



Starry Night - van Gogh

Nativity News

DECEMBER 2023

Issue 26

Editorial

by Rose Francis



Christians in North Korea are persecuted, and many die for their faith. Yet they gather secretly and 'sing' in silence, opening their mouths in unison, but allowing no sound from their voices for fear of being overheard.

Imagine what it would be like to attend a Christmas service and have to simply 'mouth' the words of our great carols, with no sweet harmony or swelling crescendo of the organ. We are so privileged to be able to join in singing aloud the glorious good news of Christ's birth, and sharing precious scriptures in public. Carols are original elements of the Nativity story, as the angelic choir composed and sang the first carol "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and goodwill towards all." (Luke 2 v 14) Imagine the richness of their song, myriads of angels harmonising, chanting as they brought a luminous glow to the dark skies. Every time we join in such music, we are re-enacting that wondrous scene. As we hear the sound of Christmas music in shops and on radio, let's pause, concentrate on the message and sing along.

Nativity contributes to the music of Blenheim. Our organ and building are used for big concerts, and we have parishioners who are involved in music in the community; both orchestral and choral. We hope you will enjoy their stories within. On the Nativity Library page the theme of artistic creativity continues with a book review of "75 Masterpieces every Christian Should Know", which tells the fascinating stories behind great works of Art, Literature, Music and Film.

Last issue we featured birds, sweet creatures God has blessed us with. Now we follow the birds with the bees, with their amazing service of pollination and the bonus of their honey to feed people and animals alike. (There are over a dozen mentions of bees and honey in the Bible.) Dion Mundy is a bee keeper, and his daughter Alice is following in his footsteps. Their stories are in our Eco Church page.

Soon we will be farewelling Canon John Neal and Pam Neal who are moving to Palmerston North to be nearer family. John and Pam are greatly loved members of the Nativity family. We feature articles and photographs highlighting their lives of service to God and his church. I know they will take the light of God's love with them. 'Pam and John, you are such a blessing to us, and we will miss your cheerful, generous presence.'

Also in this issue, we show the exciting progress of the hall upgrade. We will share photos of The 'Joy of Christmas House Tours' which was a fund-raiser towards the upgrade, organized by our hard-working Fun and Fundraising Team.

You will find in the Nativity News Pages Christmas activities for children.

Let us celebrate King Jesus this Christmas. He came to bless those who rejected Him, challenged those who defamed Him and gives hope to billions in a disheartened and fearful world.

"Joy to the World, our Lord has come!"

We wish you and your loved ones
a Blessed Christmas.



UPDATE

From Vicar Glen

Revelation and Fulfilment

On the road between Paeroa and Waihi at the base of the Coromandel Peninsula you will find the stunning Karangahake Gorge. This used to be goldmining country and the remains of that can now be seen by bike via the Hauraki Rail Trail. It is an easy ride and great for all ages. That is, of course, until you reach the train tunnel. As you enter the tunnel you can see the light at the end but 1.1km is a long way and it gets pretty dark at times (for small ones, take a flashlight). The prophet Isaiah, foretelling the birth of the Messiah, said this, 'The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light' (Isa 9:2). Through the month of December we go through the season of Advent. And it seems a strange season - not only do we hear about the events leading up to the arrival of Christ as a baby but also the events leading up to his return as Lord.

But it's a bit like the Karangahake train tunnel - we are living between the revelation of God in Jesus Christ and the fulfilment of that revelation, the redemption that lies ahead. We can see the great light and all has been done for our salvation but yet all things still wait to be renewed. How are we to navigate the world in this state? The theologian Karl Barth said that 'confident assurance is not Christian unless it is shot through with longing for a salvation yet to be realized in its fullness in Christ.'

Although there remains darkness on the road, we walk in that life that is to come, '...the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light' (Rom 13:12)

Revd. Glen Ashworth



Vicar Glen, along with three other wise men and an apprentice, led Nativity's float in this year's Christmas Parade in Blenheim, on Saturday 2 December.

The Nativity float was named the 'Best Community Float' in the Christmas Parade!
More pictures feature later in this Nativity News.

How one camp at Lake Rotoiti changed my life



Peter Olliver

August 23rd, 1969, was the first week of the term holidays. I was a slightly apprehensive 4th former stepping out of my comfort zone. I wasn't afraid of the outdoors, in fact as a Scout I loved camping and tramps around Canterbury and the backcountry. I guess my unease stemmed from being with a group of people I didn't know.

My parents dropped me off at Newman's Bus Company's depot in central Christchurch. There I caught sight of the one boy I knew who was going on the week-long Crusader/ISCF camp at Lake Rotoiti in the Nelson Lakes National Park. His name was Graeme Beal. Graeme and I sat together as the green bus chugged its way north via the Weka Pass with stops at Springs Junction, Murchison and finally an almost brand new Rotoiti Lodge at St Arnaud village. I recall the incredible skill and accuracy of the bus driver who could throw copies of The Press newspaper over the top of the bus into mailboxes on the side of the road while the bus was moving!

