

The Messenger
Of St Thomas's Parish
The Anglican Parish of Tamaki-Kohimarama



Winter 2017



The Fantastic Journey

By Joan Osborne

One lovely Thursday morning, towards the end of February 2017, Stephen and I boarded the train at Parnell, on a package tour to the "*Forgotten Highway*" organised by *Forgotten World Adventures* of Pukekohe.

The "*Forgotten Highway*" refers to the remains of the old railway line between New Plymouth and Taumaranui, although we were only going to go from *Okahukura* to *Whangamomona* stations on that railway line.

We left the train just after lunch at Taumaranui. Once our motel rooms at *the Forgotten Highway Motel* were sorted, we were bussed to a large Alpaca farm. We patted and fed the animals – black, white, and brown - and we were shown how they are shorn; they were laid out on tables and leg-roped down.

Friday was THE DAY. We went by bus to the old station at *Okahukura*, and boarded our carts. The carts are adapted golf carts; two, four or six seaters. Steve and I chose the back seats of a four seater, with two other travellers in front, one of whom was the driver. "Turn on the motor, foot on the accelerator or stop pedal as required, and don't touch the steering wheel" were the driving instructions.

We were divided into two travelling groups, each with a leader from *Forgotten World Adventures*. Our leader was a lovely Maori girl named Maree. She gave us our hand signals: *wave* (slow down), and *stop* (arm out, hand vertical).

And we were off. The carts were petrol driven and do 12 mph (20 kph). The line from New Plymouth to Taumaranui took 30 years to complete and includes 24 tunnels and 91 bridges. We did about 20 of the tunnels and stopped in one very long one which had a curve in it. All lights were extinguished and we were in complete and absolute blackness. Some found that a bit unnerving, but Steve and I found it fascinating. There was a gentle softness about it. There are no glow worms or similar insects in these tunnels, because they are lined with concrete bricks.

I was very interest in this railway, having travelled it when I was at Ardmore Training College, but always at night, so to do it by day was a real thrill. But it was interesting for another reason as well; we were travelling through King Country land, some of which I had visited many times before Steve whipped me off to Whakatane.

And one of the stops we made was at a tiny place called *Matiere*, near *Ohura*. This was the country my grandfather, Charles Mackinder, had come to when he returned from the Boer war. Grandma was one of the first white women in the area, and my mother started school at *Matiere*. Her brother later had a farm in the area, and his grandson is now on that farm.

Not only did Grandad cut a farm out of the bush at *Matiere*, the family story goes that he also did a stint on the railway including tunnel making.

In many places trestle viaducts were constructed from one hillside to the other. Soil from the tunnels and cuttings was used to fill in the trestles, and now one is not aware of them.

Many of our fellow travellers were surprised at how hilly the King Country is. It is good sheep farming country. We went through patches of bush – mainly Kahikatea, Rimu and Totara. In one cutting I saw a little bit of Tutu – a highly poisonous scrub plant we used to see alongside road cuttings.

We arrived at Whangamomona about 4.30 PM (we had morning and afternoon tea and lunch along the way). There, the old 1911 hotel has been very nicely refurbished, retaining its old features but with modern amenities. And it is now a PUB. We spent Friday night at that pub.

And then we had to get back to Taumaranui and home; but not by train. Instead, on Saturday morning we went on a helicopter ride out to the Wanganui River. This was exciting as neither of us had been on a helicopter before. Seeing the land laid out beneath us was most interesting.

Where we landed wasn't quite where we expected. Instead, we found ourselves tramping along a not very well defined path through the roughest tussock grass and reeds I have ever known. It was NOT easy going. It culminated in a rather steep muddy path down to the river's edge to a waiting jet boat. I could at least see where to put my feet, but Steve was having difficulty. So our boatman gave him a piggy back. The only trouble was they both went for a slide; though not actually into the river, thank goodness.

This time Steve and I were front seat passengers, and we had yet another enjoyable trip, up the river, through the rapids and among the hills.

