

MOUNTAINSIDE RUMBLINGS

Mountainside
Lutheran Church

December/January 2020
Volume 18, Issue 6

CELEBRATING OUR EMMANUEL: GOD WITH US, THIS CHRISTMAS SEASON



At the end of September, my family and I were on holiday, and we spent some time in New Plymouth. While visiting we came across this little mountain on the edge of the town called Mount Paritutu. Josiah and Samuel decided that they would like to climb to the top and see the view, so I volunteered to go with them. But there was only one problem, I am terribly afraid of heights! And this mountain was no easy climb. In fact, for the majority of the way it involved pulling ourselves up by a chain, over very steep and rocky terrain.

The two boys took off and were a long way in front of me, to the point where I could not at times see where they were up to. But I kept going, pushing myself as much as I could. At about three-quarters of the way up, I was really struggling and wondering if I was even going to make it to the top when suddenly my two boys (who had already been to the top!!) came down and walked up the rest of the way beside me. Encouraging me with their words and being patient when I had to stop and rest, putting their arm around me and cheering me on. Eventually as they walked beside me step by step, I pushed through my fear, I reached the top and the view was spectacular.

As I stood upon this mountain looking at the spectacular scenery, it struck me that I would not have been able to see this if my boys had not walked with me, especially for that last quarter of the climb, which was the hardest. I really did appreciate their presence with me.

This issue of the Rumbings is the last one for this year and it is the issue where we look towards Christmas and what Christmas means for us. One of the words that we as Christians hear and focus on at Christmas is Emmanuel: God with us. God himself becoming human like us so he can walk with us, in our world. Christmas, is one of the defining things about the Christian faith that differs from all other religions in the world. This is because no other faith makes this claim, that God himself walks in our shoes. God himself became a human baby and grew up to be a man. Emmanuel: God is with us, in the midst of ordinary life.

This baby grew to be a man, who lived, taught, died and rose again, and gives us the Holy Spirit, who is present with us. God's presence with us, in the midst of our lives, means that he is right there, walking with us, encouraging us, nudging us. This is particularly important as we journey through the difficult (we might say rocky) and challenging seasons of life.

Another way that he is present with us, is through his body: his people, our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ, who walk alongside each other and carry each other's burdens. God speaks to us and provides encouragement to us through the people he places in our lives. The people he works through to bless us. It is often through these people that we know and see his presence with us.

So as you prepare for this Christmas season, think about Jesus our Emmanuel: God with us, and what this means for your life and your faith journey. God's presence is with you through Jesus and he is leading you in your life. Along the way, you may even get to see some spectacular views.

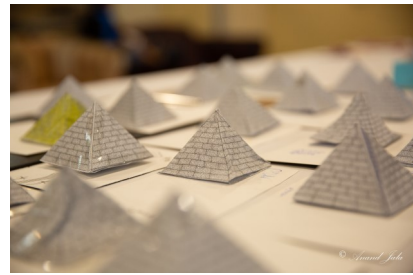
Blessings
Pastor Nich



MARY'S CORNER

Holiday Bible Adventure – 2019

Check out page 7 & 8 for more HBA 2019 pictures.



Women's One Day Retreat:

A Women's One Day Retreat was held on 9th of November 2019 and we had a good turnout of ladies. We extended the invitation to all NZ Lutheran churches. The day rotated through singing, testimonies, a skit, messages, lots of activities, even a fitness workout! All around the theme "The Bride of Christ". We were so privileged to have *Catherine Levine* (pictured right) as our guest speaker. Feedback has been great. The best part of this programme was the involvement of women of all ages, who joined us in exploring the truth in God's written word, the Bible. A HUGE THANK



YOU to all the gentlemen volunteers who spent their time helping out so the women could participate. I THANK all the participants who spent their Saturday attending this retreat. I also thank all who supported this wonderful event through their prayers. I thank God for being with us. More photos from this event on page 8 of this Rumbblings edition.

TINY TOTS:

We are having a Tiny Tots Christmas party for the last day of Term-4 sessions which is on Thursday 12th December, 2019. We are extending our invitation to all of the TINY TOTS families for both Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services. Next year we will be starting back on January 30th 2020 at 10.00am. Come along with your pre-schoolers and enjoy a morning of songs, snacks and free play.



SUPAKIDZ:

We have restarted the SUPAKIDZ programme from the 18th October 2019, and this is going well. Our SUPAKIDZ Christmas party will be held on Friday 13th December 2019, which is the last day for Term-4 and we are extending our invitation for SUPAKIDZ families to attend Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services. SUPAKIDZ will be performing one item at the

7pm Children's Christmas Eve service. Next year we will be starting the programme again on January 31st 2020.

Christmas Programme:

Our Sunday School kids will be performing on Christmas Eve. The kids have already started practising and are looking forward to the big night!