I think that there were around sixty teenage students at the lodge that day. We lined up outside the building and were welcomed by the leaders before we were allocated our dorm rooms- girls upstairs and the boys downstairs. We carried our packs and gear to our bunk rooms and met our new 'teammates' one of whom was a young Chris Nicholson, son of a Blenheim clergyman.

The camp was a major turning point in my Christian journey and nearly a decade later, several of the leaders would become close friends and still are to this day. For example, one of the leaders was a young 23-year-old maths graduate and Teachers College student from Waimate. Dave Kennedy was a mad keen long-distance runner and outdoors fanatic. Years later when I got a job at Marlborough Boys' College he was on the staff and Jenny and I became friends with him, his wife Anne and their young daughter Esther. They had a wonderful sense of humour, and we are still good friends.

Other members of the team were Richard and Maureen Lamb. They too have played an important part in our lives. Richard was ex-RNZAF and was a pilot with SAFE Air. I didn't know it then, but when we joined St Ninian's Church in 1979 they welcomed us into their house group, and we never left. Richard and Maureen were exemplary Christians, committed to faithfully serving Christ in the world. Richard was a talented woodworker and music leader and Maureen, a nurse, organist, and Girls' Brigade leader. In their 80s now, they are still committed to pastoral ministry at St James in Lower Hutt where they have worshipped for several years.

What struck me most in the week-long camp was the fact that the leaders were down-to-earth 'Kiwis' who were into outdoor life. Yes, there were studies and discussions, but nothing felt 'contrived'. The leaders were 'real' people and certainly were not 'holier than thou'. I was super impressed when we were taken on tramps to numerous places including Hopeless Creek Hut, Mount Robert, around the lake and even deer stalking. One leader, a young vicar from Stoke in Nelson, shot a 'Spiker' deer while we were walking up the Speargrass Track. He butchered the first-year stag and carried it on his pack back to the hut for further processing. When we returned to the lodge it became part of an evening meal. Wow! If this was the Christian life- count me in!

Next day, the same vicar took us for short flights in a Cessna 172 aeroplane from a nearby airstrip.

***Forget 'cool', this was awesome!
He was Barry Crump and Biggles
rolled into one.***

***Who was this man?
Our very own John Neal.***

I would learn later that he used his love of flying as part of his ministry in Labrador, Canada and even more recently, prior to retirement, as a padre in the Air Force.

Thanks, John, for setting an example of what a Christian could be like. Fifty-five years on you are still passionate about your faith and you lead by example. You were pivotal in showing me the way of Christ, and it changed my view of Christians.

All too soon the camp was over, and we returned to our respective towns, schools and in some instances-churches. I returned to Christchurch, completed my Scouting and Venturer awards, and became a youth leader before heading to university and a career in teaching.

I would visit Lake Rotoiti many times with classes from Marlborough Boys' and Girls'; and while all of these were memorable in their own way, none were as significant as that camp I attended in August 1969.



***Who was this man?
Our very own John Neal.***

Na te whakarongo me te titiro ka puta mai te korero.
Through looking and listening we gain wisdom

Pam Neal - A Ministry Angel

I am sure that none of us know all that Pam has done for the church and our wider community over the years!

Some may know her as John's secretary and support, missions supporter, a small group leader, or the children's ministry angel. But she has contributed even more. Pam is a major force for many of the behind-the-scenes jobs - setting up communion, sharpening pencils and sorting kids' packs, creating floral art, watering, sorting and organizing, as well as sharing her gentle wisdom and encouragement to many in the church family, both in and outside of the office.

Several years ago Susan Howarth and Robyn Petrie asked me if I would lead a sub-group of Nativity Kids (lovely 4-7 year olds. To sweeten the deal, Robyn said that she would even let me have Pam as a helper because she was so good at organising and helping with the crafts. Pam always insisted that she would help whenever and wherever needed, and I assume didn't know that she was part of the bargain! I soon discovered that Robyn was correct - Pam was an asset to the Explorers team and the wider children's ministry and has continued right through until now.

I have often admired the pieces that Pam has crafted from wool and other fibres, in displays, or being worn, and am aware that she has been very involved in the local Creative Fibre Guild.



Pam, also a member of the Creative Fibre Guild, is wearing one of her magnificent wool creations

Pam has built relationships with parishioners of all ages and has been a support to many. I appreciate Pam's encouragement and fostering of our children's personal faith and interests, not being afraid to get alongside the children in service and share her wisdom - true intergenerational ministry!

Best wishes to Pam and John in their retirement enjoying family and (hopefully) putting their feet up a little more!

By Roz Mundy

John Neal

*A Reflection from
Bishop Richard Ellena*

Toward the end of 1984 - my last year at St John's College - the Bishop of Christchurch (Bishop Maurice Goodall) invited me down from Auckland to attend Christchurch's annual clergy conference. As I walked up the wide stairway into the chapel at College House, Bishop Maurice was standing at the top next to a rather serious, balding clergyman. The Bishop didn't introduce us, he turned to the clergyman as I approached and said, 'Do you think you could do anything with this character?' To which the clergyman replied, 'I think I might be able to lick him into shape!' This was my introduction to Canon John Vernon Neal - and the first I'd heard of the Bishop's intention to send us (as a family) to Timaru.

