



**PARISH WEB** September 2021



**St. George's Anglican Church**

**Gate Pā, Tauranga.**



## **Vicar's Blog**

Well, here we are again. Locked down. Staying home. Doing church online. Not unexpected in many ways, given what is happening in New South Wales and around the world. But not expected either. Just a bit of a surprise. It makes it a little bit difficult to plan for anything coming up, and to know what might be able to happen over the next month or two. We are once again learning how to be patient and to live with uncertainty. We have been here before. We know how to get through this. God is with us in all that is happening. Our parish is still open, and Nevi and I are still at work. Please contact us if you need a chat or need some help.

The last few months have seen a few notable events. At the end of June we had a wonderful harvest festival. Thank you to Faye and Sandy and all who helped decorate the church. It was spectacular. At the end of the service, we officially farewelled Patricia as our Parish Administrator. A sad day. I really enjoyed working with Patricia. I appreciated her quiet efficiency, and the many ways she contributed to the life of our parish community. We wish her well in her new endeavours and look forward to her ongoing participation in our life in a new way.

Shortly after Patricia left we welcomed Nevi to the office. And a couple of weeks ago we officially welcomed her at church on our St. George's Celebration. Welcome Nevi to this community. There is an introductory article in this *Web*. Nevi is doing really well learning the role and radically tidying the office. I think this lockdown will give her time to concentrate on the Sunday side of things.

Thank you to all those who offered stories in the St. George's Day service about some of our parishioners who are no longer with us. It is good to hear the stories of some of those whose names are on our back wall. And thank you once again to Ainsley, Paula and all who helped prepare the wonderful lunch. It was a grand occasion. So grand I forgot to take photos. Apologies.

At the end of July I began a new role as Archdeacon for Tauranga Moana. The Bishop is reinstating archdeaconries, and it is a humbling to be invited to be responsible for the parishes around Tauranga. Thank you for your messages of congratulations. Vestry and I are currently working out how this will work in

practice, so that it does not impinge too much on my ministry in this parish. I also look forward to seeing how we might organise our life as an archdeaconry, once lockdown is over.

And coming up... well, who knows really. We hope to have a Cherry Blossom Market on 25<sup>th</sup> September, an Animal Blessing Service on 10<sup>th</sup> October and an All-Souls service on 31<sup>st</sup> October. And vestry are hoping to run a parish planning day and first aid course. But for now, we wait and see how this latest outbreak plays out. It would not surprise me if some of those, at least, are postponed.

Over September we will be taking part, in some way, in the international Season of Creation, from 1<sup>st</sup> September to 4<sup>th</sup> October. This year the theme is A Home for All? - Renewing the Oikos of God. There is more about this later in the *Web*. But this month offers us a chance to take stock, as a parish, on our relationship with God's creation and how we might be part of a global movement to change our relationship with God's gift, our home.

I want to say a big thank you to the Tauranga Special School for their help with publicity brochures for Centrepoint and for doing our gardens. We really enjoy having you come and spend time here and appreciate all that you do to keep our church environs tidy.

While we are in level three, and possibly while we are in level two, we will be offering online zoom services. I will send out a new link every week for you to join the service. It will also be live-streamed and recorded on the parish YouTube at [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCY6aj\\_VKJYW9YzDy2zZ-EAA/videos](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCY6aj_VKJYW9YzDy2zZ-EAA/videos). The service begins at 9.30 but can be watched anytime. Vestry will need to decide when we re-gather in our church. Like last year, we only want to re-gather when it is safe to do so, even with nearly all of us being vaccinated. Until then we will gather online.

Finally, keep praying for and staying in contact with each other. A number of our parishioners are going through hard times, and level four will not be making this any easier. The prayer circle is still praying, and if you need prayers please contact Joyce Crawford on 579 4363. Otherwise, stay safe, be kind to all those you meet, and ask for help if you need it.

**Peace and all good**

John Hebert PSSF.

# Faithful Response to the Climate Crisis

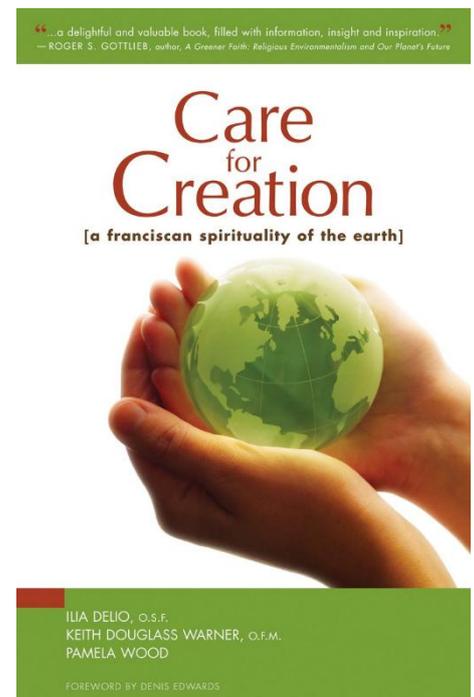
A few weeks ago the UN Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released its regular update. And from September 1 we will once again be in the Season of Creation. This is a time each year we are encouraged to take time becoming as informed as possible, and to prayerfully take action. The challenge for us all is how to respond from our faith, rather than fear. We do not need more fear. What is needed is an urgent reframing of our relationship with God's gift of creation and for people to act on this. So, I offer the following as a way into this. It comes from **“Care for Creation: A Franciscan Spirituality of the Earth”** by Ilia Delio OSF, Keith Douglass Warner OFM and Pamela Wood (Ann Arbor: Servant Books, 2009).



