

St Luke's in the City

Celebrating at the Crossroads **The Reign of Christ, 25 November 2007**

Dear Friends,

At this close of the church's year, and with Advent-Christmas-Epiphany imminent, there are a number of important matters to which I would like to draw our attention.

Saturday 8 December is going to be a landmark day in the life of the parish, as well as in the life of James Edward McKenna. Ordination as priest is undoubtedly an intensely personal event, nevertheless the essence of the priesthood can only be understood as an expression of the life of the community, the Body of Christ. An individual responds to a call, yet, paradoxically, the call is actually the call to all of us – to be the priesthood of all believers, the Christ community, those willing to enter into the sacrifice of Christ. Let us pray for Jim, for ourselves, and for an openness to our call to mission as the Christ people at these crossroads.

It is that calling to all of us that the **Mission and Ministry Review** has been directing our attention during the last several months. The consultant's report has been received by Vestry and will be available shortly. I encourage you to read the report carefully, to reflect upon the Consultant's conclusions, to consider the questions from Vestry, and to discuss these things with each other. Remember that the mission and ministry here is yours, belongs to all of us, and involves all of us. May I encourage you to pray regularly the St Luke's Mission Prayer.

Next Saturday local MP **Tim Barnett** and partner **Ramon Maniapoto** will be welcomed to St Luke's for a celebration. The Anglican Church of Aotearoa New Zealand and Polynesia does not permit the blessing of gay and lesbian relationships, so it is not possible for me to bless Tim & Ramon. The fact that our church refuses to bless such relationships is a scandal to the Gospel and cause of deep sadness to me and many others. However, as a person under orders, having pledged obedience to my Bishop, I am obliged to uphold our church's discipline. The occasion will therefore be a non-liturgical celebration for local friends who were not able to be with them at their Civil Union in Taupo.

At its last meeting Vestry responded to the Proposal to by the Historic Places Trust to Register St Luke's church and vicarage land as a '**Wahi Tapu**'. Copies of the Proposal document and Vestry's response and recommendations are available in the church. The proposed Registration is to give recognition to the burial place of chief Tautahi, after whom Christchurch and Canterbury have been named – 'o Tautahi'. Vestry intends to discuss with the Church Property Trustees (the owners of the land) and the Historic Places Trust a suitable symbol and explanatory signage to be erected on the Kilmore Street frontage of the vicarage.

Please do take an **Advent-Christmas-Epiphany 2008 guide**. Perhaps you know of someone who might appreciate being given a copy?

With my love,
David