

**Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa
New Zealand
ST NINIAN'S PARISH NEWS
November 2025**



This magazine was delivered by

Phone number

Kia ora everyone,

We are nearly at the end of 2025! Where did the year go? And yet the church's liturgical calendar has the final Sunday on 23 November. So we start a new year in November!! (in the church at least)

As Presbyterians we don't have to follow this church calendar but I love its familiar rhythm while challenging us to go deeper each time. This ancient calendar of church events was devised to help illiterate people understand the bible stories and grow in discipleship. However, it still offers modern believers value too.

On 30 November we will start Advent, those four Sundays of preparation for Christmas. I love Advent. There is the ritual of candle-lighting every Sunday that culminates in the final candle on Christmas Day. There is the beloved countdown of opening Advent calendars day by day. There are those Sunday themes of hope, peace, joy and love that we can focus on. Instead of the instant gratification of today, celebrating Advent makes us wait, makes us anticipate, makes us learn what this birth of Jesus meant then and now.

Christian World Service used to send out prayers and articles for each of the Advent and Christmas Sundays. Reading them each Sunday (or during one special Sunday*) reminded us that for some people Christmas was not "merry and bright". It made the readings of why Israel longed for their Messiah more relevant. It made us more compassionate.

So, I pray that your Advent time is meaningful and prepares you well for this next year.

*in previous parishes I had St Andrews Day on Advent 1, a Carol service on another and so combined all the CWS resources into a CWS Advent service. (the fourth Sunday was a quiet reflective service for those NOT looking forward to Christmas)

Ma te Atua koe e manaaki (may God bless you)

Rev Stephanie Wells

What's been happening:

New Organist: Lynn Vandertie has offered to play for our services on the 3rd and any 5th Sundays. She has generously advised that she wishes her fee to be paid into the organ restoration fund. We are very grateful to have her play for us.

Parish Tea: The parish tea held on the 3rd Wednesday each month has continued to be well attended and enjoyed by all. We had some delicious soups over the winter months and welcome sweet treats. The discussion topics were lots of fun. Several of our members read the book *Being Mortal* which was looking at aging and aged care.. We had an interesting discussion on that subject. The next 3 months topics were: "Let's have a Laugh", "Disasters: the Bad and the Humorous", "Surprises & Unexpected Happenings". People were very keen to share their fun stories. Thanks to members who each month offer to prepare the food.

All are welcome, \$5 for your meal. 5pm to 7pm

Petersgate: On the last Sunday in June. Rev Michael Baker and Gray Crawford gave a presentation, telling the story of Petersgate Counselling Service. Many of our members are Friends of Petersgate.

Hospital Chaplaincy: On Sunday, 27th July, Rev Sandra Wright-Taylor, Christchurch Hospital Chaplain, led worship. She informed us of the work involved in Chaplaincy. We took up a retiring offering and Sandra donated her supply fee.

Grounds: Thanks to Ian and Jean Fryer for their work pruning the hydrangeas and some of the trees and shrubs. They also laid bark and mulch over the gardens

The young members of the Tongan worship community are helping with cutting the lawns and general tidying up. Thanks to others who help from time to time with maintenance work around the property.

New Members: we are delighted to welcome new members David Crombie and Keith McCarron. David attended Boys brigade here many years ago. Keith has moved up from Wanaka and is living at Mayfair Village.

Sing-a-Long: Once again we are holding a Sing-a-long for residents of local retirement villages. We last held one in May and it was enjoyed by all. The next event will be on Monday, 8th December at 1.30pm, and will have a very Christmassy content. Of course, St Ninian's members are welcome to attend. We hope some of you will be available to help provide and serve afternoon tea. It's quite a task helping the people out of their vans and into the church. (Not to mention storing the walking frames!)

Worship resources: Rev Chris Elliot has purchased worship resources for use on the 4th Sundays when our own people are leading worship. It is prepared by Phillip Garside and is written currently for each week.

Celebration of Ministry: On 28th September Rev Don Reekie led Worship with us. He was celebrating 65years since he was ordained in England. More recently Don has been worshipping at St Ninian's and Knox churches, and occasionally leading worship. We had a celebratory morning tea after worship. Congratulations Don!

