

Nativity News

December 2019



A GREAT AND JOYFUL EVENT FOR EVERYONE!

There were shepherds camping in the neighbourhood. They had set night watches over their sheep. Suddenly, God's angel stood among them and God's glory blazed around them. They were terrified! The angel said, "Don't be afraid. I'm here to announce a great and joyful event that is meant for everybody, worldwide: A Saviour has just been born in David's town, a Saviour who is Messiah and Master. This is what you're to look for: a baby wrapped in a blanket and lying in a manger." Luke 2: 8-12

"Let's get over to Bethlehem as fast as we can and see for ourselves what God has revealed to us." They left, running, and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. 2:15



THE HINGE OF HISTORY - EDITORIAL BY ROSEMARY FRANCIS

Christmas is the day that holds all time together. The hinge of history is on the door of a rough Bethlehem stable.

Before Jesus' sojourn on Earth, our dates were Before Christ (BC.) Since His Ascension, two thousand years ago, we mark the years Anno Domini. In the Year of Our Lord. (AD)

Christmas is not just the birth of Jesus, but it was also our Heavenly Father saying farewell to His Son, who offered to take on human flesh, share our weaknesses and challenges, and to die in our place. If we think beyond the Manger, we can see a circuit of emptiness. An empty throne in Heaven, an empty manger, an empty, and soon after, an empty tomb. Our empty hearts were filled by His love. Jesus had a one-way ticket from Heaven to the manger, then to the cross and then via the tomb en route back to His throne in Heaven. At each stop along the journey, Jesus left blessings. He was born to die, and He died to rise again. Because of His sacrifice, we can be forgiven, and because of His Resurrection, we can live forever. That's why we can rejoice in an 'empty' Christmas.

At this busy time of the year, can we hear the angels sing above the chatter of the eftpos machine and the ring of the till? Are Christmas carols drowned out by the stress and clamour of purchasing gifts? Are we spending too much on festive food and traditional Christmas treats? Is the Baby in the manger getting buried under tinsel and wrapping paper? Celebrating the birth of King Jesus is my priority. Spending time in His Word, enjoying fellowship with other believers, and sharing hospitality with those less fortunate who need to know the Good News, bring fresh appreciation which enriches this festive season anew every year.

Even the secularization of Christmas, and the intrusion of commercialization rallies folk together to celebrate, and kindles good-will. It is a time when our nation pauses to recognize others by the exchange of tokens of esteem. Even small gifts strengthen our bonds with one another; they link us in one community. Christmas is for everyone, even those only dimly aware that they are celebrating Christ's birthday. We can include those from different cultural and religious backgrounds in our festivities and explain to them the significance and reason for this season.