Lastly, I wish you all a blessed Christmas and Happy New Year for 2020!

Mary Jala



CHRISTMAS SERVICES:

Tuesday 24th December, 7 pm:
Christmas Eve Service
(with Children's Programme)

Tuesday 24th December, 11 pm:
Christmas Eve Service

Wednesday 25th December, 10 am:
Christmas Day Worship
with Holy Communion

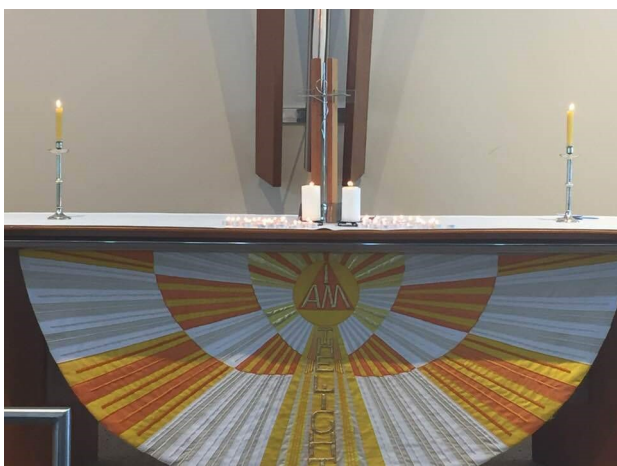
LONGEST

LUTHERAN LUNCH

Another fantastic result from Lunchbox for Mission Sunday! On 10th November 2019, Mountainside members again generously donated to this very worthy cause. For several years we have been preparing lunches to be donated to the Auckland City Mission. This year, we gave 123 lunchboxes and \$150 in cash donations. Deb Ward from Auckland City Mission came to speak to us about the work they do and how our donations would go towards this. Thank you to Visse and her helpers for organising the lunches & envelopes and also for collaborating with City Mission to have them picked up. Thank you to everyone for helping to feed those in need.



(left) Food has been blessed and Deb Ward is speaking to the congregation about the work that Auckland City Mission does.



In Loving Memory...

On All Saints Sunday (3rd November) we remembered those who have left this earth to rest in the arms of our Loving Father during the year:

Keith Duncan

11/1/1940—24/4/2019

Vera Naish

9/2/1927—30/4/2019

Christmas Traditions from around Mountainside

Julie Kitchen

With the richness of cultural diversity around Mountainside, I suspected that we had a few different ways of celebrating the birth of our Saviour, so I asked a few people in our church community about how they celebrate Christmas (or how they celebrated Christmas in their childhood):

Marianne Frederiksen (Germany): Marianne spoke about how her family always had an Advent wreath & candles in their home from the beginning of December. Christmas Eve was the main celebration, and the day on which they decorated the Christmas tree and placed a manger crib underneath. They ate German sausages & potato salad on Christmas Eve and Santa Claus would come, with presents given. On Christmas Day, her family would attend church and then have a big meal for lunch: Stuffed goose or duck, red cabbage, pfefferkuchen (spice biscuits) and Christmas stollen (Christmas fruit cake).



Ane Ongongo (Tonga): Ane's family in Tonga cleans & tidies the house inside & out as Christmas approaches. They decorate a Christmas tree & decorate the house with balloons. Extended family gets together on Christmas Eve and stays until New Year. They attend church on Christmas Eve wearing white clothes & special celebratory ta'ovala (woven mat). The service will last about 4 hrs from 6pm and includes the Christmas play by the children. The church gives bags of lollies to the children. This is usually their only gift. On Christmas morning, they wake early and prepare food for a big hangi (earth oven) lunch with the church family after church.

Annette Geese (Denmark): Annette told me that a Danish tradition that her family still follows is to hold hands and dance (or walk) around the Christmas tree singing Christmas carols. They then continue from room to room in order to spread the Christmas spirit through the house.



Ingrid Phyn (Estonian Kiwi): Christmas Eve is the focus for Ingrid's family. They have a celebratory meal & give gifts on Christmas Eve. The meal includes braun (jellied pork). After the meal, they would often attend the 11pm church service. After church on Christmas Day, they would have a meal with the other side of the family.

Hannah from Tiny Tots (Korean Kiwi): Hannah spoke about how Korea is not a Christian country, so Christmas is not a big celebration there. She attends church on Christmas Day & then has a big (eg BBQ) lunch with her church family because many of them have no other family here in NZ.

Stanley, Mary & Shirley Pidakala (India): Stanley, Mary & Shirley told me how leading up to



Christmas, new clothes would be made for the children (up to 3 sets: for Christmas Eve, Christmas Day & New Year). The Christmas tree is decorated from the start of Advent; the room is decorated with crepe paper ribbons. A paper star with a light inside is put up outside the house. From 19-23 Dec, the youth go from home to home singing Christmas carols until 4-6am. The women start cooking 3 days before Christmas, making sweet & savoury snacks & rose cakes (pictured). 15-20+ platters of these would be made up for the children to distribute on Christmas Day to their (often Hindu) neighbours to spread Christmas joy.

