

# The Messenger

June 2020



Monthly magazine of St Peter's Terrace End

Website: <http://www.stpeterspn.org.nz>

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## **Weekly Events for June**

**Please keep an eye on the website for information as the situation unfolds.**

## **No Ordinary Time!**

Thank you to everyone for the way that you have made us feel welcome and at home here in Palmerston North: to the people who worked hard to get the vicarage in order for us to move in; to those who have sent messages of welcome; to those who have given gifts of many different kinds; to those who have reached out to start to get to know us socially ... thank you to you all.

It is good to have now made a start in the parish, and in the coming weeks I look forward to meeting and talking with as many of you as possible.

This month we move from the major feasts of Easter, Ascension, and Pentecost, and on into Trinity. And then what? Then we come to the “Ordinary Sundays”, or more correctly, the “Sundays in Ordinary Time”. (Actually it is a move *back* into the Ordinary Sundays, because the Sundays between Epiphany and Ash Wednesday are also so designated.)

Over the years I have heard several people complain that “Ordinary Sundays” sounds, well, *ordinary* – as in everyday and commonplace ... and thus potentially dull and boring. People wonder why they are called Ordinary Sundays rather than something more interesting, or something more biblical or churchy.

The reason they are named Ordinary Sundays or Sundays in Ordinary Time is that they are identified and named by consecutive numbers: the word “ordinary” here has the same root as the word “ordinal” in the sense of “ordinal numerals”.

But actually, I like the association with the other sense of “ordinary”: everyday and commonplace. I like the G.K. Chesterton phrase: “The most extraordinary thing in the world is an ordinary man and his ordinary wife and their ordinary children.” As I noted in my sermon on 24 May (the Sunday after Ascension), followers of Jesus are not called out of the world but are to take up God’s purposes for the world – and that means full engagement with the ordinary things of life. Human beings were made for the extraordinary role of being God’s representatives in the ordinary, everyday, commonplace realm of Creation.

In his incarnation, his coming from the heavenly realm to take flesh and dwell among us, Jesus entered the *ordinary*, the everyday and commonplace of human experience.

At Pentecost, the coming of the Holy Spirit, the early church was equipped with the extraordinary power of the living God for its work in the midst of the ordinary. We too have the Spirit’s equipping for this same work. And Trinity Sunday

reminds us of the truly extraordinary fact that we, ordinary people that we are, are invited to join the Trinitarian community of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The particular challenge of Ordinary Time is for us to reflect on the ways we bring the extraordinary of God into the ordinary of everyday life, because God wants to redeem, elevate, and exalt everyday life into what it should be in God's extraordinary purposes.

Before he went to the cross, Jesus prayed for all believers in these sorts of terms: "I pray also for those who will believe in me through [the disciples'] message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. *May they also be in us* so that the world may believe that you have sent me. *I have given them the glory that you gave me*, that they may be one as we are one—I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. *Then the world will know* that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me." (John 17:20-23, emphasis added)

I look forward to working with you in taking up the Ordinary Time challenge.

*Rev Stuart*

## **Open Doors!**

The big red church doors were opened!!

The first entry in the church attendance register since 15<sup>th</sup> March 2020 was recorded on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2020. What a long time it has seemed since that March day. Of course, under the Government ruling, only ten people were permitted at one time. So, with registration by phone, the five potential half hour services were condensed into two as quite a few people are still staying out of circulation.



Each person was "ticked off" on a list as they went in. Our vicar commented it was the first time he had kept an attendance register. The chairs in the Lady Chapel were spaced according to distancing and the short service sheet was on each chair. Vicar Stuart led a service of prayer with a homily and it was half an hour to the minute! What a joy to have our new vicar taking a service and it will be even better

when a full service is possible. Also, a joy to see a few other church people that we have only spoken to on the phone over the last weeks.

