

SIGNPOST April 2019

Gisborne Presbyterian Parish

www.standrewsgis.org.nz

Transitional Minister:

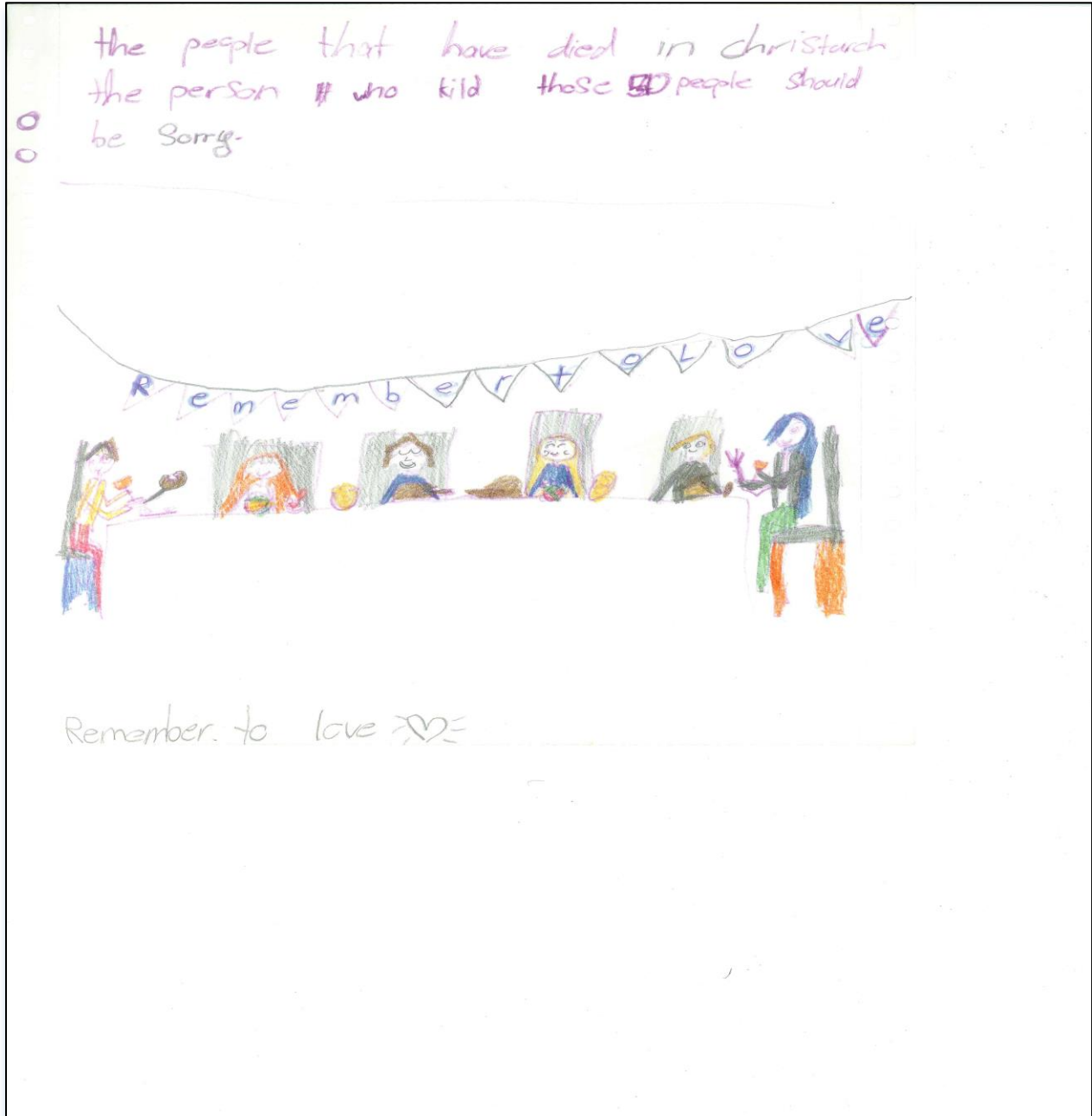
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Remembering the people who died in Christchurch by Sofia Sener-Groves

MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER



Dear Friends

REMEMBER TO LOVE!

What an important message for us all.
Thank you, Sofia.

