



Anglican Parish of
Cabersham Saint Peter,
Dunedin, New Zealand

THE ROCK

March 2014—Lent—Ordinary Time



Politics and Religion always mix in Eastern Orthodoxy

By The Vicar



Soon after Christianity became a legitimate and approved religion in the Roman Empire the Emperor intervened in its affairs. The Emperor Constantine called the ecumenical Council of Nicea in 325 AD, which pretty much defined the faith we affirm in the creed Sunday by Sunday. He personally attended the Council, and also knocked heads together, to get an outcome that he hoped would bring peace to the Church. In fact disputes

about what was or wasn't the orthodox faith of the Church rumbled on for several hundred years, with all sides appealing to the Emperor to sort things out. While his interventions were often welcomed, Church leaders rarely stopped to ask themselves where this trend would end.

By the time eastern and western Christianity broke apart the Emperor of the eastern Roman Empire had an automatic and assured place in many of the executive decisions to do with the Church's life.

When, a thousand years later, Orthodoxy spread to Russia the Tsars of the emerging Muscovite state made sure they had a tight grip on the Church's affairs right from the start. As the long-lived Romanov dynasty got under way it proclaimed that its legitimacy rested on three pillars, autocracy, the Tsar as the Father of his people, and the Orthodox Church. So the nobility, the Emperor, and the Patriarchs were in the driver's seat, with the Tsar at the apex of the triangle. This is what is known as Caesaropapism—the divinely appointed Emperor directing the affairs of the Church.

As time went on the exercise of Tsarist power became even more naked. The modernising Tsar Peter the Great abolished the Patriarchate and replaced it with a Holy Synod of compliant modernising clerics whose activities were directed by an Imperial official, called the Chief Procurator. In 1917, with the Tsar deposed, the Patriarchate took back control of the Church, but too late as the Bolsheviks seized power in Russia.

The key leaders of the Bolshevik party were in the main the children of the intelligentsia, who as a group tended to be alienated from traditional Russian culture, and who had imbibed the secularising ideals of the European enlightenment, including a generous dose of contempt for Christianity and the Church. For the next 70 years vigorous attempts were made to eliminate organised religion from Soviet life.

But the Church, though severely vitiated, survived because of an atavistic hold on the traditional pockets of Russian society. So the communist state adopted a double edged strategy of using the

(Continued on page 2)

Fine Flagpole

Damaged beyond repair in recent wild weather, Saint Peter's flagpole has been replaced thanks to the generosity and pro-activity of parishioners Elizabeth and Bruce Moore.


Seeing the problem, the Moore's decided to do something about it, purchasing and paying for installation of a new aluminium mast which should last "for ever" according to The Vicar.



The new "lean-free" flagpole in action.

PHOTO.: INFORMATION SERVICES OTAGO LTD.

"We are very fortunate and most grateful to parishioners who assist the parish in such practical ways", he said. The Vicar also mentioned the generosity of Adams Flags, who provided a new lanyard and flag repairs gratis.

Work is also under way on preparing the Eastbourne street frontage, for replanting. A parishioner has donated funds for native plants there. 

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Politics, Religion, Eastern Orthodoxy

(Continued from page 1)

Church for its own ends, while at the same time severely restricting its life. So, during “the Great Patriotic War,” its leaders were encouraged to appeal to a spirit of sacrifice among Russians to drive out Hitler’s armies.

The security apparatus controlled the Church by ensuring that only approved and compliant candidates became Patriarchs and Bishops. It made it clear to these Church leaders that the Church’s limited privileges would only continue if they assisted the party in a wide variety of ways. And in some sinister cases KGB agents infiltrated the Church to become priests and Bishops.

This was the ecclesial tool that Stalin decided to use to assist with pacifying and controlling the Ukraine. Although the Ukraine had long been incorporated in the Tsarist Empire, it also had a proud spirit of independent cultural nationalism, particularly in the western parts. The great famine that followed on from Stalin’s collectivisation programme in the 1930s hit the Ukraine particularly hard, and earned the hatred of many Ukrainians for Stalinist rule. Although the short sighted cruel treatment of the invading German armies soon burnt off potential Ukrainian collaborators, it is an embarrassing fact for the Russian state that several large Ukrainian partisan groups fought on against the Red Army for several years after 1945 in the name of an independent Ukraine.

