

FAMILY

REFLECTIONS FOR LENT 2013



Plenty
for everyone

a million kisses

FAITH

LOVE



Presbyterian Church
of Aotearoa New Zealand

Presbyterian Support



Welcome

Lent has always been a very significant time in our Christian faith for reflecting on the wonders and ways of God through Jesus Christ.

It is my joy to introduce these Lenten reflections for 2013. The partnership of Presbyterian Support and our wider Church in this work is to be commended.

When we read the Bible the strongest heartbeat of God we hear is the call to care for needy, the poor, the vulnerable.

At the start of his earthly ministry Jesus read from Isaiah:

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour."

With every eye on him he declared "You've just heard Scripture make history. It came true just now in this place."

This is the start of his ministry. His first recorded public statement. It is important. In current terms this is his mission statement. Why should we care for the poor? Should justice matter to us as Christians? Why is this important to one living with a resurrection mind set? As followers of Jesus how can we not care?

Look at any definition of righteousness in the Bible and you will find sins of omission (injustice, greed, ignoring the poor), right alongside sins of commission (sexual immorality, stealing, anger).

Will this be the time when Christ's church stands and causes the powers and empires of the world to shake as we work for justice and righteousness? Or will we withdraw into spiritual escapism?

The church is at its strongest when the power of the spirit moves to renew the body, resulting in the transformation of communities.

If the resurrection is true then we are children of God and through God have the power to effect change. We are rich not through hard work, but because God has blessed us to be born at a great time in history, in a great country.

Can I encourage you to use these studies not only during Lent, not only in the approach to the Cross, but use them after Easter, after the resurrection and look for ways of putting what you have learnt through reflection into practice. We are a resurrection people moving in the power of God's Spirit.

Grace and peace be with you this Easter



Ray Coster Moderator, Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand

Reflections for Lent 2013

Love Reaches out



"Love is reaching out when no one is looking. Sharing kindness, patience and concern with those who need it."



Brinkley Botting, Waiareka Weston Presbyterian Church.





Reflections for Lent 2013

This booklet contains weekly reflections which are based on the lectionary readings in the weeks leading up to Easter. Each reflection has been contributed by a minister in the Presbyterian Church and all Presbyterian Support regions have contributed a story.

BEGIN HERE

Within your study group, or in your own personal devotional time we suggest you:

- READ** each of the lectionary passages
- MEDITATE** on the reflection which is based on one or more of the passages
- CONSIDER** the questions they pose
- TURN** to the Presbyterian Support contribution
- REFLECT** on how you can put your faith into action this week
- BRING** these reflections, thoughts and intentions to God in prayer

KIDS FRIENDLY FAMILY DEVOTIONS

are made to be shared! Here's how they work:

Lent is a special time in the Church when we remember the 40 days Jesus spent in the desert. It was a difficult time for Jesus. He fasted (ate no food) and was tempted by the devil. During Lent some people give up things to remind them how Jesus gave up his life for us. Other people do extra kind and generous things during Lent to share Jesus' love. This Lent we want to encourage you to be the "hands and feet" of Jesus by loving others the way he does. Once a week at breakfast, dinner, or bedtime, take time to read the Bible together, talk about it and decide how you are going to reach out in love.

READY

One way we learn about Jesus and how he wants us to live in the world is by reading the Bible. So when you see READY get your Bibles and find out more.....

STEADY

Jesus wants us to be STEADY in our faith to him and his way. So when you see STEADY it's time to chat about what you've heard in the Bible reading and how you can apply it in your lives.

