



Loving God, His People, His World



## NURTURING RELATIONSHIPS AND FRIENDSHIP: BUILDING BONDS THAT REFLECT GOD'S LOVE

Friends are those rare people who ask how we are and then wait to hear the answer.

- Ed Cunningham

<sup>12</sup> When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. <sup>13</sup> "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. <sup>14</sup> Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. <sup>15</sup> I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. <sup>16</sup> Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. <sup>17</sup> Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

<sup>34</sup> "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. <sup>35</sup> By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

- John 13:12-17, 34 -35

In a world marked by rapid changes and constant distractions, the value of genuine relationships and deep friendships cannot be overstated. As members of the body of Christ, we are called to cultivate meaningful connections that reflect the love, grace, and unity found in Jesus. Over the next couple of weeks our preaching theme will explore the importance of nurturing relationships and fostering friendship within the church community, and with friends and family in order to love each other more deeply.

#### THE ESSENCE OF RELATIONSHIPS

At the core of our existence lies the innate desire for connection and belonging. From the beginning of creation, God designed us to live in community and to share our lives with one another. Genesis 2:18 reminds us that it is not good for man to be alone, highlighting the importance of companionship and relationships in our journey of faith. The whole story of creation is one of built around relationship, a picture of walking in a garden, and feeling no shame, been one with God each other and our world.

#### **BUILDING BLOCKS OF HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS**

Healthy relationships are built on a foundation of love, trust, and mutual respect. Ephesians 4:2-3 encourages us to bear with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. As followers of Christ, we are called to embody these virtues in our interactions with one another,

fostering an atmosphere of acceptance, understanding, and grace.

#### FRIENDSHIP: A GIFT FROM GOD

Friendship is a precious gift from God that enriches our lives and brings joy and fulfilment. In fact, as I have been thinking around this theme I can't think of a time in my life that relationships have not made my life better or given it more meaning. Proverbs 17:17 reminds us that a friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for a time of adversity. True friendship transcends mere companionship; it is characterized by loyalty, empathy, and shared experiences.

#### THE ROLE OF FRIENDSHIP IN THE CHURCH

Within the church community, friendship plays a vital role in nurturing spiritual growth and providing support and encouragement. Acts 2:42-47 illustrates the early believers' commitment to fellowship, breaking bread together, and sharing their lives with one another. In a similar manner, we are called to cultivate deep friendships within the church, where we can pray for one another, bear each other's burdens, and spur one another on in love and good deeds. I was reminded recently of a small group that I was a part of some years ago, went and painted one of the groups house. The person was going through a bit of a rough time, and the group wanted to bless them. The person that reminded me we had done this was a relatively new Christian at the time, and her comment was "this is something I thought only family did for each other!". She is right, we become family.

#### NAVIGATING CHALLENGES IN RELATIONSHIPS

While relationships bring great joy and fulfilment, they also present challenges and opportunities for growth. Proverbs 27:17 reminds us that 'iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another'. In the context of relationships, conflicts and disagreements are going to happen, but they also provide opportunities for reconciliation, forgiveness, and growth. As Proverbs 17:9 says 'Whoever would foster love covers over an offense, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends'.

#### PRACTICAL TIPS FOR NURTURING RELATIONSHIPS

#### 1. PRIORITISE QUALITY TIME

Invest time in building and nurturing relationships, whether through meaningful conversations, shared activities, or acts of service. Join a small group.

#### 2. EXTEND GRACE AND FORGIVENESS

Cultivate a spirit of grace and forgiveness in your relationships, recognizing that we all fall short and make mistakes.

#### 3. BE VULNERABLE AND AUTHENTIC

Share your joys, struggles, and fears with trusted friends, fostering a sense of intimacy and connection.

#### 4. PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER

Lift each other up in prayer, interceding for one another's needs and seeking God's guidance and provision in all things.

<sup>12</sup> My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. <sup>14</sup> You are my friends if you do what I command. <sup>15</sup> I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.

- John 15:12-15

As members of the body of Christ, let us commit to nurturing relationships and fostering friendship within the church community. May we embody the love, grace, and unity found in Jesus, as we walk together in faith.

