



# Church on the Hill

Sunday 11 February 2018



**Theme:** Christ is All  
**Vicar:** Susan Gill  
**Preacher:** Graham O'Brien  
**Readings:** Colossians 1:15-23, Mark 2:1-12

## Sentence:

God in all his fullness was pleased to live in Christ, and through him God reconciled everything to himself.  
*- Colossians 1:19, 20*

## Prayer for the day:

Creator God, we remember that it is your Son who holds this universe together. We thank you for Jesus the Christ; the one who moved into our neighbourhood and made you visible. We celebrate that all things have already been and will be reconciled to you because of the person of Jesus. When we worry about the state of

your world and your church we remind ourselves that these too belongs to him. We hold onto your promise that through him you reign and your purposes will be achieved on earth and in all of creation. We pray in Jesus' name and in the power of your Holy Spirit; one God now and forever. **Amen**

*Following Jesus, Building Community*

# Reflections...



## One of Gods Sons

With our Diocesan Synod approaching fast I am very conscious that we have had limited opportunity as a Diocese to do what we and our national church pledged to do some years back; that is to dialogue with and listen to the voices of gay Christians. While Motion 29 is about church unity in the midst of diversity, rather than the issue of sexuality, I still feel it is important for us to honour what we said we would do when the issue began to be discussed seriously.

This voice is that of a friend of a Holy Trinity parishioner. Our parishioner wrote it after interviewing a friend who has given his permission for us to circulate it. The introductory paragraph is theirs. The below is simply part of his story.

Part of motion 29 is about the decision to authorise a service of blessing for same gender couples (the service) resting with amorangi and diocesan bishops; who in turn may authorise individual clergy to conduct services only within their respective ministry units. It can be easy to talk theologically and logistically about such a thing. But at the heart of motion 29 is people, so we must remember them. Growing up in church and being gay over the past few decades has been difficult. Here is one story, from one of God's sons. He is a creative person. He brings mischief and fun but has a soft side too. The world is a better place when he is allowed to be true to himself. Here is part of his story.

I have been part of the church for many years.

When I was around eleven or twelve, I realised I was not really into girls. But my church told me if I loved boys like me, I would go to hell. So I just went with boy-girl relationship thing. I tried to have relationships with girls but they all ended up really bad.

I remember being unexpectedly pulled out of leading a camp and driven from the camp into a meeting with church leadership. They had heard rumours I was gay. They berated me. At that time I didn't think I was. Sure I had many gay friends, but at that point I hadn't worked out I was gay.

Later on when I was at another Christian camp, I was really struggling. By this time I had realised I

was gay. I was struggling to decide whether to be true to who I was and stop living a lie or keep trying to suppress the real me. During the camp one of the other leaders, who I had only met a few days earlier, came up to me and said, "He knows what you are going through and don't worry." I am an anxious person and all those church years of talk about hell and damnation were definitely on my mind. I didn't want to go to hell and this leader was telling me it was okay and I didn't need to worry. He also said. "I can tell you need the hug of a Father." I don't think he knew why he had to tell me these things. After that I felt relaxed and at ease with my decision. I believe everything happens for a reason and those words really meant something. I can still be a Christian. There are lots of Christians like me.

I have had no sense of God moving away from me. I found peace. Now, I don't feel guilty. When my homosexuality was a secret, I felt guilty. I have a relationship with Christ just like other people and I don't need to be concerned about going to hell. I thought a lot about that commandment not to lie. Now I am being honest about who I am. It feels more right than before.

I read the Bible and I don't see any condemnation for me. I see love and commands about loving one another. God did not condemn me. The only condemnation I have felt is from church and people in the church who have stopped talking to me. Other people in churches have welcomed me, continued to talk to me and have me over as before.

It is not easy. The work I used to do in my old church, I am not allowed to do anymore. Yet within other Christian areas and in my work outside the Christian sphere I do similar work, with similar responsibilities every day. I don't understand. I am not any less able than I was before to do that role inside my church.

But I have to say I haven't had anyone from church say anything negative directly to me about my sexuality. Many have not said anything. It is true, silence really can be deafening. No one from the leadership team and no one from pastoral care has spoken to me. It stands out against those who have kept showing me love.

I do want to get married in a church, not necessarily by a pastor or church leader. I have had enough of judgement from them. But the church

building holds a lot of significance for me. In a church I feel at home. It is a place of peace.

If I died tomorrow, my funeral would be in a church. No one asks about someone's background to book a funeral. I can have my funeral in a church what is the difference to a

wedding? Baptism, marriage, and funerals are all different stages in life, but only one seems to be a problem with the church and me.

