



Anglican Parish of  
Caversham Saint Peter,  
Dunedin, New Zealand

# THE ROCK

April 2014—Eastertide



## Vicar's Report: 2014 AGM

The past year has seen good things happening in the life of our parish—I think of the Horizon spiritual development group at Frances Hodgkins Retirement Village, and the Caversham Lectures, which included not just a series on framers of Anglican identity, but also Otago academics, most notably Professor John Stenhouse in his talk on the social impact of South Dunedin's churches. But I don't propose to dwell on these past achievements today, but rather to focus on our present situation, and our future prospects.

As you enter Saint Peter's off Hillside Road, the noticeboard to your left has a tag running beneath the Perspex display panel which reads "A traditional Anglo-Catholic Church with a warm welcome". That says it all about who we are, what we stand for, and what we offer. In other words, we are a niche market church representing a particular slice of the

Anglican tradition. Here the liturgy is done well to a high standard in a non-fussy way. The preaching and teaching aspires to a similar high standard. The welcome is low key, genuine and warm. We teach the orthodox Christian faith, we believe that prayer, worship, and the disciplined search for holiness are priorities in the Christian life, and we believe that Anglo-Catholicism is genuine Anglicanism, Anglicanism at its best, our Church when it is its natural and authentic self.

I said just before that our welcome is low key, genuine and warm. But I think we need to be always asking ourselves how deep does

Reproduced for those unable to attend the AGM.

our welcome extend? You may have noticed that just recently I have taken to standing at the back of the Church before the 10.30 am Service to greet people as they enter. It gives me the opportunity to establish a connection with those who have come to worship before we get started, and to advise newcomers on tips which may help them to get the best out of our liturgy. And as the Service ends I get up the back smartly so I can engage with newcomers, and hand them a contact sheet. In this way I am trying to model what an effective welcome might be.



Father Hugh Bowron

If you see someone obviously struggling with our Service booklet, or pew sheet, feel free to get alongside them to give some discrete advice about how to drive our liturgical literature. And at the morning tea afterwards

try to talk to someone who is obviously new, or whom you don't know, rather than just the people you know well, and feel comfortable with. I have noticed too over the years how follow on hospitality offered to new comers can be decisive in their decision to return again. The question, how deep does our welcome extend, is one I think we should continue to engage with, and talk about.

Occasionally I have heard it said that Saint Peter's is a middle of the road Anglican Church, with a high church veneer of shallow roots imposed by recent Vicars. My reply to that would be, you must be

*(Continued on page 2)*

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Jesus said  
unto her, I am  
the  
resurrection,  
and the life: he  
that believeth  
in me, though  
he were dead,  
yet shall he  
live:

JOHN 11:25

O death,  
where is thy  
sting? O  
grave, where is  
thy victory?

1 CORINTHIANS 15:55

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# Vicar's 2014 AGM Report

(Continued from page 1)

mistaken—Arthur Pyewell, Roger Taylor, John Teal, Carl Somers-Edgar, and a variety of priests before them—there is an unbroken succession of Anglo-Catholic leadership in this parish stretching back over many decades—and as a result the tradition has taken root here. The consultation which took place during the interregnum made that clear.

If you look around the major Anglican parishes of Dunedin you can see they offer a menu of pretty much all the options of Anglican identity. We are the traditional Anglo-Catholic parish, neither hidebound nor reactionary, we embrace the recent changes of the liturgical movement, but we are not ashamed of our Church's English roots, we are unimpressed with many of the current enthusiasms of our parent denomination, and we believe the Anglican Church is a variety of reformed Catholicism.

In my first year here I published a series of articles in *The Rock* (in



**More online : find the Vicar's original articles at**  
[http://www.stpeterscaversham.org.nz/News\\_Rock\\_Archives.html](http://www.stpeterscaversham.org.nz/News_Rock_Archives.html)

May, June and July 2012) about the contemporary dilemmas and opportunities of Anglo-Catholicism, which made it clear that we are part of a tradition which evolves and changes. So while we are the traditional Anglo-Catholic parish of Dunedin that does not mean ours is a museum piece religion. This is why there have been some minimal changes to the 10.30 am liturgy, and to the Holy Week Services, to come into line with what has become standard fare in churches of our tradition for some decades now. Always in a parish like ours there will be a continuing debate about what are the key aspects of our tradition as it evolves. This year's Caversham Lectures on great Anglo-Catholics of the 20<sup>th</sup> century are part of that continuing discernment and renovation process, since the underlying message will be that our tradition did not end and go into deep freeze in the 1930s, but continued to expand and enrich its understanding of Anglicanism right into the modern era.