GO

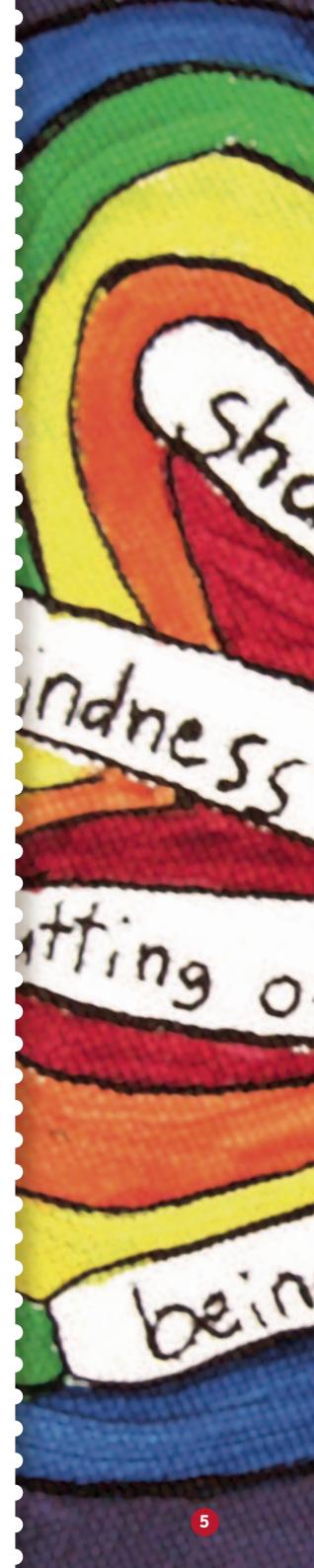
Jesus told his disciples to GO out into the world to share the good news of his life on earth and to love each other. So when you see GO, make a plan to reach out in love this week.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF CHILDREN

The illustrations in this booklet are taken from artwork submitted for the PresCare Art Competition in 2012. The theme of the competition was, "Love Reaches Out".

THANK YOU

This booklet has been made possible through the combined assistance of people in the Presbyterian Church and Presbyterian Support. Thank you to those who so willingly shared their time and thoughts to produce a means of reflecting on God's story and our stories, this Lent.



Lent 1 – February 17, 2013

BLESSED TO BE A BLESSING

Deuteronomy 26:1-11
Romans 10:8b-13

Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16
Luke 4:1-13

The conversation in Luke is a spiritual debate. The suggestions were legitimate suggestions! Earthly sustenance; making sure that God loves you; material satisfaction and using all this power to care for others.

But the instant fix is not going to be part of the toolkit of the newly baptised Jesus. Jesus is led by the Spirit into the wilderness. He is hungry, he has fasted for 40 days, and the rocks around him start to look like loaves of bread. And he is tempted - we can only be tempted by what we see as possible for us to have and good people are tempted by good things - to turn a stone into a loaf of bread.

Why not do it for himself and for others? What a gift to bless a hungry world! There were plenty of people on the breadline in Jesus' world.

But was this his task? He turns and challenges the tempter, "one does not live by bread alone". Jesus is hungry and lives among people who are in need, yet he says there is something even more essential than food for life.

Food is basic for our survival, but the temptation to only deal with the physical needs and ignore our deep spiritual needs is great.

When I was active in Women's Refuge we provided a place of safety. Emergency food, shelter and clothing were the first needs. But those who came needed to deal with the constant fear which was not going to vanish overnight. This is a spiritual struggle and those who could not trust anymore had to learn to trust again to live. Often everyone in their lives had let them down.

So where could they find the bread which fed their emptiness?

And where have we found it and what have we shared?

Rev Margaret Anne Low

KIDS FRIENDLY FAMILY DEVOTIONS

READY Luke 4: 1-13. Jesus is tempted.

STEADY Sometimes we do wrong things. Remember what Jesus said when he was tempted by the Devil: "*It is written: Worship the Lord your God and serve him with all your heart.*" During Lent let's try to serve God with all our heart.

GO What act of kindness and love will you do this week?

GEORGE'S STORY

George⁽¹⁾ is 88 and values his independence, but after his wife died 12 years ago he needed a bit more help around the home so he invited his daughter Liz to come and live with him. Liz had been through a hard time and hoped that living with her Dad would be a good way to help her beat her demons of alcohol abuse and depression. Initially things were fine, but earlier this year George's diabetes got away on him and he had to have his right leg amputated.

Following the surgery, George was keen to get back home to heal and regain the mobility he had lost leading up to his operation. Liz was not happy with the prospect of being a 24/7 caregiver and became quite unwell herself. It was at this point that George was referred to Presbyterian Support's Enliven Positive Ageing Service for help with personal care, housework, meal preparation and medication oversight.

With the support of the Enliven team, physiotherapy and occupational therapy were added to the mix and George recovered quickly: learning to use a wheelchair and developing the sense of balance that would be required for an eventual prosthetic leg.

Over time, Liz also opened up to Enliven staff and expressed her concerns and anxieties. She has gradually come to accept her father being at home and their relationship has improved as stress levels have reduced. Their house has been insulated and a heat pump installed with the help of government subsidies. They are spending less on electricity and the house is much warmer, which helps with their budget as well as comfort.