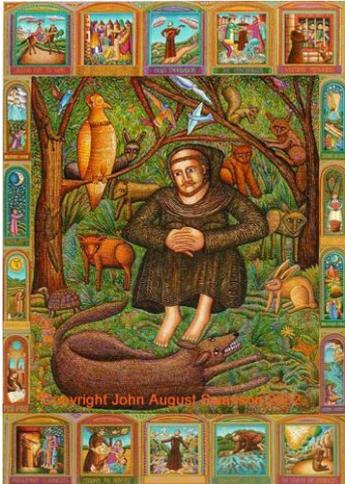
## ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS AND THE WORD OF GOD

There are a number of reasons why we find ourselves in an environmental crisis: technological, cultural and economic revolutions. But for Christians the crisis may be even more fundamental. Christians are in a crisis of the Word of God. We Christians have no real grasp of the living Word of God. Jesus was a good person, but do we believe that he is the Christ, the living Word of God who dwells in our midst? Many seem to believe in God, not because the living Word of God interrupts our daily lives on Earth, but because it is better to believe than not to believe. We do not know what awaits us after death, and the promise of heaven and eternal life seems worthwhile for an act of faith. As a result, creation is not our primary concern. We may hope for a new heaven and a new earth but we don't really believe such hope has anything to do with *this* earth.

The crisis of the Word is a crisis of theology—literally—“God talk.” We have lost a Christian theology that adequately conveys the idea that creation is God speaking to us. However, this is indeed what the Franciscan theologian Bonaventure claimed. The first Book of Revelation, he said, was the “Book of Creation.” Before sin entered the hearts of humans, we could read this book intelligently and know God through the things of creation. However, once sin entered into the human condition the “Book of Creation” became unintelligible; like a foreign language to us. Only one like Francis, who lived a life of conversion, could read the “Book of Creation” and understand its meaning.



The “Book of Creation” spoke to Francis in such a way Bonaventure said that “In beautiful things, he contuited Beauty itself.” Thomas of Celano wrote that “He walked reverently over rocks, out of respect for Him who is called the Rock.” The meaning of creation would be lost to us forever, Bonaventure indicates, if Christ had not come and enlightened the darkness of the human heart. Christ is the Book of Life through whom we can learn to read once again the “Book of Creation.” Because sin has rendered creation like a closed book, we are given the Scriptures to know God and the things of God. Reading, understanding and contemplating the Word of God leads us back to creation as the revelation of God.



#### FRANCIS: AT HOME IN THE COSMOS.

Francis of Assisi was at home in the cosmos. We know this because at the end of his life he composed the Canticle of the Creatures in which he sang of brotherhood and sisterhood in the family of creation: Brother Sun, Sister Moon, Sister Mother Earth. The cosmos became home to Francis because this is where he discovered love, the overflowing goodness of God. The brothers who lived with Francis remembered him as one who revered the Earth:

When he washed his hands, he chose a place where the water would not be trampled underfoot after the washing. Whenever he had to walk over rocks, he would walk with fear and reverence out of love for Him who is called “The Rock.”...

He also told the brother who cut the wood for fire not to cut down the whole tree, but to cut in such a way that one part remained while another was cut....

He used to tell the brother who took care of the garden not to cultivate all the ground in the garden for vegetables, but to leave a piece of ground that would produce wild plants that in their season would produce “Brother Flowers.” Moreover, he used to tell the brother gardener that he should make a beautiful flower bed in some part of the garden, planting and cultivating every variety of fragrant plants and those producing beautiful flowers.

Francis taught the brothers to accept the gifts of God’s goodness in creation and to respond with grateful hearts through bonds of love, care, concern and companionship. Francis valued the home of the earth, not as his home alone, but first and foremost as God’s home.

## CREATION V NATURE

To speak of creation as our home is to speak of creation as relationship. The word creation implies relationship, unlike the word nature, which holds no inherent religious meaning. “Creation” points to a “Creator,” a God who creates. The distinction between creation and nature is an important one because when we discuss the integrity of nature, especially from the Franciscan tradition, we are really talking about creation, the relationship of the natural world, including humans, to the Creator. “Creation,” therefore, means relationships between the human and nonhuman created order, the place of the human person within that order, and the response of the person to the created order in its relationship to God. In this respect, talk of an “environmental crisis” from a Franciscan perspective must immediately signal a “religious crisis” simply because environment is more than nature alone; rather, it is that realm of God’s goodness in the natural world that shares with us humans a deep longing for God.

## IDENTITY IN GOD

The life of Francis shows us that to appreciate the Book of Creation we must come to know ourselves as creatures of God and as creatures of creation. Without self-knowledge there can be no real knowledge of creation as our home and the womb of our birth. Without the human person to give voice to creation, to celebrate its giftedness and sacredness, creation becomes mute and vulnerable to manipulation. The key to creation’s holiness, therefore, is in human identity—who we are in our Creator, the Trinity of divine love. This identity is revealed to us in Jesus Christ, the Word in whom we are made flesh. If God is alive in us, as he was in Francis, then we are alive to the world of God’s good creation. However, if God is dead in us, then we are dead to the deeper meaning of creation as well. Francis realized that God humbly bends low in love and hides in simple, ordinary, fragile beings. So too we must realize that God is in our midst.

Only when we can recognize creatures for what they are—expressions of God’s overflowing love—can we recognize the source of our own lives as well. The love that gave birth to all

creatures is the same love that has brought us into existence. This is what Francis realized, the luminous web of God’s love revealed in Jesus Christ. We are called to live in this luminous web of love.

**“ THE URGENT CHALLENGE TO PROTECT OUR COMMON HOME INCLUDES A CONCERN TO BRING THE WHOLE HUMAN FAMILY TOGETHER TO SEEK A SUSTAINABLE AND INTEGRAL DEVELOPMENT, FOR WE KNOW THAT THINGS CAN CHANGE.”**



# Vestry Notes...

## Senior Chef

St George's is looking to run a programme called **Senior Chef** in the near future. It's a course for people over 50 who may be on their own and would like to improve their cooking skills.



The course runs over 8 weeks for 3 hours on Fridays, for 8-12 participants with no cost to them. The programme is fully funded by ACW from our Diocese. The trainee cooks receive a practical recipe book to keep. The course is run by a trained, paid facilitator who undertakes the training of the course members.