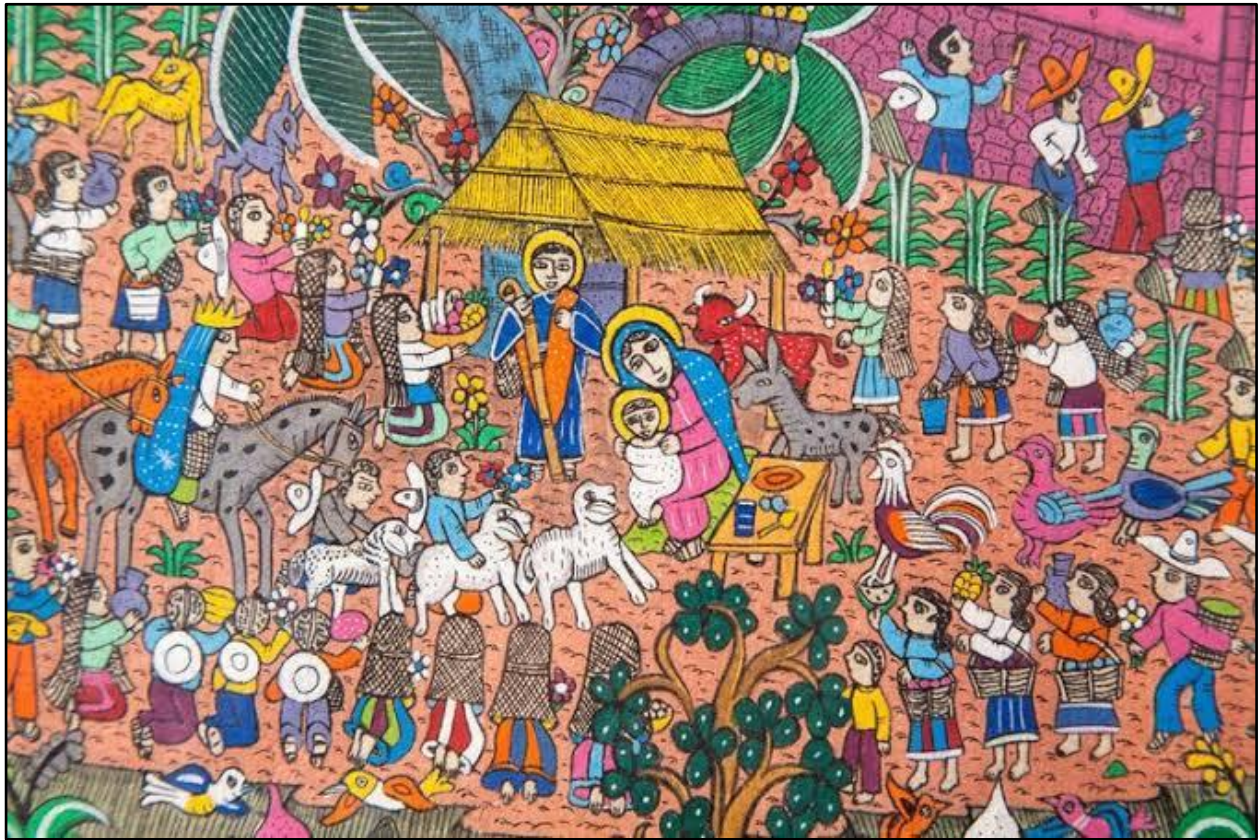
For Christians, we rejoice in the birth of our Saviour, and the redemption that it promised. As 2019 winds down, we anticipate a long hot summer and holidays. Let us thank God for His guidance, protection and encouragement throughout this challenging year. For the lonely who have poignant empty chairs at their table, why not share your home with other lonely people? There are many around us in need of companionship. It is truly more blessed to give than to receive.

May the humility of the shepherds, the faith of the wise men, the joy of the angels and the peace of the Christ Child be God's gift to us all, this Christmas and always.

**We give *ourselves* to Jesus -
the gift he most desires.**



NATIVITY CHURCH'S NATIVITY



Coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother, Mary and they bowed down and worshipped him and presented him with gifts. Matthew 2:11


 FOR
 unto us a
 Child ^{is born,}
 unto us a Son
 is given; and the government
 will be upon His shoulder. And
 His name will be called
 Wonderful
 MIGHTY GOD
 Everlasting Father
 PRINCE OF PEACE
 PRINCE OF PEACE
 ISAIAH
 9:6

CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS AT NATIVITY

Nine Lessons and Carols:

Sunday 15 December – 7.00 pm

Christmas Eve:

Tuesday 24 December - 11.00 pm

Christmas Day:

25 December - 8.00am & 10.00 am

HAPPY RETIREMENT JAN!



For almost twelve years Jan Burroughs has been the receptionist at Nativity. She has always been cheerful, humorous, and very colourful! A woman with a firm faith in Christ, Jan has been an excellent person at the front desk for 'first time' visitors and for regular church family. Jan has helped to solve many a problem with never a complaint. On Sunday 01 December the Nativity family honoured her with a shared lunch after church. The good news is that though Jan is retiring, she and Paul are not leaving us. They remain precious members of our church family.



