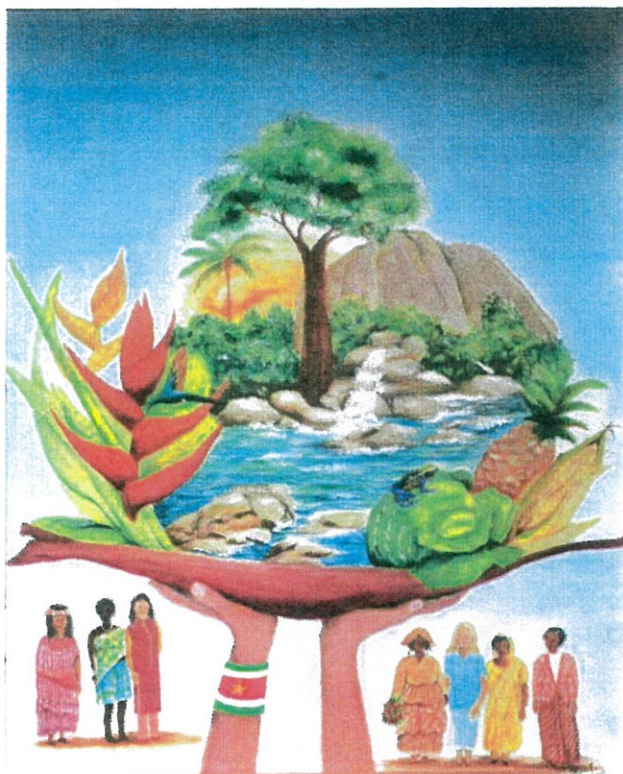


St John's

Caring for Creation



3-Monthly Magazine for the
Anglican Parish of St John
St John's Church, Te Awamutu
St Paul's Church, Rangiaowhia
St Saviours Church, Pirongia

WINTER 2024

If undelivered return to:
162 Arawata St, Te Awamutu 3800
or let the office know if you no longer
wish to receive this - Ph. 871-5568

In Remembrance:

We commit to God and pray for the families of:

Joan McManus

Alan Empson

Pastoral
CARE

Please advise the Parish Office (Ph. 871-5568)
of any parishioner illness, hospital admissions or
prayer requests for noting by our Pastoral Care team.



Prayer Chain:

If you need someone to pray for you regularly, or if you know someone who is sick and needs prayer, please remember that the Prayer Chain is here to journey with you and in confidence.

Phone Steve Anso 871-6273 or the Office



This magazine's theme is "Care for Creation."

It is a theme that comes from the Anglican Communion's mission statement which is widely known as the "Five Marks of Mission."

They are:

- To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom.
- To teach, baptise and nurture new believers.
- To respond to human need by loving service.
- To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and to pursue peace and reconciliation.
- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and re-new the life of the earth.

Some churches abbreviate the five marks to five words: *Tell – Teach – Tend – Transform – Treasure*. The last word, "Treasure" is also referred to as "Care for Creation."

When Johanna suggested that "Care for Creation" be a focus for an issue of *St John's Today*, I took it a step further. Each future magazine will have one of the Five Marks of Mission as its focus. So let's look more closely at the topic for this issue.

Our Christian belief is that God is the ultimate Creator of all, and that the environment we live in has been given to us to care for and sustain. Our relationship with it should be one of responsibility and careful stewardship. The church has been late to the party in understanding that God's creation includes *all* of creation. As I was growing up, I don't remember any teaching from the pulpit that

related to Care for Creation, nor from Sunday School teachers. My guess is that many of you had a similar lack in your early faith formation. However, the theological underpinnings of this teaching are very clear. Sam will be illuminating those in his writing.

I want to share why I think this is so important for the church to embrace, both in teaching and in action. My conviction is two-fold. Along with most people who have lived closely with the land; indigenous peoples all over the world, farmers and horticulturalists, I believe we have a duty to the coming generations to hand on something in better shape than we received it. As far as Care for Creation is concerned, everything we do now will impact those following us-for better or worse. The desire to tread lightly on the planet has been a driving force for me since I started working with young people in schools, strengthened when my own children were born.