On Christmas Eve they attend a late service (10:30pm -2am) in which the children perform the Christmas play. Often Hindus will also attend this Christmas 'festival', so it is an opportunity to present the gospel. There is 8:30am church on Christmas morning after which the platters are distributed while the women cook a big feast: biryani & 2 curries (lamb & chicken), to which non-Christian friends are usually invited.



Abby Abera (Ethiopia): Abby explained to me that as an Orthodox country using the Julian calendar, Ethiopia celebrates Christmas on Jan 7 instead of Dec 25. They start with a midnight church service on Jan 6, with everyone holding a special Christmas candle and singing Christmas carols. The family celebrate together & wear their best clothes. After another church service on Christmas morning, the family has a big feast, cooking lamb or chicken (depending on their means). After lunch, the children play Christmas games. Abby told me that it is not Ethiopian tradition to give gifts or have a Christmas tree, but because her father studied in the USA, her family had a Christmas tree, decorated with chains of lollies, tinsel & handmade decorations; and they were given 1 gift each.

... continued on page 6...

Felix Tong (Hong Kong): Felix said that in the lead up to Christmas, people from his church family walk up the hill to their church, singing carols to residents of the high-rise apartments they pass, & then have late night dessert together. There are 2-3 church services held over Christmas, often including joint services with other Lutheran churches. Baptisms are traditionally held on Christmas Day & there is Holy Communion at every service.

Linda Heidrich (Austrian Kiwi): Linda remembers as a child that during the war years the Christmas story was the core of Christmas, but that in terms of food and gifts, they made do with whatever they had. The children would learn Christmas poems or songs and recite them. Christmas Eve is the most important day for Linda's family, giving small gifts to each other. They have a Christmas tree, with a nativity scene nearby; and she hangs a large Christmas star in the hallway. They share a special meal either on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day.



*Mountainside Women
would like to invite all
women of the parish to their
Christmas Lunch
on Sunday 15th December
after the worship service.
Please bring a plate to share*

**Book Group
Christmas Break-up:**

Saturday 14th December,
Book Group Christmas visit,
1.30pm Evermore Christian
Books, Ellis Road, Mount
Roskill, followed by café visit.

Once again we are selling Entertainment Books and Digital memberships to fundraise. Order forms are on the table in the foyer or you can order online using this link: <http://www.entbook.co.nz/1001834>.

The price per book/digital membership is \$70 for which you get over \$20,000 worth of offers! See Jenna or Fredric if you would like more information. Please return filled out forms with credit card details to Jenna, and we can order the physical copies needed. Next year the books are going to digital only, so this is your last chance to have a physical copy.

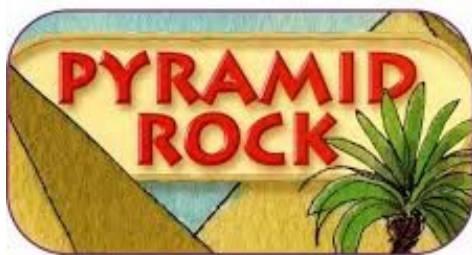


HOLIDAY BIBLE ADVENTURE 2019





HOLIDAY BIBLE ADVENTURE MOMENTS 2019



WOMEN'S ONE DAY RETREAT 'The Bride Of Christ' 2019



New and Renewing Churches Update

When I was still in Australia, just after I decided to accept the call to come to Mountainside, I was contacted by Dean Eaton from Local Mission Department of the LCA. I met with him and he shared with me that Mountainside had been identified as a 'sending church' and had received some support and visits from him under the New and Renewing Churches program. At the time of this conversation, Mountainside had put things on hold because of the Reformation 500 involvement. The Board for Local Mission, however, was still keen to make contact with Mountainside in 2018 once I had settled in here, in order to discuss where Mountainside was in this journey and where it might lead.

A few people have been asking me lately about where we are up to with the 'Sending Church' ministry. So I would like to take the opportunity to inform you about things that are happening.

In April this year, Noel Due from the Department of Local Mission came to visit us. He met with myself, William, Bishop Mark, and also with Mountainside Parish Council members the next day and then preached for us on Sunday. Noel came to discuss where we were at regarding Mountainside being a 'Sending Church' and the possibility of Church Planting. As a part of the discussions with Noel, it became clear that God is doing something bigger in us and in the wider Church than perhaps we realised. At the time, Pastor William had only recently started his call with us here at Mountainside, in which things for us were changing. No longer did we have a separate Chinese based ministry using our building, but this ministry was now under Mountainside. So we are no longer two separate churches but are one church with two services. It was then highlighted that two other congregations and their pastors, had similar contexts to what we at Mountainside have. Pastor Mark Schultz (Epping, NSW), and Pastor Matthew Huckel (Pasedena, SA). All three congregations are working with multicultural congregations, with multicultural staff, as one church body. This is something that had occurred only recently in all three congregations. As a result of Noel's visit, the three congregations (including Mountainside) applied to the Local Board for Mission, and the LCA individual districts, and put forward a proposal to start a network between all three lead pastors and congregations. This was approved and funding has been granted by the LCNZ (for Mountainside) and the Local Board for Mission.