Eastern Orthodox churches are divided up into what are called autocephalous

churches, which represent different culture and national groups, in the same way that the Anglican Church has separate Provinces for different nations. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church is one such autocephalous Church. Stalin was determined to diminish it, and to get it in a headlock, for fear that it would act as a hidden encourager of Ukrainian separatism. One way to do this was to make the Russian Orthodox Church, present in the Ukraine because of the considerable number of ethnic Russians, the leading and preferred agent of Orthodox religion. So it was allowed to commandeer Churches, Seminaries, and Monasteries of the Ukrainian Patriarchate, and to be given pride of place in Ukrainian religious affairs.

All of this went into reverse when the Soviet Union fell apart, and the Russian periphery was allowed its freedom. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church has been making vigorous

and often successful attempts to get its property back, and to resume its pride of place in the religious affairs of the nation. The Russian Orthodox Church has found itself on the defensive.

It is significant that in one of the tense encounters outside military bases in the Crimea in recent weeks a Ukrainian Orthodox Bishop stood outside the gates confronting Russian troops, in solidarity with the Ukrainian soldiers in the base. His Church will now be anxiously wondering if it will be back to the bad old days if Putin’s annexation campaign continues and expands.

The Russian Orthodox Church of today is not controlled in the same way it was in communist times. But it rejoices that the new Russia honours it, privileges it, building splendid churches for it, and shutting out some of its overseas competitors. It is led by patriotic Russians who want the best for the *rodina*, the motherland as Russians call it, and the habits of servitude to what the state wants run deep. And for sure the security apparatus is subtly shaping its policies. Putin himself as a former KGB operative well understands how to do this, as he turns up to major Orthodox Services, and spreads the tentacles of autocratic rule through many layers of Russian society.

When Russian Orthodox leaders visit large Russian communities in different parts of the world they are usually keen to encourage loyalty and assistance to the home country. And they are right behind the current

back the periphery states. Russia has few defensible geographical barriers. If invaded, as it so often has been, it must trade space for time until its armed forces are ready to deal to the invader.

Its sense of mystery, mysticism, and symbol, and the sheer beauty of its worship, draws many people to Orthodoxy. But its supine and craven attitude to the authority of the state is an Achilles heel. God wants the Church to run its own affairs, to direct its life according to the priorities of the gospel, to be ready if necessary to have a prophetic word of criticism and warning if the state is going against the gospel. That is not to say that the Church can’t be proud of its home country, and support it in times of emergency, but always standing in a relationship of critical solidarity. Orthodoxy needs to get itself sorted out on this score. The unfortunate pastoral consequences of Ceasaropapism

Letters

The Rock welcomes letters to the Editor. Letters should be no more than 150 words in length and are subject to selection and, if selected, to editing for length and house style. Letters may be :

Posted to : The Editor of The Rock,
c/- The Vicarage, 57 Baker Street,
Caversham,
Dunedin, N.Z. 9012

Emailed to:

TheRockEditor@stpeterscaversham.org.nz

Ask The Vicar

For answers to questions doctrinal, spiritual and liturgical.

Write to: Ask The Vicar,
57 Baker Street,
Caversham,
Dunedin, N.Z. 9012

Or email:

AskTheVicar@stpeterscaversham.org.nz

ASK THE VESTRY

Questions about the secular life and fabric of the parish may be:

Posted to : Ask The Vestry,
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AskTheVestry@stpeterscaversham.org.nz

occur even in countries well away from the Orthodox homelands, as Romanian Orthodox priests have found in Australia even years after the downfall of the Ceausescu dictatorship, because parishioners go on suspecting their parish priests of being former agents or informants for the Ceausescu security apparatus, as regrettably some of them were.

Of course Anglicanism had the same tendencies in the reigns of the Tudor and Jacobean Monarchs, but in the end it largely resumed control of its own affairs, in part because of the insistence of the Oxford movement that parliament should stop interfering in the affairs of the Church of England. And Bishop Selwyn insisted that the Anglican Church be autonomous from the state right from its beginnings here.

Often churches under persecution give ground to the state, as they did in Soviet Russia. But when they have choices, and are relatively free, they have no business becoming tools of government political agendas.

