

# NEWSLETTER

Sharing information from 10am Leaders' Meeting

## *Being Remembered*

Eleven of my cousins, our spouses/partners, and some of their children gathered last Saturday for a memorial service for my Aunt Dorothy Fordyce, the last of five her siblings, who died in March. The memorial service didn't have the feeling of being rushed and under time pressure that accompanies many funerals.

Us cousins are now in our mid-50s to early 70s. We realise that we are now the older generation. Some of us are in poor health. We are all greyer. Some have developed lined characterful faces.

In the past 15 years, as well as gathering for funerals, we consciously decided to gather the wider clan to celebrate milestone 80th and 85th birthdays of our parents, uncles and aunts.

With Dorothy now gone, some of us are asking how we will keep the whānau together, maintain the links and foster an ongoing feeling of belonging and identity as members of the Fordyce family. That question is sitting with us at the moment. It is too soon after the memorial service to process it further.

My cousin Anne, a retired Anglican priest, led the service. She invited me to write and present the eulogy. Dorothy wrote an autobiography ten years ago that I used to summarise significant events in her life. I also shared two personal memories.

When my parents separated in 1970 for three months, Dorothy invited my mum Ruth, Helen my sister and I to stay in her unit. A supportive act.

Dorothy also made thousands of decorated white handkerchiefs with crocheted decorative edges and a fancy corner over the years. Heather had one tucked away under her wedding dress when we got married in 1982. When a Matchbox toy tip up truck of mine broke,

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## *From my desk ...*

Last week I received an email from Synod Superintendent Rob Ferguson with greetings for Pentecost. In his email he noted that Pentecost is a wonderful time (as we enter winter) to stop and reflect on our faith and on the sense of the "other" in the lives we lead. If we stop and take the time, ordinary things can become transformed for an instant within us, and we can find we are lifted into a new appreciation of Godness at the heart of life.

Last Sunday I asked Hugh Laurenson to reflect on his faith and the impact his faith has on his life. Hugh did that, and I have included his story in this newsletter. I have also asked Philp Garside to introduce a book of the month slot. My intention is that these books will be available for people.

This month also Philip Garside remembers his aunt, and we pay tribute to former President of the Methodist Church, Ron Malpass.

All of this as we enter Pentecost, in a world and time very different from just a few years ago. As you read these stories, I invite you to be still, be silent, to reflect on what is happening within you and around you.

Arohanui, Nicola.

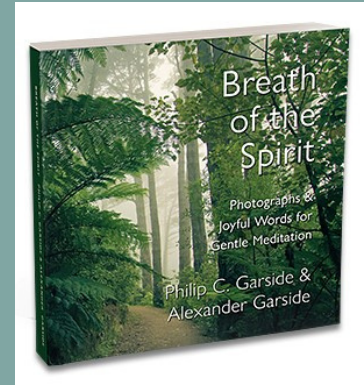
## *Faith, what is faith?*

In his famous pop song, George Michael says that we've got to have it, but what does it really mean? I decided to Google the definition of faith to see what I could find, and got a number of different answers. One source said: 'complete trust or confidence in someone or something', while another stated: 'belief that is not based on proof'. This last one tied well into the religious element: 'belief in the existence of God - strong religious feelings or beliefs'. When Nicola asked me to share what my faith means to me, I decided to cover some areas of my life where faith has played and continues to play an important role.

I was born and raised in the Methodist church - with both grandfathers as former ministers and presidents of the church, I couldn't really escape! Wesley has always been home, and I am lucky to have somewhere I feel that I truly belong. Over the years, my faith has developed and shifted with me as I have grown, influenced by family, friends, different jobs and personal experiences. A few times my faith has been challenged - when I first taught at Wesley College in Auckland, I encountered students who also claimed to be Methodist. What struck me was their behaviour and values that didn't match those I'd grown to associate with being Methodist, which threw me. Another example was a service led by a lay preacher here at Wesley - his main focus was on the gospel of Matthew in great detail, including a great deal of, to me, archaic theology. I was angry - I'd never felt so incensed by a service like this before, to the point where I stopped attending services here for some time. These experiences made me reflect on what it means to be Methodist and a Christian, and my beliefs.

My faith has had a significant impact on my identity, values and outlook. I get a great deal of pleasure from helping and supporting others, and serving others, a particularly Methodist way of looking at the world.

## *Book of the month*



**Breath of the Spirit: Photographs & Joyful Words for Gentle Meditation.**

By Philip C. Garside & Alexander Garside

Do you feel tired, stressed, over busy? Does the world around you seem dull and flat?

Pause and let these 57 full colour photographs with simple words boost your spirit.

Photographer Alexander Garside helps us to see the world through fresh eyes, and to appreciate the beauty of nature and our urban landscape. There is joy, light and life all around us.

Available in print \$25, eBooks \$15, PowerPoint slides and sets of jpg images.

<https://pgpl.co.nz/breath-of-the-spirit-print/>

### **Being remembered continued ...**

Dorothy replaced the pin that joined the top to the body, bent over the end, trimmed off the excess and, in a jiffy, the truck was good as new. The repair has held for 50 years.

So abiding memories of Dorothy (who had no children of her own) are of kindness when family needed support, and the ability to repair anything.

This raises for me the question; how will I be remembered when I die? How will you be remembered?

Philip Garside, nephew, 1 June 2022.

Becoming a teacher was a way that I felt I could help make a difference in others' lives, and I have been blessed to have had some amazing experiences over the past 10 years. I have had moments where I knew this was what I was meant to be doing, and where I felt I was making a real impact. Teaching has brought with it some challenges, too - times where my faith has really been tested to its limits. There have been times where my self-belief and esteem have been shattered, and I've had to really question everything. Sometimes it takes others' thoughts and opinions to get you back onto your faith journey. I've had to call on my faith recently in the search for a new job - this can be a tough time where you can feel that you're unworthy or can't meet others' expectations.

Often our faith lies in strength. As Bob Marley once said, "You never know how strong you are until being strong is the only choice you have". There are those you look up to, both for their faith and strength - in my case, my parents. My younger brother Isaac is severely autistic, and this has had a profound impact on our family over the years. I can only imagine how this has impacted on their relationship, but they have always

remained steadfast and caring despite the challenges. I think in many ways this has made our family stronger and closer. As the eldest, I feel responsible for looking out for others in my family, my way of giving back for all the love and support I have received. The recent death of my grandmother was another time where my faith was tested and I had to be strong for others and myself. Although death is a part of life, there's always a part of you that wants to ask why - how someone who has so much faith in you and your abilities, and with such a lot of love can be taken away so quickly.

So where does my faith lie now? I think like us all it ebbs and flows - sometimes it's strong, others it's quite lacking. When I see the horror of war and conflict and the damage we can inflict upon each other, my faith is seriously challenged. On the flipside, when I think of the aroha, support and guidance I have in my life, my faith is restored. I am grateful to be part of this community of faith, and I look forward to continuing to question and grow my faith, and working alongside others to help to enrich theirs, too.

Hugh Laurensen, 29th May 2022