The other reason for my conviction stems from the missional impact I witnessed in my work as a Missioner in Papamoa. I was sent to a rapidly growing community as a sort of chaplain to the community. I had to find ways to connect with people who were not attending a church; ways that would be lifegiving and eventually create Christian community. What I discovered was that those who were most willing or interested in things spiritual were all concerned about Care for Creation. When I shared with them that it's one of five things that we, the church, believe is our God-given task, they were blown away. In every case I found people willing to engage, listen and share about that topic. Care for Creation opened doors to community building with Christ at the centre. If we, the church, are committed to following Jesus, we must hear his call to, "Go into the world and make disciples."

We have learnt that people are looking for authenticity. In particular, actions need to match words. Our challenge therefore is

to ensure that our actions match what we say we believe and prioritise. Are we as a parish, and as individuals, taking all reasonable steps “*to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and re-new the life of the earth?*”

If you are interested in practical ideas of how to go about this, the Anglican Schools NZ website has a great list of references and suggestions. Or look up A Rocha, which is a Christian environmentalist group who offer encouragement and suggestions for churches seeking to begin their creation care journey.

<https://www.ecochurch.org.nz/>

Once you begin to discover the various actions that others have taken, pray about actions St John’s Parish might be called to take and how we might partner with other churches or community groups. Let’s work together to Care for Creation.

Rev’d Jodie Guest

CHARTING OUR FUTURE

This diocese was carved out of Auckland and Wellington in the early 1920s, but without the huge trust funds available to them.

The Diocese is living beyond its means. How to continue? Should it continue? How to shift resources to where the Spirit is at work? This year there will be a series of Diocese-wide meetings to debate these issues. All are invited to attend and to participate in robust discussion. Meeting opens 9.30am at St Luke’s Anglican Church, Te Kuiti.

Saturday 8th June

Saturday 17th August

Grounded in Nature

One of the most beautiful, though often conflicting, images depicted within the Bible is the image of the new Jerusalem descending from heaven to earth (Revelation 21). Living in a world that is so thwarted with corruption and decay, it is hard to see why God would decide, a second time, to come down and live among creation - why would God not just take us away to a better place? Further, this image of the heavenly city coming down to earth challenges us to think about how we view our role or place within creation.

The best place to begin thinking about our place within creation is in the first chapter of the Bible (Genesis 1). Genesis 1 gives us an epic story of an all powerful God who looks down at this ball of chaos and chooses to give it order; God gives the chaos purpose and meaning. From the chaos light and darkness are given their place, water and earth are separated and given their place. Finally, as the climax of this epic ordering, God forms humanity in God's own image. These humans are blessed and given the responsibility of caring for the creation God has made - we are to enable nature to flourish and in doing so we will flourish.

What is incredible about this story is, not only is humanity created in the image of God, that being God's images we are to act as God does within creation. God cares, God gives purpose, God empowers, God has chosen to be intimately involved in the life that he has created. We are then given this gift and responsibility, to be intimately involved in all of the life that God has created, enabling and empowering it to flourish. In the first chapter of the Bible we are given a picture of humanity working with God to care for each

other and to care for creation.

When God becomes one of his creation - a human, Jesus - it shows much more than simply a desire to save us from our sin. God's decision to take on a physical human body tells us that God cares about the physical world; God has purposed humans to live in a physical environment as physical beings. Even more amazing, when Jesus ascends to be with the Father after his resurrection he keeps his human body (1 Timothy 2:5). There is a human in heaven.

What does this mean for us? We are created to be physical beings in a physical world, but we often treat our world as if it can be used and then thrown away when we are finished with it. I think this perspective has been reinforced by theologies which focus on the world burning and God creating new heavens and a new earth. It seems to me, though, that God has planned for us to flourish on this earth that he has already ordered for us. This world, though currently corrupted by disease and decay as well as being abused by humanity, is good for humans. In our life-time, specifically, we have separated ourselves from the world, even going as far as thinking of nature as not including humans. We think of nature as what we look at when sit in our living room and look out the window. Nature is a place we go to enjoy a walk - Lake Ngaroto or Yarnley's Bush. But we are part of nature, we were created to exist in close relationship with the world around us.