St Peter's church is a special place. It has an atmosphere that is intangible but goes straight to the heart and mind and we realise that it is the House of God. Hopefully, soon full services can be resumed and the fears of the last few weeks can be put aside. Then we can all rejoice in the fellowship of worshipping God together with Vicar Stuart. So much to look forward to.



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## **Please Keep Giving if You Can**

One of the more serious follow-ons for the parish is the loss of income. Even before the Level 4 isolation, there were a number of hall and church bookings cancelled for forthcoming events such as concerts. Regular users of the hall cannot use it now so the loss of that income is quite considerable. A big plea to all parishioners: Please do not stop your giving. There is no problem with those who are already on automatic payment. If you usually put your giving in the plate on Sunday, please consider using your computer to set up an automatic payment. If you do not want to do that, you can do a Bill Payment which allows variable payments. The details are:

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An email to the parish office letting Caro know that you have set up an automatic payment or made a bill payment is an extra safeguard to ensure she can reconcile it: [stpeters@inspire.net.nz](mailto:stpeters@inspire.net.nz) .

If you are already on envelope giving, it would be a good idea to put your giving in the envelope weekly or monthly, whichever you do, so that it will be ready to put in the collection plate when that is possible.

*Yvonne Rae People's Warden*

## Continuing to Pray “Thy Kingdom Come”

In the period between Ascension and Pentecost, we are asked to join in with a global initiative – started by the Archbishop of Canterbury, but now embracing many denominations and countries – praying “thy kingdom come”. We are praying for lives to be submitted to the gracious loving rule of God and Christ Jesus. We are praying for this at the global scale in terms of nations. And we are praying for this at the intimate level for those we love and care for. Rather than asking as the apostles did, “Are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel” (Acts 1:6), we are committing ourselves to the work of prayer in which we actually participate in the coming of the kingdom, the coming of his kingly rule.

Even when Pentecost has passed, we should still form habits of prayer for God’s kingdom to come. You, like me, probably have close friends and relatives who do not know the love of Christ. You, like me, may have almost lost hope that they will ever accept his gentle and just rule in their lives.

In prayer we bring our longings and hopes to God, and as we involve ourselves in this work of God, God acts in the mystery of his love and power. You may like to avail yourself of one or more of the wide range of ways of participating resources and resources available – here <https://movementonline.org.nz/thykingdomcome> and here <https://www.thykingdomcome.global/prayer-resources> - or you could use the following simple form based around the Lord’s Prayer.

### *Thy Kingdom Come* **Praying for friends and family using the Lord’s Prayer**

*This format for reflection and prayer can take as much or as little time as you like. If you take 10 minutes for each section, it will fill an hour.*

#### **Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.**

Think of all the names for God you’ve heard. (If you feel you need inspiration read Genesis 21:33, Exodus 3:14, Judges 6:24, Deuteronomy 7:9, Deuteronomy 10:17, Isaiah 5:16, Psalm 136:26, Isaiah 7:14, John 8:58.)

Which name do you most use when speaking to God?

‘What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.’ (A W Tozer). How often do you use the name ‘Father’?

Read Matthew 7:9-11: *Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for bread, will give a stone? Or if the child asks for a fish, will give a snake? If you*

*then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him?*

How does your identity as God's child affect the way you approach God now as you come to him to pray for your friends and family?

**Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven.**

Think about the people, situations and places you want God to move in. Ask God to teach you to pray in his will for His kingdom in each of these.

God's kingdom comes as more and more people acknowledge God's kingly rule and submit their wills to his. Pray that your friends and family members will come to accept God in this way.

Thank God that He has your whole life and all your requests in His hands.

**Give us today our daily bread.**

Ask God for his provision in every way for those you are praying for – for daily needs of food and shelter; for work to do and for rest from it; for health and wellbeing; and so on.

Ask God too that he will provide for you opportunity, actions and words that will help these people to know the love of God.