Until recently Saint Peter's was pretty much the only game in town when it came to this variety of Anglicanism. All Saints had once been the standard bearer of this style of Anglican identity, but had entered into a long period of gentle decline since its glory days under Father Charles Harrison, allowing Saint Peter's to move into this niche market slot, a favourable place, which it has enjoyed for several decades. But recently All Saints has rallied in its fortunes since the arrival of the Revd Michael Wallace, and has a strong

outreach to students. So now we face competition on this score. However, we have deeper roots in the Anglo-Catholic tradition, a surer sense of what it stands for and how it may be expressed in its most attractive form, and this is a strength we must play to, while at the same time rejoicing that Anglican religion in North Dunedin is alive and well.

The area in which our parish is located is in social and economic decline. The closing of the Hillside Workshops last year was the most dramatic symbol of the end of the manufacturing base of what had once been the most advanced industrial suburb of New Zealand. Caversham has one of the highest youth unemployment figures in the country, and there are many under-employed and unemployed males. In a city whose economy is stagnant or in gentle decline this suburb shares in this trend more than most.

The parish is currently passing through a period of history in which the Christian

churches are facing strong head winds, as the surrounding social and cultural forces make it no longer cool to be a Christian. The dream of unlimited and transforming freedom that lured people away from the churches from the mid 1960s on has turned sour, but its aftermath has been to distance several generations from the life of the churches. When you look at the congregations of our parish, our diocese, and our denomination you can see they are made up of the generation which came to faith in the 1950s, and of those in that generation who stuck with the worshipping life of the church through thick and thin. The problem is that despite our best efforts, we failed to persuade our children to follow us in to the church. Now the faithful generation has reached the stage where ill health and departure into the life of the world to come are becoming evident as a continuing feature of parish life. There are new people coming into the life of our parish, but not in the same numbers as the steady attrition rate from the factors I just mentioned.

If you assess the worshipping life of our parish you are talking about three different congregations: the Thursday morning 10 am Service, and the Sunday morning 8 am and 10.30 am Services. Numbers at the Thursday morning and Sunday 8 am Services have remained constant, if anything slightly rising. But since the latter half of last year there has been an evident drop in numbers at the Sunday 10.30 am Service, by which I mean that whereas previously attendances

## Letters

*The Rock* welcomes letters to the Editor. Letters should be no more than 150 words in length and 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,  
 57 Baker Street,  
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[AskTheVicar@stpeterscaversham.org.nz](mailto:AskTheVicar@stpeterscaversham.org.nz)

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

Posted to : Ask The Vestry,  
 c/- The Vicarage, 57 Baker Street,  
 Caversham,  
 Dunedin, N.Z. 9012

Emailed to:

[AskTheVestry@stpeterscaversham.org.nz](mailto:AskTheVestry@stpeterscaversham.org.nz)

oscillated between about 35 to the low 40's they now oscillate between the low 30's to high 30's. Why is that?

Several people have moved—I think of the Pilipino couple the Sahaguns, and Dorice Preston. Some have died—I think of Father Geoff and Joc Malcolmson. Some have lapsed—there was a number of people who came occasionally every six to eight weeks or so, drawn I think by the flamboyant personality of Father Carl, and who have dropped away now that he is no longer here. One or two have left because the new Vicar does not suit them, as always happens at the start of a new ministry.

There is another trend as well, one I noticed as soon as I arrived here. Some of the regulars come less often than they used to. Once in church pretty much every Sunday, they now sit more lightly to their spiritual responsibilities, and are more easily attracted away by other activities. This is of a piece with the changes in the western world I referred to before in which church is no longer the centre of the community, and as a result of which attendances are not what they were.