On Sunday 17 March, when we were all still reeling from the shocking events in Christchurch, I mentioned in the services at Matawhero and St Andrew's about how it is generally a result of where we are born as to what religion we adhere to. If we were born in Indonesia, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Turkey, or Somalia, the likelihood would be that we might grow up in the Muslim faith, whereas **most of us are Christian because that was the faith that surrounded us and in which we were nurtured.** Yes, people make individual decisions about faith, but it is often the environment in which you live and what you are taught by example, if not by words, that makes an impact on you.

Sofia and Zara Sener-Groves were at St Andrew's that Sunday. They often come with their grandparents, Trish and Alan Groves, and we are delighted to welcome them as part of our faith community. In the *Congregational Story Time* in the service, Sofia and Zara always respond animatedly to the story or discussion. That day I asked them whether they had questions they wanted to ask God. Six year old Zara responded with 'Why do people kill each other?' My immediate response was to say that we all have a choice to do good or to do bad things and that sadly sometimes people choose to hurt others. **Sofia**, aged 8, gave her

own response during the service - she **drew a powerful picture with a message for all – Remember to Love.**

Love, aroha, is what we have seen in action throughout New Zealand, since the horrific shootings in the mosques in Christchurch.

The gunman wanted to divide this nation and spread his message of hate. His hatred will not be shared. It is illegal to post the video taken by the gunman of his actions in the mosques or to share his manifesto.

He wanted people to turn against Muslims. Instead, we are united with them. In general New Zealand is now united in grief, with a stronger emphasis on solidarity, standing together, supporting each other and understanding each other.

“We are one. They are us.” – words spoken by the Prime Minister on the afternoon of 15 March, before anyone knew exactly how many had been killed and injured, have been echoed by many politicians, civic leaders, journalists and church leaders. It **has become a significant motto for Aotearoa New Zealand.**

Jacinda Ardern has shown commendable leadership in many ways. Changes to the gun laws – making it illegal for anyone to own semi-automatic weapons that are designed to kill people, should have happened long ago. The Prime Minister's suggestion that another way to stop the gunman gaining any glory was not to say his name, has been followed by journalists as well as other public speakers.

New Zealand seems to be focusing on common ground, shared values and the dignity and worth of each person – as well as shared grieving.

That grief is for everyone who died, of all ages. There is also genuine concern to support their families and friends, and all who are affected by this tragedy. **Thousands have attended services and prayer vigils all over New Zealand.** Human chains have been formed around mosques to symbolize standing together to protect each other. Non-Muslim women have worn the hijab, a head scarf, in solidarity.

There is no mosque in Gisborne but there is a small Muslim community of about 30 men, women and children. On the evening of **Sunday 17 March a hastily organised Inter Faith Service was attended by hundreds of people of all faiths and none** – including the Muslim community. Solidarity, unity, standing together, shared grieving was the theme there – as in services everywhere around this country.

People of different faiths may use different words for God and have different understandings but there are common themes and values.

The Muslim community is open, generous and forgiving. Their religion, Islam, means ‘submission to the one God’ and it has five “pillars” – profession of faith, prayer, pilgrimage, fasting, and giving to the poor. Muslims are generally people of peace and love, grace and a gentle spirit. The extremists who become part of ISIS or Al Qaeda are no different from the Christian extremists throughout history who have taken fear of something they do not understand and turned it into hate. **God is love and God’s love can take away our fear.** When people focus on hate it is often because of fear of the unknown. What can you do to better know and

understand what Islam, the Muslim faith stands for?

The **Gisborne Interfaith group is arranging a special evening** where a local Muslim will tell about his faith.

Maybe you could plan to come?

The horrific, senseless, tragic event in Christchurch, has united a nation in grief and in valuing each person, but it has also revealed some ugly facts. There is a small but apparently growing group of white supremacists in New Zealand – people who believe they are better than others, simply by the colour of their skin or their religious beliefs. They are sometimes called Fascists or neo-Nazis – the names are not what matters. What motivates them all is fear and hate. ‘Islamophobia’ is real and we should have tackled this long ago – but we should also have tackled all hateful treatment of any minority, including Maori, Chinese immigrants, and homosexuals. **We are one. They are us.** The fact that the gunman came from another country, deliberately targeting Muslims here, planning two years ago to obtain a gun licence and guns, shows that our border controls and gun laws, and observation of potential terrorists, have not been adequate. Things will be different in the future.

