

Christmas Greetings from Ross and Kathy Callaghan



Hi from Paraparaumu, New Zealand. We pray that the Lord will bless you richly this Christmas and that you will know His joy in all you do.

Here is our 2009 newsletter to keep you up to date with our activities.

Family

Debbie and Fraser in Melbourne are doing well. **JJ** (3) and **Heidi** (1) are growing rapidly and have a very full life. It is lovely to see Heidi's personality emerging as she starts to talk and interact with us. JJ still has lots of energy. He is wearing glasses to strengthen one of his eyes that is a bit weak. Fraser has a contract to establish a fuel supply depot in Brisbane and the project is going well. The family have joined a new, progressive Church which is great for them all.

Sarah and Michael have exciting news! They will be having a son in March. We are helping them do up their house in anticipation of the big event: putting in insulation, relining walls, plastering and painting. We thought we had finished with that sort of thing when we moved to our new house! Sarah has been teaching part time this year which has worked out well for her. She has just resigned from the Faultline Chorus but hopes to take up her singing again once family commitments allow. We were relieved when **Michael** had his contract as an IT specialist renewed, as this gives more certainty in the future.



Phil continues to do well in his business, Verboom Badges. He has a shop in Cuba Mall in Central Wellington, and often has stalls at markets and big events throughout the country. He even had a stall in Melbourne this year, and it did very well. See www.buttonbadge.co.nz Phil was voted Wellington's "Character of the year" and had a couple of moments of fame when his "Bring Back Georgie Pie" campaign got squashed by McDonalds, who own the Georgie Pie copyright. Occasionally Phil plays keyboard in a band and for sports he plays indoor soccer and 20/20 cricket, where he is becoming known as a great bowler. Phil's wife **Sarah** does occasional massages and is continuing with her university science studies.

Travels

This year we went on a wonderful trip to Vietnam and China. We took a Wendy Wu tour which was fully escorted and included all meals. After a short stopover in Singapore we joined 19 Aussies for our 27 day tour.

In Vietnam we visited Saigon, the Mekong Delta, the Cu Chi tunnels, Hoi An, Hue, Hanoi and Halong Bay. The Vietnamese are lovely people and we enjoyed their food; their warm, friendly attitudes; their culture; interacting with them while shopping, and learning about their history. It was interesting to get a totally different view of the 'American War in Vietnam' from the one we had portrayed to us as the Vietnam War back in the 1970s. Vietnam is definitely worth a visit!

Next we saw some of the big cities in China: Kunming, Guilin, Yangshuo, Xian, Beijing and Shanghai. China has become so industrialized and westernized! It was amazing to see the massive changes that are taking place with lots of building, modernization and freedoms. Interspersed with this was some wonderful scenery in the Stone Forest, Guilin and the Li River, the Reed Flute Caves, and the Great Wall of China. Then there was the culture and the history! The Terracotta Warriors, Tiananmen Square, the Forbidden City and mighty Shanghai. What a privilege to visit such a progressive and beautiful country.

We also visited Debbie, Fraser, JJ and Heidi in Melbourne three times during the year! It is relatively cheap and easy to get to Melbourne so we have been able to be 'active grandparents' even though JJ and Heidi live in another country. They also visited us twice and we talk a lot on Skype so we keep in touch really well. On our third visit to Australia we drove from Sydney to Melbourne via Canberra. We enjoyed the beautiful coastline but the weather was poor with lots of rain, and we very nearly got snowed in on our way from Canberra to the coast. So much for sunny Australia!



Family history

Kathy has continued to research our family history. She joined the Genealogical Society and this has proved valuable in finding how to access information from a range of sources. Next year we will be visiting Norway and the Shetland Islands so Kathy can see more of where different parts of her family came from. Ross has also been recording the story of our family on our new website and we will be continuing with these big projects in the coming year. You can always get up to date news on our activities (and lots of photos!) from our website <http://callaghans.yolasite.com>

Health

This year it seems we have been called on more than ever to support friends with serious illnesses. Perhaps this is reflective of our ages! We have maintained good health, though, for which we are very grateful. Ross has ongoing pain in his back and neck, and Kathy had a very painful episode of back pain that came out of the blue. We try to maintain our exercise regimes with Ross walking a friend's dog (Joshua) and Kathy taking up cycling. The older you get the more you appreciate your health!

Chorus

Kathy resigned from the Faultline Chorus and no longer sings Barbershop. This was a big decision after so many years singing in choruses and quartets, but the travel to practices made it very difficult to stay fully involved. Kathy did go to Auckland to watch this year's competitions and still maintains the friendships she has made with so many in the Barbershop world.

Business

Our contract for work in retail assessment finally finished and since then we have had almost no work, so are pretty much retired. Kathy has been doing some relieving as receptionist at the local medical centre but we seem to be so busy that she is often not available when they want her to work! Being 'retired' has meant that, rather than working, we are spending much of our time on ministry activities, so we are always busy!

Ministries

We now have significant leadership responsibilities in our Church: Gateway Christian Fellowship. Ross is an elder and Kathy is on the leadership team. Ross preaches regularly and Kathy is responsible for pastoral care. We also lead a home group. One of the exciting new developments for us this year has been getting involved as volunteers at Sevenoaks Retirement Village in Paraparaumu. We take residents from the dementia unit out for walks; lead sing-songs and run Church services for elderly people in the hospital. 13 people from Gateway are now volunteering at Sevenoaks, and it is obvious that we are bringing a lot of joy to the residents there. You can read all about our Church on the website that Ross has set up: <http://gatewaychristianfellowship.yolasite.com>

Ross continues to prepare Bible Studies for his website <http://rosscallaghan.yolasite.com> and these are now being used all around the world. We have also continued our involvement with Girls Brigade and attended a wonderful Fonomarae camp in Christchurch at the beginning of the year. Each day we made a highlights video and projected it onto the big screen. Ross has also helped with Queen's Award, ran a training programme on mentoring, and presented a 'Train the trainer' workshop for the Girls' Brigade Australia National Conference in Canberra.

Visitors

We live in a very beautiful part of New Zealand and it is lovely to be able to share this with visitors. We love it when people pop in for a coffee, stay a few days; or go for a walk on the beach. If you are close by to our place in Paraparaumu please come and see us! One of our special visitors this year was Kiem, a student from Vietnam. We met him on the plane as we returned home from Vietnam and China and he became 'part of our family' for the year, visiting us often.

So we have had a great 2009. It is now 2 years since we moved from Lower Hutt to the Kapiti Coast and we are now well established in our lovely house; beautiful environment and stimulating community..

We hope you have a wonderful Christmas and that 2010 is a fulfilling and blessed year for you and your family. Do keep in touch! We value our relationships with friends all around the world and trust that you will know God's richest blessings on all that you do.



*And His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor,
Mighty God, Everlasting Father Prince of peace. Isaiah 9:6.*

May you know the joy of Jesus this Christmas.

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Love from Ross and Kathy Callaghan