I was very apprehensive about St John's Highfield - it was the evangelical Anglican Church of South Canterbury and I had come out of St John's College as a rather committed liberal. This was a disaster in the making. But I hadn't counted on John Neal being the person that he was. Passionately evangelical he also had a pastor's heart. I was the third in a line of curates, Mike Hawke, Craig Dixon and me, and I'm sure that the three of us shaped John as much as he shaped us! An unusual turn of events when, years later, I became John's supervisor when he was the airforce chaplain at Woodbourne.

The thing that stands out for me - and for which I will be forever grateful - is the freedom, encouragement and support he gave all three of us to discover our own unique identity in ministry (both in the church and the community). As a member of the Timaru Maori Council, I vividly remember asking John if there was any chance of the Maori community using the old Sunday School rooms to establish the first Kohunga Reo in Timaru. They were in within a month!

I loved his dry sense of humour and the rather pontificating 'my son....' when he was about to put me in my place.....



'John....a rather serious balding clergyman'

But flying was in his blood - his years with Mission Aviation Fellowship were incredibly important to him. So.... A friend of John's left his Tiger Moth at Timaru airport for John to play with. He went AWOL from ministry for a few weeks - leaving Craig and I to run the place making his presence known by flying low over the curate's houses and dipping his wings to us! But he was a man for whom I have had the deepest respect - enabling me to cast off the vestiges of St John's. I can still see him standing in front of the congregation at St John's holding a print of the famous Holman Hunt painting and preaching on 'Christ the light of the world'

+Richard



AN AVIATOR, A RADIO HAM, A MINSTER, AND A BIT OF A BIKIE!



By Rev. Derek Harding

John is an articulate lexiphile (1) and eloquent rhetorician who “speaks with the tongue of the righteous,” (Proverb 10:20). I wouldn’t describe him as a paraprodsokian (2) but more of an aficionado of paranomasia (3). I have to acknowledge the Americanisms promulgated in New Zealand vernacular (“December one,” in place of “December the first,” etc.) but accept that they are always used with otherwise impeccable grammar.

An aviator, a radio ham, a minster and a bit of a bikie, we have much in common. Indeed, it is through knowing John that I have been able to develop my own passion for flying and experienced aircraft ownership. We’ve been to radio club meetings and chatted across town using Morse code. We’ve been on bike rides, particularly when I was returning the old Vincent to the road and enjoyed many kms together. Inevitably, part of the ride has included coffee and conversation. We’ve commiserated when either of us has fallen from his motorised mount and celebrated the completion of refresher training courses and successfully remediating recalcitrant mechanisms (fixing our bikes).

Following my own mishap, I am on restricted fluids which means a weekly pint or two is now a single coffee (decaf at that) but John’s taken that fully in his stride, changing our usual location of Dodson Street to an equally acceptable Aviation Heritage Centre Cafe. In this way, we’ve continued our twelve-year-old habit of weekly conversations as a result of which, governments and politicians notwithstanding, the world has continued to follow a more stable orbit.

Because I am currently grounded, I have had to use an inordinate amount of persuasion to inveigle him to fly my aeroplane to Rangiora for an upgrade and to repeat the task in reverse to bring it back home. Not only do I know full well how much he will enjoy flying on my behalf, I also appreciate that, even while in the midst of “downsizing” and preparing for the move, John has gone out of his way to help me out in this respect. This shows a typical aspect of his character and one which is cherished.

Our shared experiences of Nativity and St. Luke’s Parishes have shaped our ministries in recent years and John has provided a steady beneficial influence in both spheres because first and foremost, John is a dependable worker for the Kingdom. We worked together in Nativity Parish and successively for Spring Creek Parish, with John stepping forward to pick up for me when I was hospitalised and out of action for so long (indeed, I’m not back fully yet). Certainly, Nelson Diocese is unaware of the significant benefit it has derived from its being featured regularly in our weekly conversations – surely without them it would not be the Diocese it is!



Pam Neal and Denise Harding

I’ve no doubt that Denise and I will fly over to Palmie or Feilding; I’ll provide John with his required flying fix while Denise will provide suitable commiseration with Pam. What an exciting time as they move closer to their family and enjoy (?) the effects of downsizing. Above all, thank you John for the amazing ministry, both parochially and personally, from which it has been a privilege to benefit.

FOOTNOTES:

- (1) **Lexiphile**: like logophile, one who loves words
- (2) **Paraprodsokian**: a figure of speech in which the latter part of a sentence, phrase, or larger discourse is surprising or unexpected in a way
- (3) **Paranomasia** – a play on words, a pun.

PAM NEAL

A Passion for Mission

**Pam Neal - Secretary Diocesan Overseas
Missions Council (DOMC)
and Nativity Mission Contact**

NZ CMS League of Youth sounds of little consequence now, but it was a "movement" with a strong influence in the 1960s and later. Many young Christians throughout New Zealand joined the League – the age range was 15-30 so that kept it in the younger bracket. We had lots of fun, and chances to meet "real live missionaries" as they travelled around the country when they were home "on furlough" and for us to travel and meet them and others at house parties and conferences. From this movement, many people went into Christian work in New Zealand and overseas. We learned to pray and support mission work and at that time it was very much part of our Christian walk.