At one stage after an afternoon stop I was unable to get back into the boat; I was just too short. But I didn't get wet feet; instead I was told to turn my back to the boat, and the driver shot his arms under my armpits and hauled me aboard. I thought I had grown three inches, but it didn't last and regrettably no-one got a photo; we were all laughing too much.

And so we arrived back by boat at the Cherry Grove Park in Taumaranui.

Sunday was our last day. After we had packed up and had breakfast, we were bussed to the Chateau Tongariro for a most elegant morning tea and a wander around the grounds.

Our trip finished with going to National Park Station to catch the train home. This last part of our trip included doing the Raurimu Spiral. "Miss Daisy" was waiting for us when we arrived back in Auckland at about 7.00 PM. Needless to say we spent Monday and Tuesday recovering.

And "Yes", I have a passport from the Republic of Whangamomona.

(A map of the Forgotten Highway, from Okahukura to Whangamomona, is on the next page. Many of these towns are also shown on large-scale maps of the region, between Taumaranui, Whanganui and New Plymouth.)

David Livingstone *By Beverley G Johnson*

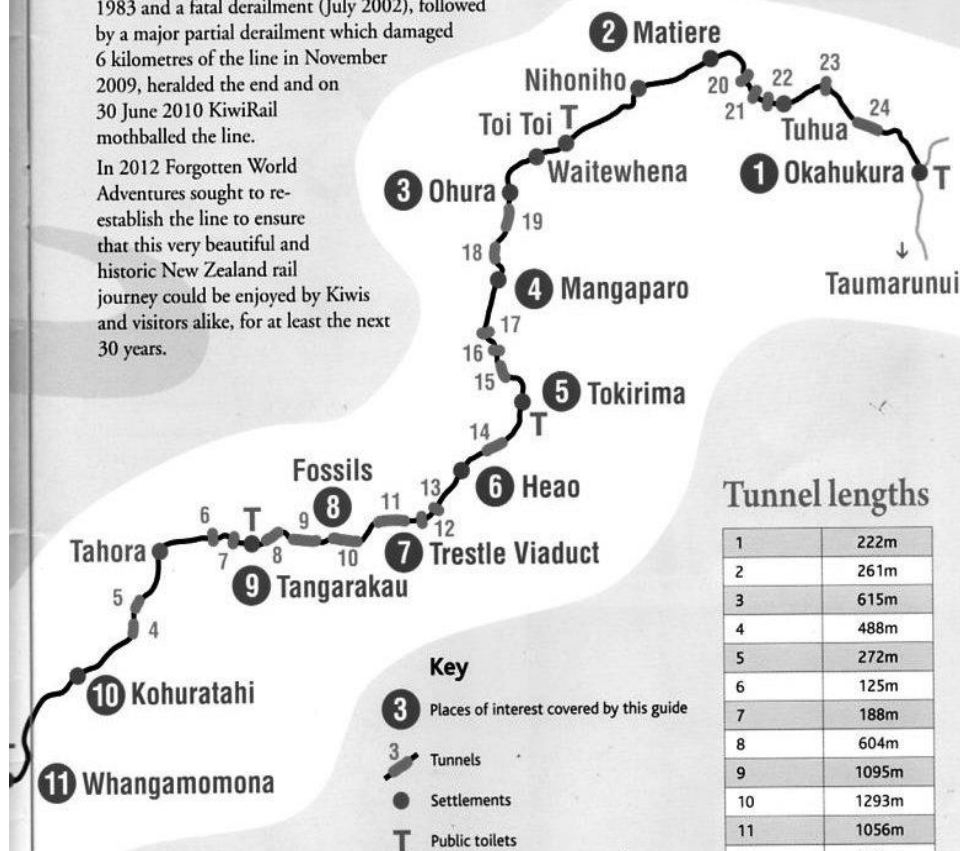
David Livingstone is renowned in our history for his 30 years of exploration in Southern, central and Eastern Africa, his Christian missionary work, and his striving to destroy the slave trade.

