PARISH WEB

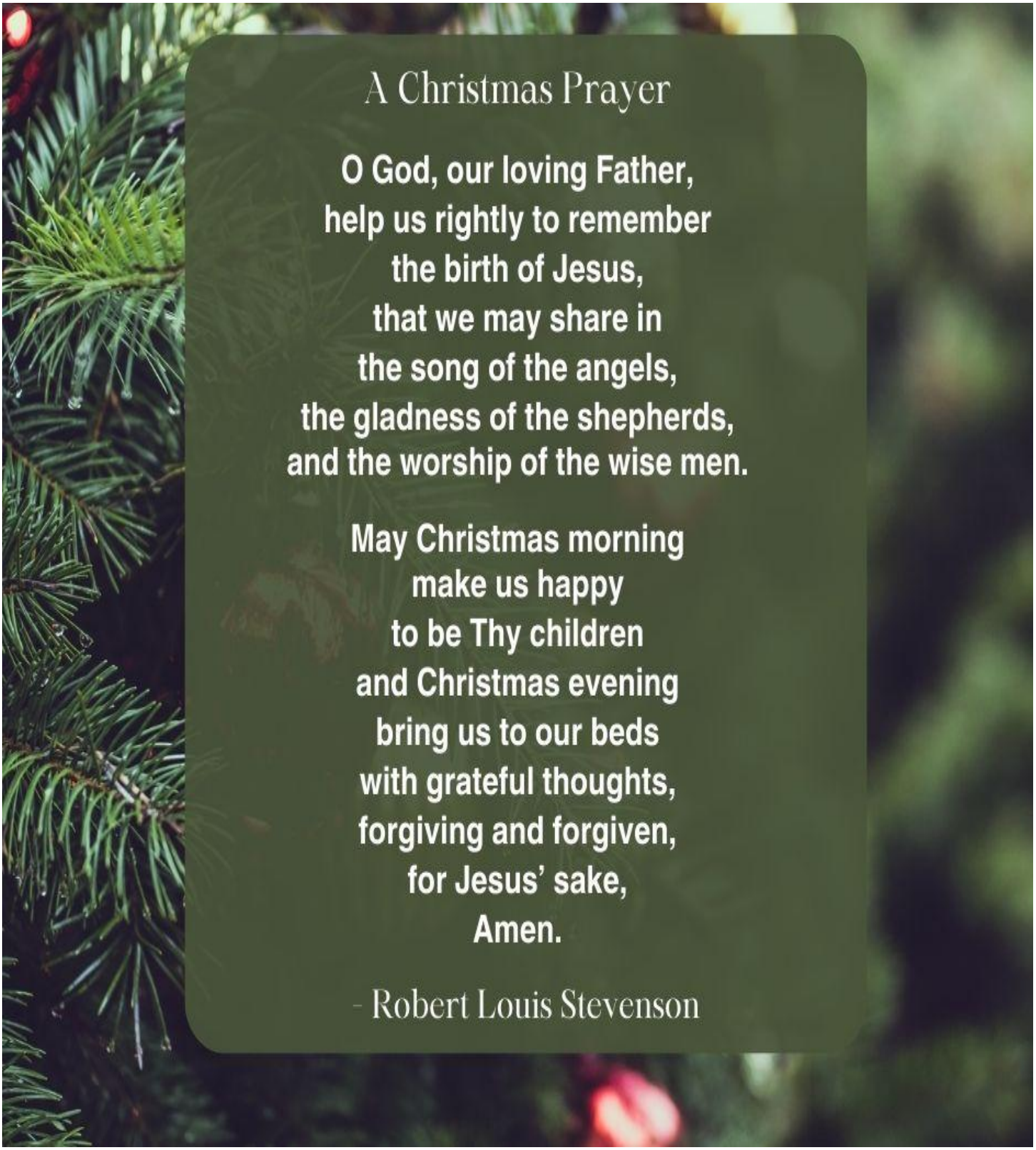
December 2025

St. George's Anglican Church

Gate Pā, Tauranga

Wishing all our readers a very happy Christmas and a safe and peaceful New Year

GLORY TO THE NEW BORN KING



A Christmas message from Rev'd Debbie

Advent is upon us and it has caught many of us unawares – well it has for me! This year has gone by so quickly I've hardly been able to catch my breath! But God comes in our un-readiness and un-worthiness with the gifts of hope, peace, joy and love. In the fourth and fifth centuries Advent was a time of preparation for Epiphany which we celebrate in early January. It was not until the sixth century that Christians in Rome began linking the season of Advent to the coming of Christ at Christmas time and Christ's expected return in the Second Coming.