This horror has touched people here, not because the victims were Muslim, but because it happened here. Christians, Jews and Muslims are killed in many parts of the world every day – but **this happened in New Zealand.** **The real issue now for New Zealand to deal with is the hatred that some people have for those who are different from them** – whether that is from white

supremacists or any other ideology that opposes and denigrates others.

Jesus calls us to love, even to love those we regard as enemies, **and to put that love into action.**

God is love. Perfect love casts out fear.

We are one. They are us.

God bless you

Mary Petersen

All Welcome to a Special Meeting
of the
Gisborne Interfaith Group

7 p.m. Wednesday 1 May 2019
at St Andrew's Hall,
176 Cobden Street

Speaker: Mahmood Kahn
about his faith and experiences
of being a Muslim.

News for Gisborne Presbyterian Parish from Presbytery Central:

The Presbytery Central Leadership Workgroup has considered the GPP request to call a Nationally Ordained Presbyterian Minister for three years full time. They studied the Financial Report, the Mission Plan and the Parish Profile – **and said YES!** So we have permission to proceed and the Ministry Settlement Board will be doing that as soon as possible. **Thank you** to all who have been involved in getting us to this point, including the 60 who were at the Special Congregational Meeting on 24 February.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBERS

On 10 March, in the Celebrations Time in the service at St Andrew's we formally welcomed, and celebrated, that **Pete Cowley** has come to join this parish from St Andrew's on the Terrace, Wellington, where he was an elder, parish councillor, treasurer of various groups, and property caretaker. Pete grew up in Gisborne and has come home again. After 40 years away, Pete has been here this time since October 2018 and has already become very involved with this faith community - including doing practical tasks like helping on the sound desk, and doing the 6.30 a.m. organising shift for Car Boot Sales. Thanks, Pete, and welcome.

WALKING GROUP - meets at the community hall 9 am every Monday to enjoy a leisurely walk around town. Everyone, any age is invited to join the group and to enjoy a cuppa together afterwards in the church lounge.



OPEN DOOR – is our Parish weekly get together for everyone. Tuesday mornings from 10am in St Andrew's Lounge for a cuppa, friendship and chat please come and join us!



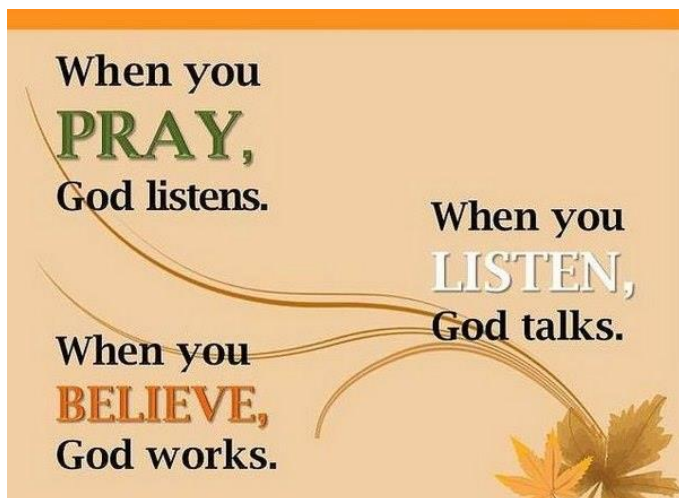
PASTORAL CARE

If you need transport to the Church Service at St Andrews or if you would like someone to visit you, or your family or friends, or have another pastoral need, please phone the office.



GIVING

If you would like to go onto the envelope offering system, please see Jean Hillyard or contact the office. A tax receipt is given at the end of the financial year. Another simple way of giving is to set up a direct credit with your bank. **GPP a/c: 03 0638 0462917 00.** (2018/19 tax receipts will be sent out mid-April).



CWS OPERATION REFUGEE 2019



Operation Lifeline: To raise funds and to help understand what a refugee experiences, you could eat refugee rations, or walk the talk.

www.operationrefugeecws.nz

PEOPLE NEWS

CONGRATULATIONS PAT!



Retired accounting technician Pat Flockhart, of Gisborne chartered accounting and advisory service, BDO, has been awarded Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand (CA ANZ) Fellowship.