Years later, after John entered the ordained ministry, beginning in Stoke we received an unexpected invitation from a Kiwi living and working on the Labrador Coast of Quebec suggesting we might go over there where John would fly the Diocesan aeroplane from village to village on the coast and this also involved medical flights. To say the idea was not met with enthusiasm would be an understatement! If we went anywhere it was more likely to be a hot climate, possibly with Mission Aviation Fellowship, certainly not to some remote spot we had never heard of, in an area where the snow lay around for up to 6 months of the year! However, the Holy Spirit has a habit of keeping at you so the idea keeps surfacing. So we were released from further parish Curacy work and sold our household and other items and had just enough money to buy a ticket on a ship that sailed to New York with our nearly one-year-old daughter Carol. It was the dead of winter there but we were met by an American pilot and clergyman who had long connections with the Labrador Coast.

After a six-month interim position in a parish on the Gaspé Coast, we travelled to a small English-speaking village called Harrington Harbour, where we lived for the next 4 1/2 years.

This was new and exciting, but quite demanding as we adjusted to a different culture and John's work was demanding with the flying, parish work and being away from home frequently so it was not always easy for the family. The weather was challenging and changeable, with fog, snow, and winds. My involvement was mainly with children's work and the women loved a visit. I had to keep an ear on the radio for the twice-daily reports from the other "mission" stations on the Coast and the radio was always crackling in the background for updates from John or others. There was certainly no internet and telephones were unreliable. During this time our son David was born in a Grenfell Mission Hospital in Newfoundland. He returned home with me in a helicopter! Overall it was a great experience but the time came when we were glad to move back to the Nelson Diocese.

*Margaret Jarman
and Pam Neal*



Pam Neal has been involved with CMS over many years and with her warm personality has built up relationships with mission partners, inviting them to come to Blenheim when they are available on leave and home service and offering them hospitality in the Neal home.

Pam has regularly supplied maps and articles for the mission section on the notice board to keep us informed and updated.

An active member of the CMS prayer group she has sent encouraging messages to our mission partners and received and shared their newsletters. Her secretarial skills for keeping minutes, writing reports, and managing the finances, will be sorely missed.

Thank you Pam for your magnificent missions ministry. May God bless you and John in this next chapter of your lives.

Margaret Jarman

FAREWELL, JOHN AND PAM

*May the Lord bless you and keep you,
May the Lord make His face to shine upon you
and be gracious unto you,
and give you peace,
both now and forever more.*

Your Nativity Family express their heartfelt thanks for your ministry, love and friendship.



Currently in the Nelson Diocese John Neal's official title is Reverend Canon John Neal.

In Nativity he is affectionately called Canon (Big Shot) John Neal!

When attending military events John is addressed as Padre John Neal. John has been Base Chaplain at Wigram, Ohakea, and Woodbourne Airforce bases.

In 1999, while at Woodbourne, he was promoted to Principal Airforce Chaplain, holding that position until 2007. In 2007 John became the Principal Defence Chaplain for all the Services - Army, Navy and Airforce. He was based in Wellington for two years before returning to Blenheim and Nativity Church. Nativity is honoured that John has gifted the church his Field Communion Kit (pictured). This will be treasured and displayed in the Chapel.



John presided at Communion in Nativity, using his Field Communion Kit, on November 26th, 2023.



Eco Church - Caring for Creation

ALICE, DION AND THE BEES!





DID YOU KNOW THAT NZ BEES PRODUCE MILK?

By Dion and Roz Mundy

When God's people entered the Promised Land it was a land of milk and honey. A land of rich bounty.

Did you know in New Zealand bees produce milk? 'You see', says Dion, 'as I had it explained to me; without bees, the clover does not get pollinated; without clover, the cow does not get high nitrogen feed, and therefore does not produce lots of milk. Hence, in NZ bees make milk!'

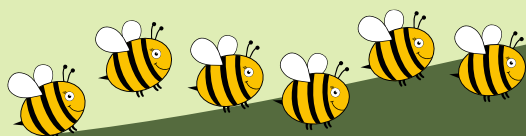
Soon after we moved to our lifestyle block in Tuamarina, Dion became interested in the idea of having some bees to help with pollination of the fruit trees and other crops. The father of one of his work colleagues was happy to set him up with some bees and give some mentoring. We also had neighbours with beekeeping knowledge but there was quite a bit of learning ...some of it trial and error. All of the learning requires observation of bees and God's creation.

Alice has been assisting Dad and learning with, and from him and others, and has been a beekeeper in her own right for a few years now too. It seems this 'discipleship model' is a good way for them both to learn more about beekeeping. Alice started with her 'Princess Pink' coloured boxes, and now, with help from Dad, is working some hives based in Rārangī. She has been to several Beekeepers Association meetings and has a reputation for spotting queens and varroa mites with her younger eyesight, and is known for her love of handling and introducing others to the drone bees (who don't sting).