We have been working with Graeme Brock the Diocesan Social Coordinator to establish this initiative in this Parish. There is one other just underway in Papamoa; we will be the second in the Bay of Plenty. We have already had interest from social agencies like Age Concern and Te Tuinga Whanau personnel.

The course is open to the whole community, not just from St George's, though any of our parishioners who attend will be coming to a familiar venue.

We appreciate being offered this opportunity by the Diocese and look forward to getting this new community service underway.

If you are interested in attending please let me know.

Faye Mayo

People's Warden

## Calling All Gardeners

Do you have green fingers? Is your garden a thing of beauty?

Do you like nothing better than spending time with plants?

**WE NEED YOU** to become part of St George's Garden team. A roster of keen gardeners or anyone else who would like to help with this task is being made. Could this be your ministry for the parish?

If you can spare an hour or two once a month, or even every two months, helping maintain our grounds and gardens please let me know (see below) or sign up on the sheet in the foyer. I will send the roster out once we have our team.

Thank you.

**Faye Mayo** People's Warden

5433369 [fayemayo06@gmail.com](mailto:fayemayo06@gmail.com)



# Harvest Festival

St George's held its annual Harvest Festival Service on Sunday, June 27<sup>th</sup>.

Donations of pumpkins, potatoes, citrus, lettuce, spinach, kiwifruit and cans of food were artistically displayed around the altar by Lesley Jensen, Sandy Houltram and Faye Mayo as well as other willing volunteers. Thank you all for your donations and support. It was lovely to walk in and see the colourful piles of fruit and vegetables contributed by parishioners, from their own vegetable patches and orchards. All produce was donated to Foodbank, who collected it the following morning.



Traditionally Harvest Festival is a celebration of the food grown on the land, an ancient ritual celebrated since pagan times, marked by decorating the church with baskets of fruit and vegetables and food, as well as singing and dancing. For us today, it is a time to reflect on God's generous bounty and creates an opportunity to share the bounty with others in need.

This Harvest Festival was also the day we farewelled Patricia Price, our Parish Administrator for the past 18 months. Patricia is an organisational genius, who had an enthusiastic and cheerful approach to this very varied, people-orientated job. We loved her efficiency, computer competency, her willingness to help everyone, her creativity, especially when designing posters and tickets for our various events and for the support she gave us in our roles. During lockdown last year she was a real trooper, working with John to keep the congregation informed and connected. It was with real sadness we farewelled her as she moves on to a fulltime job. Patricia, we wish you well and are delighted you are remaining at St George's as a parishioner. That lessened the blow! Good luck and thank you for your effort, energy, enthusiasm and your friendship.



*Ainsley Max*

## Introducing Nevi Fernandez

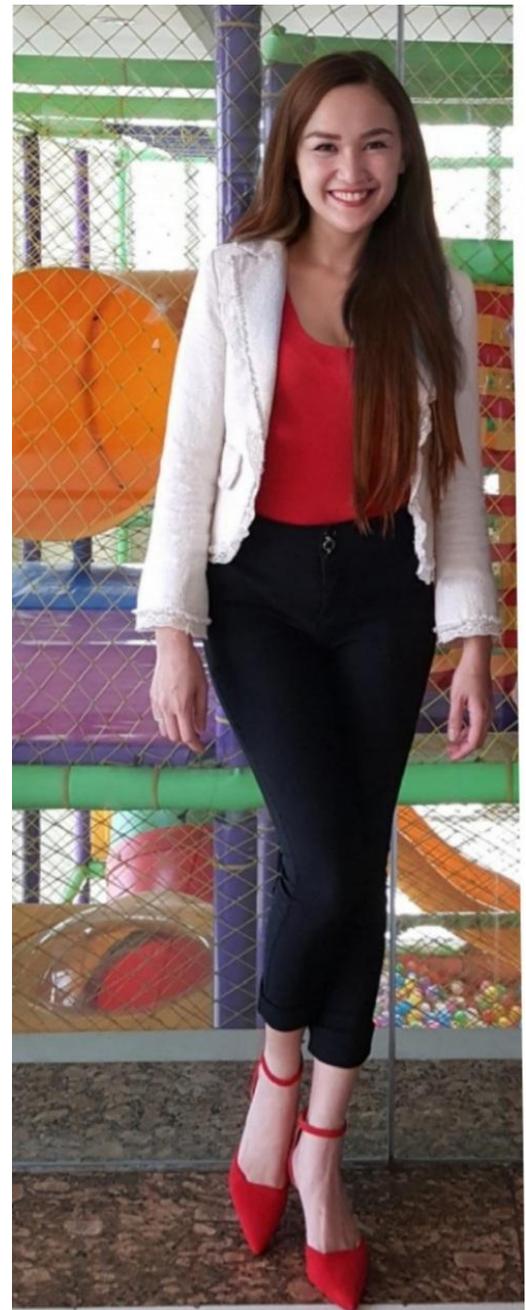
Thank you for this wonderful opportunity to be part of the St George's Parish and for giving me the chance to introduce myself.

I am Nevi Fernandez and have been your new Parish Administrator since the 19<sup>th</sup> of July 2021. I am a Filipina, born and raised in the Philippines for 37 years. I moved here to New Zealand roughly 3 years ago with my husband and my only son. He is 18 years old now, studying at TBC.

I was happy with my corporate job in the Philippines as an Events Marketing Manager, which I did for 10 years in the famous hotel chain in our country, before we moved in Auckland to save my family from falling apart. It was never a plan to leave our country because when I was a child, my mother always told me a scary story about those people who migrated to other countries and suffered racism, discrimination, and were physically abused. My abrupt move happened when my husband accepted the job offer as an architect in Saudi Arabia. I also lodged a visa to Australia and New Zealand with much hope that I could keep my family together in either country because I want nothing more in this world but to be at my husband and son's sides in good times and bad times.

So here I am in Tauranga, the city that I hadn't been to before. Little did I know I was guided by Him above into a lot better place to live, and I landed into my dream job that I once hoped for. A job that I can do in the morning as I need to manage my franchise business (Jasmine Rice, Frozen Foods, and a delivery service) in the Philippines through online transactions at night due to the time difference.

