



Photo - Fiona Harper

Nativity

NEWS

AUGUST 2021

Issue 19

Editorial

By Rosemary Francis

The Olympic Games 2020 (Delayed 1 year by Covid.) Our world desperately needs respect and unity between various races and countries. The Olympic Games stand for these high ideals. As the world watches on from a safe distance, thanks to Covid's ugly spread, we can appreciate the personal journey of every athlete as they represent their countries at the elite level of the Olympics.

Such prestigious sporting challenges occurred in Greece in the time of the early church, and we can still learn from advice laid in our Bible. The life of the Christians' journey is compared with a foot race. This is the challenge set for us, no matter what age or health we enjoy; the Bible gives us a check-list of wise advice as we journey through life towards our Heavenly home.

As our region dries out and repairs begin following the weather bombs which saw us severely flooded, Nativity's projects move on. In this issue, we report on the redevelopment of our hall. We introduce the Corins, one of our missionary families. We show you the cutest little church in New Zealand, at Kekerengu, and Nativity's part in keeping it going.

In 'getting to know our Nativity family', we chat to the van Wijngaardens, who are regulars at our 8AM Service and the Smiths from our 10AM Service. We also report on the very popular and nostalgic afternoon of singing the grand old hymns of our church, and share photos of the mid-winter luncheon which our elderly folk look forward to as a highlight of their long winters indoors. Yes, Nativity is busy in our community and shining as a light in this place.

(Perhaps we should consider building an ark as the rain events continue?)

Meanwhile, let us train for our personal 'Olympics', and "run the race to claim our prize,"



THE CHECK LIST

STRIVING FOR THE PRIZE

"Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize." (1 Corinthians 9:24)

ENCOUNTERING HINDRANCES

"You did run well, who did hinder you that you should not obey the truth?" (Galatians 5: 7)

STRIVING FOR THE GOAL

"I press toward the goal for the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 3:14)

LIGHTENING THE BURDENS THAT BESET US

"Let us set aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us. (Hebrews 12:1)

THE HOME STRETCH

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." (2 Timothy 4: 7)

THE PRIZE WON

"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing." (2 Timothy 4: 8)





UPDATE

From Vicar Glen

Rev. Glen Ashworth

In the April edition, being my first piece, I thought introductions were in order – it's what you do when you first meet. Although we are still getting to know one another and the place, it feels a long time since then which I think is a good sign. What do you do after introductions? As a church leader, rambling thoughts that try to say something about our Christian life of course...

We have now been in Blenheim for six months and for us as a family it has been a time of settling into a new environment. New places to navigate and discover, new things to learn and new relationships to develop. We have enjoyed the newness of a different place, the different physical environment as well as experiencing first-hand the renowned southern hospitality – we have not been disappointed. 'He aha te mea nui o te ao?', 'What is the most important thing in the world?', the ancient Maori proverb asks... 'He tangata, he tangata, he tangata', 'It is the people, it is the people, it is the people,' is the reply. And while Marlborough is a beautiful part of the world to live in, it is always the people and the quality of relationships that make a place a great place to be. My family is pretty great and moving here continues to grow and strengthen us as individuals and as a family too. Moving anywhere for a particular role also has an effect and while being careful about maintaining a balanced life, it helps to bring a certain focus to what you do.

The people we have encountered here have been great. There is a great balance of care and space and already I feel a connection with many of you.

This all bodes well for the time ahead we have – it is the quality of relationships, it has been said, that show the world to whom we belong. It is the start and end of our mission in the world and as we love God and love one another, we make him and his hopes known to those around us.

***Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God;
everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.
1 John 4:7***

Good News to Share!



New minister for St. Christopher's, Blenheim South, Deolito Vistar, seen here with his wife, Guang Wang and their children, Angela and Nathan. They will be commissioned on 5th September 2021.



On 2nd May 2021 Marie-Jeanette van der Wal, and her husband Hans, were welcomed to Holy Trinity, Picton. Marie-Jeanette was commissioned as minister of the Picton Parish.

THE EYE OF THE STORM

By Rosemary Francis

As local river levels rose rapidly through Marlborough and the West Coast, Councils monitored the angry waters putting our stop banks under massive pressure. Any breaches would cause flooding. As news came in of enforced evacuations from homes inundated, businesses flooded, and vehicles trapped on our roads. The heavy downpours brought rockfalls and mudslides, washing out bridges, and fallen trees denied access to isolated communities.