Advent is a time of reflection when our worship focuses on God's gifts of hope, peace, joy, and love. As we gather in worship and light candles we are reminded of the constant presence of God in our lives, and we give thanks for Mary who let God's Spirit enter her life so that the Christ Child could be born into our world.

As a new church year begins may God turn our expectations upside-down and show us how we can be used in service through the power of the Holy Spirit.

A prayer for Christmas from *Seasons and Celebrations – The Christian Year*:

Gracious God, we thank you for coming as a child, reminding us that each human life is precious, that we depend totally on your goodness, that we rely on each other to live and survive, that we grow in your love and wisdom. We thank you that Christmas each year is an opportunity for retelling the story, for giving and receiving, for worship and song and for renewal and re-dedication. Amen.

Wishing you all a hopeful, peaceful, joyous and love filled Advent and Christmas.

Debbie

Rev'd Debbie Garrett
Priest in Charge

Vestry Notes...

It has been pleasing that the parish roll continues to grow with a number of new parishioners joining us over this past year.

Maintenance in both the church and adjacent vicarage has continued. In particular, attention has been given to large trees on both properties. Some electrical appliances have been replaced or updated, a new boiler in the kitchen, photocopier for the office and the alarm system extended. The worn carpet in the sacristy has been replaced. Glass doors near the Lady Chapel have been repaired, making them more secure. The Vestry has welcomed Maggie McIntosh and farewelled Gavin Bunker who moved to serve in his new parish community of Te Puke. Some of the vestry travelled overseas this year. See Clark's article in this magazine. Maggie is currently in Europe.

A fundraising presentation by Stephanie Smith, a local poet and historian, called *Rebels, Misfits and Disobedient Daughters* was held in November. This was an entertaining and informative event about the lives of a number of saints. $800 was raised for Awhina House the local women's shelter.

To all parishioners who take active roles in parish life; liturgists, readers, prayer readers, organists, home communion givers, garden tenders, pastoral care team, the social committee catering for a number of events, Centrepoint staff and vestry, to Charmaine for her stirling work in the office, a role that has many different facets, and finally to Debbie and Joyce, our priests, who enable us to hold our many services.

Thank you all, your mahi enables St George's to continue to flourish.

Ka mahi te hukuroa i ana mahi
Well done, the band of toilers keeps on working.

A Very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to Everyone.

Faye Mayo
People's Warden

Centrepoint Catch Up

Well, another year is drawing to a close, and boy, hasn't this one flown by! It feels like only yesterday we were settling into the start of the year, and now here we are reflecting on everything that has happened at Centrepoint over the past twelve months.

This year brought some significant changes, including the bittersweet moment when we had to say goodbye to our longest-serving volunteer, **Shirley Scott**. Shirley had been part of the Centrepoint family for over 30 years — an incredible achievement and a true testament to her dedication. She has been a valued and much-loved member of our Tuesday team, and I wouldn't be lying if I said that Tuesday mornings have felt very different without her. Things simply aren't the same.

Shirley also gave her time generously as a member of the Centrepoint management committee, contributing her knowledge, experience, and warmth. Shirley, you are deeply missed by all of us, and everyone here wishes you nothing but the very best for the future. You will always remain part of the Centrepoint family, and our doors are always open to you.

We also had to say goodbye to **Peter Williams**. Like Shirley, Peter served Centrepoint faithfully as both a volunteer and a member of the management committee. Although he had stepped back from his duties due to his declining health, his presence continued to be felt. Peter leaves behind a big space here at Centrepoint and on the committee, not just because of his hard work, but also because of his big personality and kind heart. He touched many people, and his absence is felt deeply. RIP Peter.

