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Thank you to Academy Funeral Services for printing this edition.

the Gateway

Magazine of the Anglican Parish of
Upper Riccarton—Yaldhurst

Easter 2022



Reflections	The Vicar, the Editor, Matt Melchert
Reports	Victory Christian Church, Care Bears, AAW
Activities	Join the dots & Colour-me-in
People	Ruth Manickam, David Kent, Gin McKenzie
Historical	Light & Life, Shrove Tuesday
Book Review	"After" by Bruce Greyson ...and lots more!

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Usual Sunday services

St Peter's...

8.00 am Holy Communion.
9.30 am Holy Communion.
11.15 am Family Church, every 2nd & 4th Sunday.

St Luke's...

9.30 am Holy Communion every 1st and 3rd Sunday of the month.

*Please see page 35
for our special Easter
services*



Cover: The restored church in autumn. Photo by Lynette Wilkinson

Easter Services

10 April—Palm Sunday

- Blessing of palm crosses 8am and 9:30am Eucharist.
- At 9:30am combined family church and visit of **Edmund the Donkey**, brother of Wonky Donkey.

14 April—Maundy or Holy Thursday

- 7:30pm Brake St Methodists—liturgy including a play by **Keeping Good Company** and choir anthems.

15 April—Good Friday

- 9:30am **Service of Devotion** around the cross at St Peter's

17 April—Easter day

- 8am and 9:30am Eucharists at St Peter's and 9:30am at St Luke's. **Greening of the Cross** at all services. Please bring some greenery.

Don't forget St Luke's !

If you would like to worship at a service in a small, friendly



country church, head out to St Luke's at Yaldhurst at 9:30 am on the 1st or 3rd Sunday of the month. You will not be disappointed! See above for the Easter services at St Luke's.

From the parish register

Funerals, Interments

- 15 October 2021 – Gayle Anne Keast (Funeral)
- 08 February 2022 – Kenneth Charles James (Burial)
- 14 March 2022 - John David Donaldson and Lynnette Eileen Donaldson (Interments)

Baptisms

- 05 December 2021 – Freyja Lee Andreassen (St Luke's)

Weddings

- 08 January 2022 – Tom Johnston and Rosa Elliot
- 12 February 2022 – Anthony Collins and Nicola Jane Rough
- 19 February 2022 – Nathan Glen Barltrop and Natasha Jane Jackson

SPECTACLE DROP OFF

I have found a new drop off point for our unwanted spectacles.

They will be sent to the **Fred Hollows Foundation NZ** to be passed on to those who need them across the Pacific Islands.

To date we have collected **514** pairs.

Thank you—keep them coming!

There is a (marked) drop off bag in the church for any pairs that you can spare.

Leigh Craythorne ph 342 9110



Got a story idea?

We encourage you to submit stories or ideas for stories, comment on any article, or send feedback by emailing the editor. We would love to hear from you!

Ven. Nick Mountfort

Vicar's Easter message

One of my favourite things about coming to church at Easter is the greening of the Cross. The greening is when we take the old bare wooden cross we have used on Good Friday, and transform it with flowers and greenery. (If you forget to bring some we will have plenty at church). The symbol of death and hopelessness, the cross, becomes a symbol instead of new life, beauty and of hope. This year we are going to green the cross, not just at St Peter's, but also at St Luke's! Why should they miss out on all the fun? This is Easter in a nutshell. Death transformed into life.



If ever we needed to hear this message of resurrection, it is now. Everyday, friends and family are getting COVID19, while daily we watch on in horror as the people of Ukraine are brutalized, and in our own lives, we continue to face our own times of trial.

The message of Easter is as simple as it is profound: that the love of God is stronger than all kinds of death. The life and love we see in Jesus could not be held back by death. Christ is alive.



Christ is alive, not just 2,000 years ago, but alive with us now. He is light in our darkness and hope in our season of COVID.

This year, as we come to place our flowers in the cross, we come not just for ourselves, but for all those who, for whatever reason, need the message of hope now more than ever.

May the hope of Easter find a home in you and yours this Easter.



You may be forgiven if you feel you are stuck in a time warp, a kind of *Groundhog Day*, where every morning has the same feeling of slight anxiety and a certain greyness. For the last two years we have woken up wondering whether this will be the day someone we know or love will be infected with COVID, and what affect that will have on our lives. This insidious virus has taken over, and our everyday actions now revolve around keeping ourselves safe. So many occasions have come and gone without families being able to celebrate or mourn together.



So I have resolved it is time to set aside anxiety and reclaim our lives. Gradually the rest of the world is coming back to life and there is hope that within several months we too will have weathered Omicron, and things will improve. As I look around our garden I see evidence of hope, in the lovely vegetables, the last vestiges of the summer roses, and the glorious colours of autumn all intermingling. With winter approaching, many plants will appear to die, but, like Christ's death, this is a mere illusion. That dry-looking stem harbours life and will miraculously produce beautiful green foliage in the approaching Spring.