(Continued on page 8)

# A Game of Darts

By Ian Condie

ne lovely Autumn, a long time ago, four young men were studying at a college in the south of England. They comprised two Australians, a New Zealander and a Welshman and they referred to themselves as The Commonwealth Brigade. They studied hard because “the way to promotion and pay” was by passing their exams. Nevertheless they decided that Saturdays after noon would be for relaxation and, since two of them had cars, they explored the less travelled roads and lanes of Hampshire.

They found little villages bypassed by tourists, each with its little pub where the locals, once they were assured the four strangers were polite and deferred to custom, made them quietly welcome.

There was one such, so insignificant that the Commonwealth Brigade could never find it again. The pub had only one room with the

bar along one wall.. At one end about half a dozen patrons including two middle aged women sat with pint or half pint glasses on the tables. A large fireplace and a shove-halfpenny table were opposite the bar and at the other end was a dart board.

Having bought pints and seeing the dart board was unused, the four asked if they might play. Permission and darts were freely obtained and the gallant four filled in a pleasant quarter hour more or less oblivious to the rumble of conversation at the other end of the room.

While the landlord was pulling the second round of pints he asked politely if the visitors would permit the two ladies to join them for a game of darts. The colonials glanced at the comfortable looking married women. Remembering they were supposed to be gentlemen they replied condescendingly that they would be pleased if the ladies joined them. They were not, after all, playing

seriously. The grin on the landlord's face and on the faces of the locals should have been warning enough to young men not puffed up with good will and suggested flattery but it was not. When, however, both ladies opened their handbags and produced personal sets of darts, doubt crept into the minds of The Commonwealth Brigade. The open grins on the faces of the other regulars deepened those doubts, but when those two comfortable looking women, who should have been at home preparing their husbands' evening meals, produced small metal files and proceeded to sharpen their darts, certainty set in.

Never have four male champions of the Commonwealth been so thoroughly thrashed at darts nor more mercilessly heckled but never did they more willingly buy drinks for the victors—although they did notice the ladies' half pints had been replaced by large gin and tonics. ☐

## Solomon Islanders need help now



## Can you help?

Christian World Service has launched an appeal for the Solomon Islands after massive flooding caused extensive damage in Honiara and the province of Guadalcanal.

CWS is appealing for funds to help locals provide practical and pastoral support to an estimated 52,000 people affected. The United Nations Office of the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has confirmed a total of 19 deaths so far.

Donations to the Solomon Islands Flood Appeal can be made:

- ◆ On line and by direct deposit at <http://www.cws.org.nz/donate>
- ◆ By Phone with a credit card: 0800 74 73 72
- ◆ By Post to: CWS, PO Box 22652, Christchurch 8140

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Alan Gillion



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**Anzac Day, 25 April**

*At the going down of the sun and in the morning We will remember them.*

# Nutritious

## Easter food customs—eggs

By Alex Chisholm



“Traditionally, eggs were ... red...”  
PHOTO'S: SUPPLIED.

At Saint Peter's we have experienced once again the quieter and contemplative time of Lent followed by Easter with the services of the Paschal Tridium, culminating in the joyful services of Holy Saturday and Easter Day.

These very special times in the church year have traditionally been associated with distinctive foods. In many cultures Lent is a season of fasting, abstinence and avoidance of meat at least on days of obligation, Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, if not for all of Lent. Stricter fasting rituals prescribe the avoidance of dairy products and eggs as well as meat; and fish and oils may be restricted. Seafood, fruits, vegetables, cereals, pulses and nuts are allowed.

As a source of new life the egg was a symbol of creation, spring, and fertility in many cultures and religions, long before the advent of Christianity. However, Christians came to see the egg as a symbol of the rebirth of mankind.

Traditionally the eggs were coloured red and various cultures have legends explaining this. Eggs decorated with traditional designs have long been given as Easter gifts. An egg is one of the symbolic foods on the plate at the Passover Seder, which celebrates the new life of the people of Israel when they were redeemed from slavery in Egypt. In this part of the world we tend to associate Easter eggs with the chocolate (treat) variety and have fewer of the traditions relating to boiled eggs such as hunting eggs, rolling them and eating the specially coloured eggs on Easter Morning. In the Northern Hemisphere Easter and Spring coincide and this to some extent dictates the traditions. This is the time when lambs are available, and maybe the hens were also producing more eggs. The association of Easter and Spring also tends to emphasise the aspect of re-birth. With the warmer weather decorated eggs are often hung on trees ...



or indoors on twigs or greenery. 📷



Next month: 1) The nutritional value of eggs and other considerations 2) Modifications of the DASH diet for NZ conditions.

