

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF

ST FRANCIS

96 PARK ROAD, CNR TITIRANGI BEACH RD DECEMBER 2017

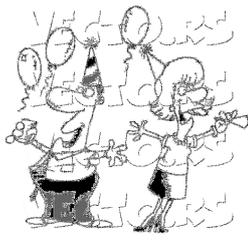
Advent—a favourite season of the year?

A very warm welcome to the members of the Titirangi Presbyterian Church, who join us for a combined service today.

Alas, it's the first time in 2017. What do they say about good intentions?! But it's a great pleasure to join with you today, the first Sunday in Advent.

Usually for Advent we have the place a little bare of decoration, but today we have the Christmas story up from yesterday

At this time of the year it's hard not to be caught up in the pre-Christmas flurry of office parties, recorded carols in the shopping malls, lists of presents, and general end-of-year busyness.



So while we rejoice in the celebration of Jesus' coming, we try to retain something of the penitential quality of Advent. The purple vestments are a reminder.

Let's find time for reflective periods of stillness, of preparation, of trying to be fittingly ready.

Today we light the first of our four Advent candles, each with its own symbolic associations,

hope, peace, joy and love.

You'll note too that the baptismal font, previously filled with water, is now empty and dry, a powerful sign of our thirsting for God.

May you find something in the Advent season to stir you in new directions, new discoveries, as we pause before our Christmas celebrations.

Don't miss our "Readings and Carols" at 10am on Sunday 17th December!

As before, it's loosely based on the traditional 9 lessons and carols of King's College, Cambridge, but as last year we'll include some secular texts along with the familiar Bible ones.

Our readers come from different sections of the Titirangi community, commercial, cultural and service.

Bring your friend and neighbours. It is a non Eucharistic service. But note the start time! - 10am.

Are you recognisable as a baptised Christian by your love for reading and hearing the Bible? Hear more from Bishop Rowan Williams in his book 'Being Christian: the Bible.'

Join with others for a short discussion at the church, Saturday 9th December from 2pm to about 3.15pm.

Diary notes

December

- 9th 2pm study
17 Readings and carols
24 11.30pm Christmas service
25 9.30am Christmas Day

Inside this issue:

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A special welcome to our visitors today

See what you think about this statement about St Francis!

Yes, it was a "Quiet Day" all right, but a little disturbing too. Our St Francis gathering at the Friary, Hillsborough, last month focussed on a passage from the Book of Revelation, chapter 2, 7-13.

Here St John talks of writing a message to "the angel of the church in Philadelphia". Edward had prepared quite a challenging programme for the day, starting and concluding with worship.

Between times we were invited to meditate on various aspects of St John's words leading to a session where we threw out suggestions of what the Angel of the church at St Francis would say.

Our warm thanks to Edward for leading this thought-provoking Quiet Day.



Below you will find the summary of the ideas the group produced. You might like to comment: is this a fair set of observations about St Francis, Titirangi?

Say to the Angel of the Church at St Francis, Titirangi; I know your works.

You are beautiful blend; you are a believing Church, with Jesus at the centre but encompassing all people. You try to be a hospitable church for everybody. You can be Ordered and traditional, but you are also open to fresh ideas in society.

You celebrate and acknowledge the environment, and are at peace there - you can be wonderful and mysterious, offering the fringe of heaven to a tired and stressed world around you. You are a people of prayer - people know that others will pray for them - they are not alone among you.

You don't take yourself too seriously, blending reverence with simplicity, humility and cheerful informality; you court a reputation for quirkiness and sanctified bolshiness

You are an aging church, in need of new births and family growth. The resurrection you hope for will require death first.

Sometimes you can be too tied down. Be a church of increased faith -let yourself be more open to the mystery of God, and open yourselves more to others, and other faith traditions

People need to see God in what you do and who you are. So, get on with it. Get out there. Continue to identify needs in the community, and continue to be willing carers to the area. As little children, stand against the culture of this age; then you will become a beacon of hope, a sanctuary, and a community for sacred gatherings.

Listen to the Wind Words, the Spirit blowing through the Churches.

Congratulations to Margaret and her team for the successful "Walk through Christmas" held yesterday. You can see the results around you today.

**"...fringe
of
heaven.."**



Helen Tommy, 9th July 1933— 5th November 2017

Lindsay and I were privileged to preside at Helen's farewell and thanksgiving for her life among us.

At her funeral service, her sons Jonothon, Derek and Adam and their families spoke movingly and lovingly of their mother, and Val Aitken gave a lovely tribute with reference to the Mary Martha group which Helen founded.

Helen chose the hymns and two other songs which were favour-

ites: *Somewhere over the rainbow* and *You are my Sunshine*.

