' Waddell polarised society. The established order, particularly the businessmen, didn't like hearing, 'The working class do not go to Church because capitalists pray for them on Sunday and for the next six days prey on them.' A dispute erupted in his church between those who believed their leader should worry about Christian souls and not body politics, and those who believed the church has social responsibilities.

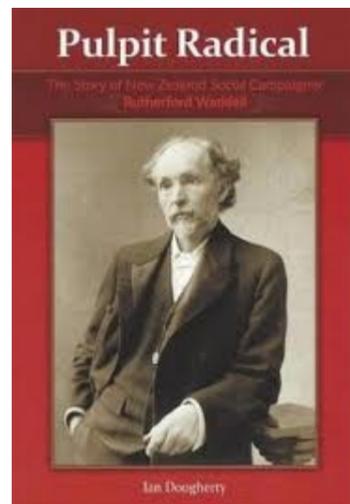
Waddell was undeterred by the controversy and continued over following Sundays his crusade against sweat shops with sermons on social injustice. He stated that a church must engage with social injustices - the laws of Christ applied equally to the world of business. Waddell had done his homework. He had found women in his parish working long hours for negligible pay. He then cited cases of extreme exploitation; for instance, of one woman who worked from 9am to 7 pm making a gross of oatmeal bags for a daily pay of eight pence. 'Is this work or is it slavery?' he asked.

A group composed of what one commentator described as 'old men' opposed further action by the church, but the Presbyterian Synod passed a motion that it 'Deplores the existence of the Sweating System in the colony and instructs the ministers and the office-bearers to discourage it by every means in their power, and enjoins all to bear each other's burdens and fulfill the Law of Christ.'

Waddell is remembered as a working class hero. His blistering sermon set off a chain of events that not only helped create our welfare safety net for those in most need, but also our civil laws that protect workers from exploitation. The Historic Places Trust has commemorated the significance of the sermon, arguably the most influential ever delivered in New Zealand, with a plaque. Look it up (St Andrews is now the Coptic Orthodox Church, in Carroll Street) when you are next in Dunedin.



WHO WAS THE REV RUTHERFORD WADDELL? TO FIND OUT TURN TO PAGE 6!!



ACTS 2:38

An elderly woman was returning to her home from an evening of religious service when she was startled by an intruder. As she caught the man in the act of robbing her house of its valuables, she yelled "Act 2:38!" (...turn from your sin). The burglar stopped dead in his tracks. The woman calmly called the police and explained what she had done. As the officer handcuffed the man to take him in, he asked the burglar, "Why did you just stand there? All she did was yell a scripture at you." "Scripture?" he replied "She said she had an AXE and two 38's!"

ST COLUMBA CHURCH PLAYGROUP

Resumes: Tuesday 25Feb

Day/Time: Tuesdays 10:30 to 12:00 (Note there is no playgroup during school holidays.)

Venue: Church Lounge

Description: The playgroup is a small, friendly and inclusive group. Mums, Dads or caregivers have the chance to relax and chat, while their children play. Morning tea is provided for both the adults and the children. There is no charge.

If you would like further information, please contact either Ruth (in the church office; office hours 9 to 12 Monday - Friday, or ph 07 5766756,) or Marilyn (at home; evenings are best 0211339006.)



RELIGIOUS TRIVIA

- Q Who was the greatest financier in the Bible?
- A Noah. He was floating his stock while everyone else was in liquidation.
- Q Who was the greatest comedian in the Bible?
- A Samson. He brought the house down.
- Q Which servant of God was the most flagrant lawbreaker in the Bible?
- A Moses. He broke all Ten Commandments at once.

SHOW COMPASSION

'When he saw him, he had compassion.' Luke 10:33 NKJV

Many dictionaries define compassion as sympathy, pity or concern - all emotional responses. But the compassion of Jesus transcends emotion and translates into action.

Christlike compassion: (1) Recognises the needs of others. 'Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others' (Philippians 2:3-4 NKJV). Note the phrase 'better than himself', and then look around you at the people in your life and say to yourself, 'Esteem them better than myself.' If you tend to be self-centred, it will take a while for this concept to sink in. Note also the words, 'look out...for the interests of others'. Sometimes those 'others' are badly messed up and not easy to love. For example, how about people in prison? You say, 'Well, they got what they deserved.' Maybe - but did you always get what you deserved or did you just not get caught? Think about it! When you visit someone sick or in prison, Jesus said you're 'doing it to me' (Matthew 25:40 NLT)! In Luke 23:43, he showed compassion to a convicted criminal on the cross and saved him. You shouldn't pick and choose to whom you'll show compassion!