Learning together in love,

*Susan*

**Short term commitment to Hope** - You are invited to Lent studies beginning next week. Our focus is on Hope through the lens of the book of Romans. It's an exciting book well worth delving further into. Lent studies are a great opportunity to introduce a new spiritual discipline for the next 7(ish) weeks. Hopefully this discipline will result in a greater understanding of the basis of hope in Christ and how that impacts our whole lives. Most home groups are undertaking the study. You can join an existing group or join a group I am leading. That will be on Tuesday evenings beginning next week on Tuesday 13 February at 7:30 pm at the back of church. (Ian Smith will take over the leadership of this group when I am on Sabbatical.) I am hopeful there will be a great turnout. If you'd like more info, feel free to contact me. - *Susan*.

**Missing Key** - If you have taken the key for the office held in the church please return it urgently.

## Prayers for the Week

**Our World** - The LORD is close to the broken-hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. Psalm 34:18 We hold you to that promise Loving God, asking for your restoration and comfort for all those impacted by the earthquake in Taiwan. Somehow provide for their physical, emotional and spiritual needs. We pray for Bangladesh where the opposition leader was charged with fraud and tensions are high during this election year.

**Mission** - Thank you the great break Murray and Féy Cotter had at their son Sean's wedding in January. Encourage them in their work in Albania: Murray with the local men of the area and Féys work with the mission groups. We pray for Miranda (from the Netherlands) who arrived in January and Josh and Ali (from Australia) who come this month. Bless them and the Cotters as they form a new working team.

**Diocese** - We pray for a positive outcome regarding Motion 29 at our Diocesan Synod on 10 March; that we truly can learn to respect those we may disagree with. We pray for Jeff and Jo Cotton and the Atawhai Hira parish. Thank you for their team of leaders both lay and ordained. Bring growth and wholeness to their congregations along with the confidence to reach out to others. May the Diocesan camp – Convergence – bring blessing to many through Steve and Mary Maina and the team.

**Community** - Thank you for the ministry of Omri Jaakobovich at the Baptist Church last Sunday. Please continue the good work carried out by Senior Pastor David Jensen and his team. Guide him with your plans for the congregation there. Bless his marriage and family life too. We bless the businesses and retail outlets in our area, especially those affected by the renewed upgrade of Queen Street.

**Our Parish** - Thanks for the social events that have been organised over the January breaks and for the new way of doing church in our second service. Thank you too for the flexibility of our church folk who are willing to try new things. Enable creativity to flow as we try to include everyone in worship. Be with Gwen Thomas, Margaret Silke and others known to us; bringing them comfort and strength. We remember Murray Savage in Christchurch and the rest homes and hospital staff and residents in our parish.

## **This Week...**

### **Monday 12 February**

9.00am Church open for Prayer  
7.30pm Weekly group (K. Peterson)

### **Tuesday 13 February**

10.00am Fortnightly group (M Silke)  
10.00am Fortnightly women's group (B Page)  
7.30pm Fortnightly women's group (S Frenley)

### **Wednesday 14 February (Ash Wednesday)**

*All day prayer and fasting for Diocese*  
10.00am Wednesday Service  
7.00pm Combined Ash Wednesday Service at Richmond Catholic Church

### **Thursday 15 February**

12.00pm Weekly Study group (W Wilkinson, J Lines)  
7.00pm Fortnightly group (J Palmer)  
7.30pm Fortnightly group (N Pritchard)

### **Sunday 18 February**

10.00am Combined Communion

## **Coming up...**

### **Tuesday 20 February**

11.30am Lunch on the Hill at Salvation Army Hall  
57 Oxford Street  
7.30pm Lenten Study in Church

*For more information about services or groups  
contact the office Ph. 544 8844.*

**St Albans' Appleby Services 10.30am**

**Sunday 11 February**

Holy Communion

**Sunday 25 February**

Morning Worship

If you wish to give financial support to Holy Trinity Church, our bank account number is:  
03 0751 0146369 001 Westpac Richmond

## **Roster for 18 February - Thank you for serving us all!**

**Leader:** 10.00am J South  
**Reader:** 10.00am A Burrough, L Summerfield  
**Sidesperson** 10.00am M Gibson  
**Welcomer:** 10.00am B Page  
**Chalice:** 10.00am J South, N Pritchard, L & T Summerfield  
**Tea:** A Burrough, V Matthews  
**Flowers:** N/A  
**Creche:** G Thomson

**Theme for Next Sunday:** Unfailing Love and Faithfulness

**Readings for next Sunday:** Psalm 25:1-10, Mark 1:9-15

## **Parish Contacts**

Vicar	Susan Gill	544 8827	Children's Ministry	Vacant	
Priest Assistant	Jean Palmer	544 4275	Friends 'n Fun	Carol Sardella	544 9237
Senior's Ministry	Yvonne Smyth	544 8844	Parish Administrator	David Cowdrey	544 8844
Youth Leader	Joshua Allan-Johns	544 8844			

## **Holy Trinity Church**

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## **Office Hours**

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday

10.00am - 5.30pm

Wednesday 10.00am - 1.00pm