The fellowship acknowledges outstanding contributions of members to the accounting profession and community.

Now retired, Pat was with BDO for 50 years and now works with the firm one day a week. She will receive her fellowship in Gisborne later this year. Recipients are nominated by fellow CA ANZ members.

Pat is the very competent chairperson of Gisborne Presbyterian Parish Finance Committee an elder, and a member of the Parish Council, as well as helping the parish in many other ways.

NEWS FROM REV EWAN AITKEN who was Minister at St Andrew's for several years

We took a holiday this festive time to visit Keir who is studying for a year at the University of California, Irvine, Los Angeles. He's really enjoying it and we decided to grab the chance to visit him and do a wee trip to LA; which included Christmas day on Santa Monica and Venice beaches, visits to Getty Museum, Grammy Museum, Warner Bros and Universal Studios and much more; did New Year in Las Vegas, where we saw Cirque du Soleil and took a helicopter ride, landing in the Grand Canyon; then visiting San Francisco, where we visited Alcatraz and the amazing redwoods in John Muir woods, travelled by Segway round the streets and much more. All this meant we didn't get around to doing a Christmas card – so this is a wee note instead to wish you all the best for 2019.

With love – Chara, Keir, Hilary and Ewan
ewanaitken@mac.com

THANK YOU to those people who made shortbread for our over 90's special morning tea.

The shortbread gift bags were well received by our guests.

mainly music Teddy Bear's picnic



**Saturday April 6 at 11.30am –
1.00 pm**

in the community hall.

**Lunch & drinks provided,
bring your teddy, rug and family!**

REV FRASER PATERSON & CATHY need our prayers at this time.

It was lovely to have Cathy and Craig with us again, playing for the service at St Andrew's on 17th March.



In car park behind church.
Monthly on 2nd & 4th
Saturdays 8am – 12 noon.
Dates for April - 13th & 27th
April

Wide variety of reasonably-priced goods and bargains.

Baking is VERY welcome for our church stall and sells quickly. Please bring to the office by Friday or take to the car boot sale on the day.

Cakes, fruit loaves, slices & biscuits sell well.

Further information available from Val 868-8226

REPORT FROM PASTORAL CARE COMMITTEE

This committee meets tri-monthly to discuss issues of pastoral concerns.

The committee comprises transitional Minister Rev Mary Petersen, Convenor: Seton Clare, Parish Clerk: Jenny Lawton, Gwenda Gray, Margaret Graham, Val Hall, Grace Johnstone and Barbara Larsen.

It is considered a pleasure to be part of a group who help oversee the pastoral needs and concerns of our parishioners.

Our Aims are:

- To be a contact, to keep in touch with parishioners
- To help develop friendship and understanding between people and the Parish
- To become aware of needs and concerns and ascertain if the Church can help
- To inform Pastoral Care Group or the Minister if additional support is needed
- To encourage participation in Church activities if appropriate

The Committee is involved with some specific projects e.g.,

- Over 90's Morning Tea where almost 30 parishioners can be involved
- Over 80's visiting list
- Spring Flowers Service & Distribution in September
- Encouraging people to discuss future planning and funeral preferences with our Minister

- Preparation and distribution of hospital and visiting leaflet
- Encouraging Presbyterians who live in Rest Homes/Retirement Villages to attend the monthly services held there

The Committee is grateful to all people who undertake visiting, particularly in crisis and urgent situations.

Seton Clare Convenor

Thank you, Seton and team, for all you do in visiting and looking after people.

GISBORNE STROKE SUPPORT GROUP

STRIDE FOR STROKE Family FUN Walk & Run. SUNDAY APRIL 28th

Event starts 10.00 am at Beacon Reserve.
Distance 5km. Lots of prizes
Entry \$10.00 Adult & \$5.00 16 years & under



AN AMAZING STORY FROM LEBANON

Cathy Porter's friend Jackie lives in San Diego but does missionary work with her church, Jackie writes:

“Our team left Beirut on Tuesday evening and headed east into the Bacca Valley where the UN refugee camps are clustered. We are 10 miles from the Syrian border and can see into Syria from our rooms. We have been working through a church in the town of Zahle that is doing amazing things for the refugees.