As these storms of June and July evolved into the biggest seen in Marlborough for decades, I contacted Animal Control to report trapped sheep on the Opaua River floodplain. They were bleating in fear, soaked and standing in water, with no way of escape. Animal Control did their best, but 12 unfenced sheep drowned and floated off down the river that day. It was horrific, both from an animal cruelty point of view and from the pollution of a 'swimmable' river flowing through the heart of Blenheim. I have written to Minister Damien O'Connor and to the MDC who own the floodplain and rent it to the farmer. I have witnessed this sad scene three times in the decade living here.

Farmlands flooded, forlorn vines were standing in trenches of muddy water, animals drowned as the saturated ground and swollen rivers were unable to cope with the deluge. Sodden Marlborough is now moving on and drying out, although the damage will take years to repair.

We cannot deny that our world is already caught up in a climate emergency. New Zealand won't be spared the devastation which has recently wrought such flooding in Germany and Hunan, China. Apart from the floods, the unprecedented heatwaves in Canada and the massive forest fires in the southwest United States and Siberia suggest urgent action by all of us is essential.

Canterbury has suffered from intense destructive fires in recent years and our state of preparedness for heatwaves are poor. While we've been more concerned with keeping ourselves warm and dry over the heavy rains of winter, we look forward to a dry, hot summer. But we need to remember that the volatilities of climate can also knock us around badly when the mercury climbs. The wilder weather that our carbon-burning lifestyles have contributed to is increasing the variations in temperatures Planet Earth is experiencing.

As Christians, let us consider our role in this world God created. He gave us the responsibility of tending and caring for His World; land, sea, rivers, mountains, skies. We've filled our oceans with rubbish, polluted the atmosphere, poisoned waterways with commercial greed, depleted soil, and killed off native habitats causing the extinction of so many creatures. How it must grieve Him to see such wanton destruction. Let us do what is possible to turn this sad state of affairs around so that our future generations can enjoy their world and not inherit a desert or a bog.

The Diversion

God looked at everything He had made, and behold, it was very good." (Genesis 1 v 31)



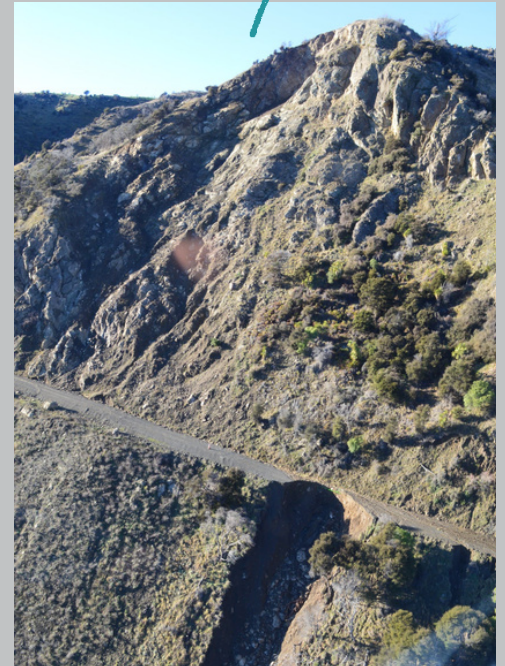
Our amazing front cover photo was taken by one of our talented youth - Fiona Harper



Stopbank Breached!



Water Rising!



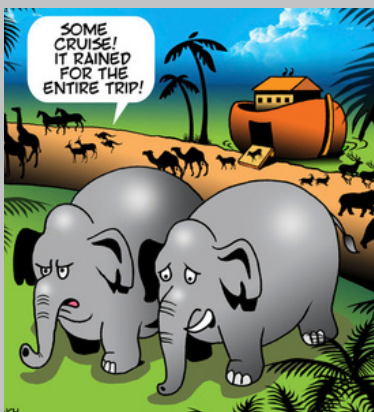
Road Gone! Awatere Valley



Vines Flooded!



Mundy farm underwater



Tuamarina



Welcome to our Mission Partners: Chris, Catherine and Family



Keith Buck's Care Cell
hosted a Coffee and Dessert
evening at Jo Danks' home, for
those who take services at
Rest Homes. A wonderful
evening was had by all!

