

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF

ST FRANCIS

96 PARK ROAD, CNR TITIRANGI BEACH RD MARCH 2017

“..they disfigure their faces...”

Today is the first Sunday in Lent. We all know what that means: traditionally it's a time of restraint.

But let's not forget what Jesus said in his "Sermon on the Mount", as recorded in Matthew. "When you fast, do not look dismal!"

So although we do exercise restraint in Lent, we don't need to make a misery of it. Instead of "giving up" something for Lent, think about taking on board something new and positive, like smiling at and chatting to the beggar in Titirangi!

Last Sunday we had the traditional pancakes after church, and then on Shrove Tuesday in the Titirangi village we made and gave away pancakes to the passers-by.

We've done this for some years now. Eve, Sally and Lindsay had good conversations with those who stopped, including two or three from England who were more aware of the practice than many New Zealanders.

Then on Ash Wednesday evening David led a group of 13 through the simple ceremony of the imposition of ashes, a powder made from burning some of last year's palm crosses.

Afterwards we shared a simple meal of soup and rolls. It was an encouraging start to the Lenten season.

Earlier that Wednesday the worship committee met and amongst other items, discussed preliminary plans for Easter. There'll be more details in the April newsletter.

Meanwhile you'll be interested to hear we'll be continuing the pattern tried last year. At 7am (!) Sunday morning we'll have a special dawn Service of Light, when the Pascal candle will be lit. Breakfast will follow.

Then when the congregation arrive at 9.30am St Francis will be fully lit, bright and cheerful. Watch for more information later.

AGM today

Stay to

- hear reports
- approve financial matters
- elect officers
- note our general good health

For the first time ever we had to cancel our annual service on Titirangi Beach. But we had a very pleasant time inside at St Francis.



Diary notes

March

- ? Study (Neil)
- 8 Friendship
- 11 working bee
- 21 Vicar of Dibley

Inside this issue:

C and F	2
Conference	3
Readings	4

A special welcome to our visitors today

A change of name heralds a change of focus for St Francis group

"Mostly Craft" is morphing into "Children and Families Ministry." "C and F" will be simpler to remember.

Last year was interesting. After 6 years' steady development of Mostly Craft, we started the year full of hope with a successful first session. Then we went steadily downhill!



**"...a
blend
of the
two.."**

Our sessions were warm, friendly and fun. But numbers dwindled away, no matter how we tweaked the pattern. Maybe God thought we were ready for something more.

His inspiration for "The Christmas Story" in December *was* successful. Our M.C. experience helped us meet, welcome and make friends with 100 people, 50 children and their parents and grand parents, many quite unknown to us.

At least 50 children experienced the real Christmas Story, so much more than Santa and the decorations in the Mall. All this at a busy, busy time and bear in mind we are well off the beaten track. Folk have to 'find' us. They seldom just 'drop by'. Many of you helped it happen.

In 2017 we have decided to try something a bit different, a blend between the two. We will have the Easter Story around the walls in about 4 'stations' with appropriate Easter crafts; a DVD on the screen; a story corner; games; a sausage sizzle, all on the Saturday before Easter, 8th April, Palm Sunday weekend, open perhaps 1.30-2pm 'til 3.30-4.00 or so in the afternoon.

Would you like to help? It's the more the merrier for things like this. Tell others, bring your neighbours and family.

If the thought of being an evangelist on a street corner has you cringing, maybe you can invite a child to an afternoon's free fun?

Margaret

"The Vicar of Dibley" directed by Lindsay Nash, opens at the Titirangi Theatre, Tuesday 21st March. Book on line or Titirangi Pharmacy 817-7658

Judy reports on her retreat ideas

On the 11th and 12 February I went to two days retreat at Vaughan Park Retreat Centre. The topics were Spirituality and Openness in an Inclusive Church, and Gay and Straight together in the Body of Christ. It was led by the retired Bishop David Gillett from England, and Prof. Peter Lineham, well known in the Anglican church. for his work in this area.

Three parts of the bible were examined, underlining again the impor-

tance of context in our study. I don't believe we can continue calling ourselves Christians if we keep the door shut on those people who are different to us.

The Church also needs to be aware that many young people today have little trouble with the gender preferences of their mates, and they don't understand why some churches shut the door on these people.

Judy

2017 Ministry Conference gives much to our five from St Francis

The recent Diocesan Ministry Conference was the best I can remember. It's a gathering mainly designed for ordained priests, though this year the invitation was extended further.

It was mainly attended by vicars, but there was a goodly sprinkling of LSM people. Perhaps that's why it was more lively than usual!

The keynote speaker was Martin Smith. His topic was "Mission and Spirituality", 4 sessions without notes.

Spirituality he defined as all those practices in which a person experiences the divine, moving from second hand, *hearing* about it, to a personal experience.

A number of our churches, he said, are more concerned with keeping the place going. This leaves little energy for coaching people in spiritual practices, a safe environment for contemplation and meditation.