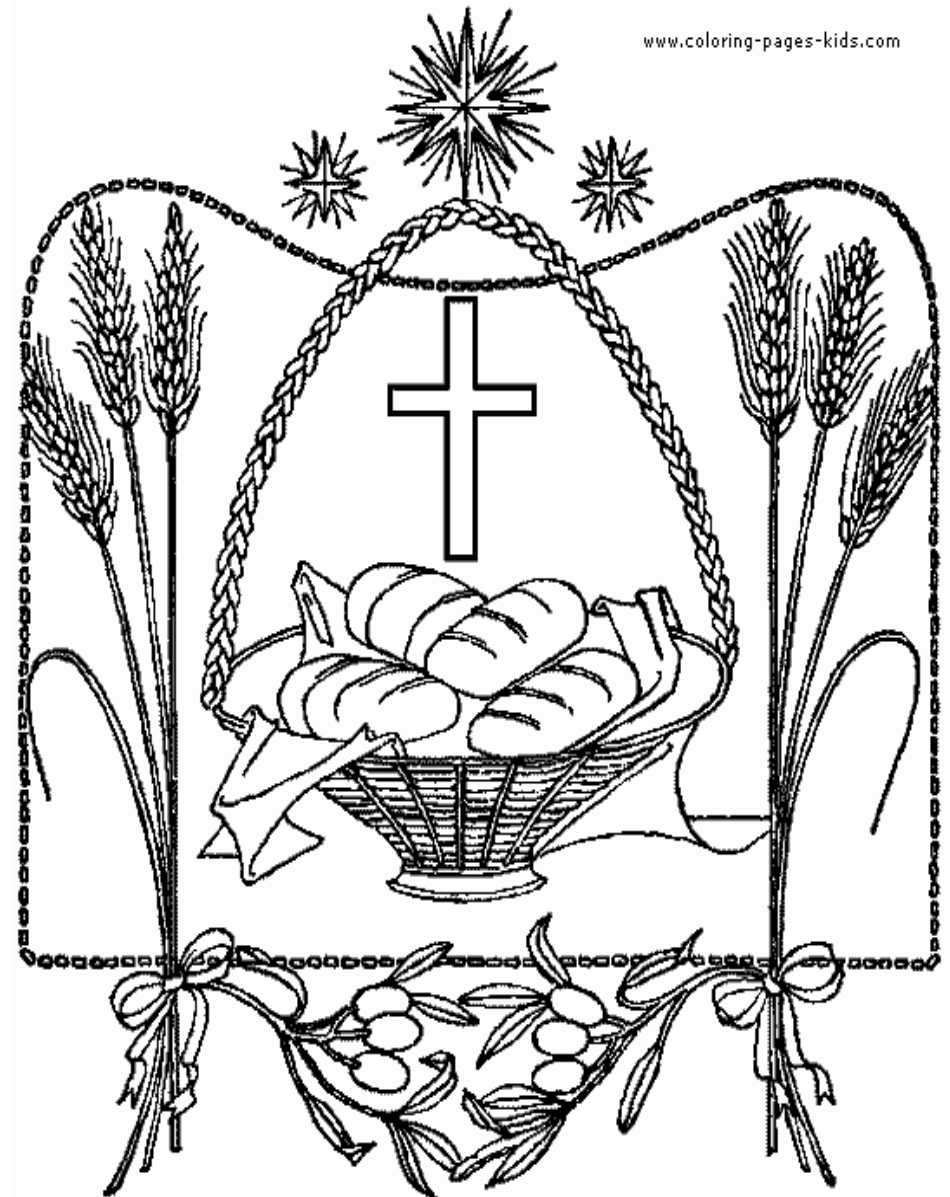
I see hope in the promise of God's love, and in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Let us make this Autumn a time to celebrate, to move forward, and to concentrate on the positives in our lives.

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4: 6-7

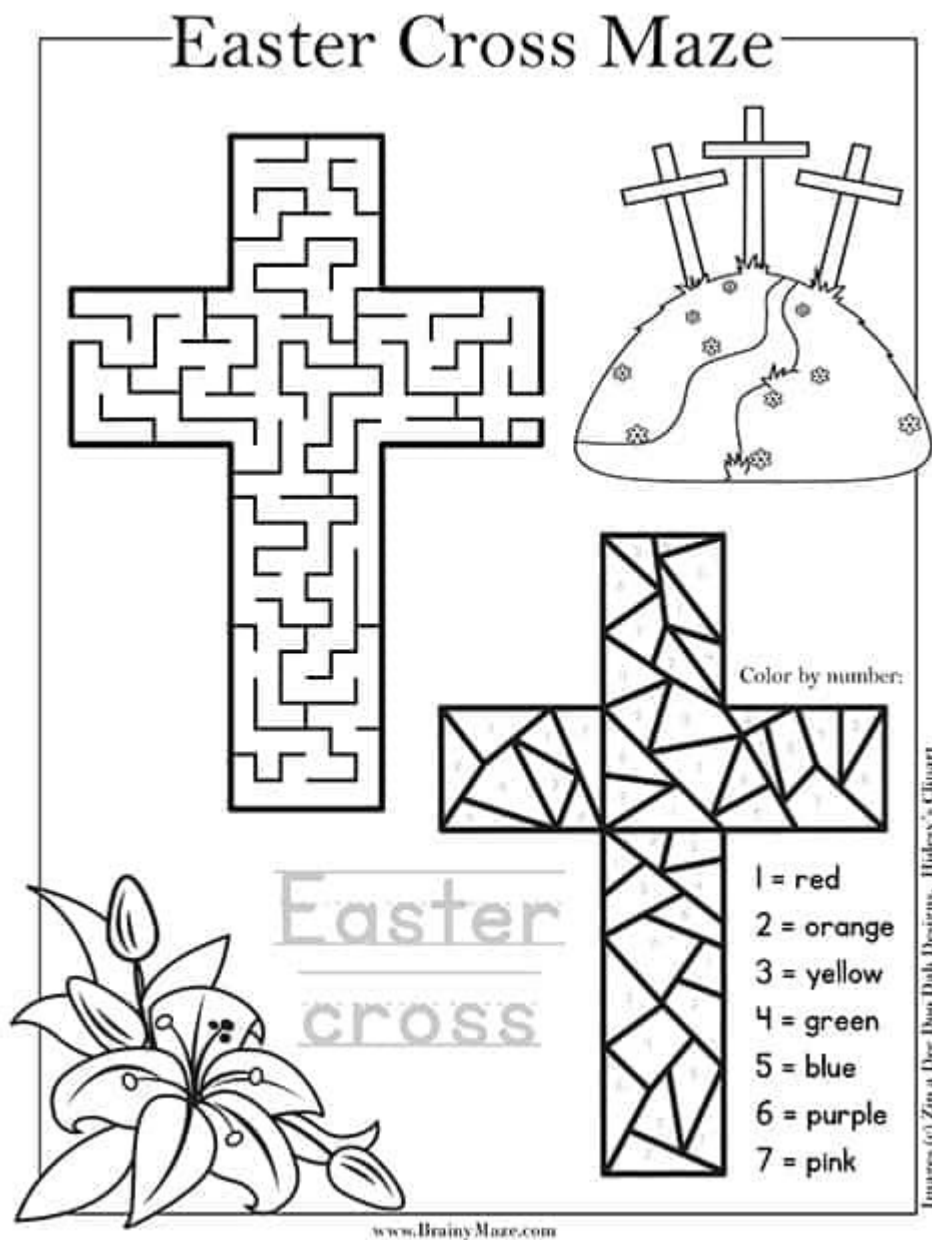


Colour me in

www.coloring-pages-kids.com



The Amazing Page!