Think about what you know about those you're praying for: their lifestyles, needs, issues, attitudes, cultures, worldviews. Ask God for the Holy Spirit's inspiration as to how to approach them, what questions you would ask them about their lives; ask God to give you what you need as you bear witness.

**Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.**

Reflect on your own attitudes and behaviours in relation to those you are praying for. If necessary, ask God to forgive you where you have wronged one of these people. Do you also need to ask for forgiveness for any failure in sharing the gospel?

Ask God to free those you are praying for from the burden of their own sin and guilt.

Ask God that those you are praying for will find the capacity to forgive any who have wronged them.

**Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil.**

Pray for God's protection for those you are praying about – protection from temptation, protection from the lure of the world's "gods", protection from the accusations and lies of Satan, protection from the Evil One's clutches.

Ask God to protect you too, as one of his beloved children, as you go about sharing the Good News.

**For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.** Give thanks to God that this is all about his kingdom, his power, his glory. Give thanks to God that he will see his purposes fulfilled. Give thanks to God that in his love he has a purpose for humankind and that he holds our future.

*Rev Stuart*

## **Vestry Vibes**

The May vestry meeting was held by Zoom on 20<sup>th</sup> May, 2020. There have been other meetings held on Zoom recently and we are getting used to the altered way of attending a meeting.

It was also the first vestry meeting to be chaired by our vicar, Stuart and he introduced a time of reflection and prayer to commence the meeting. A few verses of the Bible had been selected by him and vestry members were invited to comment about the meaning of the verses to them. This was followed by prayer before the business began.

One of the main issues was, of course, Covid 19 and there was considerable discussion about the effects of the lockdown within the church and personally. There has been a plan drawn up to allow for services under Level 2 conditions but it is still not allowed as only 10 people may attend. Hopes were expressed that this would be changed to 100 very shortly which will mean services will be able to be held. These will not be the usual services.

Other issues discussed were:

- The installation of the CCTV cameras is nearly complete.
- The treasurer's report highlighted the loss of income from congregational giving and hall hire during the Covid19 lockdown. The government wage subsidy has helped somewhat. Automatic payment giving has fortunately continued which shows the value of this means of donating.
- Caro has been working from home during the lockdown with phone and internet access being transferred to her there.
- The location and method of storing name tags was discussed and will be done shortly.
- The vicarage was extensively cleaned, the grounds tidied and new curtains hung before Stuart and Christine arrived. Thanks to Ingrid, Wayne and Githa and Graeme. Thanks to the St Peter's Catering Group for covering the cost of the curtains .

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**Pentecost**

Maybe, hopefully, by the time you read this Pentecost will have been celebrated in St Peter's church with up to 100 people distancing themselves safely according to Covid 19 rules.

Wherever Pentecost is celebrated, the meaning and reason for it is still the same. The celebration is actually a very old one for a different reason. Called the Festival of Weeks, it was the time when the barley was harvested which was a time of great festivity and the word itself comes from the Greek meaning 50<sup>th</sup> day which it was from Passover. This festival is mentioned several times in the Old Testament. But it is in the New Testament – Acts Chapter 2 – when the real excitement occurs and Pentecost becomes an important event in the Christian church.

The disciples and very many other Jewish religious men were all gathered to celebrate the Festival of Weeks, the old Pentecost. Imagine their alarm and amazement when suddenly, with a great noise, what looked like tongues of fire came and touched each of the disciples and they began to talk in different languages. Thousands of other people there had come from different countries and they were amazed that the disciples could speak to them in their own language. Some people thought the disciples were drunk but it was Peter who spoke and explained the promises that God had made about the Holy Spirit, the first Gospel. Sometimes Pentecost is called the Birthday of the Church because the disciples had received the Holy Spirit which gave them the power and courage to go out into the world to proclaim the gospel of Christ and establish churches. The colour of the hangings in the church is red at Pentecost to celebrate a special festival but it could also mean the tongues of fire which seemed to alight on the heads of the disciples.