In my free time I enjoy hanging out with my family and spending much time in the kitchen with my son and husband. As to my character, I am a self-motivated disciplined soul who always wants to up-skill myself. I always give my best in everything I do like it's the LAST DAY of my life. Likewise, I always dress well like it's the BEST DAY of my life, because if we are happy, we can always do amazing things for others and for ourselves. Thank you



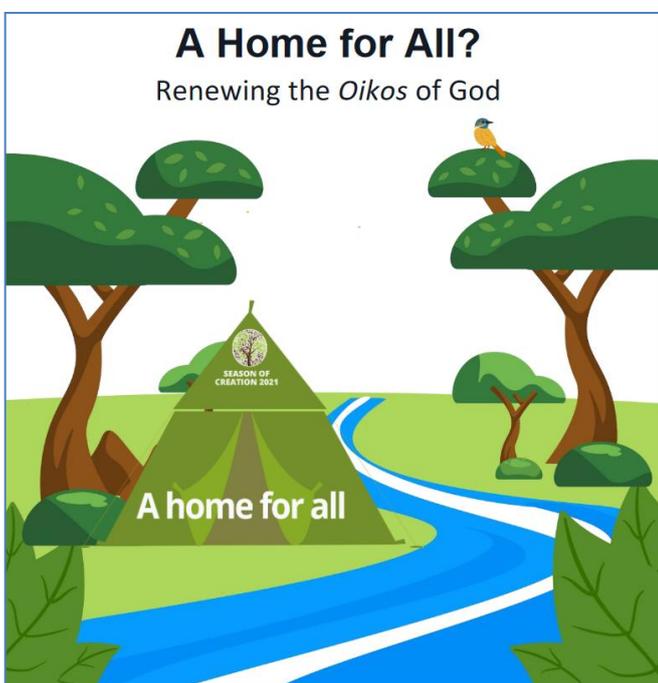
*Nevi Fernandez*

# Faith leaders' invitation to join the Season of Creation

Our dear Relatives in Jesus our Saviour and Lord,

From September 1 to October 4, the Christian family celebrates the good gift of creation. This global celebration began in 1989 with the Ecumenical Patriarchate's recognition of the Day of Prayer for Creation and is now embraced by the wide ecumenical community. Prayer is a powerful experience and tool to raise awareness and foster transformational relations and ministry.

This year our theme is A Home for All? Renewing the oikos of God. It is our hope to



work together to develop a larger Biblical and cosmological horizon, not only to be edified by the texts themselves, but to develop a new way to see Scripture, life, and Earth all in the oikos of God and to acknowledge the wisdom from countless sisters and brothers helping all to renew our world as an interconnected and interdependent global beloved community. In Genesis God set a dome over the Earth. The word "dome" is where we get words such as 'domicile' and 'domestic' — in other words, God puts us all is — all people, all life — under the same domed roof — we

are all in the house, the oikos of God. God gave humans the ministry to take care and cultivate this oikos of God. The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and others have called the oikos of God "the Beloved Community," a community in which all of life are equally members, though each has a different role. The oikos is a home for all but it is now in danger because of greed, exploitation, disrespect, disconnection and systematic degradation. The whole creation is still crying out. Since the dawn of the Industrial Revolution the geography where we recognize God's creative power has continued to shrink. Today only scraps of the human consciousness recognize God acting to restore and heal the Earth. We have forgotten that we live in the household of God, the oikos, the Beloved Community. Our fundamental interconnectedness has been at best forgotten, at worst deliberately denied. It is our hope and prayer that we can become again this beloved community of intentional discipleship. We hope to move beyond the programmatic and didactic aspects of life to the prophetic and spiritual life, to the action and way of life, which is shaped by Jesus. May we be the champions to renew life, the servant leaders of all life in the Beloved Community, the oikos of God.

In God's Grace,

*Members of the Season of Creation Advisory Committee*



## Poems for Spring

### Winter into Spring

Today  
In grey stillness  
these islands  
ride at anchor.  
It is a time  
of waiting.  
A pause.  
Smoke wafts  
thin spirals  
of indifference  
into a winter sky.

I am happy  
because  
an old man's glasses  
were lost  
and are found  
and there are buds  
on the camellias.

*Shirley May*

"...time remembered is grief forgotten,  
And frosts are slain and flowers begotten,  
And in green underwood and cover  
Blossom by blossom the Spring begins."

*A.C. Swinburne.*



## SPRING THANKSGIVING

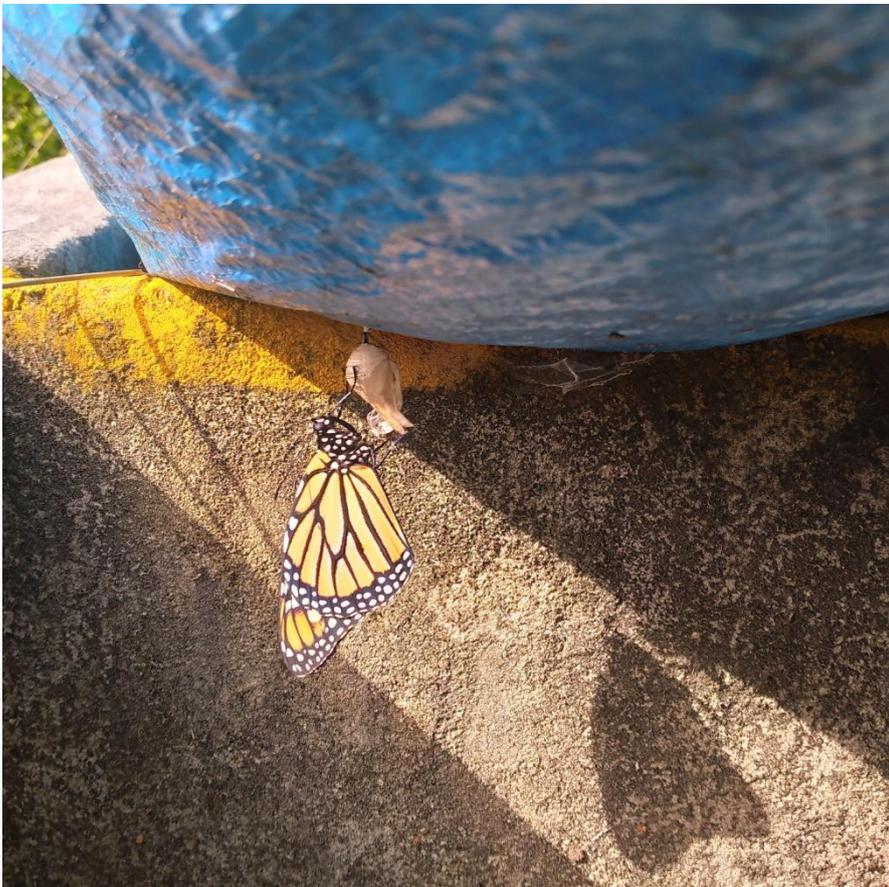
We have endured  
the Order of Winter  
The Hunger  
The Winds  
The Pain of Sickness  
And lived on .....  
Once again we shall  
See the Snow melt  
Taste the Flowering Sap  
Touch the Budding Seeds  
Smell the Whitening Flowers  
Know the Renewal of Life.