End of an era for AAW

Margaret Mahan

Over the last two years, we have discussed the probability of St Peter's AAW closing. With everyone getting older, it has been difficult to find a new leader and committee. Barbara Fleming has led the group for many years, having previously alternated leadership/secretary with the late Shirley Rhodes, which they did for a long time. While some are now in their 80s and 90s, several members have now passed away, are in retirement homes or have already done leadership and committee duties more than once over the years. At our AGM in November we decided it had come to the crunch. The Vicar moved from the Chair that the group finally close on 1st December 2021.



Barbara Fleming (left) and Judith Mackenzie

It is a fact of life now with many groups; several other AAW groups have done likewise in the diocese and throughout New Zealand. We intend, for those who wish, to come to the midweek service on the first Wednesday each month, to keep the friendships alive, and to have a chat over morning tea.

Our final Wednesday Holy Communion was held with 26 people attending as we said thank you to Barbara. She is not going anywhere, just no AAW. Diocesan and New Zealand President Dr Judith Mackenzie joined us, and at the end of the service, she spoke briefly about Barbara's exemplary service, presenting her with a special certificate which is only given for such service. We followed with a special morning tea, and presented Barbara with a "bowl of colour", small plants that she can enjoy outside her window, and a monetary gift to use as she wishes.

With money remaining in our account, it was moved that it be used to purchase a new altar cloth, which Helen McLachlan has agreed to make and embroider. The old and now rather worn cloth was donated by the AAW many years ago, and so it is fitting that this gift carries on.

Getting to Know You

Gin McKenzie



I am Virginia (Gin) McKenzie, eldest of four, with three siblings, twins living in Australia and my youngest sister in Christchurch.

Divorced decades ago, proud mother of three loving, intelligent, creative, unbelievably handsome young-to-middle-aged men, and Granny of eight smart, energetic, beautiful, funny grandchildren—aged from eleven

down to three—all overseas.

We lived in Auckland. We had a very happy childhood, good food, healthcare, and education. Our parents were amazing. Mum is in her 91st year, still living independently. My family were fundamental in helping me grow my lovely sons. I am so grateful for their input and proud of my sons, their beautiful wives, and children.

Why did I leave Auckland nineteen years ago? Was it as long ago as that? The nest was empty, Auckland was growing too big. A change was required. I hated the humidity and the traffic, but I really do miss those fabulous beaches, harbour, and bush walks.

Why did I move to Christchurch? My sister was here, the sky goes on and on, there's a hospital, International Airport, lovely places to explore and almost no humidity or traffic! - simply lovely, like Auckland was when we were children.

Working in predominately administration roles, in not for profit, health, or education-based organisations, confirmed that I loved customer facing roles. Since Christchurch's earthquakes, I have had temporary assignments of varying lengths. I enjoy interacting with people, and like to think I make a difference by being the person who makes somebody smile. These days I am busy with casual work and can pick and choose where and when to work. It is nice to still be wanted. Currently I am on a casual contract until the end of April.



Many thanks to **Lewis Grey** for being our stand-in organist over the Christmas period.

More firsts in the restored church

Last edition, we included some photos of the first wedding and the first baptism in the restored building. In this edition, we recall Christmas—the children's service, then the midnight service. (Photos—Graeme Cox)



I volunteer at Petersgate and St Peter's, where and when I can. You may have seen me singing in the choir, and I volunteer on Vestry. I am the CYP SO Rep for St Peter's and on the Body Corporate Committee where I live.

My loves are food, but not cooking it, loud music, particularly jazz, a bit of crafty stuff, and rom-com movies based in foreign places. The last film I saw was called 'Delicious'. I loved it! Recently I have been swapping watching TV with reading a book or two. Such luxury! During our first lockdown, I painted the interior of my little home. The result is nice and fresh. It will be great when live theatre can return. I love going to farmers' markets with Mum and my sister, and occasional concerts (when we can have them) in local parks. I like to think I have a good sense of humour and an open mind?



Overseas travel to squeeze my gorgeous grandchildren when I know I can get home safely again, is at the top of my 'to do' list. In the interim, it is great having Skype and FaceTime.

Why did I join St Peter's church? I am not interested in sport, preferring art, theatre and music, and wanted to meet like-minded people. I wanted to sing (much to the surprise of my lads). I joined a lovely ladies' choir in Christchurch, but unfortunately they closed after several successful decades. One choir member suggested I might like to sing in the church choir where she sang. So, here I am—part of St Peter's parish, singing in their lovely choir. A community, a place to belong, where I can grow, contribute and be myself.

If we have not yet met, please say 'hello'. I would love to meet you!

Goodness, so many 'I's in this introduction. Fear not—I am part of this St Peter's Team.

Best Wishes, Gin

G



Traditions of Shrove Tuesday and Ash Wednesday

Heather Cox

The tradition of marking the start of Lent has been documented for years. Aelfric of Eynsham (c.955-c.1010), an English abbot, states in his **Ecclesiastical Institutes** that *In the week immediately before Lent everyone shall go to his confessor and confess his deeds and the confessor shall so shrive him as he then may hear by his deeds what he is to do [in the way of penance]*

Shrove Tuesday, is the traditional feast day before the start of Lent on Ash Wednesday. In the late Middle Ages, Anglo-Saxon Christians went to confession and were “shriven” (absolved from their sins). A bell would be rung to call people to confession. This came to be called the “Pancake Bell” and is still rung in some churches today. Shrove Tuesday was the last opportunity to use up eggs and fats before embarking on the Lenten fast, and pancakes were the perfect way of using up these ingredients.

The pancake has a very long history and appears in cookery books as far back as 1439. The tradition of tossing or flipping them is almost as old: *“And every man and maide doe take their turne, And tosse their Pancakes up for feare they burne.”* (**Pasquil’s Palin**, 1619).

In the UK, pancake races form an important part of the Shrove Tuesday celebrations. They provided an opportunity for large numbers of people, often in fancy dress, to race down streets tossing pancakes. The object of the race is to get to the finishing line first, carrying a frying pan with a cooked pancake in it and flipping the pancake as you run.

The most famous pancake race takes place at Olney in Buckinghamshire. According to tradition, in 1445 a woman of Olney heard the shriving bell while she was making pancakes. Realising she was late for the service, she ran to the church still wearing her apron, while clutching her frying pan and tossing the pancake to keep it from burning. The Olney pancake race is now world famous. Competitors must be local housewives and they must wear an apron and a hat or scarf.