## “A Slice of our History”?

By Alex Chisholm

One idea being considered as part of the 150th Anniversary of Saint Peter's in 2015 is a book of recipes and related



material from times past. This is not the official history which has been mentioned elsewhere, but may be the face of everyday life in relation to Saint Peter's, in the context of the times and major events taking place in the wider world. In order to have more than just potential this project will need contributions from many people. If you are able to access recipes from your mother, grandmother, great grandmother and so on this would be interesting. Although there may not be photo's of the resulting food products, if you had photo's of church or home life at that time this would help to provide visual context. Some of you may have letters which mention food, and also what people did when food was scarce or there was excess. In addition to written material or photo's you might like to write about, or to relate to someone, your own memories and anecdotes, especially related to events at Saint Peters. Although there is, as yet, no protocol for exactly how the project will be organised it would be really helpful at this stage to have an idea of how many people would be interested in contributing. The second half of 2015 seems a fair way off but will come around quickly, especially where a project involving food is concerned! If this is to be a “working” recipe book, as well as an interesting glimpse into previous times, recipes may have to be standardised or even tested to see they work for a wider group than the family who inherited them. There are of course many interesting websites on food history, but this is to be as much as possible *our* history. 📷



If you might have material for such a book, please talk with Alex or email [150th@stpeterscaversham.org.nz](mailto:150th@stpeterscaversham.org.nz) with the details.

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

# Saint Peter's People

## Peter Rodgers' story

As told to Michael Forrest

**P**eter's mother, Barbara, was born in Hawarden, North Canterbury. In her early life she moved about a lot, and might have been caught up in the Ballantyne's fire in 1947 had she gained the position there for which she had applied. She met Peter's father, Norman, when she came to Dunedin to work as a book-keeper on the wharf and he was working as a wharfie. They were married at St Paul's, Papanui, Christchurch (because her parents were still living in Hawarden) in 1953 and settled half-way up Caversham Valley Road, just below Alex and Kath Holmes and their three children (Pamela, Margery and Russell). Their house has long since been demolished to make way for the motorway. Barbara was always Anglican from North Canterbury to Dunedin and was a Sunday-school teacher at Saint Peter's for many years. She died in 1986, and Norman in 1990.

Peter attended College Street, Macandrew Intermediate and Otago Boys' High Schools (not King's like most boys in the area, as his sister Helen was already at Girls' High, and it was easier for them to catch a bus into town from where they lived than to walk right across to St Clair). Like his younger brother John he belonged to Everyboy's Rally which still operates from the Caversham Community Church premises on the corner of Playfair and Pencarrow Streets. On leaving school in 1976 Peter embarked on a career in retailing, first briefly at Whitcoulls then the menswear department at the DIC, then at Martin's Art Furniture for three years. In order to leave home and get out from under his mother's feet he took up the position of soft-furnishings buyer for Ballantyne's in Timaru before moving to Mosgiel and spending fourteen-and-a-half years at Brown's Furnishers there. He resigned in 1995 for health-reasons and since then has had various jobs

including at Larnach Castle and Harvey Norman. His most recent employment was as a porter at the Scenic Circle Southern Cross Hotel. He is currently "resting", as they say in theatrical circles.

1978 was a big year for the Rodgers family as his parents celebrated their silver wedding anniversary, Peter celebrated his twenty-first and his sister married Wayne at Saint Peter's.

Peter was baptised at Hawarden by a future Bishop of Christchurch who was then still the Vicar there, and has been involved with Saint Peter's for over fifty years. The Rodgers family used to walk down to church every Sunday, except when they occasionally went to St Alban's for a change. He was confirmed here in 1970 by Bishop Robinson (his father was also confirmed at Saint Peter's, in 1974, the only adult confirmation candidate that year), served on Vestry in the early 1980s and acted as sacristan for both Father Blair Robertson and Father Carl Somers-Edgar. During the interregnum between



Peter Rodgers at home in April 2014.