They belong to God, not to Caesar. 🇬🇧

“Often churches give ground to the state, ... But when they have choices, ... they have no business becoming tools of government...”

government campaign to recover Russia’s near abroad, to get

Happy New Year

By Ian Condie

A long time ago a new deck hand arrived to work on tourist boats at what is now a popular holiday resort.

It was unfortunate that the lad arrived on the 31st of December, for his introduction to his duties and his first sight of the lake were of the briefest before being told to accompany the rest of the crew to the township's one hotel where it seemed the entire population plus all the holidaymakers from the camping grounds had gathered to celebrate Hogmanay.

At about six-thirty (those were the days of six o'clock closing) the manager climbed on a stool behind the bar and beat on a wall until there was a measure of silence then he made an appeal to his

customers. "Fair go, folks, you've had an extra half an hour. Drink up and we won't say any more about it."

Those within hearing looked at one another, shrugged, assumed the manager must be drunk and ignored him and the bar staff kept on serving.

Much later in the evening a rumour circulated that the biggest tourist launch was going to take everyone out on the lake to see the year in. It took some time for the rumour to reach the skipper and the engineer but when it did they thought it an excellent idea and cheerfully led the crowd to the wharf.

Nobody knew (or cared) how many revellers crammed aboard together with their essential supplies but the skipper took her out onto the


lake well before midnight and, having done so, handed control of the boat to his wife (a complete novice) and the wheel to the new hand (who had never been out on that lake before) and went off to circulate among his passengers.

The skipper's wife must have been a brave lady. Left in full charge of a boat full of

boat was crammed with happy people and it was difficult to move around. The skipper was not among the drinkers in the engine room, nor in the after cabin nor anywhere on deck. He was at last tracked down among the crowd in the forward cabin. Fortunately he was in a jovial mood and happily accompanied his subordinate to the wheelhouse where he was told in no uncertain terms that Mrs. Skipper wanted to go home and demanded to be taken to the wharf immediately.

Even the new deck hand was a little dubious about the skipper's ability to manoeuvre a large fifty year old iron launch overfilled with drunks alongside the wharf in the dark and with an engineer who was at the very least, very happy and who had several assistants in the engine room.

Nevertheless it was accomplished with panache and skill. In the old saying, the skipper wouldn't have cracked an egg coming alongside. The feat was greeted with cheers and the skipper, leaving who knew whom to make fast, clambered onto the wharf to acknowledge the applause. He waved, bowed and, unable to keep his feet, collapsed. On New Year's Day, surprisingly, the boat fulfilled all its real journeys.

You don't believe all this? Would I lie in this magazine? 



"... in full charge of a boat full of somewhat inebriated passengers on a dark night..."

somehow inebriated passengers on a dark night, she had to project an air of confidence to her sole assistant who knew even less than she did about the boat or the lake. She ordered the lad to put the wheel over to starboard and let the launch cruise in a circle.

Midnight was celebrated joyously several times according to different people's watches, but there was no sign of the skipper so Madam Skipper took over the wheel and ordered the helmsman to find her husband and bring him to the wheelhouse.

Easier said than done. The

Dedicated and
compassionate
professionals

*"Buildings are only brick and mortar;
it's our people who provide such quality
service to families"*

Alan Gillion

 Gillions
Funeral Services

For parish updates between issues of

The Rock, visit our website at

www.stpeterscaversham.org.nz

Nutritious

DASH for Health

By Alex Chisholm



In case you are wondering, this column is still about nutrition and has not ventured into the area of exercise advice! DASH stands for “Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension” and is an eating plan which was originally developed by the National Heart Lung and Blood Institute (USA) to prevent high blood pressure. It stresses eating more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains while eating less salt. I am reliably informed that several Saint Peter’s people are following DASH, including David Hoskins who is happy for me to mention the considerable success he is having with this eating plan.

DASH was recently rated as the best overall dietary plan by a panel of US experts who liked “...its overall nutrition, safety, and ability to control or prevent diabetes and help heart health” [see Medscape review online].

The description of DASH may sound familiar and indeed it advocates a very similar eating pattern to that of the NZ Heart Foundation.