Hi, we are Chris and Catherine, and together with our 5 children, we have been serving God in Central Asia, helping to make Jesus known to those who have not yet heard. Most of these people are from a Muslim background, and many have little or no opportunity to hear the Gospel. But God has been raising up local people with a heart to serve Him, and pastor the few believers who are there, and also to take the Gospel to those who haven't heard. But as they go and share their faith, they are confronted with suspicion, hostility and often persecution.

This can be quite different when they go into a new area to start a small business. These businesses give local church-planters an identity and legitimacy, so they are more readily accepted by the community, providing a context for relationships and ministry to happen. We have started a project to come alongside these local pastors and church planters – providing them with training, access to micro-credit and support – to enable them to be the salt and light that God has called them to be. We are looking forward to our time over the next few months as we are based in Blenheim, to share a bit more about the work that God has called us to in Central Asia, but also just having the opportunity to reconnect with you all, and enjoying life back in Marlborough!



Nativity Album



Strategic planning morning for Vestry and Staff Team
on Saturday July 3 at Barnies.
This will be an ongoing focus for Vestry



Fun at the Foot Clinic !
Parish Nurse , Sharon Thomas (top left)



Let's Sing!
Enjoying a sing-a-long of the familiar old hymns.



Youth Event at Harvest Life



Eileen Guard, Margaret Hastings & Jan Burrough
led the singing



Diocesan Leadership Conference at Lake Rotoiti .
Youth Activity



Exciting !

Nativity Hall Redevelopment



It is so exciting to see these images of what will become reality - hopefully in the not too distant future. The redevelopment of the Hall is stage 1 of the project. The earthquake strengthening of the Church is Stage 2. Further along the track - stage 3 - a 'fit for purpose' building for our children's and youth ministry is planned.

In the hall, the stage and side rooms will be removed giving an additional 47% more floor area. The wall at the back of the stage will be replaced with glass and will open out onto a generous deck with covered areas.

The photo of the interior of the hall (left) is taken from the current corridor looking towards the stage. The second view is taken from the current stage.

A new kitchen, 49% larger than the present one, will be along the wall facing the car park. Seen here are the proposed entrances to the Lounge and the Kitchen.

The hall which will seat 150 will be used for services when the renovations of the church are in progress.

HOW CAN I HELP?

PRAY FOR OUR CHURCH

We want to ensure we are following God's leading in all decisions concerning buildings and ministry.

FINANCIALLY SUPPORT THIS

If you have caught the vision and want to see this project become a reality through a significant financial contribution, please contact Keith Buck in confidence via keith@nativity.org.nz

TEAM SMIFF - DOMESTIC BLISS

The Smiths (Smiffs) are a family of 6 +; Alex (aka Dad, 'OG' -old guy / geyser/ grumpy, grandfather name), Anna (aka Mum, GrAnna), Bethy (aka Mama), Holly (aka 'Nuttty Holly' - derivation of Aunt), James (aka Dada James) and Arc (full name Arcanos, aka Captain Havoc). Our ages span from 20 months to 57 yrs.

The '+' are our fur-mily members, Emma (5 yr black Lab) and Moose, a 1 ½ yr old tabby cat that Holly and I rescued on Mother's Day 2020.

God only has adopted children and we are proudly a family with adoption in our DNA.

We live, play, work, study, havoc, grouch and giggle together. Our precious home is frequently a scene of low-grade chaos / busy-ness, which we're learning to navigate with loving dialogue.

Beyond the dishes, laundry, cooking, gardening etc. each of us contribute in our own way:

- Alex is self-employed running a Leadership Development consultancy
- Anna works in Clinical Research (drug development)
- Bethy is a 1st year Student Nurse
- James is an apprenticed Car Mechanic
- Holly is a wonderful work in progress, a unique set of skills about to emerge
- Arc is human sunshine, keeping us all loved up!

We have known highs and lows, all of which we 'own', recognizing that God's Grace enables us to be protected and grow, through challenge or rejoicing.

Both Anna and Alex were fortunate to grow up in Christian homes. Both fathers were Anglican priests. Alex's father (now 94 yrs) served as a British Army Padre in Germany / UK. Anna's father (ended his race in 2014) was a Missionary in Algeria for 21 yrs. However, God does not have grandchildren. In their own ways, Anna and Alex kicked back against the assumptions that are made of 'Vicar's kids' so found their own way to personal faith. Anna aged 19 (Youth With A Mission, Amsterdam), and Alex a bit later in life choosing baptism by full immersion in 2016 (Shore Community Church, Albany Auckland).