*Anon.*

*Contributed by Glenn Barclay*



## Some Lessons about Life and Faith from my Garden



There are lots of quotes about God speaking to us through nature and here is one of my favourites: "I love to think of nature as an unlimited broadcasting station through which God speaks to us every hour, if we will only tune in" *George Washington Carver.*

Nearly two years ago, I was unfortunate to suffer a concussion. At the time I was unable to do most of the things I normally did and spent a lot of time "just being" in my garden. This led me on a journey of noticing lessons about life and faith that my garden and what

nature could teach me.

*Photo:* Hatched

*Thought:* Sometimes the end of something is actually the beginning of what is meant to be.

*Andrea Andresen*

## St George's Day

On 15 August we celebrated St George's Day and as well as having the annual lunch we remembered some past parishioners. Below is a memory shared:

### Fred and Barbara Worsnop

Looking back to 1974, when I joined the parish, two of the people I remember from my early days at St. George's are Fred and Barbara Worsnop. I don't know a lot about their early days, except that Barbara was living in Guernsey, the second largest of the Channel Islands, at the start of WW2. She was amongst the 5,000 school children and their teachers who were evacuated to the South Coast of England in June 1940, just days before the Nazis occupied their island. It would have been a frightening experience for a nine year old.

Barbara and Fred were married in 1954 and came to Tauranga from the Hawkes Bay. They were part of St. George's community during the Rev. Cyril Steven's time as Vicar - he was the first Vicar, appointed to the parish in 1962 - and were known to also be personal friends. Possibly they had known one another in the Hawkes Bay, because Cyril had family connections there.

Fred was a Maths teacher and worked initially at Tauranga

Girls' College, moving later to Mt. Maunganui College and then to the BOP Polytechnic. He was a tall man, with a commanding voice which he used to good effect when reading the Lessons at church. He also served on vestry, while Barbara was involved in Mothers' Union and the church choir for many years. They were both very caring people and supportive also of their two daughters, Anne (a GP in Dunedin) and Pam (who worked as a parliamentary secretary for an MP in the Beehive).



Barbara and Fred lived on a small acreage in Pukemapu Road. They loved their piece of land, their animals and sharing fruit and other produce from their garden. They lived simply, but with great generosity.

Joyce Crawford remembers that when Ian was first home from hospital after a significant stroke, it was the Worsnops who phoned with the message not to prepare an evening meal. In due course, Fred and Barbara arrived with dinner cooked and beautifully presented, even to a bottle of wine. And they stayed to do the dishes at the end of the meal!

In their older age, Shirley Scott and I had the pleasure of taking Communion to the couple. They might not always have remembered we were coming, but they were always welcoming and appreciative.

In time, the family persuaded them to move to supported living in Kapiti, which was nearer to Pam. Fred and family members were with Barbara when she died in September 2018. Fred died just sixteen days later, reunited with his wife of 64 years. They were both aged eighty seven.

Joyce and I and other older parishioners share many happy memories of the years Fred and Barbara spent with us at St. George's.

*Helen O'Connor*

A much loved recipe to share, from our St George's Day lunch

## **American Pecan Pie**

125 g butter softened  
3/4 cup of glucose syrup  
1 cup brown sugar  
4 eggs beaten  
1 tsp vanilla  
1.5 cups chopped pecans

Line a deep pie dish with a sheet of sweet short pastry, coming up the sides.

Scatter pecans over the pastry

Combine remaining ingredients together and pour over pecans.

Cook in moderate oven for 40 minutes. Pie should be firm to touch.

Sprinkle with icing sugar before serving with ice cream or cream.

Cook at 150°

*Ainsley Max*

## Centrepoint Catchup

Spring is on its way, and it's hard to believe we are in September. We have managed to keep ourselves nice and cosy this winter by installing a new heat pump. This has been greatly received by both staff and customers. Hopefully it will prove to be as valuable over the summer keeping the shop cool.



September also brings the cherry blossom festival to Greerton (if Covid allows). Centrepoint will once again be entering the window dressing competition. The prize for this is usually free advertising in *The Sun* newspaper, so fingers crossed. During the cherry blossom festival the shop's car park will host the church's market day, which is a fundraiser for the church. The shop will also stay open longer so please come along and support this.

Earlier this year Greerton Village held the vintage and retro fair and it proved to be very popular. Due to the increase in interest in vintage and retro shopping, we have included a designated area and clothing rack for these items in store. We are regularly told by our customers that our prices for such items are very reasonable and although we have a lot of competition in Greerton Village, we are considered by many of our regulars to be “the best and most welcoming op shop”.