George is now walking well in his prosthetic and attending an Enliven Day Activity Programme. Liz is enjoying his company again. The Enliven team is still involved, but to a lesser extent. George tells us he thinks our involvement has been a real blessing.

Older people, like George, are often isolated – consider getting to know your neighbours this Lent season.

Presbyterian Support East Coast



⁽¹⁾ Names are changed to protect the privacy of our clients. Their stories are true.

Lent 2 – February 24, 2013

IN GOD'S TIME

**Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18
Philippians 3:17-4:1**

**Psalm 27
Luke 13:31-35**

'Wait for the Lord, be strong, and let your heart take courage' (Ps 27:14). Kia kaha! Be strong and wait for the Lord. Oh if we could wait on God and God's timing, but we struggle to wait. We have been trained well by the culture with its patience-defying imperatives: "Here it is! It is what you need! You need it now! Come and get it! Pay later!"

In pondering the biblical concept of surrender we see that we have to drop ideas of our needs and desires being instantly satiated. We have to learn to wait on God and what God has in mind. We are taught by Jesus to wait on the Lord: "Your will be done". But Jesus laments over a Jerusalem that has been sent prophets and messengers and has refused to wait and listen to those God has sent. Under the same threat as those previous prophets, Jesus heads to Jerusalem anyway. He refuses to heed the kindly Pharisees who warn him of an angry Herod. No, he is not afraid of Herod; he is free because he has long since surrendered to God.

In this season of Lent we are invited to wait on the Lord. A careful reading of the Psalm reveals that there is no expectation of an easy ride – there is an army of enemies encamped against the writer! The surrender is not to these enemies and their agendas; the surrender has long since been to God. "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?" What do these enemies really have when everything has already been given to the God who is like a hen who gathers her brood under her wings?

Rev Martin Stewart

KIDS FRIENDLY FAMILY DEVOTIONS

READY Psalm 27: 11 "Teach me your way Lord. Lead me in a straight path."

Luke 10: 25-37 The Good Samaritan

STEADY In this story Jesus teaches us to "love our neighbour". He shows us that our neighbour isn't just the person who lives next door, but anyone. A stranger is very kind and helps a hurt man. Jesus says: "Go and do the same".

GO How will you be a kind stranger this week?



Rebecca Reid,
St Heliers Presbyterian
OSCAR Programme

AFTER THE QUAKE

The February 2011 earthquake left Iris feeling "like a walking disaster". "I was panicking about anything and everything", she says. Her baby, Guy, was knocked out in the quake and her three-year-old, Oori, was quite traumatised. "I didn't handle it well", Iris says.

The tremors continued, liquefaction was bad, the drains were broken and there was flooding every time it rained. "We spent all winter sick", Iris says. "At one time I had to take Guy to the doctor every day for a week." Unlike some red-zoned neighbours, Iris's home was zoned green, and the family were unable to leave.

Iris's husband met one of Presbyterian Support's earthquake co-ordinators at a CERA meeting and asked for assistance in getting counselling for Iris, which she has found very helpful. As well as visiting the family, the counsellor arranged for a volunteer, Heather, to visit. "Heather is the best thing that could have happened to us," says Iris. "We don't have any family here ... I feel I've gained a mum and the children have gained a grandma." Heather enjoys the relationship just as much and made a similar comment: "They're a lovely family and I feel like I have gained a daughter and grandchildren".

Iris says the wellbeing of the whole family has improved. "I'm a lot better now. And when there's a shake, Oori says, 'It'll be OK'."

How well do you know your neighbours? One learning from the earthquake has been that caring neighbours make all the difference when times are hard.

Presbyterian Support Upper South Island

Lent 3 – March 3, 2013

HUNGRY

Isaiah 55:1-9

1 Corinthians 10:1-13

Psalm 63:1-8

Luke 13:1-9

As I begin to write this reflection (Sept 2012), my family and I are in the middle of New Zealand's attempt to "live below the line". Living on \$2.25 for food per day isn't really fasting in the rigorist Lenten traditions of some of our Christian ancestors, but like them, our family's "fast" serves to focus attention on important things that can get overlooked in everyday living. Our 'normal' can leave us spiritually hungry, yet what we consume fails to satisfy (Isa 55.2). Or, like the Psalmist, we know only too well how much our souls thirst for God (63.1). "There must be something more to life than this" is a common complaint, even (or especially?) in relatively affluent societies like New Zealand. What can be done to overcome such a deep spiritual hunger among us?