In this day and age of evidence based nutrition however, DASH has the advantage of already being trialled as a dietary “package”, initially in two large studies then in several somewhat smaller interventions. These were aimed at specific groups, characterised by life stage (older, younger), ethnic group or diagnosed condition—for example high blood pressure or raised blood cholesterol. A very recent article (J Hum Hypertens. 2014 Mar;28(3):170-5. doi: 10.1038/jhh.2013.52. Epub 2013 Sep 26) looked at the effects of the DASH plan on blood pressure in a group of participants with the “metabolic syndrome”-(MS). This condition is often indicated by central distribution of body fat, but also raised blood pressure and blood fats. The researchers found that both those with MS and the “control group” (no MS but raised blood pressure) benefited similarly with reductions in blood pressure. The reduction of sodium (salt—most of which is now in processed foods) and an increase in potassium (found in fruit and vegetables) are

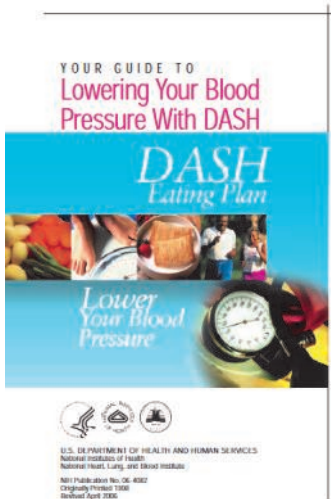


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two important dietary features of DASH.

Possibly because of this and its beneficial nutrient profile there are indications that DASH is associated with a lower risk of stroke.

Nowadays we often seem to be bombarded with messages to try this or that (usually fad) diet promising instant results. However, the really good news is the positive effects of a gradual life style change to a moderate eating pattern that includes a wide variety of good tasting foods with proven health benefits.



“... an increase in potassium (found in fruit and vegetables) ...”

More online:

The DASH brochure

www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/hbp/dash/new_dash.pdf

NZ Heart Foundation tips for eating for a healthy heart:

<http://www.heartfoundation.org.nz/healthy-living/healthy-eating/food-for-a-healthy-heart>

Medscape review of dietary plans (free Medscape registration required)

<http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/818762>



Saint Peter's Cabersham



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Saint Peter's People

Mavis Lighton's story

As told to Michael Forrest



PHOTO: INFORMATION SERVICES OTAGO LTD.

Mavis (nee Sloper) was born to parents who were ordinary working folk and never owned a car. Her father, whom she remembers as a very loving if stern man, worked on the chain at Burnside and in the off-season for Waters Ritchie, skin-merchants. He was a good father and worked hard, and her mother always encouraged Mavis to do well. Mavis was the eldest of two girls and three boys (Norman, Gordon and Ken, and Gwen) and they were all well brought up (at 42 David Street, on the corner of Thorn Street, which is still standing) and made a good happy family together. Mavis loved Caversham and remembers how the shopkeepers were all very nice. She attended the Caversham Infant School in Ranfurly Street (later College Street School, now a campus of Carisbrook School), Caversham School, Macandrew Intermediate and Otago Girls' High School. The whole family loved sports and Mavis was the Sports Captain at both Intermediate and High School; she loved gymnastics and played basketball (netball today) even after leaving school.

During her secondary years Mavis was also taught commercial practice at a commercial college in the Exchange. Because of the Depression it was difficult for youngsters to get jobs but at the age of fifteen Mavis was lucky enough to start where she wanted to work, which was in broadcasting, and got on well. While still at secondary school Mavis used to run down from Girls' High to the 4ZB studios in Dowling Street to read a quarter-hour

programme, *Did You Ever Wonder?* She also acted as a hostess for visitors to the studios. Through no fault of her own she left broadcasting and went to Turnbull and Jones where she did book-keeping which she liked, plus some typing in-between. During the War people needed relief from worrying about it—would their loved ones come home again?—so public entertainments such as pageants were arranged and Mavis was invited to participate, appearing on stage at His Majesty's singing alongside Lloyd Blackie.