The Bible says, 'To him who is afflicted, kindness should be shown by his friend, even though he forsakes the fear of the Almighty' (Job 6:14 NKJV). Mother Teresa prayed, 'Grant that, even if you are hidden under the unattractive disguise of anger, crime or madness, I may recognise you and say, "Jesus, you who suffer, how sweet it is to serve you."'



ADOPTED BY THE COLONIES PART 2

We duly arrived in Wellington and were met by press, immigration officials, child welfare and government personnel. We were then sorted out into the area we were going to; some on the ferry for the South Island and most for the North Island, joined the train north. Our party for the Palmerston North area must have numbered about 20. We were met by the Minister's Fraternal and taken by car to the All Saints Anglican Children's Home in Pascal Street. This was a typical orphanage of the day, ruled by staff who gave you to understand that you obeyed what they said. There we met pumpkin for the first time and it was a strong one and we were instructed to eat up or else - quite the wrong approach. I later came to enjoy it when first mashed in with potato until one acquired the taste.

The Child Welfare authorities now took charge of us and this was to be maintained for the rest of our stay in NZ. The head officer in RN was Lucas Hunt who I later was to learn was the father of Jonathan Hunt the MP and a dear old lady, or so she seemed to us then, Lorna Hodder. These two visited us throughout our stay and would come sometimes to school and see us so that if we had any hang ups we could discuss them. Also they visited us and our foster parents at home. They saw the foster parents without us in case they had problems and on the whole, this worked very well.

I don't know how the authorities worked out who was to go where, but we learned in later years that the Levys, who had no children of their own, had asked for two girls but when they heard that it meant we would be separated they agreed to take us. We were taken by car to their lovely home in Fitzherbert Ave and made welcome by all their friends and neighbours. Children brought toys and books for us to read. I think, for me, this was the time when I first felt homesick. Everything was new and ways were different; even food in some cases was new. It was not long however, before we settled in.

Everybody was very kind to us. We were taken on Sundays to Sunday School and Church at St Andrews. On the first Sunday both of us wore our kilts. Robert was so teased that he flatly refused to wear his again. One of the members of the Ministers Fraternal who had met us was the Rev. Robert Warnock whose church was St.Davids at Terrace End. He took a personal interest in us as we had come from St. David's Knightswood where our minister was a Rev. John Warnock. The two corresponded and found that they probably had a common ancestor as the N.Z. one had come from Scotland and still had a very strong accent.

As I write this, there has been a lot of criticism of the way children were looked after during the war, but I have the highest praise for the N.Z. Child Welfare and also for our foster parents. We could not have been more loved and well looked after and, although I didn't realise it at the time, at great financial sacrifice to themselves, as the only government help was the Family Benefit. My father remitted money from time to time, and Mrs. Levy, or Aunt Phyl as we called her, was very good with her sewing machine and knitting needles, and we were always well dressed. During these years we met through the church the Henderson family of Ron (later to become Marjory's husband), Ngaire and Valerie as Mr Henderson was very interested in these

two kids from Scotland as he had come many years previously from Prestonpans near Edinburgh. It became obvious in the closing years of the war that it could soon come to an end and the Levys decided we should at least see as much of N.Z. as they could let us see as there would be little likelihood of us returning to N.Z. Petrol was still rationed but friends and neighbours parted with their petrol coupons so that we would have our tour. Uncle Ene wrote away to the "Chateau" for accommodation not knowing that it was at that time occupied by the mental patients displaced from Porirua by the American troops. It is not many who have applied to enter a mental home and been turned down! Accommodation was found at National Park and we were actually there when the end of the war was declared. Needless to say, we kept ourselves locked in the bedrooms as the celebrations went on. From there we went to Waitomo and enjoyed the sights of the famous caves and then on to Auckland to see the relatives.

It wasn't long before arrangements were being made for the children to return to Britain. Priority was given to any who had ailing parents or for some reason should return early and some delayed their departure in order to finish off school or University Courses. Some had become engaged or married and so didn't wish to return. I understand there was provision for Mum and Dad to come to N.Z. but as Dad's mother was elderly and wouldn't have taken kindly to the shift Dad requested we be returned but said he would never stop us from returning, if that was our wish.

We were made a great fuss of with going away parties and presents. As we had accumulated quite a number of possessions, it was all packed into large boxes like coffins for dispatch to the U.K.

Communication with Britain was very spasmodic during the war and sometimes we would wait a long time for the microfilmed letters to arrive. From time to time broadcasts were made by our parents to us and us to them, but my brother said "That wasn't his father. He didn't speak like that!" He didn't recognise his Scottish accent.