New safety rails for the organ

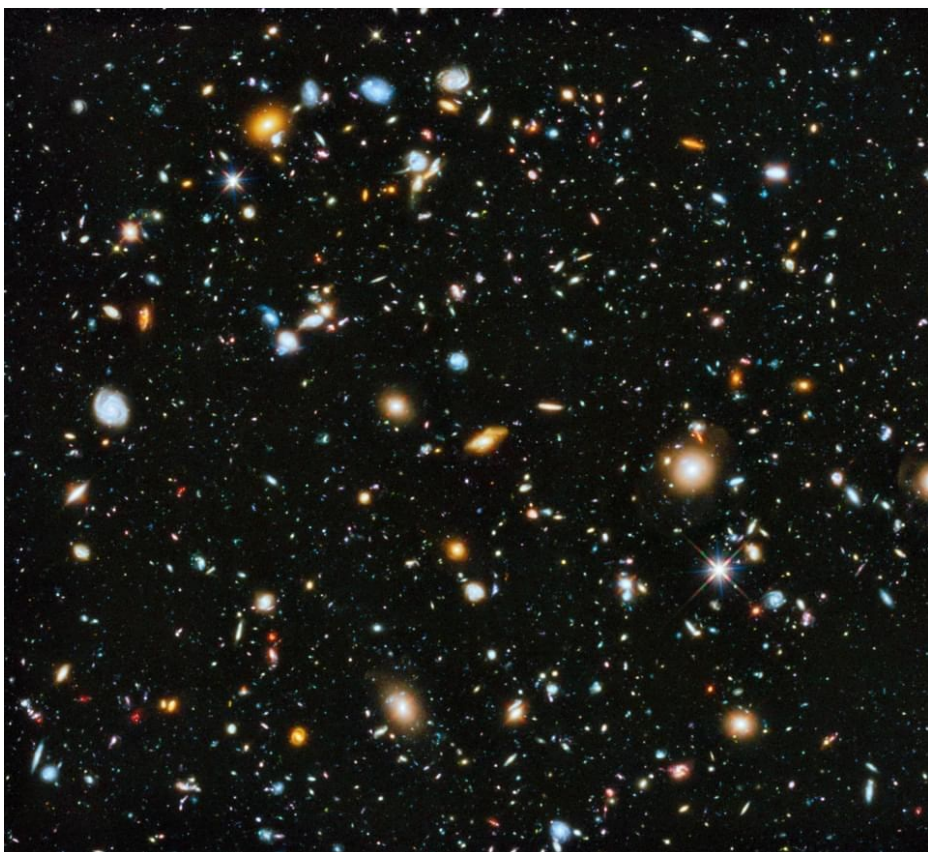
Our wonderful organ in its new location is set down below floor level to avoid the organ top touching the roof. This created a hazard for people walking near the organ, one that OSH would be horrified with. Furthermore, we would absolutely hate to damage the organ by having anyone split their head open on the pristine woodwork!

So the Vestry have installed new brass rails around the precipice, as shown in the photographs. (*Photos by Lynette Wilkinson*).



Creation—How big is it? continued...

Below, we see a “teaser” image from the JWST, looking out of the Milky Way, into the universe beyond. The height of the picture captures an angle of about 2 arc-minutes. When you split up the sky, it breaks down into 360 degrees in a sphere around you. There are 60 minutes in each degree. Therefore, the picture shows each dot being an individual galaxy, each containing an unknown number of stars, all within a height of one thirtieth of a degree.



Each dot in this JWST early photo is a galaxy containing probably millions of stars.

So how can we possibly comprehend, not just how many galaxies, but how many stars and how many planets are contained in all of creation? And they all belong to our God!



A pancake race in Olney, Buckinghamshire

In France, the term *Mardi Gras* is used, which translates as *Fat Tuesday*. This refers to it being the last opportunity to eat rich, fatty foods before the ritual fasting of the Lenten season. It is also a carnival day in many parts of Europe and South America.

The practice of using ashes to represent sorrow and repentance was widely practiced in the ancient world. In the Nordic pagan religion, placing ashes above one's brow was believed to ensure the protection of the Norse God, Odin. The Christian liturgical use of ashes is documented by Tertullian (c.160-c.225), whereby he complains about those who claim repentance but do not want to demean themselves with fasting, sackcloth and ashes. In one of Aelfric of Eynsham's sermons he stated: *On the Wednesday, throughout the whole world, the priests bless, even as it is appointed, clean ashes in church, and afterward lay them upon men's heads, that they may have in mind that they came from earth, and shall again return to dust, even as the Almighty God spake to Adam... Now let us do this little in the beginning of our Lent, that we strew ashes upon our heads.*

The custom of marking an ash cross on people's foreheads is credited to Pope Gregory I the Great (c.540-604). Today, the ashes for Ash Wednesday are created by burning palms from the previous year's Palm Sunday celebration.

Sources: Wikipedia Historic UK



Reflection

Dr Matt Melchert



I asked a friend of mine a little while ago why he did not believe in God

It's obvious there's no God, he said. There's no kind old man up in the sky. You can't pray for something and have your prayers answered. It's like there's no Santa Claus.

His confident smile faded when he saw my reaction.

I use the equation 'God is Love', I said. Where there is love, there God is. And if you want God to do something, then you should become 'the hands of Christ' and do God's work here on Earth.

He turned away, mumbling something about changing the definitions.

When I was a young man, I went through a searching phase. I read about Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, and various flavours of atheism. I couldn't find anything I like better than Christianity, and as shown above I found a way to make it work in the modern world.

I don't buy into that “magical thinking” kind of stuff, but it does not bother me particularly. It washes over me like swear words wash over *The Humans**, without leaving much of an impact.

As I have said before, different people see things differently. Even if you are content (not to say complacent) with your belief system, I encourage you to explore others. You may find something that suits you better. Even if you decide “there's no place like home”, you will come back a much stronger and wiser person.

