



Anglican Parish of  
Cabersham Saint Peter,  
Dunedin, New Zealand

# THE ROCK

December 2021—Christmas



## Christmas puzzle

By The Bishop

**T**he introduction of the COVID traffic light system provides a great temptation for me to look away and instead look into lights of another nature—anything—but including the Advent Candles and the crowning Christmas Candle, the lights decorating trees and houses and, especially for us here in the Southern hemisphere, the sunrises and sunsets of the longest days. While I understand the reasons behind the COVID traffic lights and appreciate the care taken by all trying to keep us safe as individuals and community, it still feels more burdensome than celebratory. John Donne's poem *The Sun Rising* may deride the arrival of day for reasons apparent in the reading, but for most of us sunrise, the coming of light, heralds "new joys, new opportunities" and a chance to start again.

The Gospel of Christmas from John chapter 1 reminds us each year that the light which shines in the darkness, and which darkness cannot overcome, is coming into the world.



The St Kilda Brass Ensemble at our Festival of Brass and Carols on 19 December.

PHOTO: INFORMATION SERVICES OTAGO LTD.

The Advent season, so wrapped up with expectant waiting, prepares us for the appearing of God's good news, and the mystery of "God-with-us"—Emmanuel—is revealed as the baby lying in a manger.

Along with all who celebrate the birth of a new child let us together celebrate the coming of God

among us: to enlighten us, to give us new joys and opportunities and new starts in the world here today.

The COVID traffic lights have brought puzzlement and bewilderment to many of us and in those two terms we perhaps have the closest link with Christmas—God's action of salvation will always be puzzling and bewildering, particularly when we think we have it all worked out. But within the mystery can we let the light of Jesus Christ increasingly shine on and through us as we journey again to Bethlehem and then back home.

+Steven

**F**rom Sunday, 19 December 2021, a current vaccine pass will be required for entry to all gatherings in Saint Peter's buildings—whether for Services or for social functions. The question will be reviewed as new information is received.



And she shall  
bring forth a son,  
and thou shalt  
call his name  
Jesus: for he shall  
save his people  
from their sins.

Matthew 1:21



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We will not publish in  
January, next edition is  
February 2022.

Merry Christmas to you  
all.

## Poetry and Prayer—the language of the heart

**W**hen we speak from the heart, we move into a different gear, don't we,

we change mood, listen with a new intentness. Here is a 16<sup>th</sup> century prayer, minted for a simple peasant congregation in Germany:

Lord, bestow on us the grace of the holy spirit, so that the dew of your goodness may sprinkle the very depths of our heart, and make it bring forth good fruit, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

We sense we are being touched here, taken beyond our usual pedestrian, banal concerns. Yearning is here, reaching for the heights and the depths, forming us for a life of caring. But what is it about the language that achieves this? That is the question which haunts me and I want to leave with you. With all words, of course, we are reaching out to one another, but what are the performative words, to use the technical expression, which take us into another time and space?

It is interesting, isn't it, that for many Kiwis today a *karakia* is acceptable, while a prayer in English is not. It's as if perhaps, as Latin once did, Maori offers us distance from our usual parlance.

So what do we mean by the language of the heart?

JAMES K. BAXTER:

Father, beyond the hills and water,  
Beyond the city of the stars,  
In a chosen overcoat of night  
You hide from me. All men find it so,  
And I would be a fool to grieve  
Because my bones can not yet rise  
Into your heaven.....

Such poems, like prayer, take us into new territory, we are nudged by images like the 'overcoat of night', invited to walk with Baxter from hills and river and the onset of darkness to

The third of this year's Caversham Lectures was delivered by Dr Peter Matheson. By popular demand we print this summary, provided by Dr Matheson, of his talk.

a very personal place, as the poet opens up to us his own grief. Poems have this vulnerability, shedding the outer skin.

Baxter goes on to say

Father I am myself the night

And he knows, this fine wordsmith, that all the words of our poetry and prayer are mere stuttering.