Recently I was researching self care and came across a TED talk which was presented by Suzannah Winters called, "Self Care: What it really is". Winters talks about how, as a society, we have distanced ourselves from nature and it has had harmful effects, not only on our physical health but also our mental health. Within her talk, Winters suggests that one of the best things for self care

is to simply take your shoes off and walk in the grass - to become grounded. The idea of being grounded is about intentionally placing ourselves back within nature, recognising that we need nature more than it needs us. As a theological point, being grounded challenges us to think about how we are caring for creation. If we do not care for the world God has given us to live in, how can it flourish? How can we flourish? Care for creation is, then, not simply about recycling our plastics so they don't go into landfill. Care for creation is a lifestyle which asks, "How can I participate in God's purpose for creation?"

In this Winter season it can be so easy to bundle up and shelter in our houses, however, I encourage us to take time each day to place ourselves in nature. Take a walk through the gardens, crunch some fallen leaves, stick your hands out in the rain. Then we can ask the Spirit to lead us in what the Spirit is doing in the creation, as we wait eagerly for God to come inhabit this earth again with us.



Sam Pullenger

Every saint has a past, every sinner has a future.

- Oscar Wilde

HOW GREEN IS OUR CHURCH?

A welcome to any who may be newish to our Anglican Tradition, and its Five Marks of Mission. While I strive to live out the first four haphazardly, none sings more sweetly than the newest, the fifth: -

“to strive to safeguard the integrity of Creation and sustain and renew the life of the Earth.”

During my childhood, our parents were “greening”, without any awareness of that label, simply because it was the norm. Here is a description from the Castle Carey parish magazine in Somerset, faithfully replicated in suburban Sydney.

We speak readily and easily of being a Church Family, and yet we adhere to all political parties or none; are fans of all artistic or sporting codes, truly a diverse bunch. What we do share though, is greater than our everyday range of interests and allegiances – our strong togetherness in Faith. That brings huge potential for impacting on the lives of our communities. Becoming a brighter shade of green simply needs an easy, no money involved target of more efficient recycling. While there is much being done already, we have the opportunity of influencing visiting groups with our heightened “this is how we live” attitude.

Composting immediately enters any talk of recycling, and I wonder whether Spring could herald thoughts of a composting system? I’ll have to tread carefully here, or I just might end up as the first ingredient!!

We could imagine looking out over our Church land knowing our composting would one day enrich earth waiting to yield crops in a community garden. We are already being given, or eating our way through, much food via our many St John’s groups, such as –

A Congregation-wide Invitation to the Mid-Winter Festive Monday
Meal
15th July in the Hall
4pm for 5pm Seating

Please come along for a night out (on a Monday of all days!!) and see how your prayers, baking and monetary donations are enriching a small sharing community.

Let the Office know, for catering and seating purposes. We will welcome gifts of juice on the night. For convenience, there is also a 'list of attendees' in the Lounge you can fill out.

The last word will go to PLASTIC, and its phasing out in a good way.



The Green Thing



At the check-out, the young cashier suggested to the older woman that she should bring her own grocery bags because plastic bags were not good for the environment. The woman apologised and explained, "We didn't have this green thing back in my early days."

The young clerk sniffed, "That's our problem today: *your* generation didn't care enough to save the environment for future generations. "She was right – our generation didn't have the green thing.

Back then we took milk, lemonade and beer bottles back to the shop. They were returned to the plant to be sterilised and refilled so they could be used over and over again. But we didn't have the green thing in our day.

We walked to the shops: we didn't climb aboard a gas-guzzling machine every time we came out of the house. The shops used brown paper bags that were re-used for numerous things such as covering schoolbooks.

People travelled by bus and children cycled or walked to school instead of turning their mums into a 24-hour taxi service. But she was right; we didn't have the green thing in our day.

Back when we washed the baby's nappies because there were no 'disposables.' We dried clothes on a line – not in an energy-gobbling machine burning up 220 volts. Wind and solar power dried out our clothes. But we weren't green in my day.