I can't even begin to describe the situation here. We have served hundreds of refugees through our clinic who are suffering from major PTSD-adults and children , serious malnutrition, all kinds of infections, sicknesses, depression, and on and on. I helped a man into the clinic this morning who could barely walk; he was so undernourished, he had skin lesions and looked like he was 100 years old; when I took his medical form and saw his age I couldn't believe it - he was 10 years younger than me. I sat and comforted a woman who lost her eye in a bomb blast in Syria. Another woman's baby was paralyzed and listless; she said her baby hadn't been eating and she wasn't producing any milk to feed it. I went in search of baby formula and was able to get her enough to feed her little boy for the next 4 months. Then finding diapers for a 10 year old boy who witnessed such terrible things before he fled Syria that he is incontinent and cries all the time.

A truly amazing story that has inspired all of us on the team happened in our Beirut clinic. A young mother brought in a baby not more than 3 months old that was barely breathing and

close to death. It was seriously malnourished and as a result appeared to be having system failure. We didn't have the ability to help the child in the clinic so we started calling around to the UN hospitals but they were all full. The Lebanese hospitals won't admit Syrian refugees but after negotiating with one hospital, we were able to have the child admitted on the condition that we pay the hospital fees up front. (There was no available money though. We had already invested all of our money in medicines and the local church spends every dime it has feeding and caring for the refugees.) Our team leader, emailed MSI (our organization) back in the States and asked them to look into getting the money together.

This is the miraculous part:

Last Christmas we had a big missions fair at our church in Carlsbad selling things to raise money for refugees around the world. Someone at the church made a big donation that they wanted designated specifically for “infant emergency care for Syrian refugees.” **AND IT WAS THE EXACT AMOUNT NEEDED TO GET THE CARE THAT BABY NEEDED!!!!** We all literally broke down and cried. There is a scripture in the Bible that says, **“God has known you and loved you before you were born.”** The money was made available specifically for this purpose, before the baby was even born. The last we heard the baby girl was showing much improvement and expected to survive.”

Comment from Mary: Recently, independently in different services, both I and Clive Yates, referred to Psalm 139. The words Jackie quotes are from that psalm. I thought some of you might find this paraphrase interesting and helpful:

Psalm 139 James Taylor paraphrase

1. I am transparent to you, God.
You can see right through me.
2. I can hide nothing from you.
You read my body language
and detect my deepest feelings.
3. The tiniest quirks of my handwriting
reveal everything that's going on inside me.
4. You know what I am going to say before
I've thought it through.
5. I look around at the world and you are there.
I look within myself and you are there.
Emotion and intellect are one to you.
6. You know me better than I know myself.
7. I could not stand knowing myself that well
- I need some hidden corners still to
discover, some mysteries still to unfold.
13. No wonder you know me so well, God.
Even before my mother knew I existed,
You wrote the genetic code of my cells.
14. You created my life.
15. You are the essence of all life.
16. As once you shaped the cells that formed
my fingernails and my hair, so you still
guide me through the events of each day.
- 18b. I can no more imagine your thoughts than I
can recall every detail of my dreams.
But you are not a dream, for when I
wake, You are still with me.

This year the Easter services and events include:



Wednesday 3 April

5.30-6.30pm Easter Study St Andrews lounge

Sunday 7 April

9.00am Matawhero Communion

10.00am St Andrew's Lenten Music Service

Wednesday 10 April

5.30-6.30pm Easter Study St Andrews lounge

Sunday 14 April

10.00am St Andrew's Palm Sunday

7.00pm Combined Churches service at
St Mary's Star of the Sea

Thursday 18th April

7.00pm Maundy Thursday/Communion
Matawhero Church

Good Friday 19th April

10.00am St Andrew's Good Friday Service

Sunday 21st April

10.00am St Andrew's Easter Service and
Communion

Sunday 28th April

10.00am St Andrew's Anzac
Commemoration Service

Easter Study in St Andrew's lounge



Wednesday 3 April 5.30 -6.30pm

Wednesday 10 April 5.30 -6.30pm

**MAUNDY THURSDAY COMMUNION
SERVICE**

**AT MATAWHERO CHURCH
THURSDAY 18TH APRIL AT 7.00 PM**



*'Love one another as I have loved you.
By this will others know you are my disciples.'*