Language is not enough. Your stars  
Tell me because you tell them so.  
These bones must die before they rise  
And that is half of why I grieve.

Prayer and poetry pare us down to the elemental level. They can be accessible, but often trip us up as they hint at otherness. Why so? What is very clear to me is that the language of the heart can never be prose. A dear friend of ours, Elizabeth Templeton, a Scottish lay theologian, who twice was invited to address the gathering of bishops of world Anglicanism at Lambeth, was a rigorous philosopher. She never lets herself or the reader get away with sentimentality or cant. Yet she would

say—as the title to the anthology of her writings puts it—In your loving is your knowing. Or, as Rowan



**James K. Baxter.**

PHOTO.: [HTTPS://NZHISTORY.GOV.T.NZ/PEOPLE/JAMES-K-BAXTER,](https://nzhistory.govt.nz/people/james-k-baxter/) (MINISTRY FOR CULTURE AND HERITAGE), UPDATED 8-NOV-2017.

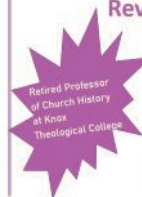
Williams, who was a close friend of Elizabeth, writes, "theology is

### THE CAVERSHAM LECTURES 2021

Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> November at 7.30pm

In Saint Peter's hall, Hillside Road

Rev. Dr Peter Matheson



*Poetry and Prayer:  
The language of the heart.*

It is striking that the great liturgies and classics of spirituality have much in common with the language of poetry and imagination.

Let's look at some examples and see what they tell us.

supposed to connect somewhere with a knowledge that is joyful, nourishing and supremely desirable." But how, and with what language?

To the average Kiwi poetry and prayer are gobbledegook. Nonsense. They agree with St Paul; it's folly. It's demanding stuff. Talk normal! I don't get this!

It would be odd to talk of poetry and prayer without mentioning William Blake:

We are led to Believe a Lie  
When we see not thro' the Eye  
Which was Born in a Night to perish in a Night  
When the Soul slept in beams of Light.  
God appears and God is Light  
To those poor Souls who dwell in night.

We can say things in poetry and prayer which no other medium allows. Express passion, compassion, and mystery.

We return to the big question: what is it about the language of the heart?

It is, of course, such a dangerous sea to swim in. It is so easy to abuse those hungry for community, for comfort, for certainty by luring them with sentimentality, with the slick, short-cut answers of the



**Elizabeth Templeton.**

PHOTO.: [WWW.HERALDSCOTLAND.COM](http://WWW.HERALDSCOTLAND.COM).

(Continued on page 5)



## Letters

Dear Sir,

To quote one church leader The Archbishop of Canterbury. "We are linked by love not by law." This year Christmas celebrations for some Christians are thwarted as they suffer from feelings of excommunication and ecclesiastical censure in that they are excluded from their regular communion.

Seemingly due to my belief that New Zealand statute law guarantees, without discrimination, free choice and privacy to all citizens. As an elder citizen on Sunday afternoon (late November) on a public pathway, my progress was blocked by thugs and I was verbally abused and assaulted by one of two 'pro jab' youths.

The following Sunday (early December) I felt stabbed in the back when at Church, I became aware that my days of attendance were possibly numbered, as upcoming mandated restrictions could mean as a conscientious objector I might be banned from this spiritual home where I had experienced regular communion for the past 16 years.

Later, I was extremely grateful to receive a pastoral care visitor to pour love on my; heart, soul, spirit, body and mind. Among a team of five million people some others may feel isolated, alone and under fire without support.



For me some questions arise:

- ◆ Are privacy and freedoms expressed in NZ statute simply being given lip service?
- ◆ Is the future moral leadership dependent on quantity rather than quality of data?
- ◆ Does blind subservience to social media assumptions replace facts and truth?
- ◆ Do recent NZ health mandates twist words, privacy and choice, to mean jab free?
- ◆ How does the 'absence' of an identity element, certificate or random phone, be factually construed to be a refusal to protect oneself and others or to willingly threaten the safety and well-being of our community at large?
- ◆ Under protection framework guidelines, a 'gathering' is defined as: a group of people who are intermingling. This does not include people who remain at least two metres away from each other so far as reasonably practical...