A strong theme was the *desire* of God, something which gives shape to various aspects of our life. God's plan, God's will are terms some people use. More helpful, he thought, to talk of God's desire, his wanting to be present in our lives.

David remembers Martin's story about "finding the spring". How as a teenager he had an interest in archaeology, and had read about an Edwardian expedition to find a holy spring which had been a popular site of pilgrimage in the Middle Ages.

He was about to give up searching when he noticed a group of cows standing in a smelly mud dung patch, and wondered if they were guarding the secret. When he dug down, he discovered a carved platform and wooden pipe from which water was flowing.

He related this to Jesus' promise in John 7 that for those who believe, "Out of their hearts shall flow rivers of living water." The Greek word translated "heart" literally means guts - in the King James version it is "belly."

So, he says, "The home of the Spirit is not in the intellect, the realm of concepts and ideas, not in a refined sanctum of spirituality, but in the guts, the deep core where our passions have their spring, the place of conflict, confusion, vulnerability and desire."



Neil had similar ideas and added:

- the reclaiming baptism as the ground of our dwelling in Christ and he in us.
- the prospect that believers may gather quietly to share with each other their experience of God in Christ, and that such groups may choose to fold in one or two other people (seekers) of like mind and heart. Such is evangelism at its gentlest, kindest and most unobtrusive.
- prayer is the yearning or groaning of God in our hearts which leads us into mission. It's not a lot of words or formats. Silence in the church gathering can be powerful.

There was much we could apply later this year.

**Working bee at St Francis,
Saturday 11th March, 9am.
Spruce up the church for Easter:
tidy the Bambury Lounge and
notice board, oil-polish wood-
work, clean around doors, tidy
the foyer and banners room and
put stuff in the garage eg crib,
some chairs, take down Christ-
mas silhouettes**

**"...spruce
up the
Church.."**

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Readings for March:

Note: Although we don't often read the Psalm at the service, we have included it so you can read it at home if you wish.

March:

5th First Sunday in Lent. Genesis 2:15-17,3:1-7; Psalm 32: Rom 5:12-19; Matt 4:1-11

12th Genesis 12:1-4a; Psalm 121:Romans 4:1-5,13-17; John 3:1-17

19th Exodus 17:1-7; Psalm 95: Romans 5:1-11; John 4:5-42;

26th 1 Sam 16:1-13; Psalm 23; Eph 5:8-14; John 9:1-41;

April

2nd Passion Sunday Ezekiel 37:1-14; Psalm 130; Romans 8:6-11; John 11:1-45

9th Palm Sunday Isaiah 50:4-9a; Psalm 118:1-2,19-29; Phil 2:5-11; Matt 26:14-27:66

(The lectionary occasionally gives alternatives, and sometimes these may be used instead of the ones printed here)

Please pray for Ank and Hans van den Brink, Susan Wightman. Hans is now at the Selwyn Village and visits are welcome; best around 11am. Suzie Haddow is on the mend with her broken ankle.!

News from here and abroad

Lenten appeal:

It's time again for the annual Appeal run by our own Anglican Missions. We ask you to take an envelope and fill it up during Lent and give it to me after Easter. If you use a cheque, please make it out to St Francis Anglican Church.

There are three different causes.

- Jerusalem, Princess Basma Centre for children. This was established in 1965 for children with physical disabilities especially those suffering from polio.

- In the Gaza Strip the Al Ahli Hospital, owned and administered by the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem, aims to provide fortified high energy food to control the prevalence of malnutrition among underweight children.

- Solomon Islands, Rainbow Wing Safe House. The aim of Rainbow Wing is to provide a safe and supportive caring environment that is free from harassment, violence and abuse for the most vulnerable groups, women, young people and children.

There is also a prayer booklet with suitable prayers for each day of a month. I only have two but again further copies can easily be obtained.

Canon Robert Kereopa, leader of the Anglican Missions team, comments "We should never underestimate the importance and power of prayer.

Please join our community of prayer as we all continue to lift up and support one another in a time when many are struggling and living through conflict and fear.

John Hyatt

Lenten studies: "Consecrated to the Lord": These look good and will reward our exploring and sharing together. They are grounded in the reality of the Hebrews as the consecrated people of God, and all that follows from that for us and the church. See Neil for timing.

Pastoral care:

We continue visiting those in hospital or recovering. Let's share our insights with others who are involved in visiting where it is helpful.

Friendship Circle:

Our first 2017 meeting will be held next Wednesday 8th March at 10am at St Francis. It's a planning meeting, with morning tea and a trading table for Lovelink. The next meeting is planned for Tuesday 4th April also at 10am St Francis, making palm crosses for Palm Sunday.

Our liturgist Margaret Meyer is in Australia with her daughter helping tend her grand daughter, Daphne Miriam, very ill with GER, a throat disorder. Do hold them in your prayers.