Finding and keeping good volunteers can be difficult. This year has been particularly hard for a lot of people and a few of our regular and valued volunteers have had to move on. Although we have had new members join the team we sometimes find ourselves short staffed. We have had to come up with ways to reach out to the community to find new

“Volunteers don't get paid, not because they're worthless, but because they're priceless.”

– Sherry Anderson

volunteers. This has been done by committee members placing posters in places such as doctors waiting rooms and supermarket notice boards and the delivery of approximately 700 flyers into letter boxes around Greerton and the Lakes area. Thank you to Helen O'Connor and the students and teachers from Tauranga Special School (who's classroom is situated above Centrepoint) for delivering these flyers.

Shoplifting continues to be a problem, not only for Centrepoint but all of Greerton Village. We have now installed 7 security cameras which gives us full coverage of

the shop floor. A new monitor is being installed near the counter area. This will be visible to customers as they enter the store, reinforcing to them that we have working cameras, hopefully discouraging shoplifting. This will also give the volunteers serving behind the counter full view of the shop floor, giving them the ability to monitor undesirable customers and behaviour.

Hopefully this latest Covid drama won't last too long and Centrepoint will be up and running as normal soon. Hope to see you all there.

*Kate Heselden (Centrepoint Manager)*



# St George's Blossom Festival Market

**SATURDAY 25TH  
SEPTEMBER  
9AM-12 NOON**

**CENTREPOINT CARPARK  
CHADWICK RD**



**BOOKS, PRODUCE,  
CLOTHING, BRIC-A BRAC,  
FURNITURE, FACE PAINTING,  
SAUSAGE SIZZLE.**

## Matariki at Waiapu Kids Merivale

The rising of the Matariki constellation in the winter skies marks a special time in the Merivale Whānau Aroha calendar. Every year we spend this time deep in learning what the Māori New Year inspires, the catalyst of which is our Matariki Hākari. This celebration has been a long-standing tradition easily being our biggest event of the year.

As Matariki reminds us to look back at where we have come, and forward to where we are going, it seemed fitting that we also celebrate the reopening of our centre after our significant renovations in Autumn. Bishop Andrew Hedge and our local Vicar from St George's Parish in Gate Pā, Rev'd John Heberton, worked alongside us to incorporate a blessing of our new centre into our Matariki celebration.

It was a privilege to share this special ceremony with our tamariki, whānau, ACW family and wider school community. Merivale Primary School's Kapahaka group finished this portion of the day with waiata sung alongside our tamariki. With much of the Kapahaka group being past students of Merivale Whānau Aroha it was the perfect symbolisation of our growth to have them perform for



all our guests.

With the formalities aside it was then time to share our centre with all of those who made the time to attend. Our tamariki had their Matariki work on display in their new project room showcasing their Matariki learning journey for 2021. We are tremendously proud of our centre and the realisation of many years of dreams and hard work evident throughout. Of course, the cornerstone of this event however is the feast itself. One of our longest standing whānau put down the hangi and in the spirit of Matariki the feast

preparation was a team effort from both staff and whānau. Once again Matariki brought our community together and reminded us of the strength we have in this unity.

Matariki hunga, Matariki ahunga nui.

*Miri Roberts*





## TAURANGA MOANA INTERFAITH COUNCIL

The Tauranga Moana Interfaith Council has been going now for about 7 years. It was started by Edward (Ted) Heselden from the Bahai community, Oriel Reed from the Quakers, and me, John Heberton. I continue to chair the Council. Over this time, we have sought to foster understanding and co-operation among faith groups in Tauranga Moana. We continue to do this through several ways.

For the last two years, as Covid has allowed, we have held Interfaith Council meetings every two months. Representatives from the Baha'i, Anglican, Methodist, Religious Society of Friends/Quakers, Gaudiya/Hare Krishna, Catholic, Sikh, and Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints faith communities have attended at least one of our meetings. Haidee Kalirai from Welcoming Communities has also regularly attended, as well as Fungai Mhlanga from the Office of Ethnic Communities. This has provided a space where people of different faiths can learn about each other and grow in understanding.

We try to hold public events in the intervening months. These have included:

- An introduction to the beliefs and practices of each of the faith communities who make up the council.
- Holding the New Zealand premier of the docufilm "**The Sultan and the Saint**" about Saint Francis of Assisi meeting the Sultan of Egypt during the 5<sup>th</sup> Crusade.
- In October each year hosting an event to mark the **Week of Prayer for World Peace**. We usually have contributions from Baha'i, Hari Krishna, Mormons, Quakers, Methodists, Anglicans, and Roman Catholics. One of the highlights is always the conversation after the official part of the evening is over. It is this relationship building that is at the heart of interfaith work.
- For the last two years we hosted a **Religious Diversity and Anti-Discrimination workshop** in collaboration with the Tauranga City Council, Religious Diversity Centre and Waikato University. These have been well attended, and we look forward to holding some modified version of these again next year.
- We have also hosted Todd Nachowitz from Earth Diverse who has offered a range of courses here at St. George's, the last one being a series on **fundamentalism and extremism, and pacifism** run in 2019.

Our big focus for next year is to co-host, with the Waikato Interfaith Council, the **National Interfaith Forum** on 6-8 May 2022. It was supposed to be in September last year but Covid got in the way.

We are also supporting the Religious Society of Friends in their goal of planting peace poles around Tauranga.

We live in a time of growing sectarianism and religious intolerance around the world. There is much ignorance about the faith communities present within this land and in Tauranga Moana – what faiths are here and what those faiths are about. At heart is a struggle for what kind of society we want in this land; a welcoming society that allows people of many races and faiths to call this place home; or one built on other ways of seeing our society. We need wisdom to know how to grow this work. We would welcome your support and invite you to attend all of our public events.

## SPCA Blessing of the Animals Service

For many years now we have held a special service in October where people can bring along their animals to have them blessed. We do this in conjunction with the Tauranga SPCA and any donations made that day go to the SPCA. The establishment of the SPCA and the development of the Blessing of Animals services both had significant Anglican roots.