For the month of November Jan has been training up her successor, Rosalind (Roz) Mundy, another faithful and loved member of the Nativity Family. Welcome to the front desk Roz! With this appointment comes new office hours. Nativity office will be open Monday to Friday from 9.00am to 2.30pm.





CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVALS:

Renwick Anglican - 13 DEC – 24 DEC

Open all day - into the evening

Nelson Cathedral - 27 DEC – 23 JAN



COME AND ENJOY SEDDON COMMUNITY CAROLS

IN THE NEWLY UPGRADED YEALANDS AWATERE MEMORIAL HALL

4.00 PM SATURDAY 21 DECEMBER

SALVATION ARMY BAND

NATIVITY PLAY

BBQ FOOD



CELEBRATING PASTORAL CARE AT NATIVITY - SERVICE WITH A SMILE



CARE AND SHARE - RAEWYN PARKES - PARISH NURSE

Like most things 'Care and Share' grew out of a confluence of ideas, events and conversations. In my role as parish nurse I have become aware of the high level of loneliness and isolation in our society, particularly among our older population, with its side effects of hypertension (high blood pressure, one of the risk factors for diseases such as stroke and heart attack), depression and increased risk of dementia; the end of 'Care and Craft' after 26 years, and a conversation with the Mirjam Van der Stoel, Wairau's geriatric nurse practitioner, confirmed my observation and led to the connection with green prescription. A visit from Coral Moon on the same issue, (a week after my conversation with Mirjam,) suggesting a craft group. I started to think God may be in this. A meeting followed and 'Care and Share' was born.

'Care and Share' is based around the principle of simple and light weight. Its aims are, to form a community around likeminded craft loving people. To reduce loneliness and its associated side effects. To connect this community into the pastoral care and life of Nativity. And out of relationships developed, introduce Jesus to those who don't know him yet, as God leads.

After completing the health and safety requirements, 'Care and Share' was launched with a 'high tea' on the 24th of June. We meet on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month between 9:30am and 11:30am. Before breaking for morning tea, five minutes of fall prevention exercises are done. We have 27 people on the books, an average attendance of around 15. Some beautiful creations are happening. I would like to take this opportunity to thank those of you who have donated craft materials for 'Care and Share'.

One last observation. When accompanying Susan Howarth on her sabbatical in the U.K. I read the poems of a woman of her journey through her mother's dementia. On Lindisfarne, Holy Island, I also watched tourists come out of the scriptorium with works of art based around scripture. I sat with tears running down my cheeks as I listened to hymns sung by a choir from the U.S.A in the Abbey on Iona. I realized that God can and does speak to us, (Christian and not-yet Christian alike) through the arts. This was confirmed by Peter Horrobin, founder of Ellell, a healing ministry, on the second of three retreats we attended. With creativity and the arts God can and does touch hearts and bring healing.



LINK - ALISON BRICE - CHAPLAIN TO THE ELDERLY

'Link' provides an enjoyable afternoon for people who like fun and fellowship, while playing cards and board games. The two most popular games are Rummy Cub and Skip Bo. Both games are easy to learn in one afternoon, are fun to play and are stimulating. Other games played are scrabble and cards.

People often tell me they look forward to Friday as their best time of the week as there is an atmosphere of laughter, love and care; with competition taking second place.

We meet in the Nativity Lounge at 1.00pm every Friday. At 3.00pm we have afternoon tea, and by the time we finish the game we are on and have a chat, it is about 3.30 when we leave. We ask for a gold coin donation to cover expenses.

CARE CALLS – A NEW PASTORAL CARE MINISTRY

Elaine Bignell and Judith Plant head up this new Pastoral Care Ministry. Once a fortnight these ladies make telephone calls to some of our parishioners who live in their own homes but have limited availability to transport and family support. This ministry brings a listening ear, contact from church, and friendship to these people. We look forward to seeing how God develops and uses this ministry.



Judith Plant



Elaine Bignall

Please pray for our Pastoral Care Teams. If you would like to be involved in Pastoral Care or need assistance with Pastoral Care contact the church office or Jane Sheat.

