

## News from the Somervell Community

June 2014

# Flame Newsletter

### *Our Mission*

....where faith inspires life. . .

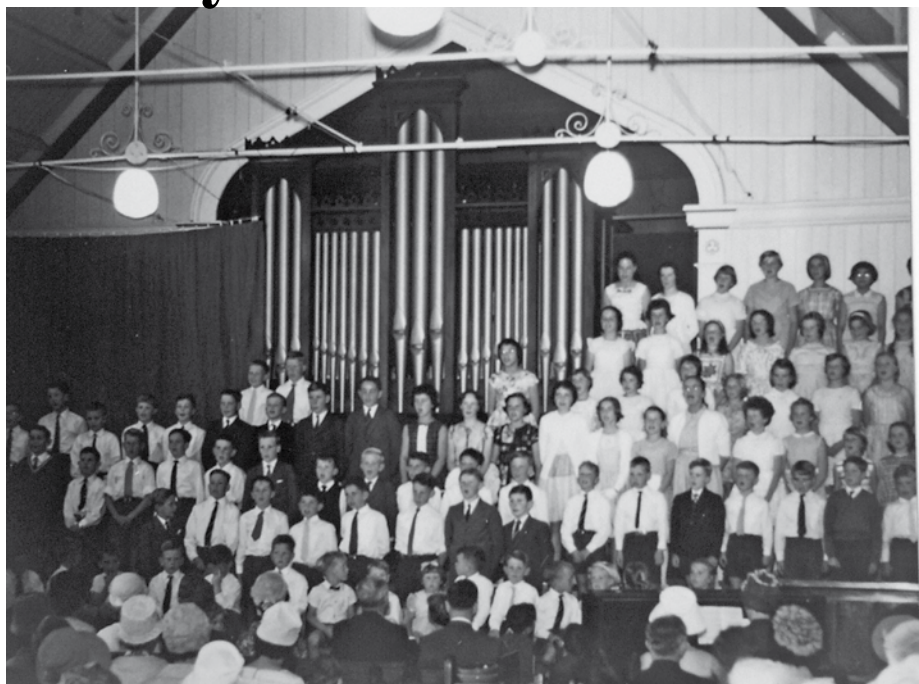
### *Flame*

is produced for the friends and  
parishioners of  
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## Early Memories



*Children sing to the congregation at the Somervell annual Sunday School service in the 1950s. Taken from the book "100 by the Grace of God".*

Many of us can point to significant people in our past, people who have influenced us, or provided us with encouragement on our faith journey. Such people are not only present in our early lives but they can be important to us all throughout our lives.

I remember the leaders at the Christian Youth Camps I attended as a youngster being important role models, and the Bible Class leaders at church, and the people who were leaders of the Universities Christian Group at Christchurch. These were people who deepened my faith, and who also showed me a breadth of faith understanding beyond the narrow confines of my Southland upbringing.

In reading the memories that others have of Sunday school and Easter camp included in this edition of the *Flame*, and the piece by Sonia about those remarkable early women medical doctors, I can see that mentors and role models are an important part in faith and life development for others as well. I think we all need such people in our lives.

What also is important is for us to consider how we might be mentors and role models for others in our own lives. How can we help shape the young lives that we come in contact with at church and elsewhere for good? We only need to read the newspaper on any given day to realize that some young people have no good role models in their lives. We have a chance at church to do good by our young people. Let's make the most of this.

Brett.

## My Memories of Sunday School

My first reaction when I read that Brett wanted people's memories of Sunday School, was that I had very few memories of Sunday School; I'm not sure if that is because it is too long ago or if because it didn't make much of an impression! But when I thought harder, Sunday School in the 1950s was certainly different from Sunday School today.

We had no car in my early days at Sunday School, and our Jewish next-door neighbour would either drive me to Sunday School himself, or else lend his car to Dad, or we walked.