Looking ahead, everyone is very much looking forward to the volunteer Christmas lunch, which will be held on December 6th. This year we will be lucky enough to be entertained by the Centrepoint Christmas Choir. Faye and her choir have been practising enthusiastically over the past few months, and I even heard whispers about some bell-ringing making an appearance, though I'm still not entirely sure what that involves!

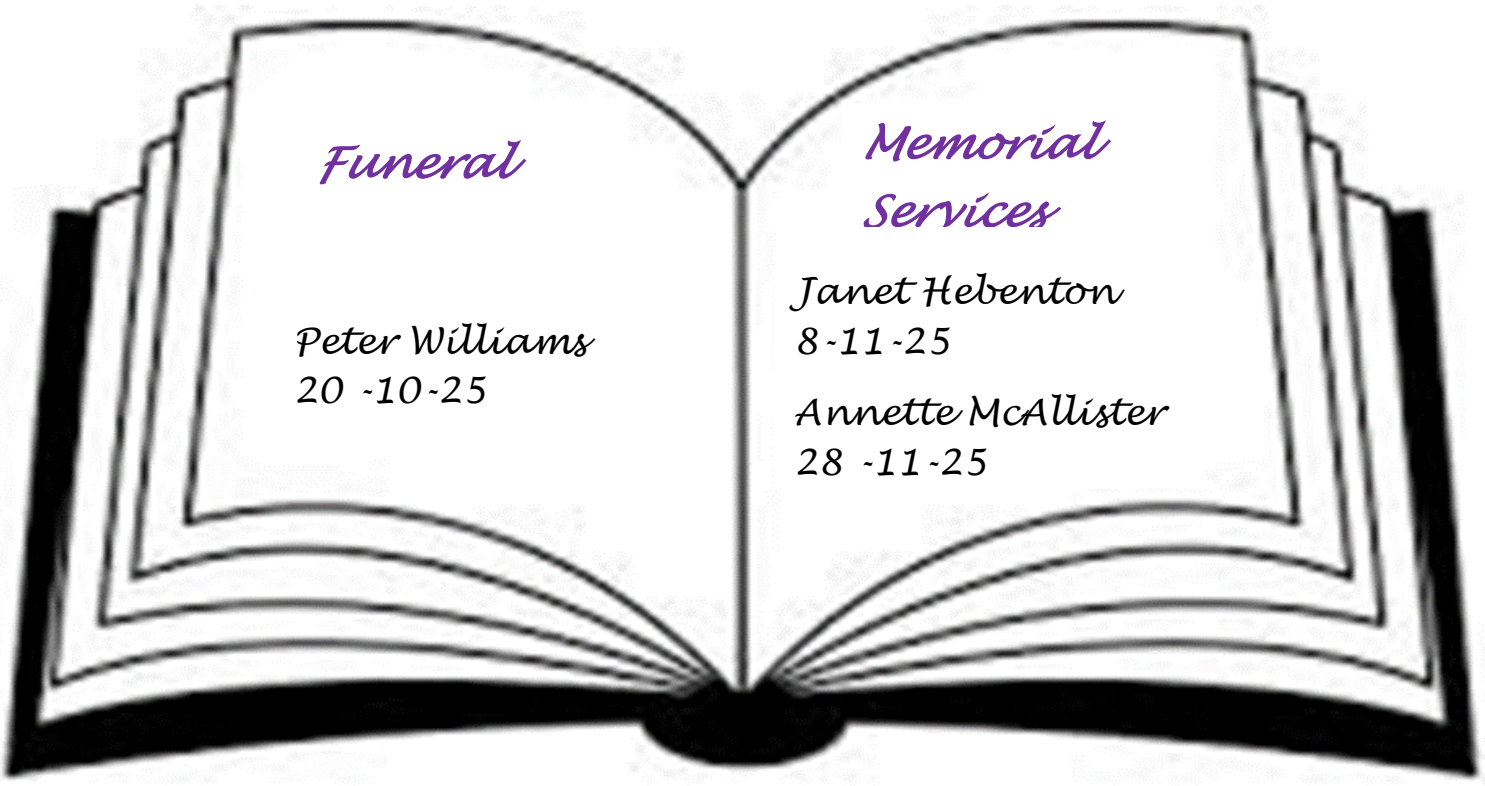
The choir will be performing a lovely selection of carols and well-known sing-along

