



Christmas Eve Services

Waiwhetu Uniting Church

24 December at 9.00pm

Stokes Valley Uniting Church

24 December at 8.00pm

Wainuiomata Union Church

24 December at 7.00pm

St John's Avalon

24 December service will be held for the end of year Sunday School Event



Christmas Day Services

St Marks Wesley Church

25 December at 10.15am

Stokes Valley Uniting Church

25 December at 9.30am

Wainuiomata Union Church

25 December at 9.00am

St Aidan's on the Hill

25 December at 9.00am

St John's Avalon

25 December at 11.00am

If you require any further information regarding material in this publication, please contact the Parish Office at (04) 569 6017 or via email at admin@hcuc.co.nz



Parish Magazine: December 2016

Kia Ora, Malo e Lelei, Talofa Lava, Bula Vinaka,

Greetings to one and all!

Isaiah 52:7. How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings...



MISSION STATEMENT

“We, the members of the Hutt City Uniting Congregations parish, covenant to nurture the spiritual in ourselves and other people and explore new ways of experiencing and sharing God's love in Christ.”

*Be Welcome...
and Worship
with Us!*

Contents**Page 2**

Merry Christmas!

Page 3

Our Team

Page 4

Photo page. St Marks Wesley
United Tongan Congregation

Page 5 St Marks Wesley Uniting
Tongan Congregation

Pages 6-9

Welcome to our Parish.
Schedule of Events.
St. Mark's, Wesley
Multicultural Church,
Waiwhetu Uniting,
St. John's,
St. Stephen's,
St. Aidan's,
Stokes Valley Uniting.

Page 10

Thoughts about Christmas from our Parish
members.

Page 11

St Aidan's Messy Church

Page 12

Wainuiomata Union Church. Our plans for
Christmas. The star.

Page 13

The Mail Always Gets Through

Page 14

The Christmas Tree

Page 15

Christmas is more...

Page 16

Celebrating Christ's Coming Within the HCUC

Insert

Church Notices.

Christmas can be a season of great joy. It is a time of God showing His great love for us. It can be a time of healing and renewed strength. You see, Christmas is when we celebrate the birth of the Christ child. God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to be born. His birth brought great joy to the world. *M. Noebel*

Merry Christmas! Merry means to be happy, joyful and light-hearted. The word Christ stems from the Middle and Old English word Crist meaning the Lord's Anointed. It is borrowed from the Latin Christus and from the Greek Christos also meaning the anointed one. The Greek is a translation of Hebrew mashiach meaning anointed of the Lord or Messiah. In the word Christmas, the ending -mas comes from the Old English word maesse meaning festival, feast day or Holy Communion. *Raphael.*

Magazine Editor: Julia Alcorn from Waiwhetu Uniting.

Christmas is more...

Christmas is more than a time of music, merriment and mirth;
it is a season of meditation, managers and miracles.

Christmas is more than a time of gaiety, greenery and gifts;
it is a season of wonder, worship and wisemen.

Christmas is more than a time of tinsel, trees and toys;
it is a season of preparation, prayers and peace.

Christmas is more than a time of festivities, family and friends;
it is a season of generosity, gladness and gratitude.

Christmas is more than a time of carols, cards and candy;
it is a season of dedication, direction and decision.

Christmas is more than Santa, stockings and surprises;
it is Christ, care and concern. *William Arthur Ward*

**Post-Christmas Prayer:**

CONNECTIONS, Jan.1, '95

"Long after the angels disappear into the heavens, the shepherds return to their flocks, the magi journey home and the great star sets, Jesus remains.

The Child in whom we rediscover God's great love for humanity becomes the adult Redeemer who challenges us to imitate his selflessness and compassion in order that we might transform our world in love...

May we allow the miracle of Christmas to continue long after the holiday trappings have been packed away;

May we welcome the adult Messiah and his challenging Gospel to recreate our lives, making the peace, justice and hope of this holy season a reality in every season of the new year."