I attended Sunday School at Chalmers Presbyterian Church in Timaru. Compared with today's Sunday Schools, it was large. There were separate classes for boys and girls, with 8 to 10 children in each class. The classes followed school classes, so there would be Standard 1 Girls and Standard 1 Boys etc.

We had one of those old treadle organs, (as did most Sunday Schools). The noise of the pedalling virtually drowned out the music. I can't remember ever singing anything particularly suitable for children, apart from the song after the Sunday School offering was taken up:

Hear the pennies dropping,  
Listen as they fall,  
Every one for Jesus,  
He shall have them all

And for years I thought that "Let us worship God with our freewill offering" was "Let us worship God with our feeble offering". Maybe it was?

The only "visual" part of Sunday School I remember was the flannelgraph board. And I'm sure EVERY Sunday School had one of those. To a child it seemed like magic, the way oxen, and wise men, and babies in mangers would stick to the green background without falling off. We had Sunday School homework! I remember thinking I'd be better off going to the Anglican Sunday School that my friend attended, and where there was no homework. And there was an exam at the end of the year, and prizes awarded for the combination of exam results and attendance.

Every year there was the "Break of Day" Christmas Appeal an initiative of the National Church I think. At our Sunday School it always took the form of a "Bob a Job" where we were paid a shilling for doing odd jobs and the money was placed under the Christmas tree in church. There was also the annual Sunday School picnic. On a Saturday each summer, all the parishes in the Timaru Presbytery combined for an all day picnic at a domain or park that was close to a railway line, and old railway carriages that were no longer used by NZR were brought out of storage to transport Sunday School children and their parents to the picnic.

So that is a few memories of Sunday School in the 1950s.

Pam Pacey

## Salvation Army Primary Leader Loved

Captain Gladys Taylor was the much loved leader of the Primary at the Salvation Army in New Barnet. She was loved by everyone and she just adored little children and they adored her. She told the stories of the bible. I have never forgotten them! We had a large sand tray on which were told the stories of the garden of Eden, Abraham and Lot, Moses in the bulrushes, Joseph and his coat of many colours etc. The sand became rivers, battle fields, seas, deserts, etc, and Christmas and Easter scenes. If you were well behaved or if you needed a bit of encouragement you were allowed to dress the figurines in the appropriate garments. Although we were too young to read we learned well the stories of the Bible and their meaning. We sang choruses and even managed an occasional hymn and had lots of fun and laughs. Gladys was a bit eccentric. She never married, but she was involved in children's work in the Salvation Army. She was an author and wrote children's stories and hymns. What a treasure she was. She certainly started many, including me, on the right path of Christianity.

**Jean Robinson**

## Sunday School – what Sunday School?

I was Sunday School age in Dublin in the 1970s and like most Irish Catholics I sat through mass on a Sunday morning. I got my religious education at school, 12.00pm till 12.30pm, 5 days a week. Sunday School was something that happened on Little House on the Prairie and the Waltons.

Schools in Ireland were run predominantly by priests, nuns and Christian Brothers and at the school I attended, St Brigid's Holy Faith Convent, we started and ended every day with prayers. Then for half an hour before lunch we had 'Religion'. We learnt Bible stories, we learnt hymns and songs and from time to time we had a class mass or school mass that we would attend and where we would learn 'mass etiquette'. The gospel reading at these masses was either the parable of the Good Samaritan or the Prodigal Son. I knew other readings from the Bible but none as well as I knew those two.

Instructions and preparation for the sacraments of Confession (now the children learn to call it Reconciliation), First Holy Communion and Confirmation made up quite a bit of the curriculum. It is a



rite of passage for most girls in Ireland even today, to dress up in a fancy white dress and receive communion for the first time at a special mass. The boys are manhandled into a suit and tie and told to 'stay clean' until after this important event.