You'll likely see Alex, Anna and possibly Arc in the 10am congregation. We are there to worship, fellowship and learn because we are followers of Christ, as opposed to Anglicans.

If we are not at the 10am service we may be out sailing, exploring beautiful NZ in the caravan, or "sabbath bashing" (cheeky family phrase) due to exhaustion / needing to regroup.

The Smiffs are daily thankful for the GORGEOUS Marlborough / NZ environment we live in and that we have the 'money in the bank' of a stable loving family life, something we have learned can not be taken for granted.

A few of the precious moments in our church family life:

- Unsolicited feedback from one of our church family who had seen Holly in town, helping a frail old lady who was struggling. This came at a time when we really needed to be reminded how loving our daughter is.
- Peggy's smile and generosity at the 'Sharing Table'.
- Glen, Sarah and family choosing to join us.
- Each Communion.





FAREWELL JEFF & PAM

Thank you for your faithful servant hearts!

Jeff and Pam Sawyer have been serving the Nativity Church Family virtually from the day they arrived in Rarangi, Blenheim, from Lower Hutt, for their retirement in 2005.

They were immediately enveloped into the Nativity fold with Pam (previously a legal secretary) manning the Church Office on Fridays, and Jeff (an electrician), sorting out the overloaded power circuits in the church buildings and adding new power points, etc. in parish owned houses. At the invitation of David and Grace Petrie, they joined their Care Cell and over the past few years, Jeff has been attending John Neal's Men's group. Involvement in the church services as Readers and Servers for Holy Communion, Sunday Morning Tea duty, First Steps and Tunes for tots on Fridays has all been part of their service. For eight years their beach location was idyllic for staff retreats and for summer Sunday lunches held some years back. In 2013 the Sawyers moved into their present home in Springlands where hospitality was part of their lives.

NATIVITY CATERING

With a love of catering, Pam teamed up with Pauline Tisch to form 'Nativity Catering'. For over ten years along with Jeff and Roger Tisch providing backup support, they have been catering for weddings, anniversaries, dinners, and birthday parties. The proceeds have enabled them to fund the mid-year and end of year dinners for the over 65's, provide an evening meal for Joy Club (St. Andrews) two or three times a year, as well as assisting those in need of funding for personal emergencies such as dental care, airfares, books for university studies and grocery vouchers.

Now, with two-thirds of their family in Nelson and health problems becoming more evident it became clear that a move to Nelson would be in their best interests. They feel that God has been leading them every step of their journey and they are excited by what plans God has for them in the future.

Jeff and Pam, the Nativity family are excited for you too! Thank you for your friendship and for your love and service to God and God's people. May you be richly blessed in your new adventure!

OVER 65'S MIDWINTER DINNER



THE SMALLEST CHURCH IN NZ ?

WOW!



The wee church of St. George's, Kekerengu, that comfortably sits two to a pew, delights Nativity people who choose to take a Sunday jaunt in the country. They arrive for the service at 10.30am on the third Sunday of the month, which is followed by the whole congregation proceeding to The Store for lunch. St. George's is the most southern worship centre of the Awatere Christian Joint Venture Parish - part of the Nelson Anglican Diocese.



St. George's began life as a Station store. In 1941 it was decided to plaster the exterior, line the inside, and (with a new door and windows) make it suitable for use as a small church. The land on which it stood enclosed a burial ground from early Kekerengu days. Amongst those buried, there are three victims of the Tiaroa shipwreck of 1886.

The wall along the front is crafted from lovely pink Wharanui stone. The two pillars of the entrance gates are dedicated to the two men from Kekerengu who were killed in action in World War 2 - Wilfred JA Bennett and Lieutenant Ben Masfield.

Nativity's Pam Saunders is the daughter of W.J.A. Bennett.



Getting to know our Church Family

**Alex and Gerry van Wijngaarden
kindly share their story**

Gerry and I met for the first time on a rather dismal and unpleasant Thursday afternoon in July 1973 at Southampton Docks, after joining/re-joining one of the Union Castle passenger ships plying the six week-long mail run between England and South Africa – Gerry as the Nursing Sister, I as one of the junior watch-keeping officers. Our first introduction was brief with a bit of banter. She was a bit of a rarity in those days – the only lady forming part of the Deck Department which was traditionally an 'all male' domain. I recall seeing her medal for the first time – NZRN – which I took to be NZ Royal Navy. That was our first of many lively verbal exchanges!