The Lenten tradition connects fasting with repentance. "Repent or perish" are Jesus' stark words to those who were questioning him about an atrocity carried out by Pilate's soldiers on Galilean worshippers (presumably) in Jerusalem (Luke 13.1, 5). He follows this with a parable of a fig tree, its lack of fruit invites the farmer's axe. "If you think you are standing, watch out that you do not fall" is Paul's advice to the charismatic Corinthians (1 Corinthians 10.12).

I think of the "ruler" who came to Jesus hungry for eternal life, but who left sad because he wouldn't put Jesus' words into practice (Luke 18.23). The point of Lent isn't to feel hungry, but to find joy in obedience.

Rev Dr Paul Prestidge

KIDS FRIENDLY FAMILY DEVOTIONS

READY Matthew 25:30-40. I was hungry and you fed me. "*Whenever you did one of these things to someone overlooked or ignored, that was me — you did it to me.*'

STEADY Jesus is sad when we ignore those in need, but He is glad when we love and care for others who don't have as much as us.

GO This week plan a visit to your local foodbank to drop off some food and talk to the people who work there about how they are helping to feed hungry people.

HUNGER IN NEW ZEALAND

"Child poverty" is a favourite topic with the media in this country, but many of us have become so familiar with the statistics of one child in five living in a household where there is insufficient income for basic needs, that we no longer perceive it in human terms.

Presbyterian Support seeks to provide a voice for families who are struggling. The recession has impacted a very wide slice of the population and while many people have the resilience, skills and financial security to cope with job loss, reduced hours of work and prolonged unemployment; others do not. There is no one path to the poverty line and accordingly there is no one easy way to "fix" the problem of poverty in New Zealand.

Not having enough to live on often means: not enough nutritious food, unresolved health problems, poor housing, problems with transport, missing out at school, limited social opportunities, fraught relationships and gradually a narrowing of the family's life. Despite this, the children are their top priority. One parent put it like this, "We try not to let it affect the children ... but no matter how we work it, it does ultimately impact on them". Many of the parents we work with choose not to eat dinner so children can have food for school lunches.

Inequality like this affects us all. It marks our increasing distance from one another – not just financially, but as human beings. For Presbyterian Support, it is clear that focusing on social service delivery is not enough. Unless we question why those services are needed in the first place, we become part of a system that supports injustice. We all have a role to speak out for equality, tolerance, compassion, fairness and participation.

Are there struggling families in your neighbourhood? What can you as an individual, or your church, as part of the body of Christ, do to help?

Presbyterian Support Otago

Mia Denholme, Small Miracles Preschool, St Heliers Presbyterian.

"I love my mummy because she cares about me and helps people in Africa."



Lent 4 – March 10, 2013

FORGIVEN

Joshua 5:9-12
2 Corinthians 5:16-21

Psalm 32
Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

Forgiveness lies at the heart of the good news of Jesus Christ. It's what our Christian faith is all about. And yet only some of us really desire to be forgiven because only some of us are humble.

Our reading from Joshua indicates that the people had been shamed and disgraced. They needed a new start. The Promised Land was not theirs until they were all in covenant relationship with the Lord, and for that they needed to submit to the knife of circumcision. It takes humility to submit. Mostly we would prefer to exempt ourselves from acknowledging who we really are. But as Psalm 32 tells us: once we have humbled ourselves and confessed our need, then we are truly happy and our strength that has been expended in denial is renewed.

Forgiveness is a profound experience. It alters our entire perspective on life. We view people differently; we view ourselves differently; we view Christ differently. Everything is now understood through the lens of reconciliation, and as we see the father in Luke 15 running to greet the son who had been lost, and as we listen in to him begging the stay-at-home son to join in with the festivities we start to realise that life will never be the same again.

Forgiven, we arrive home. Forgiven, we are free to forgive. And forgiven, we are enabled to do justice in a world that desperately needs it.

Rev Helen Martin

KIDS FRIENDLY FAMILY DEVOTIONS

READY Luke 15: 11-32. The story of the lost son. "It's not fair!"

STEADY The older brother in this story was very grumpy. He thought it was very unfair that his father threw a party for his lost brother who returned home after wasting all his money. Sometimes things happen in our lives that we think aren't fair.

GO How do you feel when unfair things happen? Ask God to help you to forgive those who hurt you.