The Christmas Tree

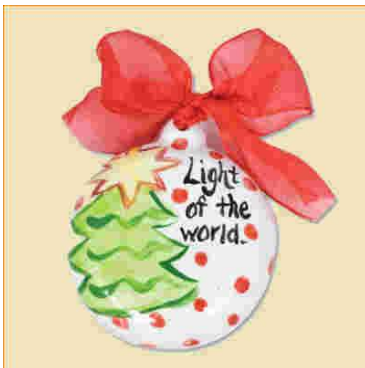
The first person to bring a Christmas tree into a house, in the way we know it today, may have been the 16th century German preacher Martin Luther. A story is told that, one night before Christmas, he was walking through the forest and looked up to see the stars shining through the tree branches. It was so beautiful, that he went home and told his children that it reminded him of Jesus, who left the stars of heaven to come to earth at Christmas. In Germany, the first Christmas Trees were decorated with gingerbread and gold covered apples. Then glass makers made special small ornaments .In 1605 an unknown German wrote: "At Christmas they set up fir trees in the parlours of Strasbourg and hang thereon roses cut out of many-colored paper, apples, wafers, gold foil, and sweets"

At first, a figure of the Baby Jesus was put on the top of the tree. Over time it changed to an angel that told the shepherds about Jesus, or a star like the Wise Men saw.

In 1885 a hospital in Chicago burned down because of candles on a Christmas Tree! In 1895 Ralph Morris, an American telephonist, invented the first electric Christmas lights, similar to the ones we use today. The lights are to represent stars and Jesus coming as the 'Light of the world'

The Christmas story is one of good news and great joy, but it is also quite a short one. There are 27 books in the New Testament part of the Bible, but the story is only told in the books written by Matthew and Luke, two of Jesus' followers. In Matthew, the story is told in two out of the 28 chapters and in Luke, it is told in two chapters out of 24.

Both Matthew and Luke finish their telling of the story with Joseph, Mary and Jesus returning to Nazareth to live. But we believe that Christmas was only the beginning of the amazing life of Jesus. *Why Christmas.com*



Our Team

Rev. Michelle Shin (Acting Senior Minister)

Rev. Kalo Kaisa

Rev. Jannet Mudavanhu

Rev. David Dell

Joan Ellicott

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Parish Administration Officer: admin@hcuc.co.nz

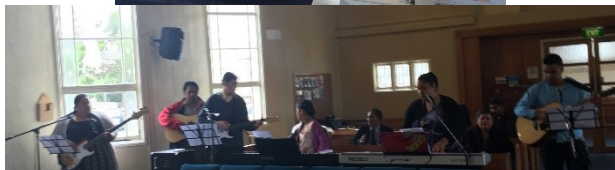
Parish Finance Officer: finance@hcuc.co.nz

...and our team of Supply Ministers, Lay leaders, Administrators, Supporters, Teachers, Council Members and Pastoral Carers.



*Christmas began
in the heart of God.
It is complete only
when it reaches the
heart of man.*

~Unknown



The Mail Always Gets Through

There was a man who worked for the Post Office whose job was to process all the mail that had illegible addresses. One day, a letter came addressed in a shaky handwriting to GOD with no actual address. He thought he should open it to see what it was about.

The letter read:

Dear God, I am an 83 year-old widow, living on a very small pension. Yesterday someone stole my purse. It had \$100 in it, which was all the money I had until my next pension payment. Next Sunday is Christmas. I had invited 2 of my friends over for dinner. Without that money, I have nothing to buy food with, have no family to turn to & you are my only hope...

Can you please help me?

Sincerely, Edna

The postal worker was touched. He showed the letter to all the other workers. Each one dug into his or her wallet and came up with a few dollars. By the time he made the rounds, he had collected \$96, which they put into an envelope and sent to the woman. The rest of the day, all the workers felt a warm glow thinking of Edna and the dinner she would be able to share with her friends.