Helen was buried alongside her husband at Waikumete, quite high on the ridge. We had a short service there, and then we sang, unrehearsed, Psalm 23 to Crimond

While we sang everything was hushed, and when we concluded, a breath of wind sighed through the trees. It was as though Helen was saying "thank you"

Christine

Stimulating LSM time at Torbay

The Local Shared Ministry Conference gained much this year from its delightful setting, the Vaughan Park retreat centre at Long Bay.

Our St Francis participants reported back in the sermon slot last Sunday.

On Friday night, Sarah Park, standing in for the unwell Bishop Jim, led us through some questions on mission, interesting and thought provoking, Lindsay thought.

Saturday morning saw Mark Harris presenting two sessions, a highly stimulating speaker. David gave a succinct summary of his wide ranging talk. More on this next issue.

Christine was impressed with the four ministry units who spoke about their special outreach projects.

Susan Crozier did us proud, articulating so well our eco-plant project accompanied by suitable slides.

Kawakwa, Towai and Paihia units spoke about their Give-away project. Three times a year they find a hall and gather items from various op shops and Outlets. They give them away, inviting people of the community to "take what they need".

Onerahi Manaia in the last couple of years have founded a community garden, using Council drainage land.

Not only church members but people with skills in the community have created this amazing space together which now has fruit trees as well as vegetables, all thriving and being given away.

They have also built a large pizza oven and once a week the community gathers for Pizza Friday. They have had over 57 nationalities visiting them in the last two years.

One thing that is common to all these stories is that the church has **gone out** to the community

and worked **with** people in the community, not tried to do things alone. Amazing stories!

Sarah Moss gave a summary of the Diocesan survey so far, cause for optimism but with cautions too.

Josh Jones and his band played on Saturday night, a lift to the spirit, Margaret reported.

Then on Sunday morning city missionary Chris Farrelly moved us all with his account of the City Mission work. No more on that here: he'll be visiting us in the new year.

It was great to be at a gathering of like-minded Anglicans. There are interesting days ahead for LSM.

"...lift

to the

spirit..."

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Readings for December

10th: Isaiah 40:1-11; 2 Pet 3:8-15a; Mark 1:1-8
17th: Community readings and carols
24th 9.30am 2 Sam 7:1-11,16; Rom 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38
24th 11.30pm Christmas Eve communion (Proper 1) Isaiah 9:2-7;
Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-14
25th 9.30am Isaiah 52:7-10; Heb 1:1-4,5-12; John 1:1-14
31st Isaiah 61:10-62:3; Gal 4:4-7; Luke 2:22-40
Note: The Lectionary states that Proper 11 be used during the Christmas celebrations, so these readings are on Christmas Day.

Healing thoughts and prayer please for

Susan Wightman, Susan Crozier, Dorothy Ashbolt, Deborah Rolland.

Our bi-monthly 11-15am healing service is postponed till next Sunday, 10th December. Indaba too has been postponed.

Seasons greetings from the editor and his staff.

News and views from here and there

Adopt a Family:

A reminder that the Christmas boxes are out to start collecting gifts and/or festive food for three disadvantaged families in our area.

The age and gender of the families are listed, to help guide your selections. Money is also acceptable for vouchers from Westfield or Lynmall so the Mums or Dads or teenagers can buy something for themselves. Money to Christine please.

Thank you in advance for your generous support – last year we **made a difference** to four families and we can do the same this year!

Council Comment:

November is the month St Francis Council allots its Mission giving. This year: NZ Anglican Missions 2,400, Hospital Chaplains \$500, Auckland City Mission \$650, Anglican Trust for Women and Children \$500, Housing Foundation (Paul Gilbert spoke to us earlier this year) \$300, Waitakere Outreach \$450.

Father Stephen Johnson:

Our former vicar has kindly donated to the church, silver candlesticks, a set of cruets, and a small pyx.

Thanks to:

Dorothy Ashbolt for her donation

towards morning tea today to celebrate her birthday. And thanks to Moira and her helpers for preparing and arranging it.

Christmas services:

Sunday 24th December: we'll have our usual Sunday morning service at 9.30am. There'll be carols but no sermon.

Christmas Eve: 11.30pm. We start in semi-darkness, but at a significant moment in the first carol, lights will dramatically come up.

We promise there will be enough light to easily read the service!

Christmas Day morning: we will have at 9.30am our Christmas celebration, a Eucharist with a couple of special features.

On Sunday 31st December and throughout January 2018 we'll continue with our 9.30am Sunday morning Eucharists.

We missed "stir up Sunday" this year! In the old prayer book, the collect for the Sunday next before Advent, last Sunday, began "Stir up, we beseech thee, O Lord, the wills of thy faithful people..." So it became associated with the custom of preparing your Christmas pudding on that day.

Good things take time to mature!