Does this mean a 'No man's land / Commons' exists outside and/or inside?

Timely regards,

Nigel Westbrook.✉

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& (MATTHEWS)  
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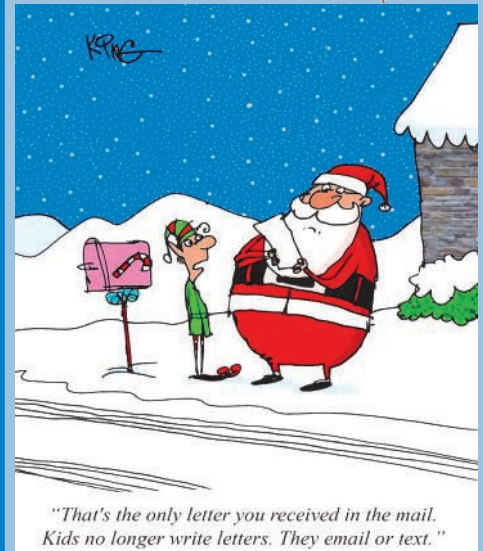


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## CHURCH SIGNS



## Letters

The Rock welcomes letters to the Editor. Letters are subject to selection and, if selected, to editing for length and house style. Letters may be:

Posted to: The Editor of The Rock,  
c/- The Vicarage, 57 Baker Street,  
Caversham,  
Dunedin, N.Z. 9012

Emailed to: [TheRockEditor@stpeterscaversham.org.nz](mailto:TheRockEditor@stpeterscaversham.org.nz)

### Ask The Vicar

For answers to questions doctrinal, spiritual and liturgical.  
Write to: Ask The Vicar, c/- The Vicarage as above  
Or email: [AskTheVicar@stpeterscaversham.org.nz](mailto:AskTheVicar@stpeterscaversham.org.nz)

### ASK THE VESTRY

Questions about the secular life and fabric of the parish may be:

Posted to: Ask The Vestry, c/- The Vicarage as above  
Emailed to: [AskTheVestry@stpeterscaversham.org.nz](mailto:AskTheVestry@stpeterscaversham.org.nz)



# Nutritious



## Of Hazelnuts, Walnuts, celebrations and health

By Alex Chisholm

There were thousands of years of prehistoric celebrations involving food around the midwinter solstice on 21 December. Interestingly Hazelnuts (filberts) are one of the foods which have been discovered in sites dating back 10,000 years or so. In pre-history they were thought to have mystical powers thus a place in Folklore. As hazelnuts were often more abundant than animal food or fish, some cultural and archaeological records include examples of the sustaining power of the humble hazelnut. The Romans and Greeks knew of filberts; Pliny apparently recorded that hazelnuts came from Damascus and that the Romans frequently gathered the nuts for food. Interestingly the Greeks used the nuts to treat coughs and colds. Apparently a good nut harvest was associated with the birth of more children than usual the following year so nuts became a good luck charm for fertility. It was likely down to improved nutrition when more nuts were



available. Walnuts were cultivated in Babylon around 2000BC but archaeological excavations date them to being eaten in Europe at least 8000 years ago. It seems the health promoting effects of fresh unsalted nuts have a long history, which is ongoing, so it is fitting they have a place in our Christmas celebrations.