PHOTO: INFORMATION SERVICES OTAGO LTD.

these two Vicars his family stayed in the Vicarage for six weeks while between houses. In the early 1990s Peter served at the Cathedral and was Dean's Verger for Deans Bob Mills and Warren Limbrick. He has also been involved with St Mary's, Mornington, but he feels the people of Saint Peter's are his family, so came back here in the mid-1990s.

Peter has lived in Burt Street, Wakari, for nearly twenty-four years. His interests include buying art and antiques, cars (he collects models and magazines, and drives a European car) and interior design, especially getting his own house the way he wants it.

We are lucky to have people like Peter, the second generation of their family to have been part of the Parish for most, if not all, of their lives and so supportive of Saint Peter's. ☑



Cleaning the brass for Easter 2014

PHOTO: RONDA TATNELL



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# Looking back

By Ray Hargreaves

In a book published by Thomas Cook and Son in 1902, tourists were advised “There are good salt-water swimming baths at St Clair”. The postcard reproduced here shows the baths as they looked early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The pool was limited in size and consisted of an enlarged rock pool with a concrete wall seaward to keep the water in as the tide receded.

The baths were constructed by the Caversham Borough Council, within whose boundaries they lay, with financial help from the City. The motive for their construction was the perceived danger of bathing in the nearby surf.



The St Clair salt water pool in the early 1900s.

FROM AN EARLY POSTCARD.

The formal opening of the baths in December 1884 was by the Caversham mayor, Hugh Calder. According to a local newspaper report, the mayor, after a short speech, peeled off his overcoat and took a header into the pool, “arrayed in gorgeous bathing trunks,” and “nated”. He was joined by other dignitaries, including W. P. Street, Dunedin’s mayor. According to an *Otago Witness* columnist, “the slightly ornate mode of expression [i.e. nate] must be

understood to convey that they spluttered, wheezed, puffed and swallowed water in the manner of ordinary mortals who swim merely and do not “nate”. [“Nate” is an old formal word meaning “swim”].

The use of the baths was free for a number of years, but in the mid 1890s the charge for adults was one penny. Swimming was segregated, with women having much reduced swimming time each day compared with male swimmers. Only men were able to use the pool on Sundays. ☒

## THE CAVERSHAM LECTURES 2014

### “GREAT ANGLO-CATHOLICS OF THE 20TH CENTURY”

MAY / JUNE 2014

#### Revised dates

Lectures will pause for a week in late May because the Vicar will be attending the Diocesan Clergy Retreat. Dates for the last two lectures therefore differ from those published in *The Rock* last month.

#### Percy Dearmer—6 May



The first lecture is on Percy Dearmer, Vicar of St Mary’s Primrose Hill, who insisted Anglo-Catholicism take an integrally English form, which he called

Sarum, rather than aping Roman Catholic ways, and who instigated the creation of the *English Hymnal*. This hymnbook caused a storm of controversy on its publication, with several Bishops banning it from their dioceses. The Vicar will cover the first aspect of Percy Dearmer’s enduring contribution, and David Hoskins the second. Dearmer was an eccentric, an aesthete, and a Christian Socialist. Conrad Noel, Vicar of Thaxted, was all of these things to an even greater extent and there will be a brief consideration of his remarkable career.

#### Ninian Comper—13 May



Subject of the second lecture is Sir Ninian Comper, the great Anglo-Catholic architect. Churches featured will include St Mary’s Wellingborough, St

Cyprian’s Clarence Gate, Wyndmonham Abbey, All Saints Carshalton, St Philip’s Cosham, All Saints Convent London Colney, and St John the Baptist Lound.

#### Dom Gregory Dix—20 May



The third lecture features Dom Gregory Dix, the Nashdom monk, whose blockbuster book *The Shape of the Liturgy* became a bestseller and changed thinking about liturgy and the Eucharist for decades afterwards.

Also considered is the remarkable development of his Benedictine community, from its origins on the island of Caldey to its finest flowering at Nashdom. There will also be a brief salute to Walter Frere, liturgical scholar, and Superior of the Community of the Resurrection, Mirfield.

#### Austin Farrer—3 June



The fourth lecture considers Austin Farrer, Dean of Keble College Oxford, a great theologian, philosopher, teacher and preacher

of the 1950s and 1960s and something of a wordsmith extraordinaire. Some consideration will be given to his helpful book on the problem of evil, *Love Almighty, and Ills Unlimited*.