Mavis and the late Jack were married at Saint Peter's in 1948. He knew a Mr McLean who was on the Vestry and, since it was very hard trying to find an affordable flat—because all the American servicemen renting (they were in Dunedin owing to the War) had pushed rents up—accepted the position of caretaker in exchange for living rent-free in the cottage, which Mavis loved. His duties included mowing the lawns, cutting the hedges and ringing the bell for Archdeacon Pywell's services, and he looked after the place well. Mavis' brothers thought the cottage was "a home away from home", and her elder daughter Karen was born in 1952 while the family still lived there. Jack was originally from Auckland so they moved north and Stephen was born there in 1954, but Mavis hated Auckland so they moved back to Dunedin, building a house in Waldronville. Their youngest child, daughter Diane, was born in 1958 at the Mosgiel Maternity Hospital. Jack was a bespoke tailor by trade but gave that up on health grounds and worked on the wharf at Port Chalmers. While the family was living in Auckland Mavis went back to work briefly as a clothes-model and seamstress, so she was successful in two occupations. When her children were older Mavis worked at Cadbury's, another job she really enjoyed, and she is still friends with former workmates from Cadbury's after all this time.

Mavis has been involved with Saint Peter's from a youngster, though in those days it was not High-Church. She was confirmed here on 27 September 1942 on the occasion of Saint Peter's Diamond Jubilee celebrations, all her three children were baptised here and, while the family attended church in Waldronville during the time they lived there, both her daughters were married here at Saint Peter's.

Mavis' interests include genealogy and she belongs to a Probus group. She may be new to many of us but in fact Mavis is one of Saint Peter's longest-serving parishioners and we welcome her back to the fold. 📧

Confirmation



The Vicar, Helen Clements and The Bishop pictured following the service on 2 March at which Helen was confirmed in the Church. Further photographs of the celebratory morning tea appear in Saint Peter's Photo Gallery on our website. <http://www.stpeterscaversham.org.nz/PhGallery.html>

PHOTO: ALEX CHISHOLM.

Looking back

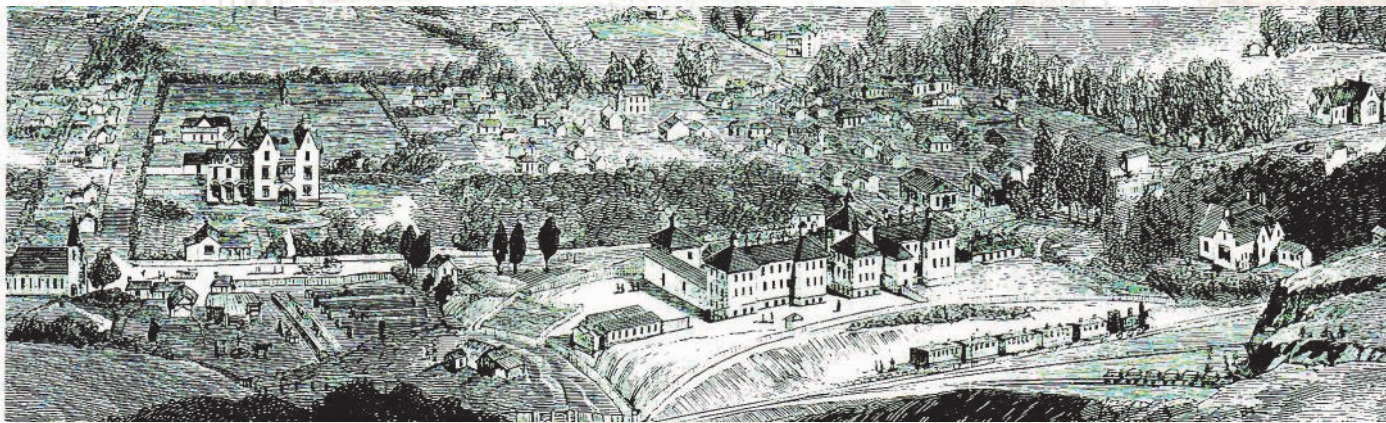


By Ray Hargreaves

The 1875 engraving below shows (at the left) the first Saint Peter's Church, located on the higher ground on the north-western side of Main South Road. Eastbourne Street runs opposite the church. Alma Rutherford, in her book *On the Edge of the Town*, notes that it was the Anglicans and not the Presbyterians who built the first church in Caversham.

