

MARCH, 2017

ST. ANDREWS

MATAWHERO



PARISH MISSION STATEMENT

*We are a diverse community called together by
Jesus Christ to welcome, love, serve and care*

HAERE MAI – AFIO MAI EVERYONE IS WELCOME

GISBORNE PRESBYTERIAN PARISH

St Andrew's Church, 176 Cobden Street Gisborne
Matawhero Church, Church Road, Matawhero

REFLECTION

Moving on: Transition Ministry

Our younger son Joseph has just left home for his first year at university. We are very pleased for him, and relieved that we have helped him to the point where he can be fairly independent. There is of course some heartache for us, as we shall no longer have his regular company now.

However, it is also a chance for us to re-arrange the house to suit us and even to modify our diet from a meat the dairy focus that Joseph expected to the non-dairy vegetarianism to which we aspire.

We are in a phase of transition. As I write, we have two weeks before the start of Lent: Ash Wednesday seems a good time to go all-out without meat, fish, milk and cheese. We have two weeks to clear out the larder and adjust to new routines. By the time you read this, we shall see whether the transition has led to a sustainable future.

Your Ministry Settlement Board (MSB) has looked to the future and examined the range of ministry settlements possible. Just recently, both GPP and St David's congregations voted to form a combined MSB, with a view to sharing a nationally ordained minister in the longer term.

But the mechanics of that sharing and the shape of such a ministry by one person to different parts of Gisborne, still needs to be worked out in practice. Because of this, the combined MSB is recommending a phase of ministry called Transition Ministry. This special form of ministry uses a range of techniques to re-visit, renew and develop the vision and mission focus of a congregation.

A Transition Minister will develop a 'contract' with the parishes, setting out the goals to be achieved and the length of the appointment (typically one or two years' duration). At the end of the contract, the Transition Minister leaves and the MSB begins the formal process of filling the charge.

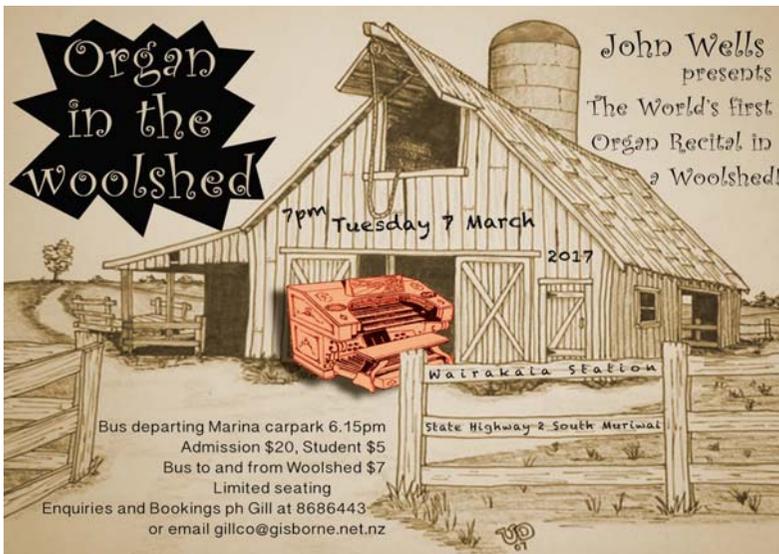
The Transition Minister is

- a change agent
- assumes leadership responsibility
- analyses the total situation
- connects with the denomination
- focuses on strategic pastoral work, worship-leading and preaching to accomplish the tasks of transition.

To make our change in domestic lifestyle sustainable we need the knowledge and advice of specialists who have been through such changes before. So our brief transition from omnivorous family of three to vegan couple could be a metaphor for transition ministry!

In each case we look to experienced professional advice, we set goals, and work towards them gradually – while regular life/ministry continues. Now that the preferred course is clear, the eleven members of the new combined MSB will hope to present a suitable candidate for a Transition Ministry in Gisborne to the churches with little delay.

Adrian Skelton
on behalf of the combined MSB



WORLD FIRST IN GISBORNE

7PM Tuesday 7 March, 2017

John Wells on his Roland C330 digital organ presents the World's First Organ Recital in a Woolshed, Wairakaia Station, State Highway 2 South Muriwai (30k south of Bisborne).

Wairakia Stream Bridge just before overhead bridge

On right. Signposted.

Admission \$20. Student \$5

Bus to and from Woolshed \$7.