However, by May 1st 1873 he became very ill, and at Chitambo's village near Lake Bangweulu in today's Zambia, his African servants found him dead, and in order to embalm Livingstone's body they removed his heart and viscera, and buried them under a small fig tree.

About 100 years later when I was living in Zambia I had the privilege of visiting the village and seeing and touching the then huge tree. Although his body was later interred in Westminster Abbey, his heart forever remains in Africa.

Passenger railcars stopped running on 21 January 1983 and a fatal derailment (July 2002), followed by a major partial derailment which damaged 6 kilometres of the line in November 2009, heralded the end and on 30 June 2010 KiwiRail mothballed the line.

In 2012 Forgotten World Adventures sought to re-establish the line to ensure that this very beautiful and historic New Zealand rail journey could be enjoyed by Kiwis and visitors alike, for at least the next 30 years.



Tunnel lengths

1	222m
2	261m
3	615m
4	488m
5	272m
6	125m
7	188m
8	604m
9	1095m
10	1293m
11	1056m
12	164m
13	140m
14	552m
15	666m
16	57m
17	426m
18	155m
19	156m
20	154m
21	155m
22	80m
23	96m
24	1525m

Opening dates of SOL Line

Section of railway	Length (km)	Date opened
Stratford-Toko	10.16	9 August 1902
Toko-Douglas	7.74	1 March 1905
Douglas-Huiroa	7.62	1 April 1908
Huiroa-Te Wera	11.27	21 June 1910
Te Wera-Pohokura	13.90	1 August 1912
Pohokura-Whangamomona	9.96	1 July 1914
Whangamomona-Kohuratahi	7.44	7 January 1918
Kohuratahi-Tahora	8.15	21 November 1924
Tahora-Okahukura	67.47	4 September 1933

A Personal View

By Tony Poole

This article involved a lot of research. I hope I got it right. If not, please feel free to let me know, especially if you have written confirmation of any errors.

The names "Islam", "Muslim" and "Isis" are, to many Christians, inextricably intertwined.

Islam is the name of the religion. A person who belongs to the Islamic religion is known as either a Moslem or a Muslim. There is no essential difference between Moslem and Muslim – the former is merely an older spelling of the latter. For our present purposes, therefore, we shall refer to the *followers of Islam* as *Muslims*.

Up until the seventh Century AD, Arabs had many religions, including Christianity and Judaism. Between 570 and 632 AD, the prophet Muhammad lived, and in 610 he began to receive revelations directly from God (*Allah*), via the angel Gabriel. Islam officially dates from 622 during that period.

Muhammad's revelations were not written down; instead, they were memorised verbatim by Muhammad's followers, who would then recite them as required. The word **Qur'an** literally means *Recitation*. As he added verses and reorganised the text, his followers would re-memorise the text in the light of those additions and edits. Certain verses revealed to Muhammad were later repudiated by him as "satanic", revealed not by Gabriel but by Satan. These verses were expunged from the text that so many had memorised.

The Qur'an was not written down until approximately 650 AD, roughly 18 or more years after the death of Mohammad, during the short reign of the third of five successors (*Caliphs*) to Muhammad. For many centuries after it appeared in written form, it was available only in the Arab language. The English Qur'an is a relatively recent book. Some sections were published in the 17th and 19th centuries, but the majority of the Qur'an was translated into English in the 20th Century.

Islamists see the Qur'an as different to the Bible. The Bible is a collection of writings *about* God, by different writers, written over a long period of time. The Qur'an was written *by* God, who gave his words directly to Gabriel and thence to Muhammad. The words of the Qur'an are therefore literally God's words. Similarly, the *hadith*, an account of his works and deeds written by Muhammad himself, make up the *Sunna*.

These two bodies of work, **Qur'an** and **Sunna**, are still today the foundations of Islamic law, known as *sharia law*. Codified only a couple of hundred years after the foundation of Islam, *sharia law* installed permanently the Arabic order of society on subsequent generations; which as we shall see later, is both its strength and its weakness.