What this means is the following:

Noel Due has agreed to be a pastoral mentor to me. We have spoken via Skype every month for the last 5 months.

A network meeting using Skype, facilitated by Noel Due has begun between the lead pastors. One other pastor, Wayne Muschamp, from GlenWaverly, in Melbourne has also joined this network. We have met via Skype twice already, and are planning to increase this to once a month.

We have been granted funding to visit each other's congregations and to do some professional development together specifically focusing on multicultural ministry and mission. This funding covers not only the lead pastors, but also the other key pastoral staff working in this area, and also one other person. So the invitation is to myself, Pastor William and one other. The first one of these will be with Pastor Mark Schultz in February next year (we will inform you when everything is confirmed).

Being a part of this network has also had some benefits to us at Mountainside that we are hopeful will provide some fruit:

- We have been identified as a key church by the Local Board for Mission in the LCA. We are on their radar, so to speak.
- The network has been discussing ways of applying for further funding, which if successful, Mountainside would also benefit from.
- The network has been sharing resources and experiences with each other that will become invaluable going forward.

In sharing the journey so far with you all, I pray that this encourages you all to see that God is at work among us. He is working in ways that are perhaps unexpected, but will bring about his purpose for us as his body, even if it has taken a different direction than initially planned.

Please continue to pray for all of us here at Mountainside. Particularly for our leadership as we journey together with the LCA/LCNZ and as we seek God's will and direction for the future of our church (both Mountainside, and the wider Church).

Pastor Nich



BirthDay greetings

'Happy Birthday' and Best Wishes to the following people celebrating birthdays in December:

Jack Neal (2nd)	Marjon Gerson (5th)
Caitlin Tippett (8th)	Julie Kitchen (14th)
Isabella Jorna (15th)	David Sutton (17th)
Christian Geese (20th)	Janet Mason (21st)
Katelyn Sutton (21st)	Theo Quax (27th)
Janet Choo (29th)	Caroline Samsom (30th)

Wedding Anniversary Congratulations to:
 Anand & Mary Jala 15 years on the 20th
 Paul & Sue Samsom 64 years on 23rd

'Happy Birthday' and Best Wishes to the following people celebrating birthdays in January :

Jacque Morris (1st)	Jessica Jala (6th)
Jenna Hewett (9th)	Pat Heinemann (11th)
Tabitha Fagan (15th)	Linda Heidrich (20th)
Dori Reeve (24th)	
Annabelle Skadiang (28th)	

Wedding Anniversary Congratulations to:
 Janet & Ed Mason 46 years on the 11th
 Maurice & Linda Heidrich 63 years on the 19th
 Julie & Armstrong Mathews 25 years on the 19th
 Kevin & Dori Reeve 10 years on the 23rd
 Nick & Jenna Hewett 13 years on the 27th
 Neil & Jenny Lindstrom 60 years on the 30th



PRAYER POINTS

In your prayers this month, please pray for the following:



We pray ...

- ✚ For the members of our Parish Council, Elders and all who serve our parish through our various ministries.
- ✚ For the churches & volunteers involved with the Mt Wellington Foodbank and all who work with those in need.
- ✚ For all who are sick or suffering at this time—may God give them strength and his healing comfort.
- ✚ For our small group ministry leaders and the participants as they continue to meet regularly to study God's word and grow in their faith.
- ✚ For peace during busy and stressful times.
- ✚ For those who are travelling over the Christmas & New Year period.
- ✚ For fire and emergency crew members, and those who are affected by the bushfires that continue to burn in Australia.
- ✚ For our Bishop Mark Whitfield & Council of Synod.
- ✚ For our sister congregations Epping, NSW, and Pasedena, SA who are networking with us.
- ✚ The message of Christ to be clear as we celebrate his birth this Christmas.

Deadline for articles for the February/March 2020 issue of 'Mountainside Rumbblings' is **TUESDAY 28th January 2020.**

Don't forget that you have 3 options for receiving this newsletter—a printed copy available in the foyer of Mountainside Lutheran Church, we can post you a copy if you let us know your address, or we can email a copy in PDF format. Just contact the office and we will organise it for you. And please remember to let us know if your contact details change so we can alter our records accordingly.

Thanks very much.

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