Bus departing Marina Carpark **6.15pm. returning 9.30pm.**

Limited seating

Enquiries and Bookings ph Gill at 8686 443

PEOPLE NEWS

BIRTHDAYS IN MARCH. *Barbara McGregor, Eunice McIntyre, Graham Craill, Mike Willis, Hans Kwak, Janet Goodall.*

DEATH: *The Very Rev. John Murray – once Moderator, a noted social activist and a leading Progressive in his day and husband of hymn writer, Shirley Erina Murray.*

WALKING GROUP: Departs St. Andrew's 9:00am each Monday morning – whatever the weather. Do join us for an hour's exercise followed by a 'cuppa'.

OPEN DOOR –Tuesdays at 10:00am



**mainly
music®**

A fun music group for pre-schoolers
At St Andrews Community Centre
176 Cobden Street
9.45am every Wednesday of school term,
commencing 15th February

All welcome
Cost = \$3 per family

For further information contact
Trish 867-2789 or Office 868-5513

FROM THE MODERATOR

Live like you believe

As we start the New Year can I encourage you to be positive about the future? There is so much negativity about the Church in the media, in society and even in the Church itself that we are often tempted to be, or feel, hopeless. I am convinced that our first job as Christians and particularly as leaders is to put aside these things – including the inconsistencies of our own lives and that of the Church – and simply live like we believe. I know this may sound a little hypocritical, but I suspect we have little other choice.

When belief lives in doubt it has ceased to be belief and, while all belief must cope with doubt it shouldn't be shaped by it. An old Rugby coach of mine used to repeat the adage 'Hesitate and you're lost' as a primary rule of thumb for playing the game well. He meant, of course, that one had to commit to one's chosen course of action on the rugby field 100 percent or the hesitation alone would give the opposition all the chance they needed. There is too much hesitation in today's Church; too much living out our doubts rather than our belief in a loving God, too much fear of failure driving us.

The Church doesn't have to be triumphant to be confident in God. We have a God who loves the Church. Why wouldn't God want the Church to be successful in both preaching and living out the Gospel? We don't have to become self-effacing and lacklustre to represent the Gospel. We can be confident in it because it is the foundation of a well-lived life and a fair society and the best way to represent this is to live confidently in the Gospel – to commit to it whole-heartedly and joyfully.

Perhaps the greatest single factor in the loss of confidence within the Church is what is perceived to be the failure of the institution and of certain individuals within it. We cannot deny the statistics and the Church's loss of status within Western society over the last 100 years. For all the work that the Spirit does within us, we all continue to struggle with sin and brokenness and yet this shouldn't be a reason for despair, but rather a reason for rejoicing. The brokenness of the Church and of its people and leaders only confirms and glorifies the grace of God in continuing to bless it and raise up followers from within society. We will always have to contend with less than perfect people and less than perfect leaders and yet doesn't this enable us time and again to look upon those outside the Church with the eyes of mercy?

Living confidently out of our belief in God's love won't fix everything, but it will encourage those around us to also look to the God whose love we are reflecting. Living confidently out of our belief in God's love won't change the world but it may well change the bit of the world which revolves around us. Living confidently out of our belief in God's love won't make us perfect but it will help us to try again when we fall because we know that God's grace is real.

Can I then encourage us all to be confident in the Gospel as we begin this year, not because we are in any way superior to others but because we believe and are committed to the God whose love never gives up.

Happy New Year!

Richard Dawson.



trade aid Gisborne – Tairawhiti would welcome volunteers to work in their Gladstone Road shop. Morning shift 9am to 1pm or Afternoon shift 1pm – 5.15pm.

Call in and view the wonderful products they import – there is a range of jewellery – perfect if you are looking for a reasonably priced gift around the \$20 cost. The

Coffee is superb!



RETREAT

Mark your calendar for this upcoming event

Saturday 27 May 2017

Joy Cowley the well-known author of both novels, children's, and devotional books will spend a day in Gisborne hosted by the Presbyterian Parish. Numbers will be limited, so mark your diary now. Joy will need accommodation for 2 days if anyone can help?

Joel Update (Sponsored child)

The following are a couple of excerpts from TearFund communications I have received lately. The first is from Roslynn Shearman of Tearfund NZ.

"Joel is 19 years old. He is set to graduate from the sponsorship programme on 1st June 2019. Often the young African students stay in the programme until maximum age of 22.