Yours in Christ Phil







Sunday 3 March

8.30am NZ Prayer Book Service (404)

10.00am Family Worship

**Theme** Foundations of Healthy Relationships

Understanding the significance of God's design for relationships and

the foundational principles of love, respect, and unity. Genesis 1:26-31 (pg. 8) // Ephesians 4:1-16 (pg.1138)

**Readings** Genesis 1:2 **Preacher** Jude Saxon

Sunday 10 March

8.30am NZ Prayer Book Service (Healing)

10.00am Family Worship

**Theme** Communication in Relationships

Understanding the power of words to build up or tear down relationships and the importance of listening, empathy, and honesty.

**Readings** Proverbs 18:10-25 (pg.627) // Ephesians 4:17-32 (pg.1138)

**Preacher** Philip Greenwood

Sunday 17 March

8.30am NZ Prayer Book Service (476)

10.00am Family Worship

**Theme** Building Strong Families of faith

Understanding the biblical role of parents, grandparents, and children

in creating healthy and thriving families of faith.

**Readings** Ephesians 5:22-33 (pg.1140) // Proverbs 22:6 (pg. 631)

**Preacher** Philip Greenwood

Sunday 24 March - Palm Sunday

8.30am Morning Worship & Holy Communion

10.00am Family Worship

**Theme** Conflict Resolution and Forgiveness

Understanding the inevitability of conflicts in relationships and the importance of humility, patience, and reconciliation and forgiveness.

**Readings** Matthew 18:15-35 (pg. 953) // Colossians 3:1-17 (pg. 1148)

**Preacher** Kathryn van Veen

Friday 29 March - *Good Friday* 9.30am Good Friday Service

**Theme** The Cross

Through Scripture readings, prayers, and moments of silence, we will enter into the sombre atmosphere of Calvary, where Jesus bore the weight of our sins and endured the cross out of His great love for us.

**Readings** Galatians 5:13-26 (pg.1134) // Luke 5:1-11 (pg.998)

Preacher Jude Saxon

Theme

Sunday 31 March - Easter Day 9.30am Easter Day Service

He is Risen

The day that changes everything. The power that raised Jesus from

the dead, now lives in you.

**Readings** Matthew 28:1-20 (pg. 967) // Luke 24:36-53 (pg.1027)

Preacher Philip Greenwood













Continuing our series of short glimpses into mission in far-away places, Peter Renew reports back from the front line...this month from Vietnam.

## **FORGIVENESS**

This month, I am reflecting on forgiveness

I've often been asked what I actually did in mission. Mostly people's ideas centre around teaching, evangelising, preaching, serving severely disadvantaged people and church planting. Some are right, some are not. But there was also an unusual aspect to my work.

I had the challenge and privilege of representing a Christian Mission and our work to many officials in elevated positions of national leadership, or internationally with the U.N. or W.H.O for instance. For legal reasons our mission's work often needed approval from government authorities; some of which were intolerant of Christianity. Yet I had official access to such people and various opportunities arose in unlikely places. In some countries I was granted access to areas where foreigners were not permitted, and on one occasion I was escorted by a police jeep announcing by loudspeaker, in local language, to "keep away, foreigner approaching!"

In a war zone I had embassy contacts who helped us obtain medical supplies. Such contacts made me 'a person of interest' to the secret police. In a country controlled by a military junta I was received with

grandeur by a senior government minister, who asked me, on TV-camera, why I did such work, and, half expecting to be jailed, I was able to tell him.

Travelling to a restricted area of the Indian sub-continent I was picked up on arrival, literally on the airport tarmac, by security officers who were astounded that I had Ministry of Home Affairs permission to be there. Elsewhere, a town mayor in a Communist state was amazed to be reprimanded by a senior government official for being rude to 'the foreigner'...because I was a Christian!

Some days I was negotiating contracts in the powerful corridors of government. Over the next few days, I might have been meeting local church leaders, or drinking tea with slum dwellers while discussing the effectiveness of our programmes.

In Vietnam I often travelled extensively with the national director of ophthalmology, an official of the Communist government, as we planned ways to increase eye surgery in disadvantaged areas. One exhausting week, we took a break at a place called My Lai (see picture), which is famous for an appalling event in March 1968 when a platoon of American soldiers massacred about 500 civilians. I remember it happening back then, when I was only 11.