In the kitchen we blended and stirred by hand because we didn't have electric machines to do everything for us. When we wrapped a fragile article to send by post we used old newspaper – not polystyrene foam or plastic bubble wrap. We didn't switch on a petrol engine to cut the grass. We used a push mower that ran on human power. We exercised by working so we didn't need to go to a gym to run on electrically-operated treadmills. But she's right; we weren't green back then.

We used a tap when we were thirsty – not a plastic bottle. We refilled fountain pens with ink instead of buying a new pen and throwing it away, and we sharpened and replaced razor blades instead of throwing the whole razor away just because the blade got dull. But we weren't green.

Isn't it sad that some members of the present younger generation lament how wasteful we were because we didn't have the green thing back then?

Johanna Halder



Alan Empson

5 October 1941 - 14 May 2024



I chose to read the passage known as the “Beatitudes” at Alan’s service, because it captured for me the Alan I knew and the Alan described to me by his family. *Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth.* Perhaps we now understand or interpret being meek as being weak. I would argue that being meek is almost the opposite of being weak. To be meek requires courage and strength - it means to choose to stand back, to not push one’s self forward. It requires you to consider the other before yourself – to be present and to lend strength from behind. That was what I saw as one of Alan’s most consistent characteristics. Alan’s family told me that Alan has always been there for each of them . Always hardworking, but working for the benefit of others as much as himself. Meek. Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth. Sue put it this way ,”he would never blow his own trumpet.”

‘Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

‘Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.’

The Alan I knew got on with making the best of his life and not only that, he made the best of it for everyone around him as well. I never saw Alan get angry or seek to push his own ideas on anyone-he was even tempered and a true peace maker – a listener and someone who would work with people to get the results that satisfied as many as possible.

Despite that gentleness with others, Alan had very high standards for himself. He was very disciplined and had a strong sense of obligation. Anything he did he did well, and he saw it through to the end. He has been a role model in of a great work ethic for his family, but probably hundreds of others. He was the one **everyone** at St John’s turned to when anything stopped working.

As chair of the trust board he has negotiated all the leases for church property, working with valuers and the solicitor to put together proposals which he presented to the trust board.

Alan has overseen the maintenance of all the church plant for too many years-and has not wanted to burden anyone else, seeing it has his responsibility and very much wanting to shield me and my predecessors as Vicars from having to carry that as well.

I think Alan, as a manager himself, was aware that people can be demanding and fickle, and those in leadership need someone to keep a look out for them as well. Alan was my look out, and I know he offered the same care to my predecessors. I will ever be grateful for his attention to detail- and the myriad of things he took on so that I didn't have to even think about it. We did have our moments though. More than anything else, the maintenance role has had Alan and I at odds -always over health and safety-HIS health and safety.

Not long after I arrived here as Vicar, I came into the big church one day to find Alan on a very high ladder which itself was standing on two pews. He was changing light bulbs, but the whole set up was horribly precarious and illegal. I tried to talk him down, but he insisted he'd done this many times before and knew it was fine. He suggested it was best I make myself scarce and let him get on. I had similar experiences when he was cleaning gutters on a roof, and chain-sawing down a tree with no safety protection evident at all.

As a priest I was privileged to have conversations with Alan about his faith and spirituality. They will remain private, but I can say that those conversations showed how deep Alan's reliance and trust in God was-how much his faith was the compass of his life. He drew great strength from his closeness with God which allowed him to be the person we knew. And while he would never want to push, I believe he would want me to share with you that he hopes you find the confidence in God's love that carried him throughout his life.

Alan is one of a kind. He used all that God had created him to be and we give thanks today to Alan for living fully into those gifts. He had huge ability to care --for friends and foe—and to love his family and he did it all through his actions rather than talking about it.

There was so much to be grateful for in knowing Alan, and so much to miss. Rather than using more words, I want to end with a poem that for me sums up Alan's life"

How do you measure success?

How do you measure success?