The beekeeping hobby has led to Dion being the current Chairperson of the Marlborough Beekeepers Association, and supporting and leading workshops for the association. More recently this has expanded into NMIT Apiculture, with courses covering anything from introductions to beekeeping, seasonal duties, things to do with your honey/apiary products, extraction, bee biology or floral sources - even I (Roz) have got involved!



There are now more than one or two hives in the Mundy apiary and we are all continuing to learn about this amazing little creature and its' part in God's creation.



**Footnote from Rose Francis
Nativity's Eco-Church Champion**

From the Opaua River stop-bank, as I walk my dogs, I observe a strange sight. Is it a Martians' landing? No, it is Dion teaching a bevy of students, among several dozen hives of buzzing bees! Caring for our environment, encouraging healthy plant growth and thanking God for His bountiful provision, are part of our responsibility as good stewards of His Creation.

Out & About

Our people out in the community



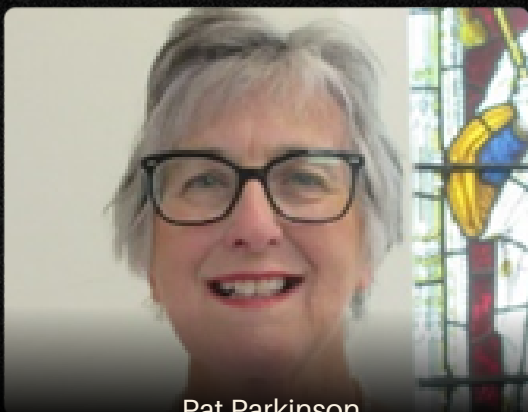
Nativity members of Blenheim Choral



Margaret Hastings, Eileen Guard,
Natalia Shabanava



Alex Smith



Pat Parkinson

BLENHEIM CHORAL SOCIETY

My husband, Bob, and I lived in Seddon and joined the choir when family circumstances allowed us to. Bob first, and me later when the children were old enough to be left.

The Choral Society has been in existence for about 60 years, give or take a few years that were missed when there was no one to conduct. I personally have belonged for 45 years!

It has had several Directors over the years. The first that I remember was Marius Sophocleus, not that I was singing at this time. Rod Wilkes was the conductor when we joined and we had many concerts with him. Bob filled his place when Rod was not able to continue. These are some names of others I can remember, but not necessarily in the correct order: Gwenette Elliott, Cherry Taylor, Nancy Woolford, Tessa Parker, Sister Patricia, Tessa Parker, Steve Austen and Islay Leov. Currently, we are very fortunate to have Robert Tucker as our director.

Our concerts have covered a wide range of music - everything from Mendelssohn's Elijah, popular Folk songs, Show songs, Opera choruses, Handel's Messiah, Vivaldi's Gloria, and even some Gilbert and Sullivan! Our latest offering was Carmina Burana, which I feel we presented to a very high standard. We plan to reprise some Gilbert and Sullivan next year, with HMS Pinafore, so that is something to look forward to.

I well remember moving to town in December 1980 and attending our first Christmas service. We were met at the door by Rev. David Pickering. "Ah ha, you can be in the choir." And that was that! Allan Kingston was the Choir Master at the time. I had to learn to sight-read very quickly!

Singing is a great way to make friends. I count Eileen Guard as one of my besties along with Pat Parkinson. Hopefully, we can muster some more singers in the coming year, for both the Nativity Choir and for the Choral Society. All you need is to be able to sing in tune. The ability to read a little music is helpful but not necessary.

by Margaret Hastings

*Blenheim Choral are presenting
'Carols by Candlelight'*

7.30pm to 9.00pm

16th December 2023

At Nativity Church

Door Sales: Adults: \$20.00

Children: \$5

Our people in the.....



MARLBOROUGH
CIVIC
ORCHESTRA



JANE CLARK

I started learning the cello at Epsom Girls Grammar School because my mother made me. I had three years of tuition from June Taylor, playing in the school orchestra and the Auckland Secondary Schools Orchestra.

Further tuition was not possible when I started training to be a nurse. It was not until many years later, in my forties, that I picked up my bow again and played in a couple of community orchestras in Auckland before moving to Blenheim and joining the Marlborough Civic Orchestra.

I love classical music and, despite my modest ability, I really enjoy being able to participate on stage with the MCO and in the pit for musical theatre productions.

RUTH MOORE

Music has been a part of Ruth's life for as long as she can remember. She started playing the oboe over 17 years ago and has been in the orchestra in Blenheim for over 10 years. Ruth also enjoys playing for Musical Theatre in Blenheim, and is a member of the New Zealand Doctor's Orchestra.



The Marlborough Civic Orchestra (MCO) aims to showcase a diverse repertoire from standard classical fare to popular music (shows, tv or film) from memorable traditional pieces to catchy contemporary tunes.