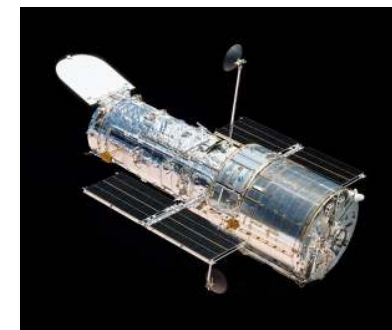
Matt refers to a book (2013)—The Humans** by Matt Haig, and also a movie adapted from the book.*



The time taken for the light from the edge of the **observable universe** to travel to the viewer, is very close to the age of the universe—13.8 billion years. But the distance from the edge of the **observable universe**, and the Earth, has long since moved further apart. In comparison, the diameter of a typical galaxy is 30,000 light-years and the typical distance between two neighbouring galaxies is three million light-years. As an example, the Milky Way is roughly 100,000–180,000 light-years in diameter, and the nearest sister galaxy to the Milky Way, the Andromeda Galaxy, is located roughly 2.5 million light-years away. These are amazingly big distances, almost beyond human comprehension!

In our lifetime, we have been lucky to have seen the launching of two amazing high-resolution telescopes into space, near the earth; the Hubble in 1990, then the James Webb, in 2022.

The **Hubble Space Telescope** is a telescope that was launched into low Earth orbit in 1990 and continues to remain in operation. It was not the first space telescope, but it is one of the largest and most versatile. Hubble Space Telescope is about the size of a large school bus. It weighs 11,113 kg.



Hubble was a huge step forward in that it enabled us to see objects up to 13.4 billion light years distant, and what we are viewing is how it was only about 400 million years after creation.

Recently, you have possibly heard of NASA's **James Webb Space Telescope** (JWST). This is the most powerful telescope ever built, and its assorted instruments will give us a clearer view of more stars than we have ever seen. The most exciting thing about JWST is that it will be able to see further into space than any other telescope. In order to do its job, the JWST has been positioned about 1.5 million km from the Earth, on the opposite side of Earth from the sun. [This position is called the *Lagrange-2 point* (L2).] This is a place in space where gravity balances nicely. ...Cont. on page 28



Creation—How big is it?

Graeme Cox

A simple question, so surely there is a simple answer. However, the problem with this sort of question is that it challenges our mental concept of the nature of God. I have no difficulty accepting that the universe has been in some way created, and that there is logically a creator that we call God. Remember “Nothing comes from nothing, Nothing ever could” in *Something Good* from *The Sound of Music*.

For most of my lifetime, cosmologists have claimed that everything started with a Big Bang—an event from a single point in space that got very big, very quickly. What happened then nobody really knows, but there are a lot of theories! Cosmologists currently agree that the universe’s creation occurred about 13.8 billion years ago. So, this is thought to be roughly the age of God’s creation, of which we are just an extremely small part.

All we really know about the universe is what we can see at present. However, an interesting thing is that, when we look into space, either by eye or with some amazing telescopes, we see light that started travelling towards us from distant stars, many millions of years ago. So, the further we can look, the further back in time we are seeing.

The part of the universe that humanity can observe with telescopes is called the **observable universe**, which depends on the location of the observer. The **proper distance**—the distance as would be measured at a specific time, including the present—between Earth and the edge of the observable universe, is 46 billion light-years, making the diameter of the observable universe about 92 billion light-years.



This Hubble image, captured and released to celebrate the telescope’s 23rd year in orbit, shows part of the sky in the constellation of Orion (The Hunter) in infrared light. Rising like a giant seahorse from turbulent waves of dust and gas is the Horsehead Nebula, otherwise known as Barnard 33.

Light & Life

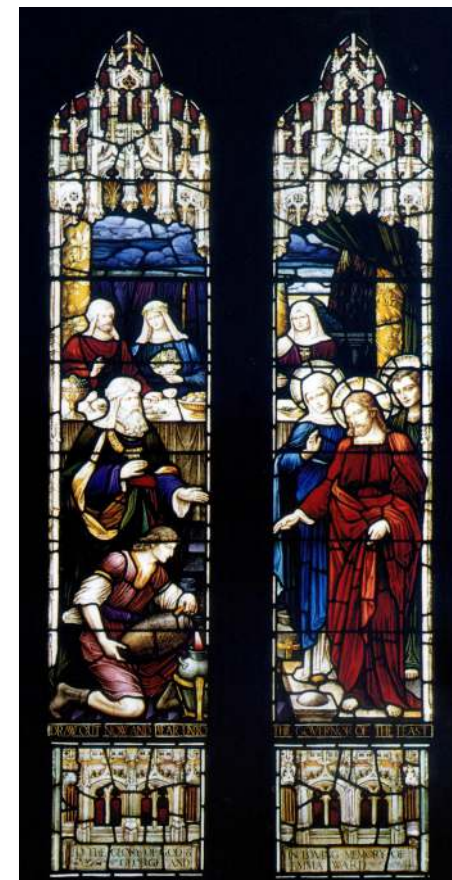
Graeme Cox

After taking a look in the last edition, at the wonderful window designed by Bill Sutton, let us consider something totally different—the **Ward Window**, depicting the wedding at Cana. This window shows Jesus performing a miracle that many of us wish we could emulate—turning water into wine. And not just *vin ordinaire*, but really good quality stuff!

Audrey Storer, in **Light and Life**, writes: *The scene at Cana in Galilee depicts the first miracle of Jesus. Jesus, in a rich red gown, is saying to the servant “Draw out now and bear unto the governor of the feast” John 2:8. The six stone waterpots are clearly seen in the foreground. Mary, Jesus’ mother, in a deep blue gown, is on the left of Jesus, and a disciple is seen on his right, both guests at the wedding. On the far left, the governor is also watching. The bride, holding her bouquet, and the groom are at the wedding table and details of the wedding feast can be seen.*

The window was made by Heaton Butler and Bain in England in 1940. It was made in memory of George and Emma Ward, active parishioners of St Peter’s for many years. The window was commissioned in 1937 by their daughter Grace, who married Arthur Dunford of Tai Tapu at St Peter’s on 31st January, 1922.

Audrey Storer’s wonderful historical book **Light and Life** is available for purchase from the parish office for \$25.



Victory Christian Church

Rev. Albert Tang

Blessed Easter. Greetings in the Name of our Resurrected Christ!

The first earthquake in 2011 made many of us 'homeless' as our church building was damaged. The leadership within it came to a temporary halt and some of us decided to start a congregational style of believers worshipping together, supporting each other and bringing people to Christ.