To laugh often and much;

*To win the respect of intelligent people
and the affection of children;*

*To earn the appreciation of honest critics
and endure the betrayal of false friends;*

To appreciate beauty;

To find the best in others;

*To leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child,
a redeemed social condition,*

or a job well done;

*To know even one other life has breathed easier
because you lived—*

This is to have succeeded.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

By that measure and so many others Alan succeeded in life. We who knew him have been given a gift which we will continue to treasure for the rest of our lives and because of Alan's example, we may in time be able to count our lives as success too. Amen.

Rev'd Julie Guest



Thank you from the Fundraising Team

The Fundraising Team would like to thank all those people who contributed donations to the Grocery Hamper Raffle and those people who gave up their time to sell the Raffle tickets in the various places around Te Awamutu town. Your donations, efforts and your time have been greatly appreciated. Thank you.

The raffle earned almost \$1500.00 towards the Restoration of the Stained-Glass Windows Fund.

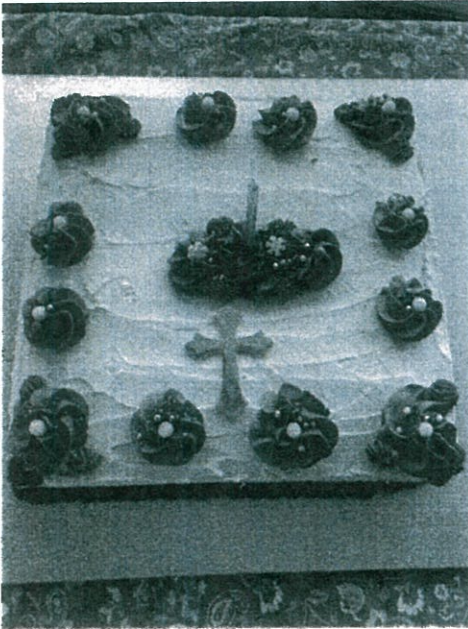
The winners are:

1. Jen Beveridge - the Grocery Hamper
2. Jackie Maskell – the Frozen Pre-cut Lamb
3. Maggie Bouma – the Child’s Quilt

On Saturday 2 November we are planning to have another Gala Day on the St John’s church grounds.

The Fundraising Team has depleted to three people, and we are looking for more people to come on board with the Team. If you are at all interested in joining us, please contact either Rev Julie Guest or Maggie Crossan in the Parish Office.

We celebrated Pentecost with a 'Happy Birthday' cake for the Church.



Thanks to Maree Brownlee and her talented daughter-in-law for this delicious cake enjoyed by those at the combined Pentecost service

Mainly Music childrens' favourite activity is a ride on the mat trolley at the end of each session. Please invite any young families to Mainly Music, in the Hall, 9.30am Fridays during school term.



God's work on display!

The Zinnias in the garden along the covered walk way to the church were such a spectacle, weren't they?

So colourful and cheerful.

Thank you, gardeners!

And thinking of colour – haven't the deciduous trees been beautiful this Autumn?

Merle Oliver



A Poem On Caring for Creation

Dear God,
You the creator saw all as good,
You created me as one of your own,
And mandated me to take care;
Care of all your six days work.

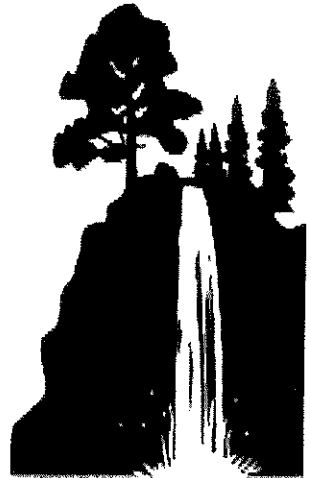
I have taken for granted these responsibilities,
And turned them to powers,
Powers to decide what grows and lives;
Where and when.
I am uprooting what you gave for my survival,
And replacing with what;
What I think is beneficial to me.

I have cut down trees and erected structures,
Tampered with water catchment areas,
Toxified the soil with chemicals,
And the atmosphere with carbon.
Warmed the sea water,
Filled the land with rubbish,
Killed wild animals unnecessarily and
Interfered with the Eco system.

Now I am suffering the repercussions!

I have not enough clean water,
Land is not yielding enough crops for my survival,
Air is becoming harmful,
Sea levels are fast rising;
Swamping and killing all I have.
Temperatures are rising so high,
I fear I will not survive!