Order on-line @ [www.unclejoes.co.nz](http://www.unclejoes.co.nz)

### CITATION:

TAN,S.-Y.;TEY,S.L.;BROWN, R. NUTS AND OLDER ADULTS' HEALTH: A NARRATIVE REVIEW. INT. J. ENVIRON. RES. PUBLIC HEALTH 2021, 18, 1848. <https://doi.org/10.3390/IJERPH 18041848>  
<https://davesgarden.com/guides/articles/hazelnuts-in-folklore-history>  
<https://www.fruitandnut.ie/walnuts.html>

## Special colours

By Alex Chisholm

### Blue and gold



What colours do you associate with Christmas? This may vary depending on family traditions and visual associations. Generally I associate blue and gold with the religious celebrations and red and green with the festivities which



generally go along with Christmas in our society. The association of blue and gold comes from the classical paintings of the Annunciation and of the Mother and Child. That the Virgin Mary is traditionally portrayed in blue can be traced back to the Byzantine Empire, where from c.500AD, blue was "the colour of an empress". The use of blue colouring and gold leaf also tells us much about the patrons who commissioned and paid the artists for these paintings. The blue pigment used in these paintings came from the rock *lapis lazuli*, a stone imported from Afghanistan. It was more valuable than gold and needed very careful preparation. As well as paying the painter, the patrons were expected to buy any gold or *lapis lazuli* to be used in the painting. Thus it was an expression of their devotion if Mary was clothed in long flowing dresses or cloaks of blue and surrounded by gold.

Transformations in visual depictions of the Virgin from the 13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> centuries mirror her "social" standing within the Church as well as in society. This is all in stark contrast to the earliest known visual portrayal of Mary and the infant Jesus which can be found in the Catacomb of Priscilla in Rome, a quarry used for Christian burials in the late 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> centuries. The earliest known portrayal of an angel in art history is also to be found here. There

(Continued on page 5)



# of Christmas

(Continued from page 4)

is another very frequent colour combination of blue and red as seen in Our Lady of Walsingham in Saint Peter's and in the picture of Mary and the baby Jesus on the front page of the November issue of *The Rock*, where Mary wears a cloak of blue while the garment underneath is red, though her head covering is gold.

## Red and green

Although red and green would seem to belong more to the festivities there is one possible liturgical background to this colour combination. According to Dr Spike Bucklow of the Hamilton Kerr Institute, the conservation branch of the University of Cambridge, the roots may lie in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and be related to the art work on rood screens which divided the nave from the choir or chancel. Many of these screens



Barton Turf Rood Screen.

PHOTO.: PETER AUSTIN VIA TWITTER.

were destroyed during the reformation but from those which remain and the restoration of others the colours red and green seem to predominate, though blue and gold are also seen. The red paint came from iron and the green from copper—colours associated with planets. The Victorians, as well as having the Gothic revival and a renewed interest in rood screens, then arrived with Christmas trees and decorations. However, long before then there was the association of the green leaves and red berries of the holly with Christmas and winter. 📖

## REFERENCES:

FOR THE ARTICLE ABOUT DR BUCKLOW'S WORK AND FURTHER EXPLANATION OF THE ROOD SCREEN COLOURS:  
<https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-little-known-reason-red-green-colors-christmas>  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Don\\_Lorenzo\\_Monaco\\_013.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Don_Lorenzo_Monaco_013.jpg)  
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## Poetry and Prayer

(Continued from page 2)

fundamentalists, whether they be Jewish, Christian or Muslim. Piety evading the tough truths. One understands very well why some are suspicious of all emotion, of the manipulation which it involves.

So what are the signposts of authenticity?

An old maxim is by their fruits you will know them. Trust those who walk the talk.

Ernst Käsemann, one of the greatest New Testament theologians last century, used to say that the most important weapon we have is our nose: generally you can sniff out pretentiousness, linguistic swagger, and see if what is being said has actually been lived, experienced, verified by life. The awesome expectation of the true poet, or person of prayer, is that they only say what they are given to say.

I'd like to close with a reference to Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who died a forty year old as you know in the concentration camp of Flossenbürg on 9 April 1945. He was, in some ways, quite forbiddingly ascetic in his use

of language. There was something of the aristocrat about him. He kept his distance. He talked sparingly of an arcane spirituality. You don't flash your piety around. He was suspicious of all cheap religious talk. In his little Finkenwalde community, before it was shut down by the Gestapo, he introduced long spells of silent meditation—quite unusual for Lutheranism—and no one could speak about another member if they were absent. Towards the end of his life, however, he turned to poetry.