Christianity, Judaism and Islam, having common origins, also have some similar beliefs. They all regard Adam, Noah, Abraham (especially Ishmael, Abraham's elder son by his Egyptian bond maiden) and Moses, among others, as prophets. Islam and Judaism also regard Jesus as a prophet – only Christianity insists he is the Son of God (while acknowledging that "Son of God" is a metaphor for his relationship with God). All three religions are monotheist, Abrahamic religions; i.e., they hold there is only one God, who is to be worshipped as the creator and preserver of all things, and they descended from the religion of Abraham. Similarly, there is general similarity in all three religions about being good, caring for others, praying, heaven, and so on. Islam adopts the Christian notion of the fall of mankind, but believes that by active, ethical participation of the faithful in every aspect of our lives, we can still be saved (rather than by God's grace alone). We have fallen, but we are not condemned by that fall.

Islam does not set out to change the views of Christians, nor is there a missionary effort to convert Christians to the Muslim way of thinking.

Today, Christianity is the largest religion worldwide, with 2.4 billion followers (33% of the world's population) in 158 countries. Islam is the second largest religion, with 1.8 billion followers (24%) in 49 countries. Islam is growing at a faster rate than Christianity, and it is estimated to equal Christianity in numbers by 2070. Although it began as an Arab religion, in 2002, 80% of Muslims lived outside the Arab world.

It may well be that if Arabs in general, and Mohammad in particular, had been better accepted by the Christian Church of the day, Islam may merely have become a sect within Christianity. Mohammad was a poor orphan boy of the Bedouin tribe, who for 10 years or so after he received his revelations was generally ignored by Arab and non-Arab Christians alike. Islam grew among poorer, disaffected Arabs first, until they could no longer be ignored.

When Muhammed died in 632 AD, he left behind something of a vacuum of power. Between 632 (Muhammed's death) and 680, a total of 5 *Caliph* were appointed successively to head Islam. Every one of them was assassinated. Those who

supported the first four, gathered together as the *Sunnis*; supporters of the fifth Caliph became the *Shiites*.

There is somewhere between 10% and 30% of Shiites in the world today, with the other 70 – 90% being Sunni (accurate statistics on Islam are generally acknowledged as being difficult to obtain). Their practices when at prayer, worship and other religious activities differ quite considerably. It has been claimed that *Sunnis* are much more likely than *Shiites* to be *jihadist*.

Isis arose out of *Al-Qaeda*, a militant, Sunni Islamist, multi-national organisation founded in 1988 by (among others) *Osama bin Laden*. *Al-Qaeda* doctrinally aligned itself with the *Salafist* movement which had existed only since the first half of the 18th century. *Al-Qaeda* fought against what they saw as the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

The *Salafist* movement to which *Al-Qaeda* is aligned, arose at least partly because of sharia law. As we have seen, the words of the Qur'an are God's words, and the words of the Sunna are the original writings of Muhammad, his last prophet. Fundamentalist Salafists believe they are so sacred that sharia law, which is based on the Qur'an and the Sunna, should not be changed or re-interpreted.

Sharia Law deals with most aspects of life; not only religious aspects, but also what people should wear, relationships between people, the place of men and women, economics, science, education, nutrition, medicine – everything.

As knowledge of these matters has advanced over the centuries, modern Muslims have attempted to incorporate the changes into Islam. They have interpreted new knowledge in the *spirit* of the Qur'an. This is claimed to be consistent with Islamic belief in *rational faith*; rationality is the highest function given to human beings, and no faith is legitimate without it. This is in contrast to Christianity, where St Augustine (possibly among others) decreed that salvation came through the Grace of God, and this was more relevant than logic.

Salafists reject this modernisation of Islam. They look back to the first three generations of Islam. They consider a *hadith*, which quotes Muhammad as saying "The best of my community are my generation, the ones who follow them and the ones who follow them", as a call to follow the examples and practices of the first three generations of Islam. *Salafists* reject religious innovation and support the implementation of *sharia (Islamic) law*, in its original form.