We started gathering at Middleton Grange School in June 2011 with twelve people, with the blessings from the local Chinese churches, as well as from overseas. Registered as a non-profit organisation, we moved forward and held on to the mission of Christ, spreading the gospel to the unsaved. By God's abundant grace, we were able to provide Love Feast (lunch) every Sunday where people could enjoy the communal fellowship after worship. Just like the Early Church, *the believers shared a common purpose—they were happy to share their food and ate with joyful hearts. The believers praised God and were respected by all the people. More and more people were being saved every day, and the Lord was adding them to their group.* (Luke 2:46-47)

In September 2016, we made a new change and announced: *VCC under God's guidance and mercy, today is the day that the Lord has blessed us and we together testify this historical moment of making the move to this larger worshipping hall possible. May the Lord unite and ignite our hearts as we continue growing in Christ victoriously. May we also keep this place clean and tidy, warm-hearted and a loving fellowship. To God be the glory!* The Lord in His timing had graciously provided a better place within the school compound when our attendance had reached nearly 100. Miraculously, God in His timing, provided us Pastor Stephen Yong, who had been serving in Napier, and intended to move to Christchurch. Now he and his family are serving faithfully in our midst.

All these years, we had celebrated many baptisms and the Lord had sent many new immigrant families, mostly from China, to join the minority from Malaysia, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore and a few Kiwis too. Unfortunately, our contract with the school ended in January 2020. Then the Pandemic broke out globally, and many of us were unable to return to New Zealand and were



St Peter's Anglican Preschool

Proudly helping bring children back to Church Corner





Welcome!

@ 📞 📧 📍

25 Yaldhurst Road, Church Corner
Tel: 03 348 5608 / 021 269 0717
Contact: Shyuan
E: stpeterspreschool@mcctrust.nz
W: stpetersanglicanpreschool.org.nz



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Pay only for your booked hours

Unique Programmes
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Bilingual programs in the afternoon, in a multicultural setting
午後有雙語課程, 在多元文化環境中學習


Preparation for School program & Mandarin program both run daily
每天都有學前預備課程 以及中文課程

Staff
Highly qualified & Experienced Teachers

Enrol today!

Preschool news continued...

COVID-19 keeps life busy with constant changes needed to keep up with government requirements. The biggest change this year in terms of COVID-19 is splitting the preschool into two separate bubbles. This is to reduce the risk of transmission between children, and to be able to keep one part of the preschool open if we do not have enough staff for the whole preschool. We would really appreciate your prayers for new enrolments, which have stalled during COVID. If you know of any preschoolers, please encourage them to come and visit our wonderful preschool.

One thing that is always constant in our ever changing world is our heavenly Father. I am forever grateful to Him for His goodness and grace, wisdom, strength and guidance during these turbulent times. Thank you too, to the clergy and parishioners of St Peter's and St Luke's for your ongoing support. It is valued far more than you realise. We are excited to see what the Lord has for us in the months and years ahead. 



Falling leaves like gentle rain,
reflect my soul, reflect his pain.
The starkness of his cross I bear.
Feel Jesus draw near.

Slowly dying on the ground,
reflecting red, reflecting brown.
The leaves, like Christ, their glory borne,
let all life now mourn.

Branches, bleak, slash through the sky,
reflect my life, reflect his cry.
But by his death Christ beckons me,
to my Calvary.

Death upon that lonely cross,
reflects his love, reflects my loss.
His sacrifice, surely our gain,
believe on his pain.

Life springs from that loving deed,
reflects my hope, reflects my need.
As trees with bud and leaf appear,
feel Jesus draw near.



Pastors and Deacons of the Victory Christian Church

separated from our families. At the same time, it was a tough time as VCC was experiencing its 'wilderness journey', roaming around the city for a couple of months, when the promised venue of worship was suddenly turned down. Then came the lockdown.

I do believe, when God closes a door, He will open a window or another. Likewise, when God's people pray, He does wonders and shows His *This Way* sign. I thank God that He gave me a quick response through our connection with sister Shyuan. When the Lockdown ended in May, on Pentecost Sunday, we finally put our feet and hearts at the parish hall of St. Peter's Anglican Church, meeting in the afternoon at 2pm. The "nomads" have desperately found their spiritual home and promised land at Church Corner!

On behalf of the Christchurch Victory Christian Church, I would like to convey our sincere appreciation for accepting us as one Body of Christ. I believe the cross is colourless. St. Peter's family has been so kind, warm and friendly to us. Regardless of differences in practice and race, we certainly can work together in the furtherance of God's Kingdom. We can celebrate Easter and Christmas together, may it also be the Moon Cake Festival and Chinese New Year. Looking forward to blessing one another in the years to come. God bless you all!



Book Review

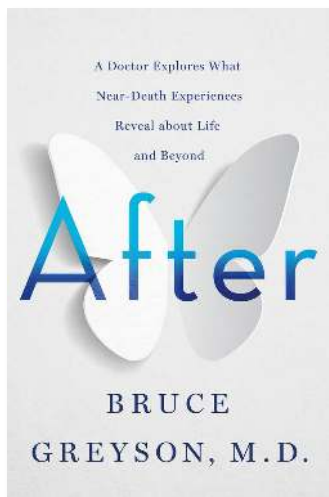
Adrienne & Bruce Williams

"AFTER" by Dr Bruce Greyson

A clinical psychologist explores what Near-Death Experiences (NDE) reveal about life and beyond. The title refers to...

- People relating their experience after recovering from a NDE
- People's changed attitude to life after having experienced a NDE
- Conjecture as to what life, if any, exists after death

The author has been a clinical psychologist and tutor to medical students in several American hospitals, and an avid researcher on NDEs for more than four decades. He claims to be a scientist and not 'religious'. He has, along with others, scientifically analysed thousands of reported NDEs.



Ten percent of people whose hearts stop and then restart report NDEs. Stories of lights, tunnels and reunion with late loved ones have been relayed—and dismissed—since ancient times. But when Dr Greyson's patients started describing similar events, he began to investigate. He has become increasingly convinced that dying is less an ending than a transition, the threshold between one form of consciousness and another.

One of many such experiences is related by Bill, who was "killed" in an airplane explosion at Ellsworth Air Force Base in South Dakota.