I do remember a shift in the religious education I received at primary

school. When I was 4 and 5 I learnt about a God who had a big black book and who kept score of all our sins. By the time I was 7 and making my First Holy Communion the emphasis seemed to have changed and we were being taught that Jesus was our friend and he was there to help us and guide us. The prayer that I was taught to say after that first communion I still say each and every time I receive.

As a child there was never an absence of God in my life. I guess I was extremely lucky, I grew up with parents who were regular church goers and I went to a Christian school that was run by nice nuns (well, most of them anyway!). When it came to it and I had my own children that was something I wanted for them – and given that Martin and I met through the ecumenical movement started in Taizé, it was an easy choice for us – St Joseph's Catholic School and Sunday School at Somervell.

As Andrew Laxon sang at my 40th birthday I'm 'a Protestant on Sundays and a Catholic Mum at School!' Does that make me Cath-atarian or Presb-olic?

**Sharon Sweeney Lauder**

## Memories of Sunday School

For most of my childhood I attended Sunday School at the New Jerusalem Congregational Church in Barry, South Wales. It was a relatively modern church – built in 1897 from memory – and had a separate building behind which was used for both the Sunday School and for providing tea and biscuits for the local community during the week. The church itself had two levels both of which were often full most Sundays.

My abiding childhood memory was of the sixty plus panels which adorned the main wall behind the pulpit. They were copied from a children's Bible and depicted scenes from the Old and New Testaments. The artist was actually a member of the congregation. As a child I was fascinated and almost mesmerised by these images – almost to the point of distraction from the service!

Another memory was of the annual competition we used to have for the Sunday School children, where we competed in singing (solo and duets), recitation and learning the Bible. We even got certificates and medals (these were pre-politically correct days so medals were gold, silver and bronze).

Of course as it was a Welsh church, singing was a major part of the service on a Sunday and traditional hymns were the norm, sometimes sung in Welsh. I remember the main Minister at the time was a large fellow with a big booming voice – certainly kept you focussed. Our Sunday School teachers were extremely caring and supportive – a real family Church. I thoroughly enjoyed my time there.

**Roger Windle**







## Listen. Pray. Act.

Sonia Srinivasan spoke about pioneer women doctors as a Listen Pray Act contribution to worship in May. Here is the text of her talk. Recently we celebrated Mothers' day and we also had international women's day, and so today I'd like to say a little bit about the health of mothers and their babies. Despite significant progress for women over the last decade, half a million women will not survive pregnancy or childbirth this year, and this proportion hasn't changed in decades. It seems, in fact, that it is surprisingly dangerous to be a woman and a mother.

The three women pictured in this incredible photograph from 1885 – Anandibai Joshi from India, Keiko Okami from Japan and Sabat Islambouli from Syria – all became the first licensed female doctors in their respective countries. They were students at the Women's Medical College of Pennsylvania, one of the few places in the world at the time where women could study medicine. This was still 8 years before the first women in the world would get to vote here in New Zealand. At this time women were not really encouraged to learn.

A Harvard gynaecologist at this time wrote that women who went to college risked developing uterine disease, hysteria and other derangements

of the nervous system such as infertility. He suggested that this was because of the proven fact that a woman's system can never do two things well at the same time – I have a feeling every mother would disagree.

So how did these three women end up in medical school without developing these serious diseases of female studying? Interestingly, the Women's Medical College of Pennsylvania was set up by a religious group – the Quakers – who believed women were more than capable of studying medicine without compromising their physical health. It was this belief that allowed Anandibai Joshi, from this photograph, to pursue medicine after the death of her 10 day old baby during a time when adequate medical care for women's health, even for a well-off woman such as herself, was simply unavailable.

We have a legacy in Somervell church of advocating for the health of mothers and their children. Beryl Howie, an important member of our congregation, travelled to India as a young doctor and trained female obstetricians so that local women, like Anandibai Joshi, could get better perinatal care. Margaret Bear carried on this tradition and worked in India as a nurse, and years later our own Heather Laxon followed suit. As a student in Obstetrics and Gynaecology myself, I'm lucky to be reminded of these wonderful role models at church every Sunday.