The large building to the right of Eastbourne Street was the Benevolent Institution, which was built in 1866. Sponsored and supported by private individuals and not Government, it took in the elderly poor and orphans. A school was run for the children in the institution, but this amenity was closed in the early 1890s when orphans were placed in foster homes rather than in the institution.

The very large building in the right of the engraving was the Immigration Barracks, opened in mid-1873 to replace the original barracks in Princes Street near the then commercial heart of Dunedin. After sponsored immigration ceased in the latter half of the 1880s, the barracks was closed. Parts of the extensive building were then used for the making of matches, and a part was used as a fever hospital for a time before the building was demolished in 1905.



Caversham in 1875 showing the first Saint Peter's at extreme left.

IMAGE FROM COLONIAL NEW ZEALAND, ENGRAVINGS OF THE VICTORIAN ERA, HARGREAVES AND HEARN, 1980 USED BY PERMISSION.

THE CAVERSHAM LECTURES 2014

"GREAT ANGLO-CATHOLICS OF THE 20TH CENTURY."
MAY / JUNE 2014

This year's Caversham Lectures will run through May and early June on the theme of "Great Anglo-Catholics of the 20th Century." Some histories have concluded that the movement had substantially shot its bolt by the early 1930s, but in many ways its greatest contributions were yet to come. Percy Dearmer had already obtained the services of the composer Vaughan Williams to create the signature tune hymn book of the movement, the *English Hymnal*. Sir Ninian Comper, architect, would create some of the most beautiful Churches and Church interiors in the British Isles. In 1945 Dom Gregory-Dix would write one of the most popular and influential books ever written on the Liturgy—one which would change the Church's thinking about worship for decades to come. Austin Farrer, Oxford theologian and philosopher would come into his own as a great preacher and teacher from 1945 to 1968, and Michael Ramsey in the 1960s and early 1970s would become one of the outstanding Archbishops of Canterbury of the 20th century.

Percy Dearmer—6 May

The first lecture is on Percy Dearmer, Vicar of St Mary's Primrose Hill, who insisted Anglo-Catholicism take an integrally English form, which he called Sarum, rather than aping Roman Catholic ways, and who instigated the creation of the *English Hymnal*. This hymnbook caused a storm of controversy on its publication, with several Bishops banning it from their dioceses. The Vicar will cover the first aspect of Percy Dearmer's enduring contribution, and David Hoskins the second. Dearmer was an eccentric, an aesthete, and a Christian Socialist. Conrad Noel, Vicar of Thaxted was all of these things to an even greater extent, and there will be a brief consideration of his remarkable career.

Ninian Comper—13 May

Subject of the second lecture is Sir Ninian Comper, the great Anglo-Catholic architect. Churches featured will include St Mary's Wellingborough, St Cyprian's Clarence Gate, Wyndmonham Abbey, All Saints Carshalton, St Philip's Cosham, All Saints Convent London Colney, and St John the Baptist Lound.

Dom Gregory Dix—20 May

The third lecture features Dom Gregory Dix, the Nashdom monk, whose blockbuster book *The Shape of the Liturgy* became a bestseller, and changed thinking about liturgy and the

Eucharist for decades afterwards. Also considered is the remarkable development of his Benedictine community from its origins on the island of Caldey to its finest flowering at Nashdom. There will also be a brief salute to Walter Frere, liturgical scholar, and Superior of the Community of the Resurrection, Mirfield.

Austin Farrer—27 May

The fourth lecture considers Austin Farrer, Dean of Keble College Oxford, a great theologian, philosopher, teacher and preacher of the 1950s and 1960s, and something of a wordsmith extraordinaire. Some consideration will be given to his helpful book on the problem of evil, *Love Almighty, and Ills Unlimited*.

Michael Ramsey—3 June

The final lecture covers Michael Ramsey, Archbishop of Canterbury through the 1960s and early 1970s, a theologian of note, an ecumenist, and a man of evident holiness.