As we walked around the site of the atrocities, bullet holes were still evident. There was a sombre atmosphere which revealed the terrors of that day so long ago; but still fresh in the minds of many Vietnamese people. There was a small memorial museum, which has now





been demolished and replaced. But, along the top of the frontage was a message in Vietnamese, permanently embossed into the previous concrete façade. I enquired of my colleague what it said and they appeared to be uncomfortable.

There was a connection with many previous conversations about faith and the reasons for the work I did. I realised that there was reticence to say what the message actually said; and it was translated as, "We will never forgive the Americans for what was done here."

From a human perspective, I can understand why someone might write that; but it's also not the most helpful way to move forward to reconciliation.

The Bible includes much about forgiveness. The topic occurs frequently. It is not something that is optional. It is not something that is 'quite a nice idea'. It is something mandatory because it is important for life to move on, even when the circumstances were ghastly, tragic and of exceptional hurt.

Forgiveness doesn't trivialise or reduce the wrong which was done, it doesn't say that it was alright after all, but it does add a dimension of freedom which provides a space to live, breathe and manoeuvre our way through life. God forgives those who repent, and he forgives as if it had never happened.

We aspire, with the assistance of the Holy Spirit, to be as much like Jesus as possible, in all aspects of life. So, we forgive. Jesus even forgave the people who crucified him.

<sup>33</sup>When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals - one on his right, the other on his left. <sup>34</sup> Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."

- Luke 23:32-34

Peter Renew // Assisting Clergy





# A MATTER OF SUSTAINABILITY

Okay, strap in, we're going to talk about strategy for a moment.

I am one of those who think strategy is important when it is applied to things that are important, with a certain open-handedness. And I think the work of Bright Hope World and our partners is quite important indeed.

At Bright Hope World, everything is under one umbrella strategy: 'sustainability at every level'. 'Every level' means our donors, our leadership, our team, and our partners. We want to see what we are doing thrive and grow and succeed; not just now, but as long as God wants us to keep partnering with exceptional people. We believe that could be for quite a long time yet. So, we've worked hard to build a wonderfully committed and stable donor base. We have built a strong leadership team with more great people involved. We have worked closely with our partners on local income generation and a raft of other initiatives to ensure their work continues. That leaves our team, and it is now a big focus.

This is being expressed in two main ways. We are bringing on quite a few new people to help carry the load of looking after our partners. This is such a vital job and isn't easy. It involves a lot of time and sacrifice for our people, and some of them are managing a lot of

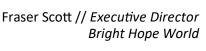
relationships and endeavouring to support people in very difficult circumstances. Some of our partners face extreme hardship, war, famine, and/or persecution. Most are being looked to by their communities as the source of support and comfort and may receive very little themselves. Our people are so good at stepping into that gap and just listening, praying, and loving our partners. But it can beat you up sometimes!

And that's where our second emphasis comes in. Bright Hope World people tend to be resilient and self-motivated, but they do also carry a lot. So, we as a team are committing to doing more to support one another. We want to check in more, pray more, and connect more. We are extremely fortunate to have team members that go the distance with us, and we want that to continue. We want to honour the fact that our people give their time for free. They pay their travel costs. They bear the burdens – and sometimes the trauma – of our partners. The least we can do is make sure such fine folks are cared for. We've always done this to some degree, but we want to do better.

This is where you might be able help us a little bit. If you are reading this, then you probably know about Bright Hope World. You probably hear some of the stories and — as our people are inclined to do — all the attention is directed to our partners. But know that our people work hard, sacrifice, listen to heart-breaking stories, and as one of our partnership facilitators put it, "drink bad coffee in dark rooms".

I'd be grateful if you'd encourage these people. Pray for them and support them as you can, because they are very focused on the needs of others.

Thanks for reading.







### HANNAH ROMANIA

Winter is a picturesque time of year in Romania. Snow draped over the landscape like a blanket, the crunching sound of footsteps on fresh snow, boots, warm clothes, cosiness and warmth indoors. It's rare to find someone who doesn't appreciate the beauty of a fresh snowy landscape. For many though, any romantic response is short lived as the reality of surviving takes over. Living in a shelter with gaps to the outside air in temperatures that go as low as -20°C is life threatening. Thank you to those who support these families with firewood, warm clothing and food. In December we were able to help a family purchase a pig which the father had the skills to process and preserve, providing them with food over the winter months.