Whatever it is called, Pentecost is a very special celebration for Christians

## **How We Die and How We Grieve**

More than 300,000 people worldwide have died of COVID-19.

21 people have died in New Zealand.

Over the past weeks we have regularly heard about loved ones dying without family members present while in lockdown. We have also heard just how difficult this has been for the law makers and family members alike. Some of the stories that have been shared have been heart breaking and at times confronting.

When our Prime Minister announced that (only) ten people would be able to attend the funeral of their loved one in Level Two lockdown, funeral directors and others spoke of their concerns.

### **COVID-19 has placed dying and grieving at the front of our minds.**

What has all of this said about the expectations of how we die and how we grieve in society today?

Perhaps the COVID-19 situation and the media broadcasts have led to us thinking about, even having conversations about how we die and how we grieve. I would like to think so. If it has, I would like to think that the thinking and the conversations would continue.

The Government has provided us with three 'W's for contact tracing. We are to record the following: **Where** we go, **When** we go, **Who** we meet there.

Let's continue the conversations about how we die and how we grieve, using the following four 'W's:

**When** (how and where) we will continue the conversations we have begun with family and friends. What are the opportunities?

**Where** we die. Talking about the options; home, hospice, hospital, aged care facility.

**What** the dying process might be like.

What is a 'good' death? What are our expectations?

What would we want? How would we communicate those wants to others?

What are our options and choices?

**Who** will join us on the journey – family, friends, community workers, specific health professionals?

*It is about Quality of Life at the End of Life.*

*Rev Faye Davenport, RN*



## **Love in Troubled Times 6**

You might have noticed that the pause button has been pushed - with few posts on this site over past few weeks. This is because I have started a short-term parish role, in Rotorua. Not that I am there yet - like you, perhaps, there is a sense of yes, but not quite yet, as the world around us changes again, and we adjust to shifts in lockdown levels.

As the world around us shifts, and before rushing headlong into life as it was, it could be useful to take another kind of pause. Make a cup of coffee, find a seat in the sun, grab your journal or a piece of paper, and take a reflective pause...

Ask yourself some questions:

- What did I most miss over the weeks of lockdown?
- What were the gifts & blessings of that time?
- What did lockdown teach me about myself and how to live?
- What would I like to take into the future?
- What am I going to leave behind?

For me, there is a sense of gratitude for this experience. It has been a time of slow spaciousness where I have found myself content in the small things of life: toadstools in the garden, hands in the soil, at work in the kitchen. It has shown me that I need far less than I thought: fewer possessions, fewer people,

fewer activities; and in that less of everything, there has been peace and connectedness. It has, for me, been a blessing.

It will be a challenge to go back into the world of busy-ness and muchness, but I intend to carry the sense of pause with me. For you, the experience may well have been very different, but I hope that it has brought new learnings and a greater embrace of life.

So I invite you to take that pause, pour the coffee, sit in the sun, and ponder... how have these days been for you? And if you wish, leave a comment: share your discoveries, your struggles and your joys.

However this time has been, I wish each of you the ongoing blessings of the sacred, and the willingness to simply pause.

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**St. Augustine – First Archbishop of Canterbury**

If you have visited Canterbury in England, you may also have visited the remains of St. Augustine's Abbey. But did you know that 26 May is Augustine's Saints Day?

Augustine was a Prior of the Abbey of St. Andrews in Rome when Pope Gregory the Great chose him to lead a mission to Britain. The province of Britannia became Christian prior to the Roman withdrawal in 410, but the subsequent pagan Saxon invasion led to the destruction of Roman religious structures. This was the recent history that confronted Augustine when, after landing, he proceeded to Canterbury King Ethelbert was converted to Christianity by Augustine who then became the first Archbishop of Canterbury in 597. He is widely recognised as the founder of the Catholic Church in England by converting many of the King's subjects. The King founded an abbey dedicated to St Peter and St Paul which was consecrated in 613. This abbey became the most important and famous centre of learning in

the country and was enlarged several times notably by the Normans in later years. Eventually it was levelled by them and a new church was built. The bodies of St Augustine and early archbishops were re-interred in the new church in 1091. The abbey was taken over by the dissolution of the monasteries. The shrine of St. Augustine was not destroyed but removed to the church in the nearby village of Chilham and was reduced to its present ruined condition before the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