All lectures are in the Saint Peter's Parish Centre at 2 pm and again at 7.30 pm

Saint Peter's Caversham

Regular Services

please consult The Pebble or our website for variations

All services are held at Saint Peter's unless noted otherwise

SUNDAY:	8am	Holy Communion according to the Book of Common Prayer
	10.30am	Solemn Sung Eucharist
TUESDAY:	11am	Eucharist in the Chapel of St Barnabas' Home, Ings Avenue
THURSDAY:	10am	Eucharist
FIRST THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH:	11am	Eucharist in the lounge of Frances Hodgkins Retirement Village, Fenton Crescent



Vestry Notes:

*By Ian Condie,
Vestry Secretary*

- ◆ Mr. Graham McDougall of BMC, a firm of consulting engineers, kindly donated time to speak to your vestry on the subject of engineering investigations and consequent work in the shadow of the earthquake requirements. It was well worthwhile to have his factual explanations and have questions honestly answered
- ◆ The Vicar gave a report of the Finance Advisory Group's meeting and that led to a discussion about finance in general. The plain hard fact is that we need more income—and I hope I don't sound like a Minister of Finance. It would be a great help if parishioners would give a regular sum, ideally by direct credit. It would be wonderful to get bigger sums but even paying the same on a regular base will help. Believe me, any extra will not go on champagne at Vestry meetings
- ◆ Insurance valuations have been received for the pulpit, altar and reredos
- ◆ We agreed to arrange for Crewcut to supply a container for green waste from the church and to remove it regularly
- ◆ It was decided the 150th anniversary celebrations will be celebrated at Michaelmas (late September) 2015, the anniversary of the dedication of the second (and present) church
- ◆ Led by the Vicar, there was a preview of our A.G.M. (on the 30th), and all vestry members searched their consciences and braced themselves for the scrutiny of the parish. ☹

The Rock

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Special Services

Contact The Vicar to arrange baptisms, weddings, house blessings, burials, confessions and other special services.

For your diary

Monday nights during Lent (March/April) :

Christian Formation Group meets at 7pm beginning with The Eucharist in Saint Peters

Saturday, 29 March :Garage Sale in the Parish Centre

Sunday, 30 March :Parish AGM

Monday 14 April : Holy Week begins

Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday: 7 pm. Holy Eucharist

Maundy Thursday: 7 pm Commemoration of the Institution of the Lord's Supper

Good Friday: 10am Eucharist at St Barnabas

12 noon Celebration of the Lord's Passion

Holy Saturday: 6pm Eucharist at St Barnabas

8pm Easter Vigil, Service of Light, and first Mass of Easter

Sunday, 20 April : Easter Day. 8am Holy Communion
10.30 am Solemn Sung Eucharist and procession

Sunday, 4 May : Harvest Festival celebration

Tuesday, 6 May : The Caversham Lectures : Percy Dearmer

Tuesday, 13 May : The Caversham Lectures : Ninian Comper

Tuesday, 20 May : The Caversham Lectures : Dom Gregory Dix

Tuesday, 27 May : The Caversham Lectures : Austin Farrer

Sunday, 1 June : Ascension day

Tuesday, 3 June : The Caversham Lectures : Michael Ramsey

Saturday, 7 June : Pentecost Vigil celebration of the Liturgy of St Basil, followed by a meal

Sunday, 8 June : Pentecost

Saturday, 21 June : Eve of the Feast of Corpus Christi. Liturgy of St Basil followed by discussion and shared meal

Sunday, 22 June : Corpus Christi

Sunday, 29 June : Patronal Festival

Weekend of 12-13 September : Diocesan Synod in Oamaru

Michaelmas 2015 : Saint Peter's 150th anniversary celebrations

Signs and Wonders

By Jenny Lay in Zimbabwe

Looking carefully at the words of Jesus in Mark 13:22 we see that 'signs and wonders' will be done by the false prophets "to lead astray, if possible, the elect." There seem to be many of these signs happening around us at present, and it is important for us not to be tempted to pay them any attention. Our faith is founded on a Rock, not on drama, and it is good to remember the many sayings of Jesus which draw attention to the trials and tribulations which we have to face as Christians. There is a note of exasperation in Jesus' remark to the official at Capernaum, who asked him to come and heal his son who was at the point of death: "Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe." [John 4:48]

When we put together the more militant sayings of Jesus, any idea we may have that being a Christian guarantees a nice, gentle, cosy life free of problems, is shown to be unrealistic. Read these for a start:-

"You will be hated by all for my name's sake" [Matthew 10:22]

"Brother will deliver up brother to death" [Mark 13:12]

"Do you think I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division." [Luke 12:51]

"In the world you have tribulation" [John 16:33]

"I have not come to bring peace, but a sword" [Matthew 10:34]

"Nation will rise against nation" [Mark 13:8]

"They will deliver you up to

In the past couple of years, I have occasionally contributed a piece to *The Rock* which has dealt with the ups and downs of life in the Anglican Church in Zimbabwe, the country from which we came, 13 years ago now, to the safety of New Zealand and Dunedin.