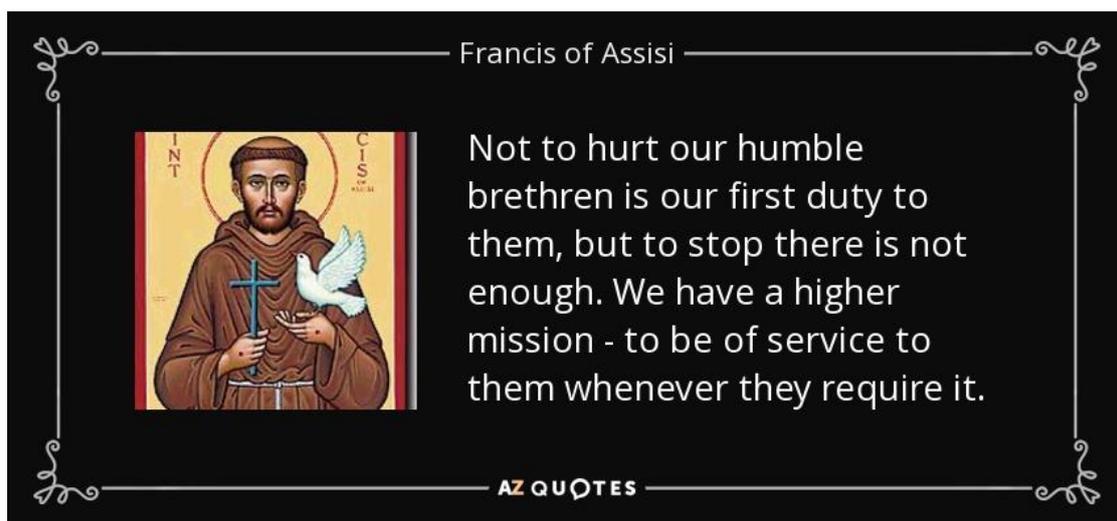
Arthur Broome (1779-1837) an Anglican priest, was the first secretary of the RSPCA. In 1822 he began raising funds for an anti-animal cruelty society by re-publishing an abridged version of Humphrey Primatt's *'Dissertation on the duty of mercy and sin of cruelty to brute animals.'* In 1824 he invited a number of reformers to create a society for the prevention of cruelty to animals. There were 11 other founding members including two other Anglican priests, lawyers and members of parliament including William Wilberforce. Broome gave up his London church to work full-time and unpaid for the Society. He instigated a system of anti-cruelty inspectors which he paid for out of his own pocket. Sadly he overspent the funds and ended up doing time in a debtor's prison in 1826. He died in 1837 of tuberculosis and was buried in an unmarked paupers grave in the grounds of Birmingham Cathedral.

Andrew Linzey is an Anglican priest who has been a member of the Faculty of Theology in the University of Oxford for 28 years. He held the world's first academic post in Ethics, Theology and Animal Welfare. As a teenager he had a series of intensely religious experiences which deepened his sense of God as the creator of all things, and these deepened his sensitivity towards creation itself, so that a concern for God's creatures and animal rights followed from that. In 1975 he wrote the first *Order of Service for Animal Welfare* which was published by the RSPCA. Hundreds of churches, of all denominations, now hold these services. He passionately believes "Animals are God's creatures, not human property, nor utilities, nor resources, nor commodities, but precious beings in God's sight." He has said, "I used to be frightened of controversy; now I accept it ... in an ideal world change would come without it. But this is not an ideal world: 150 years ago,

the Church was defending slavery as the Christianisation of the dark races; 50 years ago it justified the subordination of women as part of the God-given order." Linzey is a prolific and pioneering author on theology and animal ethics from a Christian perspective and also a moral one. In 2001 he was awarded a Doctor of Divinity degree by the Archbishop of Canterbury in recognition of his 'unique and massive pioneering work at a scholarly level in the theology of creation with particular reference to the rights and welfare of God's sentient creatures'. This is the highest award that the Archbishop can bestow on a theologian and the first time it has been awarded for theological work on animals. In 2006 he was placed on *The Independent's* Good List of 50 people who have changed Britain for the better. In 2010 he was awarded the Lord Erskine Award from the RSPCA for advancing animal welfare within the Christian community.

Our Animal Blessing Service is held on a Sunday close to the 4th October, the feast day of Francis of Assisi and also now World Day for Animals. St Francis is the patron saint of animals and the environment. On many animal rights and vegetarian websites the following quote is attributed to Francis:

'Not to hurt our humble brothers is our first duty towards them, but to stop there would be to mis-understand the designs of Providence. We have a higher mission. God wills us to assist them whenever they require our aid.' (*History of Francis of Assisi by the Abbe Leon Le Monier and translated by a Franciscan Tertiary 1894, p426*)



The following are examples of St Francis assisting animals in need. His earliest biographer Thomas of Celano 1229 wrote:

'Who could ever express the deep affection he bore for all things that belong to God? Or who would be able to tell of the sweet tenderness he enjoyed while contemplating in creatures the wisdom, power, and goodness of the Creator? From this reflection he often overflowed with amazing, unspeakable joy as he looked at the sun, gazed at the moon, or observed the stars in the sky. What simple piety! What pious simplicity! Even for worms he had a warm love... he used to pick them up from the road and put them in a safe place so that they

would not be crushed by the footsteps of passersby. What shall I say about the other lesser creatures? In the winter he had honey or the best wine put out for the bees so that they would not perish from the cold.' (*Francis of Assisi, The Saint - Early Documents - Thomas of Celano. Ch XXIX p250*)



'Again and again the beasts of the forest also ran to Blessed Francis as to the safest port, as though, led by reason, they knew his kind feelings towards them. Once when staying near the town of Greccio a certain brother brought him a live rabbit caught in a trap. Seeing it, the most blessed man was moved with tenderness "brother rabbit" he said "come to me, why did you allow yourself to get caught?" As soon as the brother holding it let go the rabbit took shelter with the holy man. After it had rested there for a little while, the holy father caressing

it with affection, let it go so that it would return to the woods. As often as it was put down it would return to his lap, so he told the brothers to carry it away to the nearby forest. Something similar happened to another little rabbit - a wild one, when he was on the island in the lake of Perugia.' (*Francis of Assisi, The Saint - Early Documents-Thomas of Celano. Ch XX1 p235*)