Salafists are often divided into three categories: the *purists* (or *quietists*), who are the largest group, and who don't get involved in political activity; the *activists* (who do); and the *jihadists*, who form the tiniest minority of *salafists*.

Al-Qaeda Jihadists are convinced that a Christian-Jewish alliance is conspiring to destroy Islam. They believe that killing of non-combatants is religiously sanctioned, but they ignore any aspect of their scripture which might be interpreted as forbidding the murder of non-combatants and internecine (*internal, domestic, civil*) fighting. *Al-Qaeda Jihadists* regard liberal Muslims, *Shias*, *Sufis* and other sects as heretics, and have attacked their mosques and gatherings, just as they have attacked the institutions of the Western world.

To summarise, *Isis* grew out of *Al Qaeda*, which in turn grew out of the *Jihadist* minority within the *Salafist* movement in the 18th century.

To a modern Islamic person, the atrocities of *Isis* are as abhorrent as they are to the rest of society. In a sense, *Isis* is an Islamic problem to solve. It is caused by the inability of conservative Islamists to accept that sharia law cannot stand still, because the world and worldly knowledge has not stood still.

What the rest of the world can do is offer the hand of friendship to modern Islamists. We know what they are going through, because as Christians we too had our conservative element, which believed that God manipulated the very thought processes of Biblical writers, so that they had no option other than to write the literal words of God on every page of the Bible. Although this movement was at its height a century or more ago, that is not to say some Christians don't still hold this view.

I don't believe that. I believe that the Biblical writers were constrained by the knowledge of their time, and could write as the word of God only that which made sense to them. As a result the Bible needs to be interpreted, just as does the book of Islam.

My personal experience with Islam is limited to three events. Local Muslims in Auckland have an annual Peace Conference, to which Stephanie and I were invited partly through one of her workmates, and partly because of our known Christian faith. I recall the Islamic organisers had to get special permission (I'm not sure from whom) for Stephanie and a couple of other female guests to sit with the men – the Islamic women had their own meeting somewhere else.

This all happened several years ago, and I don't remember much about the meeting, except that NZ politicians were also present, we were not expected to speak during the meeting, everything was very cordial and organised, the food was excellent, and I bought a copy of the Qur'an, and an explanatory book to go with it.

The second experience occurred also some time ago. I was retired to rebuild our house, Stephanie worked in Auckland, and she decided to do her Oscar level Ballroom dancing examinations, with me as her partner. So every Thursday I travelled to Auckland by train, to meet up with Stephanie after work. There was an obviously Muslim woman on the train, who wore a black full length garment and a *Hijab* (a covering for her hair and neck but not her face). Her appearance was very similar to a Christian nun. We fell into conversation, and for several months met once a week on the train. She spoke perfect English, and had come to New Zealand from I think Iran, to accompany and care for her brother. I learnt quite a lot about her religion from a personal point of view. For example, as one of the *five pillars of her faith*, she prayed five times every day, at the proper time and on a prayer mat which she placed on the floor facing Mecca. Her Kiwi boss was quite happy with this, which I thought said good things about him. She had no difficulty getting a job in New Zealand, but her brother could not, and she faced having to move to Wellington with him where he believed he could get work. In this and other ways I learned that the man is much more important than the woman in Islam, no matter how well educated the woman is. Eventually she was no longer on the train, and I assume the move to Wellington had eventuated.

My greatest exposure to Islam was during a week's holiday in 2012 in Penang, which is an island in Malaysia. Malaysia is an Islamic country but Christian Churches also flourish there. The island of Penang is a favourite holiday resort for moneyed-Muslims from the Middle East. The hotel was crammed with Muslims. The overwhelming impression I got was what nice people they were; not boisterous, not rude, but quietly respectful of others. If the Muslims of Penang are typical of Muslims everywhere, then we as Christians have nothing to fear from them.

People who want to read more on this topic, might try on the web www.britannica.com/topic/Islam.