BOOK REVIEW: 'SHADES OF LIGHT'

BY SHARON GARLOUGH BROWN.

Reviewed by Raewyn Parkes

For fans of the 'Sensible Shoes' series by Sharon Garlough Brown, 'Shades of light', her latest standalone novel is for you, with cameos by some of your favourite characters within its pages.

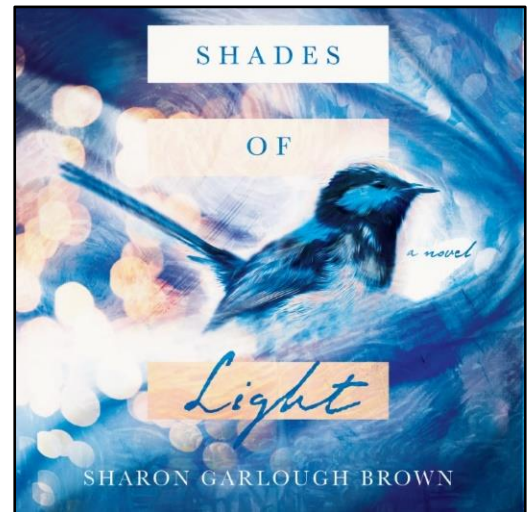
For those of us who have faced the darkness that is depression or walked that road alongside a loved one, this book is for you.

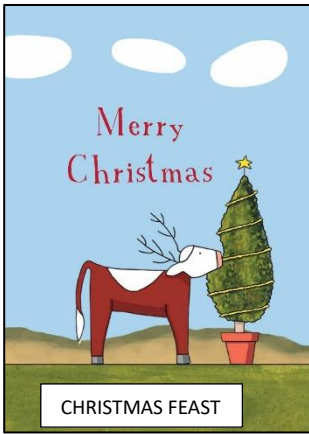
For art lovers, especially those who enjoy the works of Vincent van Gogh, this novel is for you also.

The story of Wen, a social worker is beautifully written. It is a story filled with deep spiritual insights, that courageously unveils the reality of psychological struggles among people of faith. It points us to Jesus, the Man of Sorrows, who keeps company with us in everything that is hard. I was captured on the first page and read the book in a day. I was reminded 'even the darkness will not be dark to you' (Psalm 139:12). This is a much-needed Christian vision of mental illness as both clinical (therefore treatable) and spiritual.

"I always want the power that delivers, not the grace that sustains." Page 90

You will cry, you will worry, you will smile and, like me, you will love 'Shades of light.'





SENIORS ENJOY A CHRISTMAS FEAST

Christmas at Nativity kicked off with a delightful lunch for Seniors.

More than sixty came, the ladies sporting colourful floral spring clothes, the gents smart in their summer shirts. Table cloths were sprinkled with rose petals and tinsel, fragrant bouquets of flowers, and little party favours.

A delicious festive meal was served, with Rose Francis entertaining between courses by sharing stories of Christmas cake disasters. We all joyfully sang our favourite, familiar old carols; accompanied by Hilary at the piano. The Christmas tree was gaily clad, and the manger scene reminded us of the reason we were gathered to participate in another celebration of Christmas. (Most of us have at least 75 of these chalked up so far!)

Our thanks to Pauline & Roger Tisch and Jeff and Pam Sawyer who prepared our plates laden with generous amounts of food. Our appreciation also to the team of 'waiting staff' who ferried those plates, and cups safely to the tables. And a big thank you to Raewyn who organized the party as she does every year. Thanks also to young Vaughan for working the mic so even the hard of hearing could enjoy themselves.



Hark the herald 'angels' sing - 'Glory to the new-born King'



WELCOME HOLY SPIRIT



Several Care Cells have combined to attend a weekly seminar on The Holy Spirit, led by Kaye Dyer and Kathy Hammond. We meet weekly in Barnies, wanting to learn more about the most misunderstood Person in the Godhead. He is seldom preached about, and is often ignored.