'He had the same tender feeling toward fish. When he had the chance he would throw back into the water live fish that had been caught, and he warned them to be careful not to be caught again. Once while he was sitting in a boat on the Lake of Rieti, a large fish... was given to him while it was still alive. The holy man received it joyfully and kindly, not to eat it, but to set it free. He called it "Brother Fish," and while praying and blessing the *name of the Lord* he put it back into the water. While he was persisting in his prayer and praise, the fish played in the water and did not leave until Blessed Francis, after finishing his prayer, gave it permission.' (*Francis of Assisi, The Saint - Early Documents-Thomas of Celano. Ch XX1 p236*)

'On another occasion while travelling through the marshes with a brother companion he came across a man carrying over his shoulder two little lambs bound and ready for sale. When Blessed Francis heard the bleating lambs his innermost heart was touched "why are you torturing my brother lambs" he said to the man "binding and hanging them in this way?" "I am carrying them to the market to sell them since I need the money" he replied. The holy man asked "what will happen to them?" "Those who buy them will kill and eat them" he responded. "No this must not happen, here take my cloak as payment and give me the lambs". The man readily gave him the little lambs and took the cloak since

it was much more valuable. The cloak was one the holy man had borrowed from a friend on the same day to keep out the cold. The holy man of God, having taken the lambs, now was wondering what he should do with them. Asking for advice from the brother who was with him, he gave them back to that man, ordering him never to sell them or allow any harm to come to them, but instead to preserve, nourish, and guide them carefully.' (*Francis of Assisi, The Saint - Early Documents-Thomas of Celano. Ch XX1 p236*)

'One day, on the road to Siena, he met a young man carrying some live turtle doves that he had caught and was going to sell. "O good young man," he said to him, " these are innocent birds that are compared in Holy Scripture to chaste and faithful souls. I pray you not to give them over to those who will kill them, but give



them to me." They were given to him and the Saint put them in his bosom, and said as he caressed them "O my sisters the turtle doves, so simple, innocent, and chaste, why did you let yourselves be taken? Now I will save you from death, and make nests for you. (*Fioretti, Ch. xxii. in History of Francis of Assisi by the Abbe Leon Le Monier p427*)

Thomas of Celano also related this interesting event. 'As normally happens, sometimes the craving to eat something came upon him, but afterwards he would barely allow himself to eat it. Once, because he was ill, he ate a little bit of chicken. When his physical strength returned, he entered the city of Assisi. When he reached the city gate, he commanded the brother who was with him to tie a cord around his neck and drag him through the whole city as if he were a thief, loudly crying out: "Look! See this glutton who grew fat on the flesh of chickens that he ate without your knowledge." Many people ran to see this grand spectacle and, groaning and weeping, they said: "Woe to us! We are wretches and our whole life is steeped in blood! With excess and drunkenness we feed our hearts and bodies to overflowing!" *They were touched in their hearts* and were moved to a better way of life by such an example. (*Francis of Assisi, The Saint - Early Documents-Thomas of Celano. Ch X1X p228*)

The Blessing of the Animals Service is fun, but it does make me think about the vast majority of animals in the world that don't live as human companions, especially those who humans exploit for food or other reasons. These are animals who we, as a society, have no intention of coming to the aid of.

Our Blessing of the Animals Service is always a great occasion where people can bring along their animal friends. Most are dogs, but cats, rabbits, parrots, goats

and donkeys have also come. One year the dogs even joined in the singing! Do come along to the service on 10 October and support the SPCA. Bring your hairy, furry, feathered, scaly or insect friend, or just come along for the fun. There's always morning tea afterwards and a chance to meet the animals and their companions.

*Paula Simons*



*2021 Blessing of the Animals  
St. George's Anglican Church*



**10.00am Sunday 10th October 2021**



**@ St. Georges  
2021**

7pm on 3rd October - Remembering St Francis

7pm on 28th November - Advent

*Anglican Parish of Gate Pa  
1 Church St, Tauranga  
Office 07 578 7916*



# St George's Anglican Church

## Events and Services.

All the following are Covid permitting

### Season of Creation

September 1st - October 4th

### Parish Social Pub Nights at Oasis Bar & Grill, Greerton

September 10th 5:00pm (This will now be a zoom meeting)

October 8th 5:00pm

November 12th 5:00pm

December 10th 5:00pm

### Cherry Blossom Festival Gala Bric-à-Brac Stall Centrepoint Carpark

September 25th 9.00am

### Blessing of the Animals service

October 10th 10:00am

### All-Souls service

October 31st 10:00am

### Taize at St George's

October 3rd 7:00pm -Remembering St Francis

November 28th 7:00pm -Advent

**Remember.** If for any reason you no longer wish to receive the Parish Web, please let the office know. This keeps our records up to date and stops you receiving unwanted mail.

Vicar	John Hebenton	021 679 202	<a href="mailto:john.hebenton@waiapu.com">john.hebenton@waiapu.com</a>
Ministers	The Congregation		
Parish Administrator	Nevi Fernandez	578 7916	<a href="mailto:admin.gatepa@waiapu.com">admin.gatepa@waiapu.com</a>
Vicar's Warden	Clark Houltram	543 2366	
People's Warden	Faye Mayo	543 3369	
Prayer Circle	Rev'd Joyce Crawford	579 4363	
Website	<a href="http://www.stgeorgesgatepa.com">www.stgeorgesgatepa.com</a>		
Facebook Page	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/GatePaAnglican">https://www.facebook.com/GatePaAnglican</a>		
Vicar's Blog	<a href="http://colourfuldreamer.blogspot.co.nz/">http://colourfuldreamer.blogspot.co.nz/</a>		