During the course of the voyage, we grew to know each other better as we generally moved in the same social circle on board, often meeting as a group in one of the lounges after dinner or during those stints where we provided entertainment for the passengers – this was well before the days of professional entertainers.

Skits such as the hornpipes, Morris dancing, and the Can-Can (Gerry's 'speciality!') to name but a few made up the usual entertainment fare!

During the second voyage, while at the stop-over in Durban (South Africa), I proposed, and Gerry accepted. We had to keep our engagement 'under wraps' as it was Company policy that engaged or married couples could not sail together. Gerry completed another two or three voyages on others ships in the fleet before going ashore and taking up a position at a new hospital in London to set up and manage the Anaesthesia Department.

We were married in London in August 1974 at St Mary the Virgin in Wimbledon and settled into married life together in a very small basement flat. We started the process of my immigration to New Zealand, and surprisingly I was granted entry after only 5 months. We arrived in Auckland in April 1977 and moved to Picton to stay with Gerry's parents.



We were blessed to be expecting our first child. I found temporary employment as a watchkeeping officer on the then rail ferries, with a seagoing position with an Iranian shipping company starting in September of that year.

In late September our son, Paul, was born and it was a real wrench to leave him and Gerry in Holmdale Maternity Hospital to fly to London to join a ship, knowing that I would not see them again for at least the six-month period of my contract. In the end, that turned out to be nearly nine months before I managed to get home. Our only means of communication was by letter and in some ports in the Middle East where I was trading, I would not hear from home for many weeks. That, of course also went for Gerry. There was no email, no WhatsApp, or all the instant communications we have these days and it put real pressure on our relationship.

"No email, no What's App in those days..."

While I continued my sea-going career, Gerry pursued her nursing career. In 1983 I returned as a permanent watch-keeping officer on the (then) rail ferries and in that year we were once again blessed, this time with our daughter, Karyn, who was born mid-September. Both our children were baptised in Holy Trinity, Picton, and attended church with us from a very early age.

In 1989 we moved to Fairhall and became part of the Renwick Parish. While I continued my work on the ferries, Gerry worked at Radfield Hospital as a theatre nurse, managing her work hours around my roster.

My roster was such that we were able to spend a lot of quality time with our children, not only in the Sounds but also on the local ski field. We look back on those very happy days with many, many good memories.



Gerry involved in the establishment of Churchill Private Hospital

With the cessation of surgical services at Radfield, Gerry, along with a group of medical professionals established the Churchill Private Hospital in the early 1990's to ensure the survival of surgical services in Marlborough. The then Health Service wanted to concentrate its services in Nelson with Wairau providing emergency and some support services only. The basic brief from the then Wairau Hospital Chief Executive, the late Glenys Baldick, was "get in there and get on with it", never dreaming at that stage what it has become today.

Alex becomes Picton Harbourmaster

During this time, the Harbour Master position at Council became vacant and I applied for and obtained this position. Becoming fully shore-based took some getting used to. With Paul in secondary school and Karyn soon to move to the Girls College, a move into 'town' made sense. We became regular 'eight o'clockers' at Nativity. *(Currently Alex operates the Sound Desk at 8.00am, and in recent years Gerry has served on Nativity Vestry)*

Individual Communion Cups introduced at Nativity

On completion of his secondary schooling, Paul was accepted by Otago University for the first year Health Science, culminating in admission to the Medical School. With his growing medical knowledge, Paul petitioned the Vicar and Vestry to implement the individual cups for communion, citing the health hazards the congregation face when sharing the common cup. It was at a time when we, as a community, were teaching our children the dangers of 'sharing spit' by sharing drink bottles with meningitis being one of the highly transmissible diseases.

In addition, Rev. Warwick Hearn had compromised immunity and many of our older parishioners would be exposed to a variety of transmissible 'bugs' that could potentially be fatal for them. With the Covid pandemic the decisions to use single cup made by the parish has been proven a worthwhile and prudent step at that time. It is even more important, in the context of the global pandemic, that we maintain the individual cups.