Christmas came and went. A few days later, another letter came addressed to GOD, from the same old lady. All the workers gathered around while the letter was opened.

It read: Dear God, How can I ever thank you enough for what you did for me? Because of your gift of love, I was able to fix a glorious dinner for my friends. We had a very nice day and I told my friends of your wonderful gift.
Sincerely, Edna

PS: By the way, there was \$4 missing.

I think it might have been taken by those ratbags at the Post Office!

From Maureen, Wainuiomata Union Church.

Wainuiomata Union Church is having a special Children's Christmas Service on our Holy Communion Sunday, the 11th of December, because many families will be away after this date. Those who are remaining home for Christmas will share a time of fellowship together at our Yuletide Social on the 17th of December. (This will follow on from a Christmas Concert put on by our local choir, in our hall the previous evening). On Christmas Eve we will gather for our usual Carol Service at 7pm. We also have our own Christmas Day Service at 9 o'clock in the morning in Wainuiomata - where we often welcome visitors to the church - who have returned for family gatherings in the valley during their holidays. We wish everyone a very happy Christmas and look forward to seeing you all again at St. Mark's Church in the New Year.



It's time to plan for Christmas! Time to update the diaries: school concerts, special church services and all the lovely events that December brings. Isn't it wonderful, the greatest and most important part of the whole Christmas package is already all organised, all bought and paid for? You don't need to queue for hours in the shops for it, max out your credit card for it, wrap it, post it, cook it, serve it or wash up after it. Christmas is the time to make the biggest and best choices of your life –to stop being a prisoner of the past, to embrace a future that's truly bright, to unlock your God-given potential, and to make your life really count. Starting now!
F. Campbell



Mathew tells us that the Magi found Jesus by following his star, the Star of Bethlehem. As you may expect there are a number of theories as to the nature of this star. Johannes Kepler (imperial astronomer for Rudolph II of Germany), appears to be the first to wonder, just before Christmas 1603 he observed a pairing of Jupiter with Saturn from his observatory in Prague, and thought that this or a supernova could have happened at the time of Jesus' birth. Mark Kidger an astronomer in the Canary Islands agrees and put forward a scenario some years ago that the Star, which the Magi first saw in the east at dawn, would have risen an hour earlier every two weeks until it was almost exactly due south at dawn. So when the Magi set out for Bethlehem, travelling south from Jerusalem, they would have once again seen the Star before them, appearing like it "hovered" right above Jesus' birthplace, and by the time the Magi reached there the nova might have started to fade. We can only marvel at the Magi's faith and at the sight that they travelled so far to see. May we see that faith this Christmas. *George Jevon*

St Marks Wesley Uniting Tongan Congregation

Wow how time flies by so fast, I can't believe we are now in the advent season and not long after that it is a New Year. Bring on 2017!

Our Tongan Congregation have been busy the last three months. On the 4th-10th of September 2016 was Tongan Language Week / Uike Kātoanga'i 'o e Lea Faka-Tonga, the band performed live for the first time at the Tongan Language opening ceremony at the Wesley Church (Po Hiva) and on the cultural day the Sunday school children performed a Tongan Ta'olunga (dance).

The band also played at our Women's roll call (Tali ui) on the last Sunday of September, they were invited to perform at two different events; Miramar Uniting Church for an induction for a Minister and Tongan day Celebration which was held at St James Church last week.

As they continue to have their band practises, they have rotated on the different instruments to continue to build their confidence in playing these instruments and have now started practising Christmas carols. Keep it up!

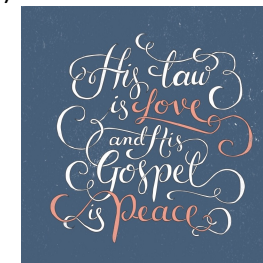
On Sunday, the 9th of October our Samoan Sunday School and Youth celebrated their Lotu Tamaiti (White Sunday) and our Sunday school children and teachers performed an action song about "We will stand together".