Lauren Smyth,
St Andrew's Presbyterian, Hamilton

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

Tom was only 14 when his Mum shot through leaving him in the care of his aunt and uncle. Angry, Tom started hanging out with mates who led him into some bad ways. The crunch came when the police turned up on the doorstep for the third time in a week. Tom was out on his ear. For six months he slept rough until he was rounded up and placed with a foster family.

John and Sue had been foster parents for 19 years so were fully aware of the challenges Tom would present. They weren't expecting to come home one day and discover Tom gone and the house ransacked.

The following day, Tom returned, contrite. A prosecution followed and Tom admitted responsibility. He'd just turned 18 so the case was referred to a Restorative Justice facilitator employed by Presbyterian Support Central. A group conference was called and the most surprising moment was when Tom burst into tears when he heard how terrified John and Sue's other children were of him and just how much he had let them down.

Tom was required to write to his mother, explaining what he had done, as a way of reflecting on his behaviour. John and Sue stood by Tom and he wasn't sent to prison, he was given a community sentence and asked to pay reparation. Not only does Tom see this as apt justice, but he understands that forgiveness works in many different ways. John and Sue forgave him and he is working on forgiving his mother for leaving him.

Presbyterian Support Central

Lent 5 – March 17, 2013

WALK WITH JESUS

Isaiah 43:16-21

Philippians 3:4b-14

Psalm 126

John 12:1-8

"A tale of two hearts"

There is a stark contrast in this story – two hearts demonstrating two opposing reactions. Imagine the scene, full of tension. A dinner party with one woman – Martha, working hard, serving the guests. All would have seemed quite normal until another woman – Mary literally "let her hair down" (quite an inappropriate action for a woman of that day), and Judas's reaction. What he said was true, righteous, and hard to disagree with. Can you imagine the atmosphere? Awkward...

Now we have met Mary and Martha before. Luke describes Martha as busy while Mary sits listening to Jesus (Jesus describes this as "the better way" - Luke 10:42). Their brother Lazarus was raised to life (John 11). She walked with Jesus, and displayed remarkable faith, hope, and love. She is easy to admire.

Of course we know Judas and his famous betrayal – which John reminds us of in case we're not sure, and goes on to expose Judas's true motives. "I'm pleased I'm not like him" I think smugly. Often you find more out about people when there is money around. Curious the reactions of each heart: one extravagant, humble, expressive, and loving. The other cold, selfish, and mean.

How did their hearts end up this way? Dallas Willard asks "Why are Christians so mean?" and concludes "Christians are routinely taught by example and word that it is more important to be right than it is to be Christ-like".

Both Judas and Mary walked with Jesus. We walk with Jesus. How is my heart? Is it growing or shrinking? How do I react to others and treat them, or talk about them? Where are we walking to? Towards Friday. After Sunday we continue to walk with him - may our hearts grow as we do.

Rev Darryl Temporo

KIDS FRIENDLY FAMILY DEVOTIONS

READY John 12: 1-8. Mary anoints Jesus' feet.

STEADY In our story today Judas gets cross with Mary for wasting precious perfume on Jesus' feet. Sometimes we get angry too because things don't go our way. But Jesus forgives us when we say sorry.

GO Is there anyone you need to say sorry to? Say sorry when you get cross this week to the person concerned and to Jesus.

MOTHERS CARE FOR THEIR BABIES WHILE SERVING PRISON SENTENCE

When I read this headline, what does my heart say? How do I react?

The thought of babies being raised 'behind bars' can provoke mixed emotions and lots of questions. It's easy to judge these mothers or feel some abhorrence towards them.

Women in prison are now able to care for their own children up to two years old. The Auckland Region Women's Correction Facility at Wiri has two self-care units, each with three mums and their babies living in. The mothers consider it a privilege to be able to care for their babies and have made a commitment to make the most of the opportunity.

Presbyterian Support Family Works, in partnership with Plunket, facilitates a parenting programme in the units to provide support for these young mums. Family Worker Pila Wati goes into the prison once a week, with Budgeter Linda McCallum also playing a part in this new initiative.

By teaching parenting and relationship skills, the programme enables the women to learn how to give their children a better life. Pila says these young mums are concerned for their future and want to change. They feel the pain of having to abandon their other children and are anxious about how they will manage when they return to the outside world.

The mothers have learned to trust Pila by working one-on-one with her and in the group. Church and the local community can play an important role by continuing to support these women when they are released. We are called to turn away from judgment and abhorrence and show compassion, as Christ did towards the 'shameful' woman at the dinner party.