Faith through the darkest time

2002 was a wonderful year for us all but towards its end left us, as a family, in a very dark place. Paul had completed his university training and was at Wairau hospital as a House Surgeon, while Karyn was attending Otago University studying law and psychology.

The 11th December 2002 is forever etched in our minds. As a family, we sat down to dinner and had just finished giving thanks for the food when, in an instant, Paul at the age of 25, was taken from us. We don't remember too much of that evening other than the support we received from the Nativity Team, in particular Richard Ellena. We have always been a very close family and we, as parents, felt particularly blessed with our children, and even in those dark moments, we knew that there was nothing left unsaid between us.

"It was our faith, both individually and as a family, that carried us through the dark days, weeks and months.

Without faith I don't know where we would have ended up! "

It took us a long time to go back to church and even longer to go back to the Christmas morning service. We tried that first Christmas but had to leave. What was equally difficult was understanding that the world around us went on as if nothing had happened. The sun still came up in the morning, birds still sang in the trees. That was hard to come to terms with.

Now a family of three, we became closer to each other.

In the new year Karyn returned to Otago but dropped law and concentrated on the psychology studies. On attaining her degree, she moved to Victoria University to pursue her law degree. Gerry continued at the Churchill until 2006 when she left to help her sister in England look after her husband who was ill. On returning to New Zealand, Gerry was approached by the Wairau Radiology Department to take up a newly created nursing position, something she enjoyed until retirement in 2016.

Our faith was challenged yet again with a potentially life-threatening diagnosis affecting Karyn. Six years and three major bouts of surgery on, we pray for her continuing good health as she struggles with the aftermath of the last few years while, at the same time, holding down a full-time job as a solicitor.

"Reflecting on the past and looking to the future with faith and thanksgiving."

As we are both retired now, we spend our time in the garden, voluntary work, and other interests, enjoying a less 'pressurised' life, reflecting on the past and looking to the future with faith and thanksgiving.

Alex van Wijngaarden



We welcome Raewyn Parkes to the Nativity News Team! From her home library Raewyn shares and highly recommends the



The Way of Blessing

Stepping into the Mission and Presence of God

By Roy Goodwin with Dave Roberts



'The Way of Blessing' has changed my prayer life. I encourage you to read this book and embark on a spiritual pilgrimage to the windswept hills of Wales, within the small praying community known as Ffald y Brenin. This is the second best-seller co-authored by Goodwin and Roberts, the first being, 'The Grace Outpouring'.

We live in a truly tumultuous and dangerous time in the history of our world.

Our natural reaction as Christians is to pray.

"How do we pray for a world that is increasingly interconnected and therefore vulnerable to terrorism and environmental catastrophes?" (Open Doors UK)

'The deaf hear, the blind see and the broken receive healing.'

The Way of Blessing can be borrowed from the Nativity Church Library



MIDWINTER CHRISTMAS FUNDRAISING DINNER



BAMBOO GARDENS - MONDAY 21 JUNE

'Grateful thanks to everyone for the 'super-sonic' effort and support that resulted in a fabulous night!' says Elaine Daines, on behalf of the Fun, Fundraising and Fellowship Team who organized the successful event. One hundred and twenty people attended the dinner. Thanks to Canon John Neal, MC, for his entertaining stories, to Auctioneer, Joe Blakiston, for his tireless work, for the sponsors of the auction items, for parishioners who 'paid forward' so that others could attend, for those who attended, and for the organizers and helpers; and of course to Bamboo Gardens who subsidized the dinner costs.

Funds from the ticket sales, auction, and competition on the night, after dinner costs were taken out, were \$11,200. A new electronic keyboard was purchased for \$3,782 and the balance of \$7,510 has been transferred to the Fun, Fundraising, and Fellowship account to help with the kitchen equipment for the hall upgrade.

Fun, Fundraising, and Fellowship Team - Elaine Daines, Pauline Tisch, Jocelyn Wilkes, and Miriam McNamara - thanks for your hard work!



UPCOMING EVENTS



WEEKLY SERVICES

Sunday 8.00am	Sung Eucharist Service
Sunday 10.00am	Family Communion
Thursday 10.00am	Eucharist Service at St. Barnabas Chapel

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMES

Sunday 10.00am (during School Term)	First Steps - 0-5 years, Nativity Kids, Youth
Friday 9.30am	Tunes for Tots - Hall

Thank You!

NATIVITY NEWS SPONSORS



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