We are now preparing for the Christmas season and look forward to the New Year.

May God, bless you with joy, peace and love at this Christmas. All the best for the New Year!

Written by: Ilisapesi Fifita

(Photos on previous page)





St. Mark's Wesley Multicultural Church, 58 Woburn Rd, Lower Hutt.

Sunday Services 10:15am. Holy Communion, 1st Sunday of the month.
Samoan Service 12.noon Tongan Service 12. noon

TAIZE SERVICE, 1st Sunday of the month at 7.30pm.

Women's Afternoon Fellowship: 1.30pm every FIRST Tuesday of the month.

H	A	E	L	H	A	D	U	J	A	MARY	JUDAH	ZECHARIAH
E	A	T	O	T	M	B	O	W	D	ELIZABETH	CHILD	LEAPT
L	B	I	M	E	O	Y	J	R	E	WOMB	BLESSED	FRUIT
I	L	U	R	B	M	O	W	A	S	MOTHER	JOY	PROMISE
Z	E	R	O	A	L	A	T	H	S			
A	S	F	E	Z	H	E	R	C	E			
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T	P	A	E	L	O	T	E	A	B			
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St Aidan's Messy Church

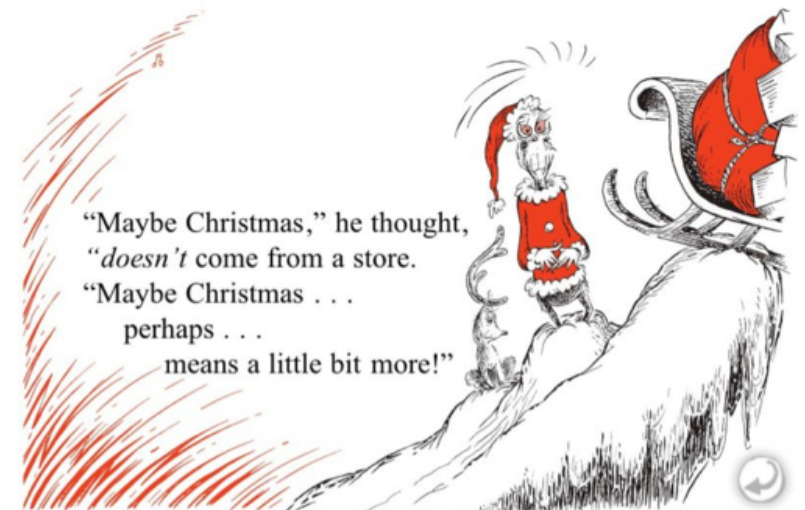
St Aidan's on the Hill has been holding Messy Church this year on the third Sunday of the month. We have been having great times with families from Mainly Music and the local community. Each session begins with crafts on the theme, then a Bible story and music and prayer, followed by dinner.

Our last Messy Church for the year was in November and was on the theme of Music. We made a variety of musical instruments then used them in our time of worship. We had over 40 people attending and it was a time of celebration and togetherness.

Several of the families have said how they enjoy coming to Messy Church and some of the children are asking their parents when the next one is happening.

Messy Church is a new expression of Church and is well suited to people's lives. Holding it on a Sunday afternoon works very well as people have had their time doing family activities and are ready to come to Messy Church.

Feel free to come and visit our Messy Church any time next year.



“Maybe Christmas,” he thought,
“doesn't come from a store.
“Maybe Christmas . . .
perhaps . . .
means a little bit more!”

Dr Seuss: The Grinch who stole Christmas



St Stephen's, Wainuiomata Union Church Main Rd, Wainuiomata.

Sunday worship 10am, with a Children's programme followed by morning tea and fellowship in the hall.

Tongan Language Service: 3rd Sunday of each month.