#### **HANNAH Christmas Celebration**







ABOVE: Making biscuits together

LEFT: A time to reflect and celebrate together

## Children and Families - Inspiring Hope and Achievable Goals.

We are continuing to hear wonderful stories of how the training in social work practice, which HANNAH has facilitated, is making a difference in people's lives. In the first instance it brings inspiration, hope and confidence to the people who work with families and children, as they become better equipped to support the families they help. As a result, the families, children, and young people feel they are being heard and given their own voice to express their strengths, needs and hopes. This gives motivation for deeper and long-lasting change.

Over the past 2 years HANNAH has facilitated *Partnering For Safety Training*, making it available to all those who work with families and children in the region. This includes NGO's as well as State Services. To help embed this training in practice, participants are invited to monthly online mentoring sessions with trainer Catherine Santoro.

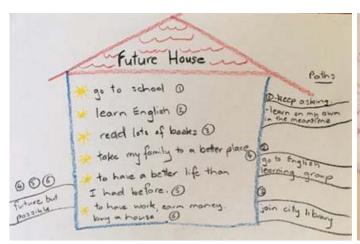
Here are some stories showing the positive impact this training has made to social worker's practice and thereby to families...

#### **Future House**

One girl was overjoyed when she realised that she could actually dare to dream for a better future.

Using a 'tool' called a Future House, she expressed her hopes:

- to attend school
- to learn English
- to read lots of books
- to take her whole family to a better living place
- to have a better life than she had before
- to have a job.





This girl is from a family of 7 who live in a very small room with 2 beds. We knew her and two of her siblings from when they were in the TB Prevention Institution which closed during covid-19. She is now living in a place that will enable her to attend school, she is one of a group practising English, and has joined the city library. Her other dreams are motivations for the future but for now she can see that they are not impossible.

The other beautiful thing in this story is that the parents had been resistant to letting her go as they felt they needed her to look after the younger children. By asking them the question of "where would they like their daughter to be in five years' time?", they realised they wanted her to have more opportunity than they had and so supported her plan for education. She loves her family and keeps in regular contact with them. Over Christmas she chose to stay with them for 2 weeks, leaving her warm accommodation for an environment of cold and snow to be with them.

#### **Three Houses**

Using the 'tool' of Three Houses: House of Worries, House of Good Things and House of Dreams. In this case it was used with children but is useful with parents also.

**Social worker:** "It was good to hear from the children's perspective and understand what it is like for them."

"I realised that there were good things happening too. In my job we tend to look just at the negative and forget to look for what is going well."

#### **Training**

We have scheduled further *Partnering For Safety Training* for May 2024. There will be 2 days of



House of Good Things

Foundational Training on the 21st and 22nd May, followed by a day of more in-depth training for those in the community who participated in previous years.

#### Prayer

For the organisation of this event, eg venue, catering, materials etc., and for the funds to run the training programme.

#### **Funding**

HANNAH is asking for a fee from participants but as this will be in line with their local income it will not cover the actual expenses. Please consider whether you can help financially so that we can cover the cost from targeted donations.

It is wonderful to see the values and beliefs of the HANNAH Strategic Plan, stated below, coming to life in this training...

We believe in taking the time to develop deep trusting relationships with children, families and communities that inspire hope and motivate change.

We believe in sharing our knowledge and expertise freely with other organisations and welcome opportunities to train and mentor other professionals working in the same field.

Thank you for your support in helping the 'HANNAH dream' come to pass.

Blessings, Kati, Alice and Ken

Alice & Ken Winter // HANNAH







#### **MISSIONS GIVING 2024**

Our total received for Overseas Missions to the end of February is \$705.00

This is 6.4% of of our target of \$11,000 for 2024.

Thank-you for supporting our Mission Partners



# DEEPER WITH JESUS AT CONVERGENCE CAMP 2024

If you missed Convergence this year, I'm sure you won't miss the benefits it will bring.