Christmas favourites, guaranteed to get everyone in the festive spirit. Certain members of Centrepoint — Beverly Nisbet and myself — have been politely banned from joining this talented group due to our, shall we say, “limited abilities” when it comes to carrying a tune. There’s always next year for us, Bev!

So as we march toward Christmas, let’s hope the Centrepoint Choir hits all the right notes and that Beverly and I manage not to sing along too loudly from the audience. Thank you all for another year of laughs, teamwork, and organised chaos. Here’s to a fantastic Christmas lunch, a well-earned break, and an exciting year ahead. Merry Christmas everyone, see you in the New Year!

Kate Hesselden
Centrepoint Manager

From the Register



Parish Activities

Annual SPCA Animal Blessing Service

Held on 12 October at 10:00am
Led by The Rev'd
Debbie


1900
2000


Blessing of the Animals


SPCA

St George's Carols on the Lawn

SUNDAY 14 DECEMBER AT 4PM

ALL ARE WELCOME! BRING ALONG A BLANKET OR A CHAIR FOR A CELEBRATION OF CAROLS ANCIENT AND MODERN

STGEORGESGATEPA.COM
1 CHURCH ST, GATE PA | PH: 578 7916

St George's Anglican Church

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

14 DECEMBER
CAROLS ON THE LAWN 4pm

CHRISTMAS EVE - 24 DECEMBER
CHILDREN'S SERVICE 7pm
CAROLS 11pm
MIDNIGHT COMMUNION 11.30pm

CHRISTMAS DAY - 25 DECEMBER
FAMILY EUCHARIST 9.30am

IN JANUARY THERE WILL BE ONE SUNDAY SERVICE AT 9.30AM
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In February we will resume our normal service times:

Sunday Services

1st Sunday of each month: 8.30am and 10am Communion services with Children's Ministry at the 10am service except that on 1 February there will be one service at 9:30am followed by our annual parish picnic.

All other Sundays: One service at 9.30am

We will have morning tea together every week after the 9:30am or 10:00am service.

Tuesday Services

9.30 am Communion service.

Community Connect morning tea

every Tuesday around 10:00am

Rev'd Debbie, one of the wardens and some vestry members will be there each time so come along and enjoy a cuppa, nibbles and a chat. Bring a friend or two.

Parish Social Nights

5.00 pm 2nd Friday of the month. This is an opportunity to get together socially. Details for each month will be advertised in the pew sheet. Everyone welcome.

ST GEORGE'S PARISH PICNIC SUNDAY 1 FEBRUARY 2025 AFTER THE 9:30 SERVICE EVERYONE WELCOME $10 PP CHILDREN FREE.

Parishioner's Contributions

HE LOVES YOU

It's amazing and incredible,
But it's as true as it can be,
God loves and understands us all
And that means you and me.
His grace is all sufficient
For both the young and old,
For the lonely and the timid'
For the brash and for the bold.
His love knows no exceptions'
So never feel excluded'
No matter who or what you are
Your name has been included.
And no matter what your past has been'
Trust God to understand'
And no matter what your problem is
Just place it in His hand.
For in all of our un-loveliness
This great God loves us all'
he loved us since the world began
And what's more
he always will.

Contributed by Janet Ross

Part Three of Clark and Sandy's Trip of a Lifetime.

Back South to Bergen.