But then I acknowledge my mistakes,
What I have done is not your will;
Not what you created me to do!



Forgive me for my actions;
And the actions of all
Who have plundered our home
Turning it inhabitable.

I take this day, this time to repent;
Do all within my abilities,
To love, cherish and always;
Always protect your creation.

Let now life flow down your planet earth,
So that we may reap abundantly,
Live peacefully and in harmony;
Just as you want us to.
AMEN!

Poem by:

Kelly Ngeti

Coast region volunteer coordinator, Kenya.

Youth Network for Environmental Sustainability In Africa.



What's on in June/July/August

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Time</u>
JUNE		
Fri 7th	Film Night, Lounge (The Dig)	7.00 pm
Tue 11th	Christian Women's Fellowship gathering	10.30 am
Sat 8th	Diocesan Conversation, St Luke's, Te Kuiti	9.00 am
Sun 23rd	Evensong at Te Paariha o Rangiaowhia,	4.00 pm
Sun 30th	Evensong at Old St John's RSA dinner	4.30 pm 5.30 pm
JULY		
Tue 9th	Christian Women's Fellowship gathering	10.30 am
Thu 11th to Sun 14th	Cursillo (Sam & Julie will be attending)	
Thu 18th to Sat 20th	Ministry Kura (School) for Clergy (Julie will be attending)	
Sun 21st	LLM Training, All Saints, Matamata	1.30 pm—4.00 pm
Sun 28th	Evensong at Te Paariha o Rangiaowhia,	4.00 pm
AUGUST		
Tue 13th	Christian Women's Fellowship gathering	10.30 am
Sat 17th	Diocesan Conversation, St Luke's, Te Kuiti	9.00 am
Sun 28th	Evensong at Te Paariha o Rangiaowhia,	4.00 pm

Please see the last Te Awamutu Courier of each month for information on Sunday Services.

What's on at St John's

*(Meetings with an * are term time only)*

<u>Sunday</u>	8.00 am	Service (Old St John's, Te Awamutu)
	9.00 am	Service (1st & 3rd Sundays) (St Paul's)
	9:15 am	Service (1st, 2nd & 4th) (St Saviours)
	10.30 am	Service (St John's, Te Awamutu)
<u>Monday</u>	9.30 am	Knit and Natter (Lounge)
	10 -2 pm	Pirongia Craft Group (St Saviours)
	5.00 pm	Outreach Meal (Lounge)
<u>Friday</u>	9:30-11 am	Mainly Music (Hall)*
	5.00 -7 pm	Friday Club (ex Youth Group) (Hall)*

1st Thursday of the Month Film Night, 7pm, Lounge.

2nd Tuesday of the Month Christian Women's Fellowship, 11am, Lounge.

2nd Tuesday of the Month Bible Study, midday

2nd Saturday of the Month Gardening Group at St John's, 9am.

3rd Tuesday of the Month Death Café, 11am, Lounge.

4th Sunday of the Month Evensong at Te Paariha o Rangiaowhia, 4pm.

5th Sunday of the Month Combined Parish Service, 9.30am

(Check pew sheet closer to date to see if this will go ahead).

5th Sunday of the Month Evensong, Old St John's, 4.30 pm followed by Social Parish Meal at Te Awamutu RSA at 5.30 pm *(If no 5th Sunday in month then RSA Meal will be held on 1st Sunday at 5.30 pm).*



Welcome Rev'd Barnabas Nqindi

Rev'd Barnabas has accepted the role of Children's Minister and Family Co-ordinator.

This position is for 1 day per week. This will allow Julie more time to do her Archdeacon work.

The role is funded from the Archdeacon wages.



“ God is in control, but He doesn't expect you to lean on a shovel and pray for a hole.”

TACC

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**CLOSE OFF DATE FOR MAGAZINE:
THURSDAY 23RD AUGUST 2024**

**COLLATION DATE:
2ND SEPTEMBER 2024**

**Send contributions either by email to:
stjohns.awa@xtra.co.nz
or drop them into the office.**