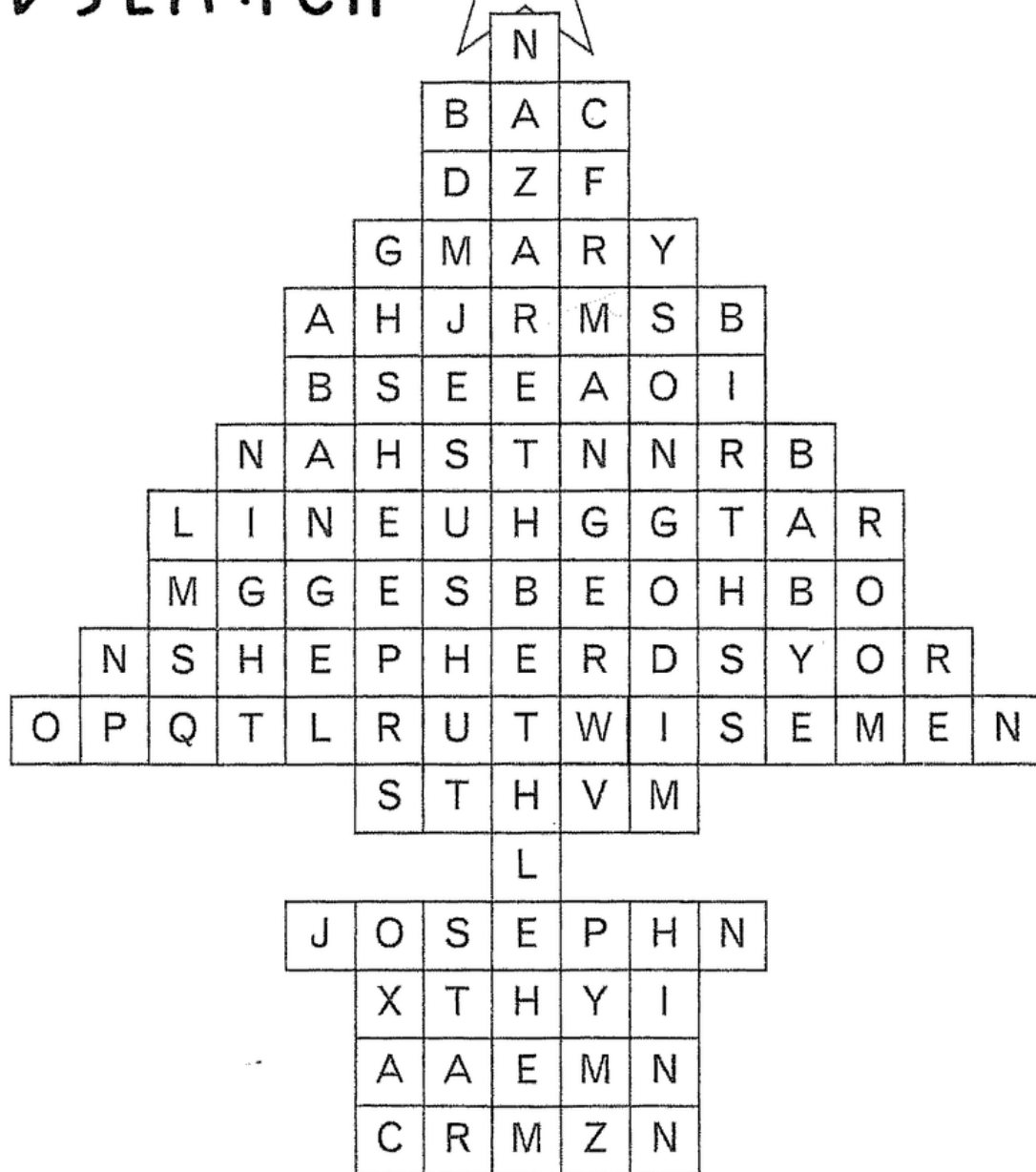


Parish icnic



Christine Smith's grounds were a perfect setting for our parish picnic, held on 26th November. Her wonderfully colourful garden was a treat for our eyes and the shade of the trees offered retreat from the sun. A variety of games and a swimming pool occupied both children and adults, and Hilary and Philip de Bruyn fed us well with BBQ sausages.





Mary and Joseph travelled all the way from their home in **Nazareth** to **Bethlehem** to be registered for the King's head count. Mary was expecting a very important **baby**. An **angel** had told her that this baby would be the **Son of God**.

That **night**, in the fields near Bethlehem, some **shepherds** were watching their **sheep**. Suddenly an angel appeared to them and told them about the **birth** of this special baby. The shepherds rushed into town to see Jesus. They found him in a stable, lying in a **manger**, just as the angel had told them.

At Christmas we celebrate Jesus' birthday.



NATIVITY LIBRARY

Browse & Borrow

Open Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday,
between 9.00am and 12 noon from 15 January 2024