We started the return journey from Kirkenes with our next stop being Hammerfest. We had a reasonably rough night with 4m swells and there were not many for dinner that night. On the way into Hammerfest we passed an island totally taken over by a liquid natural gas plant, the gas being pumped to the plant from the Barent Sea some 165km away. The island is reached by tunnel and is highly restricted access. We only had an hour or so in port and some of the 'organised' passengers went on a trip, the rest of us were taken by our German tour leader on a short walk to a marker for the UNESCO Heritage Geodetic dome. We were told the dress warmly, and for very good reason, it was -3 degrees outside with a reasonable wind giving a wind chill many degrees cooler. So cold Sandy wouldn't take her hands out of her puffer jacket even with gloves on!!


Geodetic Marker


Polar Bear Footprints

On the way back to the warmth of the ship we were told to follow the polar bear footprint marked on the footpaths, which had ice still on them from the previous night. We didn't get to the cathedral which was evidently inspired by the round island just off the coast (on which is another marker for the Geodetic dome), but we did see it lit up on the way out of port.


The Round Island

After leaving Hammerfest we moved on to Harstad. We had another tour here. A great sunrise (at around 9.30am), dropped off the ship here and bused round to Sortland, a 2.5 hour

St Nicholas Church

trip. The trip was called the Best of Vesterhallen. It started with a drive around the urban area and then out to a medieval church with walls about 1 m thick. The church was St Nicholas of Trondenes, the church was started in the

11th century and finished in the 14th century. You could have thought you were in an Anglican service with the Lord's Prayer and finishing with The Grace.

From the church it was just a short walk to the replica farmhouse complete with the 'housewife'. The house had benches round the perimeter with a fire pit in the centre. Looms for weaving the wool of wild sheep, flax for fish nets, archery set and household implements. It was very well done. On the same site was a museum and café, we were treated to pancakes with brown cheese and coffee. The museum was one of the best we had seen.

The replica Norwegian farmhouse

From there we had several photo stops, Potato Island (so named because that's what grew there). Trolls are big in Norway, we stopped at a particular point and we were asked to 'spot the Troll' on the hill.

Can you see the troll??

Then on to a roll - on roll - off ferry, beautiful scenery, reindeer far off, sea eagles,

Our boat about to dock.

white bailage everywhere and every house seemed to have a tractor/caravan/camper/boat. Parts of the road were single file with passing lanes. Approaching Sortland to rejoin the boat we waited at the top of a bridge until the boat was going underneath with lots of honking by both the bus and the boat. It must have really annoyed the locals as we held up all the traffic on the bridge.


Leaving Sortland we had the first sighting of the northern lights-very difficult to see with the naked eye but visible through the camera.

Afterward we passed the entrance to the Trollfjord. The opening was very small with towering mountains on both sides. In daylight the ship squeezes through into the fjord but it was late in the evening when we arrived so they stopped in the entry and put on the powerful spotlights.

Our next stop (where we could get off ship) was Bronnoysund, a small town. We found a shopping mall where all the locals seem to gather in the warm with a carpark underneath. We couldn't see much else, but a good selection of shops. This was a short stop (1 hour) then back to the boat for a 5 course dinner with strong coffee. We were just ready for bed when the Northern Lights warning was announced, so back on deck. The lights were not as clear as the previous night and quite difficult to photograph. Sandy got a lot of totally black photos!

One of the lectures that happened generally each day was a

demonstration by two of the apprentice chefs on how to fillet a salmon. I asked if they practiced on cheaper fish first but they seemed to be horrified at the suggestion! After filleting it they produced salmon sashimi for us to sample, delicious.

Our last morning was the approach into Bergen. It had snowed the previous night and everything was covered in a light coating of snow. We were due to dock around lunchtime and had to get all the luggage out of the cabins by 10am. But we were running late and our docking time was announced as 2:45pm so we had plenty of time to sample the pastries!

The view from the hotel entrance

When we arrived back in Bergen we got a taxi back to the hotel and the snow on the ground was still around.

The Christmas markets started the night we arrived back so we had to visit with several thousand locals. It was only a short walk from the hotel and dressed very warmly it was a great place to visit.

A trip of a lifetime, it certainly was. Cold – yes but as the Norwegians say "there is no such thing and bad weather only bad clothing". Dress warmly and enjoy the cold.