Today we continue this legacy through our 'Avalon project'. Our project is funding the training of female nurses in Northern India, who would otherwise be denied access to this education because of their religion and their social standing. Please support this project



## MOTHERS DAY AT UPLANDS

We invited our mums to Uplands on Friday 9 May in anticipation of Mothers Day the following Sunday. The children spent the morning preparing party food for the celebration – fairy bread, popcorn and carrot sticks. When the mums arrived they spent time having fun at session, playing with the children. In the sandpit a team of children, encouraged by comments from the mums, worked with Jenn to create a gigantic mountain. Inside love hearts were glued to pop sticks as children and their mums worked together. Our mat time was a special concert of favourite songs – Bounce, Great Big God, Mahunga/Pakahiwi. Next we invited the mums to sit on the floor in front of their child for a massage. Our massage song encourages the children to pat, rub and stroke their mum's back in time to soothing music. Then it was time to swap over and let the mums massage their child. A favourite story – Owl Babies was read by Michele. After our prayer, where Michele asked the children to “stay in bed until the sun came up on Mother's Day then give mum a big cuddle”, the morning ended with the food we had prepared.

Michele Morrissey-Brown

## Saints and Sinners

Who were the great thinkers of the past? The people who shaped our thinking and formed the society we now live in. We know who some of them are the great thinkers, inventors, entrepreneurs or political activists, scientist and so on who have gifted us the world we live in. The great names we could all name. People like the Wright Brothers, or Einstein, or Karl Marx, and so on.

My Saints and Sinners initiative is different. I want to introduce us to some of the great religious thinkers or activists of the past. Some will be well known, others not so well known. The Saints and Sinners title is deliberately provocative as fashions change. Someone who was a saint in the past might be considered a sinner today and the opposite is true as well. On the Sunday with a Saint and Sinner slot, I will put up 4 or 5 slides, a photo, a short biography, and 2 or 3 quotes from their work. Do you have a “Saint” or “Sinner” you would like to add to my list – give me a call.

Thomas Merton was our first saint and sinner. I'm looking forward to sharing more with you.

Brett.



*The recent baptism of Luke son of Kathy & Nick White*

## Easter Camp

*I am about to tell you a story like none before  
So amazing that you will fall to the floor  
I am going to tell a story unlike any you have heard or  
seen*

*The story of Easter Camp, Twenty Fourteen:*

*It all began one Thursday night  
All was still as the stars shone bright  
The peace was broken as young Christians arrived  
All were made welcome as friendships thrived*

*All too soon all were asleep  
And woke to a forgotten alarm's beep  
After the breakfast call  
All were eating in the hall*

*And this is where the day begun  
When we start to have some fun*

*We headed to chapel and started to sing  
Giving our praises to Christ the King  
Tom our speaker started to say  
Give yourself a fresh start today  
Have fresh expectations for camp this weekend  
Go ahead and make a new friend*

*After that we had a quick lunch  
With all our teeth going munch, munch, munch  
Next we had the battle for Middle Earth  
Where armies fought, from South and North  
When we were there we played many a game, and put the  
enemy to shame  
While many died, we still take pride in the battle of  
Middle Earth*

*Then we had our hobbit themed dinner  
And it was Gandalf who was the costume winner  
All too fast, the evening was past  
And it was the end of the day  
Living the Easter Camp way*

*But that was just a small bit  
To show you what Easter Camp has in it*

**David Laxon**

## Report on Europe Trip

In April this year, I was one of the lucky 28 Baradene College and Sacred Heart students and 3 teachers that went on the 2 week Concert Band European tour. We visited Vienna (Austria), Kran and Ljubljana (Slovenia), Zagreb (Croatia) and Budapest (Hungary).