Augustine arrived in England at a time of rather wild tribal fighting. His missionary work shows how strong his faith was and by converting the king of the strongest region, Augustine encouraged many to become Christian also. As some historians record “this was a crucial event in the development of English national identity”.

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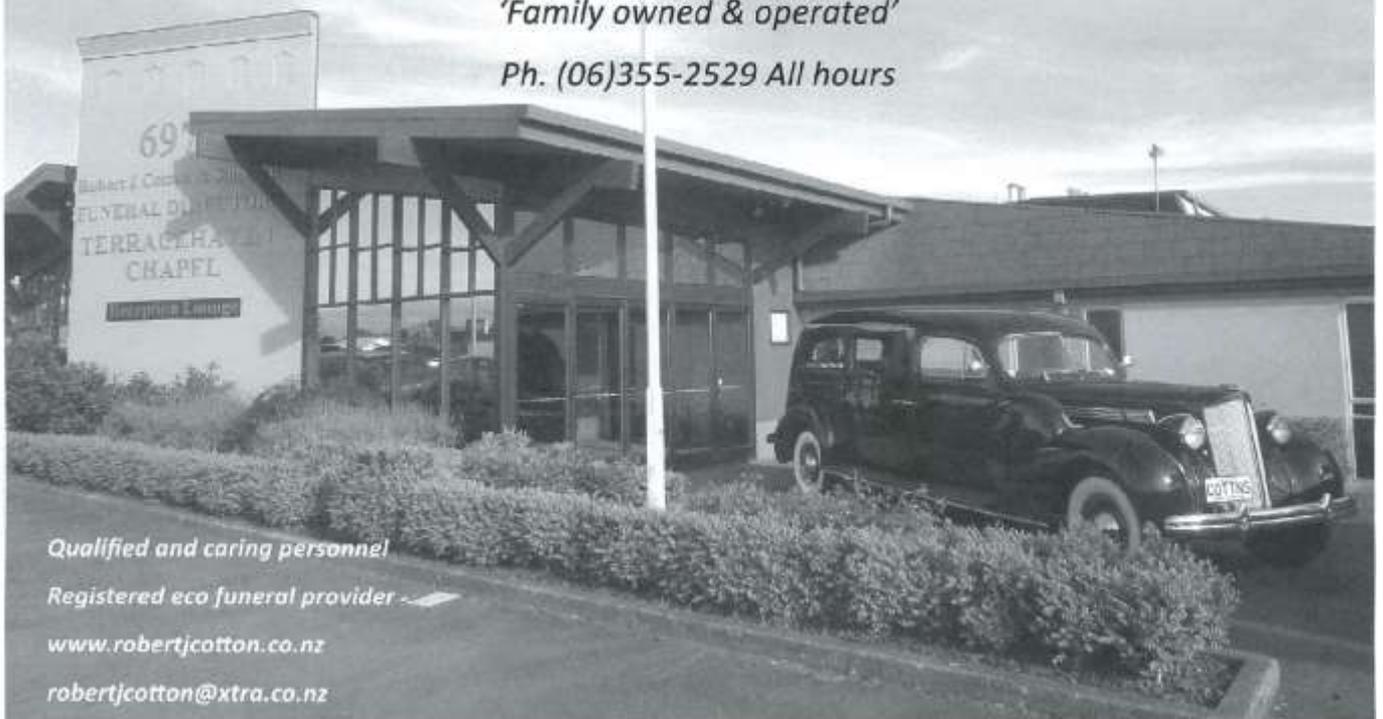
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