Clark Houltram

Santa's Prayer

My dear precious Jesus, I did not mean to take your place,
I only bring toys and things and you bring love and grace.
People give me lists of wishes and hope that they come true;
But you hear prayers of the heart and promise your will to do.
Children they try to be good and not to cry when I'm coming to town;
But you love them unconditionally and that love will abound.
I leave only a bag of toys and temporary joy for a season;
But you leave a heart of love, full of purpose and reasons.
I have a lot of believers and what one might call fame;
But I never healed the blind or tried to help the lame.
I have rosy cheeks and a voice full of laughter;
But no nail scarred hands or a promise of hereafter.
You may find several of me in town or at a mall;
But there is only one omnipotent you, to answer sinners call.
And so my dear precious Jesus, I kneel here to pray;
To worship and adore you on this, your holy birthday.

Poet unknown.

Contributed by Faye Mayo

Dear friends

HELP US TO HELP TO SAVE LIVES IN UKRAINE

Next year in May, my cousins Veronica Jacobsen and Martin Jacobsen,(whose mother Ursula Shaw was a parishioner here) and Veronica's husband Grant Scobie, along with another couple, are flying half way around the world to join a Driving Ukraine convoy to drive two 4x4 evacuation vehicles from the UK to Lviv in western Ukraine. This is a tangible way in which we can make a contribution to Ukraine's unbreakable courage in the face of Russia's ongoing brutal, unprovoked invasion.

These aren't just vehicles, they are literally lifesavers! They'll be used by volunteer medics, ambulance crews, evacuation teams, bomb disposal teams and combat teams to rescue the wounded from the battle front and transport injured soldiers to receive medical attention.

They have already committed funds of £10,000 to get vehicles bought, serviced, and ready to deliver to Ukraine. With drones now the number one threat, every vehicle they deliver is a moving shield for these heroes on the ground. They will still go even if peace breaks out before May. The Ukrainians will need to replace vehicles which have been destroyed and to be prepared for any future resumption of the fighting.

BUT THEY WANT TO DO MORE

Every extra dollar or pound they raise will go toward additional medical supplies and associated aid delivered directly to the people needing it and to the development of Amulet 7M drone jammers and other Electronic Warfare drone jamming systems – world leading Ukrainian developed technology that stops kamikaze drones in their tracks.

Up until October, Driving Ukraine had delivered over 260 vehicles in 50 convoys, all volunteer-run, zero administration fees with convoys departing every month.
Every donation goes 100% to this humanitarian mission.

If this stirs something in you – a chance to stand with people who've inspired the world with their resilience and courage – please consider donating. Every dollar will help supplement our donation to assist brave Ukrainians.

They will be posting updates, photos, and videos from the road – follow along and see your support in action.

Grant confirms that this is not a scam! We have thoroughly checked out Driving Ukraine, he says. To find out more about them look up this link https://drivingukraine.org/

Please support our Driving Ukraine campaign- visit https://donorbox.org/nzukraine for further details on how to donate. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts. Together, we can help save lives and stand with a nation that refuses to surrender.

Debbie Garrett

Ruby, Minka and Tao

These three have given me, **Debbie**, so much love over the years they have been with me.

Minka and Tao became part of the Garrett whanau in 2007 when I was vicar of St Chad's West New Plymouth. They were brother and sister and were born in Shepperton in Victoria. Tao, who sadly died last year at the age of seventeen, was the boss of us all. He was a big Siamese cat with a big personality. He was 'top' cat. He regularly wandered into church services. One Sunday he sauntered into the church and made his presence known by jumping on the altar when I was in the middle of saying the Great Thanksgiving Prayer. I continued, quickly tossing him off the altar on to the floor. He was having none of that behaviour from me and proceeded to jump up twice more which was too much for one parishioner who picked him up, put him outside and shut the church doors.