Will I open my heart?

Presbyterian Support Northern



Lent 6 – March 24, 2013

MANY VOICES

Liturgy of the Palms
Liturgy of the Passion

Luke 19:28-40 **Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29**
Luke 23:1-49

This account of Jesus' final hours describes an utterly chaotic mess marked by a feverish din of voices. Pilate, Herod, religious leaders, the mob – all raising their voices in increasing anger and frustration in an attempt to get their way. Pilate's voice is heard as he becomes deeply disturbed by the obvious injustice of it all and increasingly worried by the growing power of the crowd. Herod's voice is heard as he becomes excited by it all in that he finally has an audience with Jesus but frustrated that Jesus doesn't entertain him. The religious leaders' voices become desperate in demanding that Jesus is sentenced to death. The crowd's voice becomes ever louder as they call for Barabbas' release and Jesus' crucifixion. Then as Jesus hangs on the Cross, the voices continue to mock and taunt him; the leaders, the soldiers and one of the criminals on the cross.

Yet through the tumult of voices – as Luke's account comes nearer to the moment of Jesus' death – the violent voices seem to be drowned out by one Voice. Through all the evil static an astounding clear Voice can be heard. Comforting the grieving women (Luke 23:28-41); forgiving the offender (Luke 23:34); promising the condemned (Luke 23:43); demonstrating unbelievable trust (Luke 23:46).

What are the voices surrounding and deafening your world today? What violence and injustice are being called for? What taunts are wounding your soul? What are the destructive voices that are so extraordinarily powerful around you?

Listen.

Read Luke 23:1-49 again and listen to the voice of Jesus in this account. Listen as his suffering, death and love silence them!

Rev Dr Geoff New

KIDS FRIENDLY FAMILY DEVOTIONS

READY Luke 19:28-40. Jesus is King.

STEADY Why do you think people called Jesus King? How important is Jesus in your life? Is he your King?

GO Do people see our King Jesus in you? Jesus said: "let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your God in heaven."

IT'S ALL ABOUT RESPECT

At Bluestone School in Timaru a young boy writes of his new friend: "My mate is Ken. He is cool. He used to fly planes during the war. Wow". At Presbyterian Support's Wallingford Home in Temuka residents prepare for the regular visit of 20 children from their local primary school. They are curious to learn more about the games they play, what they learn at school and look for ways to share the wisdom of their years.

What connects these two scenarios is a project of Presbyterian Support South Canterbury called "It's all about Respect". Rest Home residents and school children commit to getting to know each other over four to five sessions which include fun filled activities, rest home and school visits, guest speakers, sharing of life experiences, encouraging buddy friendships and exchanging gifts especially prepared by young and older people for each other. The aim is to balance fun and entertainment with insightful interactions, role play situations, opportunities for young children to raise queries, reflect upon and gain a better understanding of the lives of older people.

Social isolation and neglect of older people is a growing issue in our communities. In such an environment negative attitudes can be dispelled and positive values developed ensuring a mutual respect for each other. Young children learn about older people and appreciate

the value of their life skills and life experiences. They share with other class mates their special relationships with some of the residents - the awareness that older people are caring, witty, have a lot of talent and have lots of interesting stories to tell them about their lives when they were young. Children also learn the realities of ageing – why older people move into Homes when they become frail and dependent. Some of the key words of learning have been Respect, Caring, Sharing, and Valuing.

The residents in the Home are also happy when the children visit. For a number of them there is a curiosity to learn more about the younger generation – the games they play, their activities at school, and they offer advice and share their wisdom with the children. The school co-ordinator remarks that this project "brings out the best in a child's caring, giving and loving nature".

In the midst of all the voices that surround us each day, consider taking the time to let older people know they are valued and cared for.

Presbyterian Support South Canterbury



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The easter story in real time



Easter Week – March 25-31, 2013

NEW LIFE

Acts 10:34-43

Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24

1 Corinthians 15:19-26 John 20:1-18 (or Luke 24:1-12)

If you've ever watched an action film, you'll know the basic plotline: Life is fine, bad guy turns up, hero saves the world, life is fine again. These stories always feature spectacular near misses. When everything is hopeless for the good guys, the hero arrives, dodges a bullet and saves the day.

The story of Jesus' death and resurrection however, is not about an heroic near miss. Jesus doesn't dodge a bullet, he dies.