*Von guten Mächten wunderbar geborgen*

Marvellously cradled by the powers of good

confidently we await whatever lies ahead

God is with us from morning tide to night

and surely will be with us each new day.

This was written on New Year's Eve 1944. Within four months he was dead.

But in his own words marvellously cradled and safe, *wunderbar geborgen*. 📖



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By Deirdre Harris  
Bishop's Warden

## CHURCHWARDEN CORNER

**A**s we look back over a very different and sometimes difficult year we know that we at Saint Peter's, Caversham have experienced many changes.

Some of our older parishioners have moved away to live near family, some have moved into rest homes and some have passed away. However we are pleased to be welcoming new members into our congregation.

We are very thankful we have a core of hardworking people who continue to make Saint Peter's a welcoming community. We thank all those who have contributed to keep the parish functioning well under the constraints of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We pray that 2022 will bring a continuation of the happy fellowship which is our parish and we look forward to the appointment of a new vicar.

Christmas Greetings and a Happy New Year. 📺



Early sunshine casts shadows on Saint Peter's.

PHOTO: INFORMATION SERVICES OTAGO LTD.

## Carol Service 2021

**T**his year's Festival of Brass and Carols broke new ground. For the first time the organ (played of course by Saint Peter's Director of Music David Hoskins) joined the brass ensemble in some accompaniments. The result was stunning.

The Service was lead by Father David Crooke who was assisted as Acolyte by Alex Chisholm.

The brass ensemble was led by John MacAdam and, as is so often the case with small groups, achieved a depth and breadth of sound which was described by one member of the congregation as satisfying in the extreme.

The Service is based upon the famous Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols, the Christmas Eve service held in King's College Chapel. The service was introduced in 1918 and first broadcast in 1928.

In recent years members of the St Kilda Brass have joined Saint Peter's for the Service and brought a further dimension to this happiest of seasons. 📺

PHOTO'S: SAINT PETER'S 2021 FESTIVAL OF BRASS AND CAROLS:  
INFORMATION SERVICES OTAGO LTD.



**Saint Peter's Caversham**

## Regular Services

(for variations consult *The Pebble* or our website)  
All services are held in Saint Peter's unless noted otherwise

### SUNDAY:

8am: Holy Communion according to the Book of Common Prayer  
10.30am: Solemn Sung Eucharist  
5pm: 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of each month: Evensong and Benediction

### THURSDAY:

10am: Eucharist

### FIRST THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH:

11am: Eucharist in the lounge of Frances Hodgkins Retirement Village, Fenton Crescent

## Special Services

Contact The Vicar to arrange baptisms, weddings, house blessings, burials, confessions and other special services.

### Parish Contacts:

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#### AND PARISH CENTRE MANAGER:

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## Music in Season

(Continued from page 8)

The poem itself was first published in Scribner's magazine in January 1872 and vividly tells of the manner in which Christ came into the world. She uses the cold and wintry weather as a physically humble backdrop to situate the momentous event of Jesus' birth. Not the arrival expected of God's Son, but rather reigning in a stable. Rosetti tenderly expresses the emotions of a mother's love in a most tangible way. The angels may be present, but so are the shepherds.

Finally, we are placed in the scene and the author asks (both of herself and the hearer) of love for God and what gift could one possibly bring before the infant Jesus. She chooses to give her heart as a gift to Jesus.



Our Director of Music reading a lesson during our Festival of Brass and Carols on 19 December.

PHOTO: INFORMATION SERVICES OTAGO LTD.