Clear waters, golden beaches, and hot days – sounds like some tropical island in the pacific. Sure, Convergence Camp 2024 didn't have any coconuts with mini umbrellas to drink from, but it had everything else, as well as family and collective worship of our good God.

Guest speaker, Sam Harvey, delivered a message that, at first glance, seemed like we were only drinking theological coconut milk instead of eating some tropical island food that makes this analogy work alongside Hebrews 5:13.

Yet it was vey timely as we, the diocese, enter into the next phase of "Revitalise {Nelson}". It was a message about prayer.

As we look at the world changing rapidly around us, in these post-Christian, post-Covid times, Sam spoke hope. Without denying life is crazy, with a generous splattering of tough times, he spoke of it as an opportunity to go deeper with Christ.

The beauty of a shrinking church is that we can stop and look at what we are, or are not, doing. How are we doing with prayer? Individually, how have our quiet times been? For some of us, we may have quiet times every morning, or for others, it maybe a few days or weeks between prayer with God.

Regardless of where we are at, going deeper with Jesus is for everyone.

As someone who likes an idea that is also practical, I appreciated when Sam coupled his message with the practical idea of growing a group of people deeper with Christ. If we truly want to go deeper, Sam offered the idea of journeying with people to do it.

For example, as a small group, we could ask each other what going deeper looks like for them, individually, this coming week, and gently follow up on them the following week. Accountability and journeying with others is far more effective than soloing it. As we learn to discipline ourselves to spend time with Jesus, we begin to desire it more which will lead to delighting in him.

I felt a big gulp when Sam described the attitude of the church he used to be a part of as "we can do more on a shovel than on our knees". As a doer, this struck home.

I love the idea that we are partnering with Christ in his mission to restore all things back to him, but it is so easy to get caught up doing, forgetting that all we can do is plant and water the seed and it is our God that grows things. This has to start with me. My individual quiet time needs to be fought for and prioritised over everything else. My life shouldn't be separated into spiritual growth and everyday chores, but intertwined. Passionate, radical prayer is essential.

If you missed camp, but want to go deeper with Christ – or "up a click" in the words of Sam – who could you do this with?

I'm sure it will be awkward to start with, to be vulnerable about our personal spiritual journey with others. But, to

quote G.K. Chesterton, "if a thing is worth doing, it is worth doing badly".

Sure, alongside the challenging and encouraging message at camp was swimming, good food, reconnecting or meeting new people, times to let the extrovert in me run free, and other times to let the introvert in me recover.

Would I go to camp again? Absolutely, as it is a fantastic time. Yet the takeaway for me was: let's support each

other, building a culture in our church of discipleship and prayer as we hunger after the God who loves. Let's individually and communally reach out to the one who has done everything to reach us.

Jason Shaw // Community Ministries Advisor









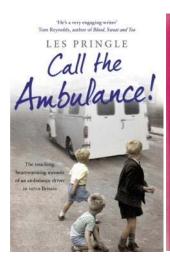


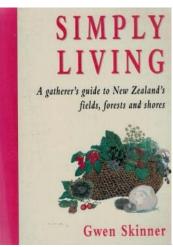


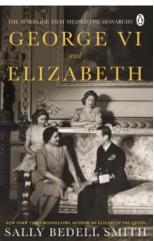


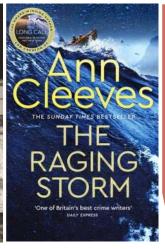












At the January meeting of the Book Club A Holiday Read was the topic.

#### **Call The Ambulance** - Les Pringle

The heartwarming story of the ambulance Service in Birmingham England in the 1970's and the patients they Visited. At that time Ambulances were only equipped first aid gear and oxygen cylinders. Lonely people often rang for help, when they only needed company, using it as a social service. An interesting read, told with warmth and humour.

#### Simply Living - Gwen Skinner

A guide to the infinite variety of wild foods available in New Zealand - greens, roots, berries, wild and cultivated flowers, shoots mushrooms, fungi, lichens, as well as seaweeds and unusual off-the-beach foods. Many of these are foods, which are, or were once, commercially available in English, European and Oriental market places, or were once used extensively by our early Maoris and European settlers. Sections covering plants fully identified and illustrated, medicines, cosmetics, household hints, home pickling through to wine making.