Another time, an older cat by then, Tao wandered into the church once again when I was in the middle of the Great Thanksgiving Prayer. I saw him coming towards me and I knew instantly what he was going to do. Fortunately, my husband Barry was sitting in the front row, and I managed to catch his eye just as Tao jumped. Barry caught him by the tail, and I saw Tao flying backwards. All I wanted to do was laugh but I forced myself to stifle my laughter for as long as I could and then I had to stop speaking to compose myself. At the end of the service, as the parishioners were leaving and shaking my hand as usual, one after the other they asked if I was okay? Being good Anglicans, they had had their noses in the Prayer Book while Tao was up to his antics and hadn't seen a thing.

When Tao died it took Minka a long time to realise that she was now 'top' cat. Ruby relaxed as well because Tao was prone to stalking poor Ruby around the lounge in the evenings and she would run into her crate for safety.

Minka has become very demanding in her old age. She is now 18 and a half! Although I have a cat door I can never relax completely when I'm at home because no sooner do I sit down one or the other wants to come in or go out. You will have heard the saying "Dogs have masters and cats have servants" in my family the cats have "slaves."

When Ruby was young, we went to dog obedience and did agility training which she loved. She was fast and I had trouble keeping up with her. She could have been a champion if she had had a better trainer. By the time Covid hit she was nine years old and so we gave up agility training. She loves her walks around The Lakes and enjoys going to church.

Debbie Garrett

Church Chuckle

God gave us two ends

-One to sit on

And the other

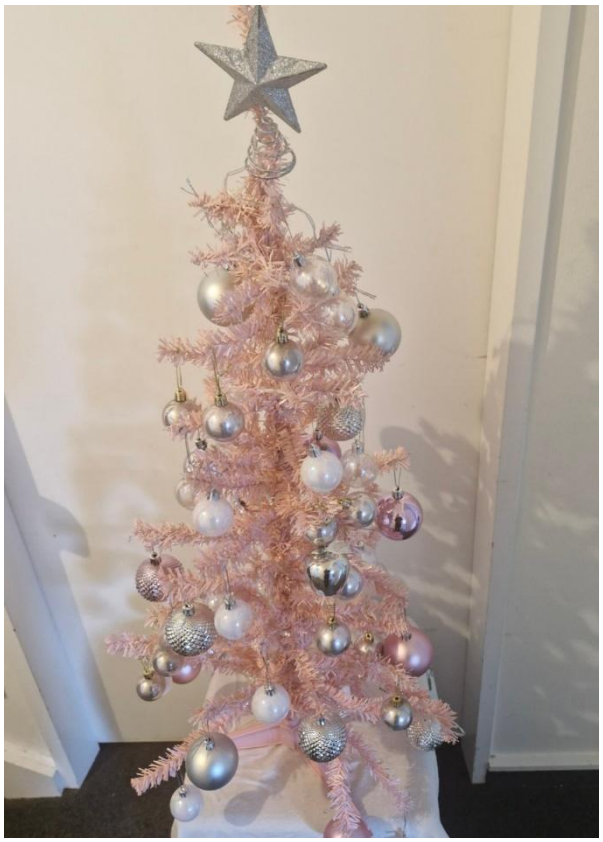
To think with.

Our success in life depends

On which end we use the

Most.

A Christmas Tree by any Other Name




Merry

Christmas Cake Recipe

1 Kg Mixed fruit.

2cups fruit juice good quality)

I add 1pkt glaze cherries or 1/2 cherries or 1/2 cherries and mixed peel.

Add 2 cups of self raising flour.

1 tsp cinnamon or mixed spice (I use a heaped tsp of mixed spice)

Cook 1 1/2 hours at 108 deg then 1/2 hour at 160. I cook in my old 8inch square tin.

When cooked I dollop brandy over while still hot.

It freezes well, I don't know how long it keeps out of freezer, it is never around long enough.

I ice with brandy butter icing.

Jose Mellelieu

Joyful all ye nations rise

Join the triumph of the skies

With angelic host proclaim

Christ is born in Bethlehem

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People's Warden	Faye Mayo	543 3369
Prayer Circle	Rev'd Joyce Crawford	579 4363
Website	www.stgeorgesgatepa.com	
Facebook Page	https://www.facebook.com/GatePaAnglican	
Vicar's Blog	http://colourfuldreamer.blogspot.co.nz/	