St Thomas' Church on the Tourist Route *by Jocelyn White*

Recently I led a group of 30 or so Thursday walkers from the Alpine Sports Club around the old and the new in the St John's area. After a side trip from the St

John's Bush track to visit the theological college, where we were treated to a short talk and a guided tour, we called at St Thomas' Church to see the ruins and the old gravestones. I had done some research in order to explain the history of the church to the group (*Delving into the Past of Auckland's Eastern Suburbs, Section 6, St. Helier's Bay*, by **Elizabeth T. Jackson**.) We much appreciated, too, being able to see inside the new building where the historic photos in the foyer and the stained glass windows evoked much interest.

From St Thomas' it was down the new shared pathway to Countdown and the Tamaki Campus, through Colin Maiden Park and past the various sports facilities in the Ngahue Reserve, then through the quieter streets and walkways back to our cars in Worcester Street.

It was an interesting and varied route with about two hours of walking. Keep it in mind as a pleasant way to spend the next fine Sunday afternoon.

Re: "Kim" *By Duncan Bamfield*

Kim, an intellectually impaired young adult came to the Parish in the mid-1990s with Jonathan Deacon and his family when Jonathan was appointed resident vicar, they having come from St Georges in Ranfurly Road.

At St Thomas, Kim was housed in a well-appointed serviced shed beside the vicarage. He attended to various maintenance jobs in the grounds, was a cross bearer, and occasionally helped at the altar.

One day when mowing the grass verge on the corner of the church property, a stone flew out of the rotary mower which he was pushing, and the stone hit a brand new vehicle passing by; the pride of a lady driver. She stopped and ran back and "tore strips" off poor Kim as he stood there open but silent mouthed. Subsequently, he wrote a note to the vicar asking for his forgiveness and as vicar's warden, Jonathan showed me that note.

When Jonathan retired as vicar in tragic circumstances, he subsequently went to the United States to live. Kim returned to St George's Parish shortly after Jonathan's departure, where he is currently cared for. He presently works as a mature adult at a packaging factory in Papatoetoe with others. He loves church music and can occasionally be seen at the Cathedral during evensong.

A Trip to Italy *by Emma Wong She*

During April, I went on the Diocesan School for Girls Latin Trip 2017 to Italy. We spent around two weeks away primarily centred in Rome itself, though we did spend a few days in Sorrento in order to see Pompeii and Herculaneum (the towns preserved from the eruption of Vesuvius).

We were lucky enough to be able to visit the Vatican City during the Easter period. We spent one day concentrated on going through the galleries and museum, through to the Sistine Chapel, which was incredible. The luxury of the decorations and the art within was extraordinary. Each wall, even the ceilings were all decorated with various styles of art- each section focused on a slightly different style. For example, one area was focused on massive tapestries- floor to ceiling- and another on frescos which alluded to various scenes.

On Easter Day, we stopped along our walk to take part in a service on the island in the Tiber River. It was entirely in Latin, though other sections (including several hymns) were in Italian. It was packed, and despite the language barrier it was difficult to not be amazed by the grandeur and the atmosphere of the space.

I thoroughly enjoyed my time in Italy. We were able to see incredible monuments in person, and it was especially atmospheric during Easter time to be in such a holy and important place as the Vatican City.



From the Priest in Charge.

I hope everyone is staying warm and dry over this period of the year. Worship numbers seem to reflect the weather of the day. Funnily enough, when I lived in Christchurch, although the weather seemed to have a similar effect, the outcome was quite the opposite. On a cold, wet and windy (even snowy) morning, church numbers would increase. It's almost like people were thinking they might as well go to church because there's nothing better to do!

Please let me know if you are unwell so we can add you to the daily prayer list.

Pastoral care

Last month I had a call from the relative of a parishioner who was unable to contact her loved one. She was very concerned because she lived out of Auckland, but couldn't get hold of her. I called around to find that all was well and although she had been a little unwell, the main problem was her aging telephone that wouldn't receive calls. It was good that the relative could contact someone from the church to sort out a solution to what might have been a sad occasion.