This month I have permission from the writer, Jennifer Lay, to reproduce something she has published in *The Bell*, the parish magazine of Christchurch, Borrowdale, Harare, the parish where we once worshipped and to which she still belongs. Since I will be sending her a copy of what I write, I will not be too fulsome about her here, other than to say she is one of those Christians in whom one finds great faithfulness, deep devotion and a lively and searching spirit, as well as an extraordinary capacity to go the extra mile, to spend herself in the service of others. It is a privilege to know her. And, if a testimony from me is not sufficient to commend what she says to you, you might also like to know that this piece has received the *imprimatur* of Father Nicolas Stebbing, a member of the Community of the Resurrection, Mirfield, who describes it as 'prophetic'. I am sure I do not need to remind you that a true prophet does not foretell the future (primarily) nor trade in spectacular events—'signs and wonders'—but speaks the truth about the Almighty and His ways.

Life for most people in Zimbabwe is very difficult. Something like a quarter of the population has fled since 2001 (as we did) to other countries. Others are dying, particularly the men, of untreated Aids and the effects of poverty at a frightening rate: life expectancy for a man is now 27. In 2001, it was 52 (or maybe 54). Life expectancy for a woman is 32: in 2001, that figure was higher, but not much, at 34 or thereabouts.

Diamonds were discovered, in the east of the country, some 12 years ago: a diamond field larger than that of Kimberley. The money from these diamonds could bring health, education, roads, water and all the other benefits of careful development to the country: instead, the wealth goes into the pockets of a few powerful people, who build huge mansions at home and abroad and educate their children at select universities, also abroad.

In such circumstances, it is not surprising that people look desperately, longingly, for evidence that there is hope, a way out, a miraculous way out.

Jenny says, "Zimbabwe is swarming with 'Prophets' at present and some of our [Anglican Church] members have been beguiled" These 'Prophets' preach an extreme version of the 'prosperity gospel'. They themselves drive big 4 by 4s; have lavish lifestyles; deal in spectacular 'healings'; take many wives; and extort plenty of money from their followers. So she wrote this article.

Jenny is describing something which is happening to Christians in Zimbabwe but which has an application to all of us, wherever we are. The Church is more and more marginalized in New Zealand, not understood, misrepresented, out of step with society but our call is to be true to what we know to be true, to be true to Christ Jesus, whatever the pressures we are under to deny Him and His ways. I would add too, to what Jenny says here, that while Jesus did indeed say [John 16:33], "In the world you have tribulation", He also followed this daunting statement immediately with, "but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world". Be of good cheer, He who is Love has overcome the world. ☒

Pamela Welch

tribulation" [Matthew 24:9]

Instead of thinking of these words as depressing, look at them again to acknowledge that they are in fact comforting,

because they show us Jesus is not asking us to do something that he has not done himself. He KNOWS the dark side of human nature, he KNOWS that if we try to follow in his footsteps, we are likely to encounter it ourselves, even within our own selves. He speaks of Satan as "the ruler of this world" [John 14:30] though he says at the same time "he has no power over me." He also said "If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household." [Matthew 10:25]

There is a hint of sorrow in the words "And because wickedness is multiplied, most men's love will grow cold" [Matthew 24:12] and he seems to want to cheer us by quickly adding "But he who endures to the end will be saved." However, one can tell that even Our Lord Himself has moments of utter despair, as in the sentence "when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?" [Luke 18:8] Even the loneliness and rejection he experienced on the cross, was foreshadowed by experiences such as this one noted in John 6:66 "After this many of his disciples drew back and no longer went about with him."

One sees no boasting, no glamour, no glittering publicity, no false promises in the words of Jesus, and all he has to offer may be summed up in one word, the Word itself, the word which is Love. ☒