EarlyTeens Reading



The Wingfeather Saga Book 1

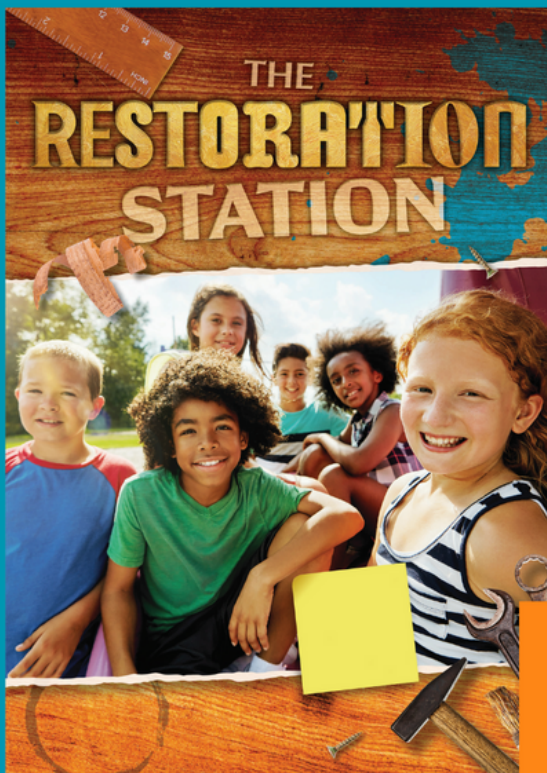
Written by Andrew Peterson

Reviewed by Jack Taylor

The Wingfeather saga is a good read. The story is set around the three Igiby siblings - Janner, Tink, and Leeli who live in the country of Skree, a mystical land. When they learn they are actually members of the Wingfeather family with a strong destiny, their routine lives take an exciting turn. The story, which is set in a dangerous and animal-filled environment, centres on the brothers' struggle to avoid evil and keep the Jewels of Anniera-a mystical artifact-out of the hands of the terrible Gnag the Nameless and his henchmen that are hunting them down. They must learn to use their unique talents and unite as a family to confront the approaching darkness as they encounter dangerous obstacles and surprising allies.

This book could be enjoyed by anyone including parents, but I think that it would be most enjoyed by someone between the ages of 12-15. Overall I think the book is a good read and can keep anyone staying up late reading it.

Thank you for this great review, Jack!



Nativity Church presents...

A HOLIDAY PROGRAMME FOR KIDS AGES 5-11 YEARS

18th to the 21st Dec
9am- 12pm

Will be held at
Nativity Church
76 Alfred Street
Blenheim

- bible stories
- activities / crafts
- games
- morning tea

recommended
\$3 koha
per child
a day

REGISTER ONLINE

Be quick! Places are limited.

<https://nativityblenheim.breezechms.com/form/summerkids23>

GOT QUESTIONS?

Contact Rebecca

e: families@nativity.org.nz
p: 03 578 3909

75 Masterpieces Every Christian Should Know

A Review by Miriam Taylor

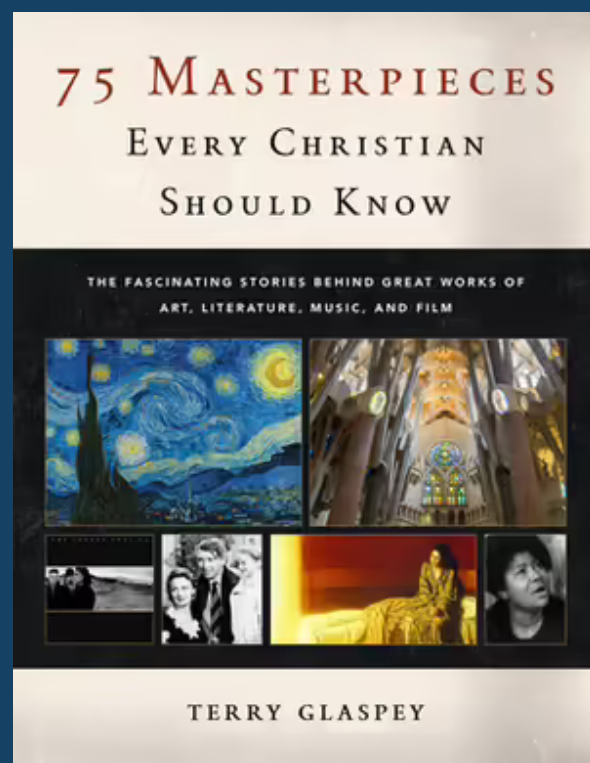
This magnificent 382-page book, filled with colourful images, has been gifted to the Nativity Library by Jane Clark. It contains fascinating stories behind great works of art, literature, music, and film. It won the *Christianity Today* Book Award and the *Evangelical Christian Publishers Association* Gold Medallion.

Van Gogh's iconic 'Starry Night', on the front of this issue of Nativity News, is featured along with the story of his life. Michelangelo, Rembrandt, and Holman Hunt, are just some of the other painters included.

75 Masterpieces features hymn writers and their stories such as Martin Luther (A Mighty Fortress Is Our God), Isaac Watts (When I Survey the Wondrous Cross), and John Newton (Amazing Grace). Stories and Works of Franz Joseph Hayden, Johann Sebastian Bach, George Frideric Handel, Felix Mendelssohn, and other musicians are narrated.

The reader learns about Christian novelists such as John Bunyan (*The Pilgrim's Progress*), Jane Austen (*Pride and Prejudice*), GK Chesterton (*The Innocence of Father Brown*), Willa Cather (*Death Comes for the Archbishop*), CS Lewis (*The Chronicles of Narnia*), Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn (*Cancer Ward*), and JRR Tolkien (*The Lord of the Rings*).