Roof repairs:

The serious leak on the church roof between the Tower and the church has been repaired. As we suspected there was a large hole and deterioration in the old butinol covering. This has been repaired and replaced. Once the concrete wall has dried out we can get the plastered wall in the church repaired.



The blessing of the new development

On Thursday 4th September we, the St Ninian's community, were warmly invited to the groundbreaking blessing for the new development for Presbyterian Support Upper South Island, which is being developed adjacent to St Ninian's Church.

We gathered around the area that is to be developed in a wide semi circle with our cherished St Ninian's Church as a background with its cross high on the roof then in the distance the sounds of Riccarton Bush.



Kim Manahi, from Presbyterian Support, welcomed everyone then introduced the members of Te Taumata, o Te Hapu o Ngai Tuahuriri. At the start of the ground breaking, a Karakia was offered to bless the land and the people gathered. We gave thanks to God for those who have cared for the place in the past, and asked for guidance, safety, and wellbeing as the work begins. The words were about starting together in a good way, with respect, hope and care for the community.



PSUSI hopes that the new building will offer sanctuary for our kaumatua (elders) in the form of day programmes that will be a welcoming place where our kaumatua can gather to enjoy company, share stories, take part in activities, and receive support for their wellbeing. It is a space that values their mana, nurtures connection and helps them to remain active and engaged in the community.

The first spade into the heard earth was dug and as that happened a bellbird sang. It was a perfect blessing!

Afterwards everyone was invited across to the brick lounge where they served a delicious morning tea.

A morning to remember.

-Mary Bullock.

Update on the Redevelopment Program:

Since the hall was demolished just before the last magazine, work has focused on developing the right of way. It looks very wide but is the minimum width that is required by the city council. Large trenches were dug out and pipes laid for all the necessary services: sewerage, water, electricity, and broadband. For a day or 2 there were road cones while services were connected to the appropriate pipes under the street. The hole was very deep. Almost a week was spent consolidating the ground in readiness for sealing. Step a head's fence on the right of way boundary was removed. Fortunately we have been able to park on the tennis courts.

More recently the curbing has gone in and car parking spaces formed alongside the Step a Head property and the PSUSI site. On the front fence there is a lovely impression of what the proposed Enliven Centre will look like.

City Council Resource consent has been received and the subdivision consent has just come through. It shouldn't be long before the PSUSI begins it's building program.

Once the right of way is completed St Ninian's can consider the sale of the tennis courts.





Reverend Don Reekie

Rev Don Reekie, who turned 90 in June, recently celebrated 65 years since his ordination by leading worship in St Ninian's Presbyterian Church, Riccarton. As the theme for his service Don chose "Thomas, the Doubter" He spoke about how our commitment to Christianity grows stronger through questioning.

In 1960 Don was ordained in a Congregational Church in England. A lay-preacher and Sunday School teacher at 14. He had two weekend parishes during Theological training first a mining village, second as an assistant to a senior. His first full parish was in a new housing area in Suffolk where he was the only minister, and worked with an ecumenical congregation.

In 1965 he and his wife, Gwen, moved to Niue Island. Many Pacific Island churches were from founding Congregational. Don nurtured the Church's independence as they wrote their Constitution then lived it. Briefly the World Mission Board Representative in the Cook Islands and Chair of Pacific Conference of Churches Communications and Christian Education. (Pacifica churches in New Zealand were received into the Presbyterian Church of NZ. late 60's.)



In 1973 Rev Don Reekie was received into the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand. He worked for Presbyterian Support Northern for almost 18 years concurrently active for South Auckland Presbytery - once its moderator. Psychiatric Hospital Chaplain with acute and geriatric patients in Kingseat Hospital, Then in central Manukau in a churches Community House at City centre. Followed by central city base training and supporting ministers and lay in counseling, helping and healing occupations for all the churches and beyond. When support decided to concentrate on Presbyterian churches and services Don and colleagues founded an independent Institute to continue the work they were doing. The presbytery proposed emeritus status and so Don has been emeritus from only 55.