Your group's support towards Joel is invaluable because it allows him to stay in the programme, finish any schooling and obtain vocational training or tertiary education. The aim of this is to allow him to stand in good stead as he seeks to obtain a better quality of job when he graduates the sponsorship programme. It is vital that Joel "finishes well" and I do hope your kind supporters are able to see him through to his graduation."

And this from the project director in Uganda.

"I am Alfred Babutinwaki, Project Director at the Compassion International Child Development Center attended by your sponsored child. This center serves 308 registered children in the Child Sponsorship Program and 39 babies and pregnant mothers in the Child Survival Program. I extend my gratitude to you for the great work the Lord has enabled you to do by sponsoring. Our children are growing and developing very well.

I would like to share the life of a young man who is 16 years old. In school he is growing and developing well. He was registered here at age 5, He performs very well in class and consistently gets good grades. He is faithful and he has leadership qualities. Though he was shy at first, now he has made many friends.

Our center receives Complementary Interventions (special Compassion grants) including school fees and nutrition supplements to children in need. Nutrition support helps malnourished children. Thankfully such cases are

now reduced, because of the education and support we give to parents. Education helps to prevent, control, or treat diseases in time. We supply Bibles to the children. We supply education funds like school registration fees and fees for helping registered children who are candidates to take exams. This was a great help, since they did not have any other source of funding. When their school fees were paid, they saw this as a God-given blessing and they saw God provides greatly. Sponsor's letters mean so much to children. It gives them great joy when they receive letters. It gives them an opportunity to know more concerning their sponsor and also how to pray for them. They also like responding to questions which the sponsor asks. Thank you to those sponsors for taking time to write and any letters received will bring great joy.

I'm inspired to keep serving when I see children growing. They can read, pray, and some can preach the Gospel. When I see children growing in their relationship with others, showing all signs of hope, and continuing to advance in school, it's very encouraging.

Our center children are studying well in different schools and at different levels of education therefore, continue praying for them. We request you pray so that many more children and their parents will come to the knowledge of Christ. We pray for a decrease in school dropout rates, and a favourable weather pattern that enables the growth of crops.

I would like to express my heartfelt thanks for the gift of caring sponsors. It is my prayer that God blesses you and guides you in his eternal ways.

In Christ,

Alfred Babutirwaki

I share this in the hope that we can continue the good work we have embarked on, and see it through to completion in a couple of years time. They seem to appreciate it – Don McConnochie

LENTEN CANDLE SERVICES There will be three short Lenten Candle Services – Wednesday March 22nd and 29th and April 5th. At 5.30pm in St. Andrew's Church. Three lovely reflective services in a build up to Easter. ALL WELCOME.

MEETING GEZA VERMES' BOOKS by Darryl Milner

I will never forget the sense of surprise, almost shock, I felt when I first came across Geza Vermes' book. 'Jesus the Jew'. It was published in 1973, and I read it two or three years later.

Like most Christians my picture of Jesus had been unconsciously shaped by centuries of Christian tradition and Western art. My mental image was of the Christ of Christian faith, the universal Saviour of mankind. Yet a

moment's reflection made me wonder about my own reaction, because I knew that Jesus was a Jew who lived in the Holy Land. I knew it intellectually, but not imaginatively and emotionally. I knew that by accident of birth, Jesus was a Jew, but I had never fully considered, what Vermes made very clear, that Jesus did not preach the new faith of Christianity, but lived and died a devout Jew.

Many regard the publication of *Jesus the Jew* as marking a new stage in the search for the historical Jesus. In an interview with Rachael Kohn, broadcast on Australian Radio National's 'The Spirit of Things' on Sunday 29/08/99, she asked him if this book had 'converted' the church to a more Jewish view of its own tradition.

Geza Vermes answered. "The straight answer is Yes." He went on to say, 'If one accepts the idea that we can know something about the historical Jesus, which for about 50 years in the first half of this century was considered as academically unsound, if not impossible, one realises very soon that we are dealing with a totally Jewish person with totally Jewish ideas, whose religion was totally Jewish and whose culture, whose aims, whose aspirations could be understood only in the framework of Judaism. So when finally after many years of studying Jewish history, I took as it were, a sabbatical to enjoy myself, and decided to write a book on Jesus, I titled it *Jesus the Jew*. To my great surprise it was greeted both by Jews and Christians as something that would put the research on the history called 'Jesus' on an entirely new basis, and whereas for years before, there were no books on the historical Jesus, for the last 25 years since *Jesus the Jew* was published in 1973, one book after the other is being published on the subject, and what sounded at that time something absolutely revolutionary and very sensational has become almost a cliché . Everybody talks of Jesus the Jew today.'