The course is based on a book most of us have purchased, **THE HOLY SPIRIT. AN INTRODUCTION** by John Bevere. We listen to John's video session and discuss set questions in small groups. 'Homework' is continued readings and devotions in preparation for the next exciting session.

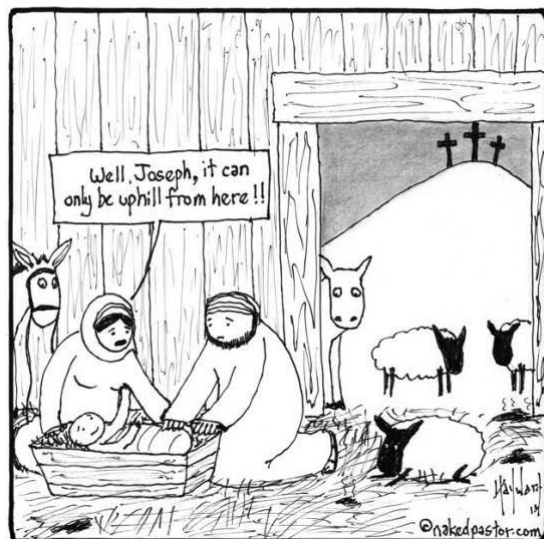
This course is taking us on a journey through Scripture, revealing new truths, and enriching participants with unexpected revelations.

The Holy Spirit guides us into all truth. He reveals Jesus and empowers us. He indwells us from conversion but we are encouraged us to wait for baptism of The Spirit, to enable His power to support our ministry. The Holy Spirit is our constant companion who will never leave us.

Jesus told His disciples that He needed to leave them so that the Holy Spirit could come, and that they would be better off because of it (John 16; v 7, 13,14) If this was true of the disciples, who spent every day with Jesus, how much more do we need the Holy Spirit actively involved in our lives today?

I would encourage everyone who is needs strength and encouragement in their lives to seek knowledge about our constant, faithful supporter, promised by Jesus before He returned to His home in Heaven.

"Now all of us can come to the Father through the same Holy Spirit because of what Christ has done for us." (Eph 2:18 NLT)



POPULAR 'TUNES FOR TOTS' - FRIDAY MORNINGS IN SCHOOL TERM - 9.30 AM





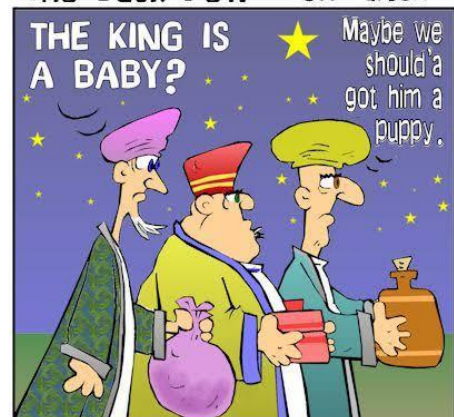
**Some members of Shirley and Miriam's Care Cell meeting for lunch to sign off the year.
Eileen Chowdhury is their most senior member at 90 years young!**



Christingles for Advent Sunday



The Back Pew - Jeff Larson



**Then the 3 WISEMEN from the East visit
the Newborn King, Mt 2**

CONGRATULATIONS!!!

**To Jeremy and Rose Newton on the safe arrival of a
beautiful daughter – Florence Eve Newton**



THE NATIVITY

THE CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY

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SUNDAY SERVICES:

8.00 AM - Traditional Eucharist Service

10.00 AM - Worship Service with children exiting to programmes

FAMILY SERVICE – First Sunday of month

5.30 PM – CANVAS – Informal Service in hall –

All Age – In recess until 2020

TUNES FOR TOTS - FRIDAY 9.30 AM - During School Term

CARE & SHARE – 9.30 AM - 2ND & 4TH Monday of month

LINK – 1 PM - FRIDAY

**GEOFFREY T
SOWMAN**

FUNERAL DIRECTORS &
MONUMENTAL MASONS

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community for generations.

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CRACKER OF A CHRISTMAS!