This event ties nicely into our pastoral care program that we are attempting to set up at St Thomas'. This is an initiative that allows us to ensure we are looking after others in the parish by making a daily call to elderly or sick parishioners to simply maintain contact. If an individual is uncharacteristically unavailable, by maintaining a regular catch up time, we can immediately begin some investigation to find out why. This doesn't mean spending all day on the phone on parish business, rather taking a few moments to call 3 or 4 people to ensure their ongoing pastoral care. Once you have begun, you may choose to make alternative arrangements regarding the way you go about contacting your people, based upon both your and their needs.

If you wish to be part of this program, please let me know so we can get underway.

Worship

After Easter, we began taking an in-depth study into the life of Joseph. Over 4 Sundays we looked at the way in which the lives of Joseph and his brothers helped shape our faith relationship with God. In essence, the story is one of redemption, where one (who was faithful to God) found his place as an Israelite leader.

One of the things that I found interesting in the story is the way in which Jesus relates to Joseph, and in turn to us. We find God in the reality of actual daily living. We find God in the faces of those we love, in the many situations that we meet each day, and sometimes in the way we respond to others. God is with us in the form of the Holy Spirit. Why do we spend so much time, questioning his place in the world, and then on the other hand ignoring God when he presents himself to us?

In the saga, Joseph is given the ability to interpret dreams. And here's another interesting point, in our Bible, over 90% of the communications between God and God's people is through the medium of dreams. So for Joseph, having the gift of interpretation of not only his own, but the dreams of others, placed him into very interesting situations. In each of the situations in which he found himself, Joseph prevailed through his God-given gift of dream interpretation. While Joseph seemed in so many occasions to have been shut behind a locked door, amid the chaos, he found an open window.

The story is also one of displacement, not only for Joseph, but for Israel itself. Not only was Joseph displaced to a foreign land, so was his family. As Joseph finds restoration with his father and his brothers, so the people of Israel were to find restoration back to Canaan in the future; even though it was to be many generations into the future. In a similar way, God offers us, through Jesus Christ, something of that restoration, but not in this life, rather in the life which is to come.

The Saints

It seems a good idea to spend part of this period of Pentecost looking at the 1st century Christian leaders and the way in which their lives contributed to

the increase and spread of the faith in those early years. This is the season in which we celebrate the growth of the Church. Taking a furlough from the Lectionary to investigate the lives of those whose lives bear witness to the growth of our faith seems to be a good thing to do. This series will continue through to the end of August, so please see me if you have a favourite Saint that you would like to know more about.

Seasonal Theme

Each week, we are tying the preaching into the theme of "What puts the fire into the Equation?" Some have spoken quite passionately to me about the things that have helped them to see Jesus afresh in their lives. While for us, Jesus is the "Fire" that burns within us, for most Christians, there has been some event or relationship that has ignited that spark in some way. It's good to see so many encouraged at and through this fresh approach to faith.

Where to from here?

Recently, while speaking to the Wardens, I encouraged them to consider the future direction of the parish. Their response was to form a subcommittee to look at that very question. Phread and Liz appointed a small group to meet with them over the coming period to devise a strategy for the future. The committee has already met once and has set a second meeting date. Please commit this small group to your prayers as they look carefully at the work ahead of us in this small part of God's Kingdom on Earth.

Finally, I have spoken to a few lucky souls who have managed to escape Auckland for holidays in warmer climes. For those still to go, Bon Voyage, and for those returning, welcome home. Keep safe, well and warm.

Mark Sullivan, *Priest in Charge*.

Worship Roster

<i>Month</i>	<i>Liturgist</i>	<i>Prayers</i>	<i>Music</i>	<i>Celebrant</i>
1st Sunday	Tony Poole	Donna Little		
2nd Sunday	Janet Anderson	Peter Newton		
3rd Sunday	Peter Newton	Janet Anderson		
4th Sunday	Donna Little	Tony Poole		
5 th Sunday	Geo Sullivan	Tim Sullivan		

Senior Liturgist/Trainer Tony Poole

Please let Tony know with as much notice as possible, if you are not available on any Sunday