Ten years after publishing *Jesus the Jew* Vermes published a second book, *Jesus and the World of Judaism*. This was a collection of ten of his papers. The first three, in particular, developed his thinking about Jesus the Jew and his teaching, and responded to some of his critics. The book also contains two papers on the Dead Sea Scrolls, another subject on which Vermes is a recognised expert. As well, there are papers on Jewish literature roughly contemporary with the writings that make up the Christian Scriptures. The way in which these Jewish writings are studied and read, offers interesting insights into how the Jewish authors of New Testament writings would have expected them to be read and understood. Read in this Jewish way, they often say something other than the traditional Christian interpretation.

Challenging

The third of his books about Jesus, *The Religion of Jesus the Jew*, came ten years later. In it he sketched Jesus' personal presence and power, his regard for the Law, his practice of healing, his creative understanding of

the Kingdom, his images of God, his eschatological zeal, all within what is now known about the religion of Jesus' contemporaries. In many ways this is the most interesting and challenging of his three books as it offers an interpretation of the teaching of Jesus that is at odds with many traditional Christian interpretations. There are also striking insights that bring many Gospel passages alive in a refreshingly new way.

As usual, Vermes argued his case with skill and clarity. Many have found the Jesus depicted in his pages a compelling figure: original, outspoken, compassionate, and often funny. The stripping away of apparently redundant layers of doctrine has a particular resonance for secular readers. Some critics have charged that his method of exegesis is essentially that of projection: having himself lost his Christian faith and returned to his Jewish roots, albeit as an agnostic, in his opinion the figure of Jesus can only be that as well, a Jewish itinerant teacher, with a radically Judaic world view. Another reviewer wrote, the 'criteria of authenticity as handled by Vermes contains a little too much of Vermes and somewhat too little of genuine exegesis. What Vermes draws out of the text, is what he wishes to see therein, unbridled by any other criteria. There are other methods of exegesis than the one haphazardly "I decide what is right" subjectivism pursued by Vermes in his book.

Seeking the truth

To this criticism Vermes replies, 'My work as far as I'm consciously aware, has always been that of someone who was trying to find the truth. And if I had something slightly beyond the objective pursuit of the truth, it was a consequence of this truth, namely that Jesus was misunderstood both by Jews and Christians. The real Jesus was not the Jesus of Christianity or the bogeyman of Judaism, and that's something else. And I think this is, I suppose, something very British, which some people will laugh at, coming from someone who was born in Hungary: I was trying to put the record straight (!)'

In the radio interview mentioned earlier, Rachael Kohn responded to Vermes, 'Well indeed, the record has even been put straight in a dictionary, where your definition of Jesus has become authoritative, and widely distributed'. Geza Vermes: "Well that may be so, and I know that this is the New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary which defines Jesus no longer as before, as the founder of Christianity, but as a Jewish preacher who was considered by his followers as the Son of God and God Incarnate. And well I daresay I had some part in this, and it's created a slight outcry when somebody managed to discover the change in the definitive, but I think most people would agree that for any independent dictionary this is a totally acceptable and probably recommendable definition.'

Vermes' influence

The influence of Geza Vermes has been not only on Christian scholarship

but also on Jewish perceptions of Jesus. He says, 'One of the most pleasant experiences I had was that in one of the reviews of *The Religion of Jesus the Jew in the Israeli newspaper, Ha Aretz*,* the reviewer, quite an influential person, declared that in the light of the results of the book the traditional *cherem* (ban) on Jesus must be now declared obsolete.'

Vermes has continued to write about Jesus. In 2000 he published *The Changing Faces of Jesus*, and in 2003, *The Authentic Gospel of Jesus*, I have not read either of these books. Both have, as expected, had a mixed critical reception. Like his earlier books, I am sure they too will provoke and stimulate, just as did the challenging subject of his books, who after 2000 years, still intrigues and fascinates millions of people, believers and non-believers alike.