Jesus' death is the end of a world, the end of a story. It is an ending that had to happen, in order to make way for the 'new thing' God had in store for Creation. (1 Corinthians 15:22) So in order to make space for the new life that God is gifting us in Jesus, we must be willing to let the old life die. Instead of near misses and last minute rescues, during Lent God calls us into surrender and obedience. It is a holy 'letting go', the end of life as we know it.

And this death is not without grief. We hear in Mary Magdalene's words at the tomb that she has lost everything that mattered. "Why are you crying?" they ask her. "They have taken my Lord away..." (John 18:13-14)

Surrounded by her discarded dreams, she doesn't even know where to find God anymore. It is the end of her world. And it's an ending that needs to happen for all of us too, an ending that Lent invites us to greet so that God's new life might have room to grow in us.

And when we have let go of everything the bringer of life will come and find us, just like he found Mary in that garden, and nothing will ever be the same again.

Rev Malcolm Gordon

Madison Hales,
Greenlane Presbyterian

"We can be like
angels to people"

NEW BEGINNINGS

The Incredible Years is a parenting programme offered throughout the country by Presbyterian Support Family Works, in conjunction with the Ministry of Education. Although it is aimed at parents of children aged three to eight years, it is designed to give all parents skills to assist them in dealing with childhood behaviours. The friendships formed with other parents are a key part of the success of the programme.

Debbie, a parent attending the programme, has this to say in describing the difference it has made to her family's life.

"I have found that I now have much better dealings with my daughter. I am more patient with her and realise that she doesn't do things to annoy me – she just uses those things to get my attention. I have also been taught that any child is a clean slate and their actions are just reactions from things they have picked up from the people around them.

I used to be quite tense and would snap at my daughter, but by doing Incredible Years I have learnt that by spending 10-15 minutes a day playing with my child, she is a happier child and is less prone to attention seeking behavior.

She loves the child directed play that we do and is so much better at explaining her situation when we are playing games. I honestly never realised how many commands and open ended questions I sent my daughter's way, but now I realise what I was doing; I reduce her tasks to steps so she doesn't get confused, and I give her choices rather than just ask a question she is not capable of answering.

The vignettes that are used and the role plays are a great help because you get to see the strategy that we are working on for that session, and in a real life, and then try to practise them with others so that we can get feedback on the technique.

Incredible Years has helped me so much, and my daughter and I are both showing improvements for the better and I can implement these strategies for the rest of my life."

Building Relationships

Spend 10-15 minutes each day for a week playing with a child – yours, your grandchild, or borrow a friend's.

Turn off your cell phone, the TV, the computer, and spend this time giving undivided attention to the child - playing and doing what the child wants.