Icon writers, Stained Glass window artists, Poets, Films, and Recordings of singers (Mahalia Jackson, Bob Dylan) and bands, (U2), are also included in this masterpiece of a book which has been heralded as 'a treasure', and 'simply magical', by reviewers.

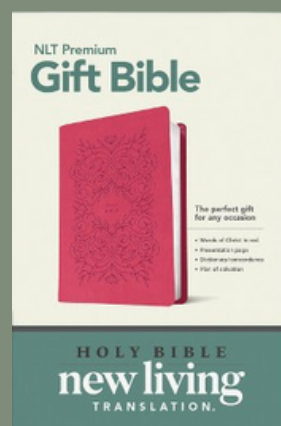
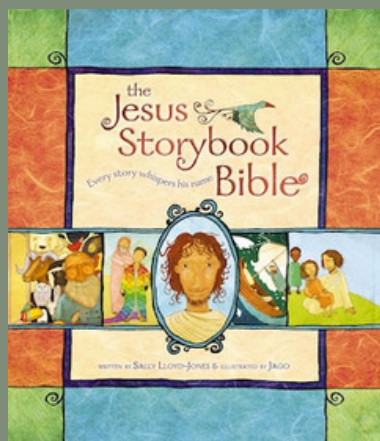


Adult Non-Fiction

**Looking for Christmas
gift ideas?**

*I heartily recommend 75 Masterpieces
Every Christian Should Know.*

*Come and see our selection of
Bibles for sale at Nativity Reception.*



Nativity Church Presents
The Joy of Christmas
House Tours

2nd & 3rd December, 2023



The 'Joy of Christmas House Tours' was another magnificently organized event by our Fun and Fundraising Team. There were six houses on the tour; each one decorated in the owners unique Christmas style. But all were considered 'AMAZING' by the viewers. Some homegroups helped by creating decorations, and some creative people offered their decorating skills.

Nativity scenes from around the world featured in each home. The scene in the bottom right corner was crafted from olive wood by Palestinian Christians living in Bethlehem, West Bank, Palestine.



CHRISTMAS WREATHS

A stunning array of Christmas wreaths were on display, including several available for purchase.

CHRISTMAS TREES



CHRISTMAS 'FRIENDS'



TABLE SETTINGS



THE 'MAN CAVE'





Mary did You Know?

Mary, did you know that your baby boy
Would one day walk on water?
Mary, did you know that your baby boy
Would save our sons and daughters?
Did you know that your baby boy
Has come to make you new?
This child that you delivered,
will soon deliver you.

Mary, did you know that your baby boy
Will give sight to a blind man?
Mary, did you know that your baby boy
Will calm the storm with his hand?
Did you know that your baby boy
Has walked where angels trod?
When you kiss your little baby
You kiss the face of God

O Mary, did you know?

The blind will see, the deaf will hear
The dead will live again
The lame will leap, the dumb will speak
The praises of the Lamb
Mary, did you know that your baby boy
Is Lord of all creation?
Mary, did you know that your baby boy
Would one day rule the nations?
Did you know that your baby boy
Is heaven's perfect Lamb?
That sleeping child you're holding
is the great,
I Am



O Mary, did you know?



12 Christmas PRAYERS

Joy

May the joy
of Christ be felt
through us. **Luke 1:44**

FAITH

Increase our faith so we fully trust in
Your promises. **Matthew 1:24**

LIGHT

May the light of Christ
shine from within us.
Isaiah 9:2

PROMISE

Thank you for the promise
of eternal life through Jesus.
John 3:16

SIMPLICITY

You came as
a baby in a manger,
help us find value
in the simple things.
Luke 2:7

GENEROSITY

Show us what gifts we have
to offer and help us
give them generously.
Matthew 2:11

TOGETHERNESS

Thank you that the gift
of Jesus makes us one family
together in Christ. **John 1:12**

LOVE

Help us see ways to turn
love into action this Christmas.
Matthew 25:40

PEACE

May the peace of Christ
cover the busyness
of this season.
Isaiah 9:6

GRATITUDE

Thank you for all of our blessings,
not just the gifts under the tree.
Luke 1:49

OBEDIENCE

Help us to be obedient
to You even when we
don't fully understand.
Luke 1:38

HOPEFULNESS

Fill us with hope for
the coming of our savior,
Jesus Christ. **Daniel 2:44**

AMEN!





Christmas Parade

*Nativity's Float was awarded
'Best Community Float'
Well Done! You're all stars!*



Sumptuous Advent Afternoon Tea at St. Barnabas Chapel



Christmas Trees in the chapel decorated by Nativity Kids (with painted rocks), AAW (Association of Anglican women), NBAS - Nativity Beer Appreciation Society, and the JOY tree.



Christmas Blessings to our generous sponsors of Nativity News

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NATIVITY ANGLICAN CHURCH
Invites you to



Christmas Services

CHRISTMAS EVE

SUNDAY 24th December

9am Sunday Worship
4pm Children's Service
10pm Christmas Eve Service

CHRISTMAS DAY

MONDAY 25th December

9am Christmas Service

76 Alfred St Blenheim
Visit www.nativity.org.nz for more details

*Come along and take your photo in our
Nativity Scene outside the church*