He said: *"I was in darkness but fully conscious and vividly aware of my surroundings. I was in some kind of tunnel. There was light in the distance and I saw the spiralling strings of blue green light coming and going like the Aurora Borealis.*

"The light was drawing me to it. I moved exceptionally fast down the tunnel and it took no time at all to reach it. It seemed that time was different or non-existent there, wherever 'there' was. The light was emanating from a being that was giving off a very brilliant light as part of his essence. He was beautiful to look at, and projected the feelings of love and peace. I also

We now have a sign advertising *Family Church* each fortnight, and include details of special services coming up in our newsletter each term. The preschool team appreciate and value your ongoing prayers.

We have managed one family event this term, even under COVID-19 red traffic light restrictions. Our families gathered on 4th February to celebrate Waitangi Day and Chinese New Year. Instead of our usual shared food, each family provided their own tea. The children performed their Waitangi Day play and Chinese New Year songs beautifully. Each attendee was sent home with a dessert gift bag containing a meringue/mini Pavlova for New Zealand culture, and some Chinese sweets for Chinese New Year. They were also each given a mandarin, which was symbolic of an orange, a traditional Chinese New Year gift.



Teacher Ariana



... Cont. on page 24

Preschool news

Liz Orr (head teacher)

Greetings from the management, staff and children of St Peter's Anglican Preschool to the Clergy, Vestry, and parishioners of St Peter's and St Luke's.

The beginning of the year had been a time of change at preschool as we farewelled eight children who left to start primary school, and one who moved to another part of the city. We have also farewelled teachers (T) Frew and Monica, as God called them onto new adventures. We wish them God's richest blessings as they leave us and thank both of them for their incredible contributions to our preschool. T Rose has graduated from her course, and found a permanent position in Wellington. Teacher Chris, who was our wonderful 'on-call' reliever, left in October to visit family in Canada. Since her return, she has taken up a position as Centre Director at a new centre. We wish both

teachers Rose and Chris God's blessings in their new positions.

God blesses us richly with wonderful staff. We have welcomed teachers Hannah and Ariana, who have taken up the positions of team leader for the older and younger children respectively. Teachers Jo and Katie have joined us as on-call relievers, and teacher Christina is basing herself with us while she studies.



Teacher Hannah

Our partnership with the parish continues to deepen as we find new ways to add to the relationship. Hopefully you will have all seen the regular columns I write for the weekly bulletin.



Farewell for Teachers Frew & Monica

sensed other beings there, but I did not see any because I could not take my attention from the Light Being. He asked me several questions all at the same time, impressions projected at me instead of verbal word-by-word sentences. He asked me: 'How do you feel about your life?' and 'How did you treat other people?' As he asked, every single event of my life from earliest childhood to the plane crash projected in front of me. There were details concerning people and things that I had forgotten long ago. I was not proud of some of my dealings with other people, but the light was quick to forgive all my errors. He told me to 'be in peace' and said that my work in this world was not done yet, and that I had to go back, and I was gone.

"I was back in my body again. I do not remember travelling there. The pain was back and I smelled the odour of jet fuel and heard sirens and explosions. The doctors and medics were busy with others but not noticing me. Later, I found out that they looked at me long enough to see that I was dead, and turned their attention to those that they could help."

The features of many of the NDEs that struck the author, included: an extreme clarity and speed of thought, a feeling of slowing down, or expansion, of time, an awareness of an enhanced state of consciousness, a feeling of enhanced senses, like vision and hearing, a 'life review' in which scenes from the experiencer's past come flooding back, and a feeling of being out-of-body.

The author goes on to explore whether consciousness continues after death—is there a heaven or hell? What about God? How does an experiencer's life change after a NDE? A new view of reality?

The lessons he would like us to learn from this account are that NDEs are common experiences that can happen to anyone. They are normal experiences that happen to people in exceptional circumstances, and usually lead to a number of profound and long lasting after-effects. They reduce the fear of death, and lead experiencers to live more fully in the present moment. They raise questions about the relationship between minds and brains, and about the continuation of consciousness after death.

We found this book a well written and thought provoking insight into a life event which comes to us all at some stage. It is well worth the read.



Remembering David Kent

Margaret Kent

Many of you will remember David, who was an integral part of St Peter's Upper Riccarton-Yaldhurst Parish for many years. His contribution to the well-being of the church was impressive, so we felt a tribute to his memory would provide a worthwhile article. ~Editor

David was born in Radlett, a dormitory village in Hertfordshire, fifteen miles from London and in the Diocese of St Albans.



He went off to boarding school at the age of seven, followed by Public School and then Cambridge where he graduated in Engineering. National Service claimed the next part of his life, and he spent two years in the Royal Navy. After this, his first job was with a firm of Consulting Engineers who immediately sent him up to Scotland for two years. This is where we first met – he was twenty three and I, eighteen. After two years we became engaged and unfortunately the day after, David had a nasty ski-ing accident which robbed him of his left eye. This was quite a blow to us all, but in his usual stoical way he came to terms with the loss and without complaint. We were married a few months later and thence to Radlett where we lived in a dear old cottage, whilst David returned to work in London.

Church had always played a big part in our lives and in the many moves we had, I do not think I can remember a time when David was not on Vestry (or PCC as it was called in the UK). He loved anything to do with figures—a mathematician at heart—and always ended up on the Finance Committee. He was, though, interested in all aspects of church life and was never happier than when sitting with a pen and pad on his lap, either working on new systems or designing extensions to buildings (Petersgate) and Gardens of Remembrance, which he did at St Peter's and also at our last church in the UK. His ideas were not always accepted by his fellow vestry members, of course, but he enjoyed a challenge!

***Peg:** Nick talked to you about the Sunday School. What is your hope for our children at St Peter's?*

My hope for St Peter's children is for them to know Jesus more, that they might have personal relationships with Jesus by reading the Bible, prayer, and examples to others, like Jesus in the community. My goal is, when others kids see St Peter's children, they will see Jesus in them.

***Peg:** What are/were some of the things you have planned for the Sunday School? (The Chipmunks visit is a good start.)*

In the Sunday School, we had outdoor activities in school holidays, for example, Chipmunks, where we had a really good time. The kids enjoyed playing together so much, and we met up with parents to get to know them better. For the coming holiday, we are planning to have horse riding as part of Sunday School activities.



At every Sunday School session, I teach the children New Testament and Old Testament themes, games, craft, memory verses, and birthday celebrations.