Don retired in 2003 to come to Christchurch with Gwen to be close to daughter and grand children - having five months each year for ten in Queensland with son and grand children there. Don is a valued member of both St Ninian's and Knox churches where he has occasionally led worship. (He did his chaplaincy training in Christchurch in 1973 with Rev Ian Wilson when Rev John Murray was minister at Knox.)

Congratulations:

Recently Daphne Keey celebrated her 90th birthday with an afternoon tea attended by 3 of her family and several friends. Her daughters had made a clever birthday cake from cupcakes arranged to look like a bouquet of flowers.

Congratulations Daphne, from all at St Ninian's.



What's coming up?

St Ninian's Christmas Sing Along:

We warmly invite you to come, sing and enjoy some musical items right here at St Ninian's. A cup of tea or coffee and biscuits will be served.

Monday 8th December 1:30pm – 3pm

Christmas Gifts: CMM's Support a Family and Sweet Boxes

This year we are supporting a lovely family of two- a mother and her 8 year old Daughter, Emily.

Also, we are again filling boxes with sweets to give to people who attend the Totara Group at the PSUSI centre in Harakeke St.

The Thursday coffee morning group had fun doing this and sponsored the gifts.

Christmas Services

- Sunday 30th November is the first Sunday in Advent. Jane and Hugh Catto will be leading worship.
- Sunday, 7th December, is the 2nd Sunday in Advent. Rev Stephanie Wells will be leading worship.
- Sunday, 14th December, 3rd Sunday in Advent. Rev Hugh Perry will be leading worship.
- Sunday 21st December, 4th Sunday in Advent. Rev Barbara Peddie will be leading worship.
- Wednesday 24th December **NO CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE** at St Ninian's
- Thursday 25th December, **NO CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE** at St Ninian's
- Sunday 28th December service will be led by Anne Kay.
- Sunday 4th January service will be led by Rev Stephanie Wells, **No Communion**

From the Office:

The office will be closed from December 25th till January 2nd.

Some St Ninian's on the move faces!



From left to right:

Audrey Bush, Jame Bush, Helen Bush, Jan Cormack, Justine Cormack (standing), Ron Cormack, Mary Bullock, Mary Brown.

Recently those in this photo met at one of the concerts staged at The Worlds Edge Festival in Queenstown Lakes are.

The annual festival is the brain child of Justine Cormack and others, a celebration of music that is now in its 5th year. This year John Psathas, the composer in residence, encouraged musical celebration where music and nature were deeply intertwined.

It will be staged in this glorious area in October 2026

-Mary Bullock

Deaths:

We acknowledge with sympathy the deaths of Kate Phillips who died earlier in the year. Several members attended Kate's funeral.

Rev Yvonne Smith's mother died in late July and a sympathy card was sent on behalf of the parish.

Mr. Donald, who lived in Essie Summers Village, died. He had been visited for many years by Sheila Nokes.

Dr Neville Bennett died on 17th August.

Organ Fund:

Please remember our Organ.

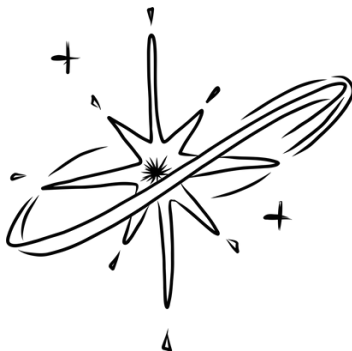
Our beloved organ needs a significant refurbishment costing nearly \$20,000. To celebrate the centenary of the church building we are seeking donations to finance this work. Please send your donation to St Ninian's, mentioning Organ in the code part of the payment and help us to complete this work. We are very grateful for all donations that have been received. The donation from the Margret Wallace Estate has been added into the fund in acknowledgement of her many years as our organist.

To contribute to the organ maintenance fund please use the following information:

St Ninian's Presbyterian Church 03-0855-0371202-01

-Kelvin Chapman

Got an article or image you'd like to see in the next magazine?
Get in touch with the office.



Interim Moderator: Rev Stephanie Wells

Parish Clerk: Pam McKeachie

Organists: Glenys Graham

Lois Dalton

Office Staff: Meredith Wilson

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St Ninian's Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand

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**St Ninian's is a Christian community focused on justice,
compassion and inclusiveness, and the exploration of a
spirituality relevant to the contemporary world.**