Choir Practice: Sundays 9.30am.

Church Council Meeting: 4th Sunday of each month at 11.45am.

Home Group: 2nd & 4th Tuesdays 7.30pm

Wesley Haven: Service at 10am 1st Thursday of month

Prayer Time: 2nd, 3rd, 4th Thursdays 9am and Study Group 9.30am in the chapel.

Op. Shop hours: Tuesdays, Wednesdays & Thursdays 1-3pm. Also on Thursday mornings when Arthritis Group meets in the hall.

Monthly Seniors Outings: 3rd Wednesday of each month.

What comes at the end of Christmas Day?
The letter "Y"!

What is the difference between the Christmas alphabet and the ordinary alphabet? It has no L (Noel)

And peace and love were in the air that night—
that wondrous night when earth and heaven met.
Remember Him on this and every day...
and tell His story, lest we all forget;
and tell his story, lest we all forget.

-Susan Noyes Anderson



St Aidan's. Cnr Poto Road & Stratton Street, Normandale

Regular Sunday Worship 9:00am followed by morning tea and fellowship. Children's programme for pre-school up to college age students.

(On the first Sunday of the month, our service is a Café Service. It begins at 10am)

Monthly Communion: every second Sunday in the month.

Open Door (for seniors) meets fortnightly on Fridays for midday lunch and Fellowship. Transport available.

Mainly Music: 9.30 - 10am, followed by morning tea and a playgroup until 11am.

Messy Church. Third Sunday in the month. 4-5.30 p.m.



Stokes Valley Uniting Church, 346 Stokes Valley Rd.

Sunday Worship 9:30am followed by morning tea and fellowship.

Cafe service: Every fifth Sunday 9:30am

Communion: First Sunday in the month.

Kids' Ministry: Every Sunday at 9.30am

Youth Programme 13yrs plus: Every Sunday after morning service

Mainly Music 5yrs under: Every Tuesday at 9.30am during the school term.

Friendship Group: Every second Tuesday of the Month 2pm.

Thoughts about Christmas from our Parish members.

What does Christmas mean to you?

The Love of God for all people and how we accept Christ's life on earth.

Spending time with family. Singing carols. Seeing pleasure on people's faces.

Celebrating the birth of Christ. Family time

Giving gifts reminds us the gift of Christ and the gifts of the wise men. It is the time when families get together.

The meaning of the Advent candles. Hope, Peace, Joy, Love and The Christ candle. Spending time with family.

It is the time when things are summed up and come together.

Celebration of Christ's birth. God's unrelenting love for you and me.

The Christmas story is about God giving to us and inviting us to know him.

Honouring Jesus and all he stood for.

At Christmas time we rejoice that Jesus led people to discover the sacred in the ordinary:
in the togetherness of our family,
in the crowd,
in the lowly,
in everyday life,
in human yearnings to be better people,
and in being neighbours to one another.

Remembering where it all started.

Jesus!



Waiwhetu Uniting, corner of Trafalgar and Grenville St.

Sunday worship 9.30am with a children's programme followed by morning tea and fellowship.

Singing group: Wednesday, 7pm

Afternoon Fellowship for men and women: Meets every second Thursday of the month at 2pm.

Evening Women's Fellowship meets every third Wednesday of the month at 7.30 pm.

Home Groups and Study groups:

Men's Bowls: Second Friday afternoon of each month.

Resource Centre: A library of Books, magazines and DVD's for church members.



St. John's Avalon, 986 High Street, Avalon.

Sunday School: 10.am then joins the service.

Service: 11:00am (Mainly in Tongan)

Communion: Every second Sunday of each Month.

Tongan Language Prayers and Bible Classes: Every Wednesday 7pm.

Club Work: (10 to 17 years) 2nd & 4th Sundays, 2-4pm

Anyone between the ages of 10 - 17 (from outside St John's) is welcome to join us.