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FUNERAL SERVICES

## For your diary

**Friday, 24 December** : Christmas Eve : A Candlelit Service of Carols and First Mass of the Nativity at 8 pm.  
Celebrant the Bishop

**Saturday, 25 December** : Christmas Day : Holy Communion with Carols at 9am.

**Sunday, 20 February** : Deadline for copy for the February edition of *The Rock*. (There is no January edition).



## Music in Season

# Rock music



By David Hoskins, Director of Music

At our 2021 Christmas Music and Brass Service, Arnold Bachop sang the touching carol, *In the Bleak Mid-Winter* by Christina Rossetti. Arnold sang beautifully, pointing up the words set to Gustav Holst's matchless tune, *Cranham*. At the service the presence of a brass quintet led by John MacAdam added an exceptionally fine dimension to the singing and solo pieces and when the organ entered one was transported to 'another place'. But this delicate tune developed the narrative so well that it brought back all manner of memories to me at a service where one had to 'keep one's wits about one!'.

So, what of this carol we all know so well? Some years ago, while living overseas, I become interested in an ongoing argument about which carols and other seasonal music should relate to 'here'. The same argument was entered into in New Zealand with somewhat dubious results.

I was told my Christmas selection for the choir was too 'Northern Hemisphere' and

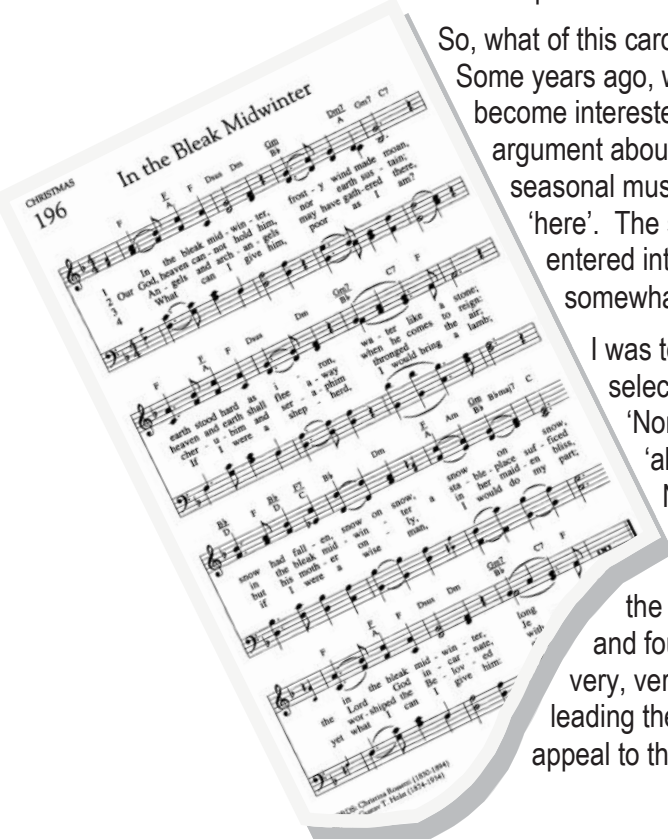
'ala Kings College, Cambridge', rather, it should represent 'Australia'.

Now there are some very fine Australian carols—some even refer to God. But the punchline of the argument was always, 'Look at *In the Bleak Mid-Winter*. How silly. Everybody knows it's ALWAYS hot in the Middle East'. During a later holiday I spent time in the 'middle east' and found the nights can indeed be very hot and close. They can also be very, very cold. Rossetti uses a wide range of literary devices in her way of leading the reader to the crux of the poem, the final verse—a very personal appeal to the faithful pilgrim.



Arnold Bachop sings *In the Bleak Mid-Winter* during our Festival of Brass and Carols on 19 December.

PHOTO: INFORMATION SERVICES OTAGO LTD.



(Continued on page 7)



Justin Welby  
The Archbishop of Canterbury

Speaking in opening a 9 December House of Lords debate on freedom of speech.



Free speech is not just frank speech but fitting speech; it is a necessary condition to the building of good communities.

...

"I believe that God's purpose for humanity is not to have fearful slaves, but loving children. We are called to treat each other as we would ourselves like to be treated—with recognition of our flawed-ness, space for forgiveness and support of our freedom. In so doing we are able to create good communities of justice, truth and generosity."



More online :

Read the complete text at:

<https://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/speaking-writing/speeches/archbishop-justins-speech-house-lords-debate-freedom-speech>