#### Michael Ramsey—10 June



The final lecture covers Michael Ramsey, Archbishop of Canterbury through the 1960s and early 1970s, a theologian of note, an ecumenist, and a man of evident holiness. ☒

**All lectures are in Saint Peter’s Parish Centre at 2 pm and again at 7.30 pm**

## Regular Services

*please consult The Pebble or our website for variations*

*All services are held at Saint Peter's unless noted otherwise*

SUNDAY:	8am	Holy Communion according to the Book of Common Prayer
	10.30am	Solemn Sung Eucharist
TUESDAY:	11am	Eucharist in the Chapel of St Barnabas' Home, Ings Avenue
THURSDAY:	10am	Eucharist
FIRST THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH:	11am	Eucharist in the lounge of Frances Hodgkins Retirement Village, Fenton Crescent



## Vestry Notes:

The April meeting was held a week later than usual because of the demands of Holy Week, so results were not available before **The Rock** went to press. The following items were on the agenda at press time:

- ◆ Consideration of Church security
- ◆ Consideration of the possibility of publishing a parish history
- ◆ Consideration of online offerings and donations. ☒

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## Special Services

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



## Kate in Japan

People's Warden Kate Paterson was in Japan recently and has sent us notes and photos of her stay. You'll find it all on our website. ☒



*More online at*

[http://www.stpeterscaversham.org.nz/News/Kate Paterson/Japan March 2014.html](http://www.stpeterscaversham.org.nz/News/Kate%20Paterson/Japan%20March%202014.html)

Or follow the link on the News and Opinion page



## For your diary

**Sunday, 4 May** : Harvest Festival celebration

**Tuesday, 6 May** : The Caversham Lectures : Percy Dearmer

**Tuesday, 13 May** : The Caversham Lectures : Ninian Comper

**Tuesday, 20 May** : The Caversham Lectures : Dom Gregory Dix

**Sunday, 1 June** : Ascension day

**Tuesday, 3 June** : The Caversham Lectures : Austin Farrer

**Saturday, 7 June** : Pentecost Vigil celebration of the Liturgy of St Basil, followed by a meal

**Sunday, 8 June** : Pentecost

**Tuesday, 10 June** : The Caversham Lectures : Michael Ramsey

**Saturday, 21 June** : Eve of the Feast of Corpus Christi. Liturgy of St Basil followed by discussion and shared meal

**Sunday, 22 June** : Corpus Christi

**Sunday, 29 June** : Patronal Festival

**Weekend of 12-13 September** : Diocesan Synod in Oamaru

**Michaelmas 2015** : Saint Peter's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations

## Vicar's 2014 AGM Report

(Continued from page 2)

I would want to gently and persuasively appeal to Saint Peter's parishioners that your attendance is closely bound up with what this Church stands for, and makes it possible for our tradition to continue, and to be available to new comers.

The conventional remedy for churches with lower numbers is to revitalise outreach to children and young people. But it is hard to do that when you are starting from a base line of very little. And taking a long hard look at the history of the parish, it has never made much of ministry to these groups. New members have been recruited from older age groups. Indeed, it has transpired in recent years that an emphasis on ministry to children and youth, so often touted as the answer to the church's recruiting problems, has turned out to be a false panacea, and no formula for church growth. You can have a flourishing youth group and Sunday School, and find it making little difference to your Sunday-by-Sunday attendance figures. It seems to me that our unique identity and particular mission to the Anglican Church is something that appeals by and large to middle aged people, and those of a mature age, and given that this is our particular strength, then this is the strength that we should play to.

The other home truth to be faced up to is that what we stand for will never be a popular option; we are, if you like, a concert programme option in a commercial radio world. But what we offer is very worthwhile, and the world of Dunedin Christianity would be greatly diminished if we weren't there. The so-called popular, vibrant, successful churches are often Christianity light, skilfully aimed at the consumer demands of their new members, rather than letting on about the demands of real deal Christianity. And when the froth and bubble of much of this shallow Christian edutainment has faded away as cultural fashions change, the churches which offer real value will remain as the conservators and transmitters of enduring worth in authentic Christianity. Our strong liturgical expression gives us the opportunity to major in the notion of mystery and contemplative engagement with God, which I believe is attractive to not a few folk who are becoming sick and tired of the rah-rah style of many churches, and who are hungry for the richness beauty and symbols offer, who want to be put in touch with the numinous aspect of the Christian religion. So what we are doing here, what we offer Sunday-by-Sunday is worth making an effort for, and is worthy of some degree of personal sacrifice.