***Peg:** How do you think it is going?*

It is so good each week, and the parents and children are looking forward to more outdoor activities in the coming holidays. The parents are giving lots of feedback, and giving some ideas about what they need for the kids to grow. This is giving me more encouragement.

***Peg:** What would you like to see happen and what would you need?*

I would like to see St Peter's Children's Ministry become a multicultural children's ministry, that God will bring more children from different backgrounds and different countries to worship and be part of the Sunday School and the Church. I need prayer, guidance and encouragement. I am grateful for all the support I am given at St Peter's Church.

Getting to know you

Ruth Manickam

My name is Ruth Manickam. I was born in Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, where I became a Christian in 2007.

In 2015 I came to New Zealand as a visitor. The Lord opened the door for me to work as *Youth Worker* in Dunedin for different churches from 2016 to 2019.

Then I moved to Christchurch to work with the Anglican church from 2019 to 2020 as youth worker.

I had a desire since 2007 to go to Bible School and the Lord fulfilled my wish. I started my journey with Vision College and am now with Laidlaw College, doing my Bachelor of Theology. While I study, the Lord has blessed me to serve in St Peter's Church as youth worker, supervising both Sunday School and an intermediate group.

I am married to John Guhem and we have one son, Joseph. As a family, we like to watch any action movie that makes us happy or laugh, we cook a variety of multicultural foods during weekends, and occasionally we spend time with other family members and go to the beach.

My passions, other than cooking, are going to the gym, meeting new people, being challenged to learn new things—like when Peg asked me to give the message for the Family Church.



An interview with Ruth

Peg Riley

Peg: *Hi Ruth: How did you come to be at St Peter's Church?*

I was looking for a church to attend with my family, and I was praying for three months to God to lead me to a church where he wanted me to serve and worship. God led us to meet Nick after three months of prayer, and we had so much peace and joy of the Lord, so then we decided to worship at St Peter's.



David sails with his children

Our most significant move though, was to New Zealand in 1970. David was asked by his firm if he would go to Auckland to start up a new company and, after family discussion, we agreed to this. Initially it was for two years but in the end we stayed for fifteen—we loved it all and the children revelled in the warm climate and outdoor lifestyle. We belonged to St Thomas' Church at the top of St. Heliers Bay Road—a wonderful place of worship with a wonderful Vicar throughout—the Rev. Herbert Simmonds.

After fifteen years in Auckland, David was recalled to the UK and, before retiring, studied for three years to be a Lay Reader. This was something he had felt passionately about for a number of years and one that kept him very busy and fulfilled once granted a licence. He discovered that Lay Readers could take funerals (he took many, some in church and some at the Crematorium), but they were not allowed to marry people or baptise!

On the move again, in 1999 we came back to New Zealand, this time to Christchurch where our daughter and family were living – our son by then lived in Vancouver. We were fortunate enough to find our way to St Peter's and St Luke's churches where we were warmly welcomed and made to feel at home right away. This was a huge step in helping us to settle and we will always be grateful for that.

What did David do to relax—well not cooking or household duties! In his younger days he loved sailing and anything to do with the sea, but latterly enjoyed a laid-back game of tennis and badminton (St Peter's Club), was a voracious reader and most importantly for him, being surrounded by family and friends.

He was humble and gentle, saw good in everyone, had great faith and kept God in his heart.



David, the Lay Reader

Care Bears began in the Parish in 2018 with an awareness of shortcomings in the level of pastoral care being provided—people were falling through cracks, the parish roll was long out of date and it was perceived that there was a general need for a group of dedicated carers within the fellowship. The name came about as many years ago we had a large pink *Care Bear*, which each week was sent home with a child to be theirs for the week (or longer, if it was forgotten!)

The Care Bears, usually about ten strong in number, meet at least fortnightly through the year. In 2020, we conducted a parish visitation whereby, with the help of some City Mission folk, we cold-called people in Upper Riccarton, particularly in the streets behind the Countdown supermarket. This was quite a task for Care Bears as we, as a general rule, do not like to visit unannounced. However, the City Mission volunteers, who were very used to the process, lead each team, and we took new generation light bulbs and St Peter's material to leave behind at the houses we visited. A successful visitation we felt and one to be looked at again, after COVID.

When looking at the parish roll, we check that all names are of current members of the congregation, no one who has left the parish is still there, and certainly no-one who has died. This is a constant job as we are a moving population. We note the parishioners who are unwell for whatever reason and someone follows up with that person—a phone call, a visit, or a clergy visit. They are offered prayer and assistance. Most often that person has a number of family and/or friends to call upon but, when that support is not there, Care Bears are offering it in some way.

In COVID times, we have been regularly phoning the whole roll, making sure that people are managing, that they know what is happening, and where to access help if needed. This information is passed on to the clergy team.

As part of our continuing upskilling for our tasks, different members of the clergy team discuss with us various things that they have learned, and we are looking forward to Margaret Neate and Sue Robb leading us in a discussion about Mental First Aid.

... Continued on next page

While the first half of that phrase—the *restoring* of St. Peter's Church—has been so wonderfully completed, the second, *fundraising*, is still a work in progress.

As mentioned previously we *do* need to repay the funds that were borrowed from our parish glebe investment (still in the tens of thousands) as income from these is important for our day-to-day running costs. As major trusts and charities do not give retrospectively to work already completed we cannot look to these sources any longer, and so must rely upon the generosity of individual givers.

In addition to such donations, we plan for special fund-raising events, and it is hoped that easing of COVID restrictions will permit a number of these to get up and running soon. Concerts and performances of various kinds, further quiz nights, our annual book sale, a garden party—the list goes on. And parishioners are welcome to come up with their own suggestions.

But we continue to give enormous thanks to the many, many generous donors, within the parish and beyond, who have brought us to this point. It has been a tremendous achievement.

So let us press on, knowing that our goal is to bring glory to God, and to equip the saints (that is all of us!) for the work of ministry.



Care Bears continued...

All in all, an extremely interesting group to belong to as we meet to discuss people's needs and concerns and to make sure all those needing assistance get the appropriate help

The Care Bears are—Clergy, Jo Winfield, Sue Robb, Sue Chappell (St Luke's Yaldhurst), Barbara Clarke, Adrienne and Bruce Williams and Bobbity Murfitt.