We started off in Vienna, after a day and a half of plane rides, stopovers and lots of movies. Vienna was a beautiful city filled with churches, markets and a lot of castles. In Vienna our first night was planned to be filled with a mass and then dinner at a restaurant called Lubella. Unfortunately I got sick that night and spent the evening sleeping. But the next morning I was up and ready to go sightseeing.

We started off with some castles and eventually got to the Spanish Riding School. This school was beautiful. The ceilings were definitely a highlight, covered in intricate swirly patterns, and while we didn't get to see the horses in action, we walked past one of the stables. The horses were beautiful, with silky backs and soft white noses. In Vienna we played 2 concerts, one at the UN building, which was an amazing experience and included a fully guided tour, and another at one of our sister schools, Sacre Coeur.

Our next stop was in Kran, Slovenia. We were billeted through a Slovenian school and my billet's name was Lukka. His Dad came to pick me and my friend Felicity up and take us to their house, as Felicity and I were staying together. We arrived at their house and unpacked all our bags. Then we met Lukka and his younger brother Bine for the first time. The mother and daughter were to arrive later that evening as they were both at work. That night was a little tough as it made me realise how far away I was from my family.

The next day we spent looking around Kran with Ana, our billet's sister. She was very hospitable. Kran is very different to Auckland filled with old buildings. The next few days in Kran weren't really in Kran as our days consisted of waking in our billets house, having fresh pastries from the bakery down the road for breakfast, driving to school, driving to a new place a couple of hours away, having an adventure and coming home again. These days were all spent at places such as Trbjoe, Sencur, Bled, Bohinj, Postojna, Croatia and even Italy. We performed at Sencur, which was an amazing experience as we played with the Sencur community band, and also performed at Bled at Bled Karvana Hotela Park and a concert in Croatia at Hotel Opatija.

My favourite of these days was definitely Italy, where we had a private boat for the day and visited the islands Burano, Murano and Punta Sabione. Some of us who were on the trip got a little confused when we learnt this, we didn't actually go to Venice as we had been told, but an Island 40 minutes in a boat away, but it was a great experience anyway. Island Burano is famous for lace, and a scarf there caught my fancy, which I managed to grab



hold of. Island Murano is famous for its glass making, and we were shown how the professionals make glass bowls, animals and other glass items. The island Punta Sabione was my favourite, though it was extremely crowded. We saw some Venetian Gondola Boats, and there were a lot of Tourist shops filled with Murano glasswork. It was a beautiful island and a great touristy experience.

After saying a very tearful good-bye to our billets, we departed for Budapest stopping on the way in Zagreb, Croatia. We visited one of our sister schools, who provided us with lunch in return for a concert. This was our last concert, and a lot of us enjoyed playing for some new friends we'd met.

When we got to Budapest my mum and gran were waiting for me. It was great to see them, as I hadn't seen my gran for 2 years. All of us went to dinner at the restaurant in the hotel, while my mum and gran waited in the lobby. After dinner my mum left, and Kiara and I went up to our room to unpack. The next morning we set off to go sightseeing and saw a lot of beautiful sights such as the chain bridge. The afternoon was then free, and we set off to go on a shopping trip. That night we went to a Gypsy restaurant in the woods, and the building was beautiful. This was a highlight of the trip. For dinner we had traditional Hungarian goulash which was divine, and had meat and potato after, ending with a dessert that included alcohol (!) but not too much, so it wasn't bad for us.

After we had eaten we all went up to the balcony, and started dancing because throughout our meal there had been groups playing music and performing songs for us. It was a lot of fun and I danced with a lot of my friends. We then got told there were too many of us up there, it might break the balcony, but we didn't stop dancing. We just appreciated your support. The trip was a great learning experience and taught me a lot about Europe and myself.

**Aisling Lauder**





*There was a different slant on Palm Sunday at Somervell this year, as making paper cloaks had messages placed on them by the congregation symbolizing cloaks that were spread on the ground during Christ's entry that day.*

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