George VI and Elizabeth - Sally Bedell Smith Granted special access by Queen Elizabeth II to her parents' letters and diaries and those of their close friends and family, Sally Bedell Smith brings the love story of

this iconic royal couple to life. It covers the early life of George, his marriage to Elizabeth, and the struggles with Edward, his abdication, requests for money and status. It emphasizes the role played by Elizabeth supporting George - his stutter, coronation war years and their subsequent successful life together.

#### The Raging Storm - Anne Cleeves

"A devilishly intricate mystery" is how this murder mystery is described. Set in in Devon, England, it features Detective Matthew Venn investigating a murder that took place in a small wind swept coastal village. Matthew lived there as a boy where he had a strict Brethren upbringing. Matthew is uncomfortable and insecure interviewing the villagers especially as he publicly renounced his faith and is now gay, married to Jonathan. Faith and superstition mix as another body is found in Scully, and Matthew finds his judgement clouded. The wind continues to howl, and he realizes that his own life is in danger. A good read.

The next meeting of the Book Club will be at 10.00am on Thursday 21 March. The topic is Short Stories. Ph. Margaret Hackston 547 6643 for info.

#### FINANCIAL UPDATE

Final Surplus / Deficit

Overview of St Barnabas Parish Accounts to 30 November 2023

\$14,512.00

	Actual YTD	Budget YTD	Variance
Parish Giving	\$183,289.00	\$159,038.00	\$24,251.00
Total Income	\$314,903.00	\$243,232.00	\$71,671.00
Total Expenses	\$305,422.00	\$261,952.00	\$43,470.00
Operating Surplus / (Deficit)	\$9480.00		
Non Operating Income	\$5,032.00 (From Trusts/Bequests)		

## What's on in March

Sunday 3 March 8.30am NZ Prayer Book (404) 10.00am Family Worship 6.00pm Senior Youth Tuesday 5 March 10.00am Melody Makers Wednesday 6 March Reflective Service 10.30am **Thursday** 7 March

1 hursday 7 March 6.30pm Youth Friday 8 March

2.00pm Tea, Cake and Conversation

Sunday10 March8.30amNZ Prayer Book (Healing)10.00amFamily WorshipTuesday12 March10.00amMelody Makers

Wednesday
10.30am
Thursday
6.30pm
Saturday
13 March
Reflective Service
14 March
Youth
Youth
16 March

8.00am Walking Group - Ruby Bay to Kina Beach

Sunday 17 March

8.30am NZ Prayer Book (476)
10.00am Family Worship
12.00pm Picnic in the Park
6.00pm Senior Youth

Tuesday 10.00am Wednesday 10.30am Thursday 10.00am

6.30pm **Friday** 

Friday 22 March 2.00pm Tea, Cake and Conversation

**Sunday** 8.30am **24 March - Palm Sunday** Morning Worship & Holy Communion

19 March

20 March

21 March

Youth

Melody Makers

Reflective Service

The Book Club - Short Stories

10.00am Family Worship 6.00pm Senior Youth Tuesday 26 March 10.00am Melody Makers Wednesday 27 March 10.30am Reflective Service Friday 29 March - Good Friday 9.30am Good Friday Service

**Sunday**9.30am **31 March**Easter Day Service

Giving to support the work of St Barnabas

If you choose to give by online banking or direct credit our account details are: St Barnabas Church // 03 1709 0041226 00 // Westpac Richmond

## St Barnabas Walking Group Saturday 16 March - Ruby Bay to Kina Beach.

An easy walk walking along the foreshore Leaving St Barnabas Church at 8.00am. Please pay the driver \$5.00.

Contact: Kevin Nilsen 548 0964.

The Book Club
The Book Club will meet
at Elizabeth Olliver's
home at 10.00am
Thursday 21 March

**Topic: Short Stories** 

Info: Margaret Hackston 547 6643

### **PRAYER CHAIN**

If you have a prayer request, the St Barnabas Prayer Chain will be more than happy to pray for you.

Please call Pam 547 7978





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Phone: 547 5631

email: office.stbarnabas@xtra.co.nz

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