Darryl Milner

LEXOPHILIA

- Venison for dinner again? Oh deer!
- How does Moses make tea? Hebrews it.
- England has no kidney bank, but it does have a Liverpool.
- I tried to catch some fog, but I mist
- They told me I had type-A blood, but it was a Typo.
- I changed my iPod's name to Titanic. It's syncing now.
- Jokes about German sausage are the wurst.
- I know a guy who's addicted to brake fluid, but he says he can stop any time.
- I stayed up all night to see where the sun went, and then it dawned on me.
- This girl said she recognized me from the vegetarian club, but I'd never met herbivore.
- When chemists die, they barium.
- I'm reading a book about anti-gravity. I just can't put it down.
- I did a theatrical performance about puns. It was a play on words.
- Why were the Indians here first? They had reservations.
- I didn't like my beard at first. Then it grew on me.
- Did you hear about the cross-eyed teacher who lost her job because she couldn't control her pupils?
- When you get a bladder infection, urine trouble.
- Broken pencils are pointless.
- What do you call a dinosaur with an extensive vocabulary? A thesaurus.
- I dropped out of communism class because of lousy Marx.
- I got a job at a bakery because I kneaded dough.
- Velcro – what a rip off!
- Don't worry about old age; it doesn't last.

DATES FOR MARCH 2017

Wed	1 st	9.45am	mainly music
		7.00pm	Ash Wednesday Service at Matawhero
Fri	3 rd	1.00pm	choir practise
Sun	5th	9.00am	Holy Communion at Matawhero
		10.00am	Holy Communion – Lent 1
Mon	6 th	9.00	Walking group
Tues	7 th	10.00	Open Door
Wed	8 th	9.45am	mainly music
		4.30pm	Works & Prop Meeting
Fri	10 th	1.00pm	choir practise
Sat	11 th	9.00am	Car Boot Sale
Sun	12th	10.00	St Andrew’s Service – Lent 2
			No Service at Matawhero
Mon	13 th	9.00am	Walking Group
Tues	14 th	10.00	Open Door
		1.30	Ryman Service – all welcome
Wed	15 th	9.45	mainly music
Thurs	16 th	3.30	Dunblane service – all welcome
		7.00pm	Parish Council Meeting
Fri	17 th	1.00	choir practise
		7.00pm	Interfaith meeting in lounge
Sat	18 th	10.15am	Over 90’s Morning Tea
Sun	19th	9.00	Matawhero Service – Lent 3
			Dr Robin Gwynn
		10.00	St Andrew’s Service
		2.00pm	Sea of Faith meeting in lounge (The History of Les Huguenots presented by Dr Robin Gwynn)
Mon	20 th	9.00	Walking Group
Tues	21 st	10.00	Open Door
Wed	22 nd	9.45	mainly music
		5.30pm	Candle Lenten Service in St Andrew’s chapel
Thurs	23 rd	2.00	Leighton House Service – all welcome
Fri	24 th	1.00	choir practise
Sat	25 th	9.00	Car Boot sale
Sun	26th	10.00	Celebration Sunday – Lent 4
			No service at Matawhero
Mon	27 th	9.00	Walking Group

Tue	28 th	10.00	Open Door
Wed	29 th	9.45	mainly music
		5.30pm	Candle Lenten Service in St Andrew's chapel
Friday	31 st		1.00pm Choir practise

APRIL

Sat	1st	10.30am	mainly music picnic in hall
Sun	2nd	10.00am	Combined Service at Matawhero Communion & Harvest Festival No service at St Andrew's

REPORT FROM PARISH COUNCIL

The Fundraising committee disbanded at the AGM last year. Parish Council are looking ahead for the year for ideas and help to carry out events. Three or Four events are needed during the year to help balance the budget.

'Growing in Faith' team – there is ongoing planning for Joy Cowley's retreat on May 27th. Accommodation is required for Joy for 2 nights, offers for this would be most welcome. Please let the office know or Pat Flockhart.

Faithbook Services – these are now discontinued. Our thanks to Sarah and Don McConnochie and Cathy Porter for leading their Faithbook services once a month.

A policy for donations to crisis situations, such as the Tongan bus crash, is being formulated.

Works & Property

Quotes are being obtained for window repairs for the church music room and for the hall window replacement for the Stroke office.

Working Bee is planned (date to be advised) for the Matawhero Aboretum, there are large trees that require attention.

Pak n Save Carpark – the manager has requested that church people do not park their cars in the Pak n Save while on church business. Some years ago there was an arrangement with Pak n Save that we were able to use their car park. That arrangement is now null and void since car parks are at a premium there. Unless you are actually inside the supermarket shopping – please do not park in the Pak n Save car park.

Parish Council - February 2017