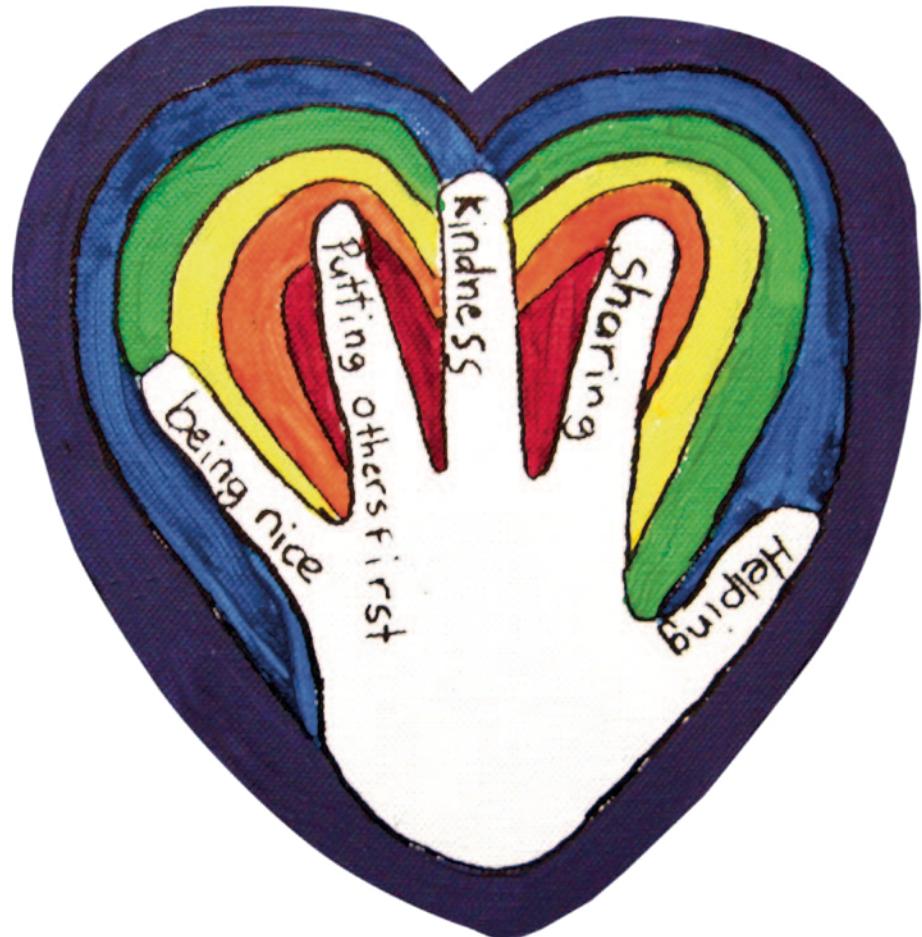
Presbyterian Support Southland

KIDS FRIENDLY FAMILY DEVOTIONS

READY John 20: 1 – 18. Jesus appears to Mary.

STEADY In our story today we hear how Jesus was standing in front of Mary but she didn't realise it was him. How and where do you see Jesus? Do people see Jesus in you?

GO This week think before you act. Think WWJD? (what would Jesus do?) Then try to be more like Him.



PRES CARE

Through the PresCare partnership the Presbyterian Church and Presbyterian Support have committed to working together on using our shared faith and commitment to nurture the wellbeing of children and families in New Zealand. Together we acknowledge the 200,000 children who live in poverty in New Zealand. All children have a right to develop spiritually, have an adequate standard of living, access to health care, education and a balanced diet.

Each one has the right to be protected from abuse, neglect and discrimination. As a Church, we want to do more. The Mission of the Presbyterian Church speaks of "responding to human need" and committing to the "transformation of society". Our support for the work of Presbyterian Support is a vital part of this advocacy and practical help. By supporting Presbyterian Support in your region, you can do more!

PRESBYTERIAN SUPPORT

Presbyterian Support regions offer a range of services, relevant to their community's needs. Central, South Canterbury, Otago and Southland maintain a continuum of care for older people through their residential Homes, hospitals, dementia services and independent living options.

To find out more about what is available in your region, visit www.ps.org.nz.

ENLIVEN POSITIVE AGEING SERVICES

Enliven Positive Ageing Services are offered in Northern, East Coast, Central, Upper South Island and Otago regions. All services are client-centered, working with the older person and their family in their own home to come to decisions about issues affecting their lives. The emphasis on wellness means goals relate to "being able to do the things I want to do". Services are unique to the individual and, where possible aim to identify opportunities for improving, or at least maintaining, physical and social activity and function, so life can be lived as fully as possible.

More information is available on www.enliven.org.nz.

FAMILY WORKS

Family Works provides services to children and families in need, helping them build on their strengths, and develop the skills which lead to lasting change, because we believe that the best way to help children is to help their families. You can find out more about Family Works in your region by visiting www.familyworks.org.nz. One of the ways that people support this work is through becoming a Family Works Guardian Angel.

There is more information about this at www.angel.org.nz.

If you would like to take this opportunity to support the work of Presbyterian Support, you can make an online donation by visiting any one of the websites mentioned, or complete the following form:

Name: _____

Postal Address: _____

Contact Phone: _____

Email: _____

Yes, I would like to help by: (please tick your choices)

- Making a one off donation (enclosed)
- Doing some volunteer work
- Becoming a Guardian Angel donor
- Receiving more information about Family Works
- Receiving your newsletters
- Other (Please state) _____
- I have left a gift in my Will to Presbyterian Support

Send to

PRESCARE LENT APPEAL

Presbyterian Support
PO Box 19222
Wellington 6149

(All donations over \$5 are tax deductible and will be used in the region where you live)

THANK YOU!

left: Michaela Tudor, St Heliers Presbyterian OSCAR

right: Eve Abernethy, Kapiti Uniting Church



LIFE

This booklet is produced in partnership between the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand and Presbyterian Support.

Digital copies can be downloaded from the PCANZ and Presbyterian Support websites:

www.presbyterian.org.nz and www.ps.org.nz

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or

Reflections for Lent 2013

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every drop savour