The difficulties I have just mentioned are

occurring in churches right across the

western world, there is nothing unique in our situation, and thus no need for us to get into a blame game about it. There are no magic formulas to get us out of this situation, if there were those cards would have been played long ago. But there is a call here for a deeper loyalty and faithfulness, for simply by turning up more often than we tend to we act as a source of encouragement to one another, and it is to our spiritual health that we do so. It is also helpful if we encourage friends and family members to come to Church with us, since most people join churches by personal invitation. And if we all put our thinking caps on about possible new growth initiatives, and are prepared to exert some energy to stand behind them, then we can begin to strengthen the base, to build up what is already there.

Next year the parish will celebrate its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and that will be an opportunity for us to take stock, to articulate the journey we have been on, and to map out the next stage of our journey. We are now in the midst of an ever-changing market place of options and styles of Christian belonging, believing and behaving. If the contemplative approach to the Christian religion is our strong suit then we need to think about how to offer as many attracting hooks as possible for people to latch on to in order to access this.

God meets us more than halfway when we try on behalf of his church, and his generous grace gives hints and clues as to what he wants to see continue in the life of churches. Is it a coincidence that the Mazey bequest and the D'Arcy Christopher grants turned up at just the time when the parish would have run into major financial difficulties without them? Of course we have now become too dependent on them, but that is another story for the time of the financial report. But my point is that God seems to want Saint Peter's Caversham to stick around, to be available for the life of this suburb, this city, our diocese in the years ahead.

I also want to make the point that you can never tell what lies ahead, and it isn't always necessarily going to be bad news. The cultural and social forces that turned against the churches from the mid 1960s on are themselves in rapid flux and turmoil now, and will be moving in unpredictable directions in the future, perhaps one day to our advantage, as they have in other epochs of our history. The diocese of Dunedin seems to continue to become smaller, and as surrounding parishes become fewer we would be an attractive option to those looking for a new spiritual home. It would be important to offer a warm

“... we receive the inner resources to make the miracle work.”

welcome to such newcomers and seekers.

Above all we must keep our nerve, maintain our sense of self-confidence, without any complacency, and keep thinking—how can we offer these good things we have in faith resources in fresh and attractive ways?

Finally, let me make it clear where I am in all this in my commitment to Saint Peter's. Above all I want to be a pastor to you. Sure it is important to preach and teach to a high standard, to have good table manners at the altar in such a way as to make the liturgy work, to be an efficient administrator with a good business sense. All of that can be taken as read in what I offer here in the routine operations of the parish. But if I hear that a parishioner is in hospital, or is ill, or is in any kind of distress then my commitment is to be there as soon as possible, and as often as is necessary. One of my responses to the considerable amount of parishioner illness there has been over the past year is to take the sacrament regularly to parishioners at home. Currently there are six people I see in this connection. Let me conclude with the closing words of the sermon I preached at my Institution Service here just over two years ago.

The parish priest as confidant and consoler, as pastor who enjoys the quirkiness and human particularity of those committed to his charge—that is the note I want to end on. For someone as curious as I am about what makes people tick, this has been a wonderful vocation to be called into. Unlike therapists and counsellors, parish priests get to know how the story ends for those they work with. They accompany their people though all the life stages, and are with them, not just at dramatic high points, but also in the long stretches of ordinary living in which their lives quietly develop and flower in their growth to union with God.

For someone as drawn to the mystical side of religion as I am it has been a helpful discovery to find out that the point of an intimacy life with God is not glamorous supernatural experience, but rather the infused graces that enable us to deal with difficult people, that fortify us with common sense wisdom in the endless challenge of building Christian community, and that lead us to quietly enjoy the company of other Christians. God has pulled off a sociological miracle in drawing the company of believers together from such a wide variety of social, cultural and ethnic difference. In being connected to Him we receive the inner resources to make the miracle work. ☒