We left for the U.K. on the Rangitikei, in August 1945 20 girls were in one cabin; troopship conditions, with no drawers or wardrobes. We were under the direction of escorts; some were doctors or teachers and it was at this time I met my friend Rosemary Ash from Bournemouth. We travelled via Panama Canal and Trinidad where we were supposed to have a trip but somebody had measles and we were not allowed ashore. The Girl Guides of Trinidad sent aboard sweets and fruit which was very much appreciated.

On to Southampton and the cold weather !! We returned to Glasgow by train and were met by our parents and sister now a school girl. We had left her as an 18 month old baby. The house was dressed in bunting and a great fuss was made by relatives and friends.

After completing my education I returned to NZ as an immigrant.

Marjory Henderson



THE SEA OF GALILEE

While called 'Sea of Galilee' five times in the New Testament it was also known as the Sea of Chinneroth and Sea of Tiberias. Situated in the northern part of Israel, today it is more commonly referred to as Lake Kinneret.

It is 21 kilometres long, 13 kilometres wide and 53 kilometres around its shores. It is 224 metres below sea level. What makes it so important is that it is a fish-filled, freshwater lake in the arid Middle East – the only one. That alone makes the Sea of Galilee special.

The reason this lake is one of the most famous in the world, drawing hundreds of thousands of Christian pilgrims year-after-year, is because it was the place of Jesus Christ's ministry, particularly the North and North Western shore. Although being born in Bethlehem of Judea, Jesus was raised a Galilean in Nazareth. After commencing His ministry, He was rejected by the people of Nazareth and moved to Capernaum on the northern shore of the lake. This move was a fulfilment of a prophecy (*Matthew 4:12-17*), and Jesus basically ministered here from Magdala to Bethsaida.

The fertile Plain of Gennesaret would have been very familiar to Him. This plain was also the location of the great Afro-Eurasian Highway, linking Africa with Asia and Europe.

Consider some of the myriad of ministry activities that occurred near or on the Sea of Galilee. As recorded in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. Jesus recruited four of his apostles from the shores of the Kinneret: the fishermen Simon and his brother Andrew and the brothers John and James. One of Jesus' famous teaching episodes, the Sermon on the Mount, is supposed to have been given on a hill overlooking the lake. Many of his miracles are also said to have occurred here, including his walking on water, calming the storm, the disciples and the miraculous catch of fish, healing Peter's mother-in-law and his feeding five thousand people (in Tabgha). In John's Gospel the sea provides the setting for Jesus' third post-resurrection appearance to his disciples (*John 21*).



Even though twenty centuries have passed, a visit to the lake makes you feel as if time has stood still. The glittering water, the mauve hills, the serene atmosphere, the strangely familiar surroundings all lend themselves to a moving experience, as visitors recall the Biblical events that occurred on site.

Interestingly, the Sea of Galilee is fed by the River Jordan which flows sluggishly through the Great Rift Valley. One hundred kilometres to the south is a bigger but vastly different lake – the Dead Sea. In the southern lake, there are no fish, no freshwater, no thriving communities, no sound of birds singing or children playing. Both lakes are in the same country, the same Great Rift Valley, and are fed by the same River Jordan. The answer is simple. For every drop of water that flows in to the Sea of Galilee, another drop flows out. Yet for the other lake, for every drop of the Jordan it receives, it keeps. That is why it is called - Dead.

Euan Ross. (Gathered from various sources).

RING A BELL?

Father John is walking down the street one day when he notices a Nathan, a very small boy, trying to press a doorbell on a house across the street. However, Nathan is very small and the doorbell is too high for him to reach. After watching the boy's efforts for some time, Father John moves closer to Nathan's position. He steps smartly across the street, walks up behind the little fellow and, placing his hand kindly on the child's shoulder leans over and gives the doorbell a solid ring.

Crouching down to Nathan's level, Father John smiles benevolently and asks, 'And now what, my little man?'

To which Nathan replies with a beaming grin, 'Now we run!'

LIFE IN THE GARDEN - A STUDY FOR LENT

LENTEN HOME GROUPS.

Beginning 23 February.

This year's Lenten Study "Life in the Garden"...an unusual and uplifting way to look at Old and New Testament Bible references to gardens; closing with the promise of the beautiful garden of Eternity.

Please prayerfully consider joining, hosting or helping to guide a group this year.

Please make this your Lenten gift of time, study, worship and fellowship. Booklets are available for \$8 from the office.

Check out the Notice Board Display or call Pam Gordon for more information 5764073 or the office.