

Christmas greetings from Ross and Kathy Callaghan

We wish you a very Happy Christmas, and pray that you will have a safe and prosperous 2012. Here is our annual newsletter. We hope that you enjoy reading about our various activities.

2011 has proved to be an eventful year for us! During the year we finally closed down our business and we are now completely retired. How wonderful!! This doesn't mean we have any more time on our hands, though; it just means we have more time for friends coming to stay with us, and for our other interests: mainly family, travels, and community activities.

- **Family**

Debbie and Fraser sold their house in Port Melbourne and moved further out from the city (thus saving 7 years of mortgage repayments and getting a better house!). We visited them twice during the year and it was great fitting in with the daily routines of JJ (5), Heidi (3) and Luke (1). They certainly have an energetic lifestyle! The family came to New Zealand twice during the year (once for Fraser's grandmother's 100th birthday), so, helped by *skype*, we have been able to keep in touch really well. We love being grandparents!

We get to see **Sarah and Michael** and Blake (1) more regularly. Blake is growing rapidly and has a lovely expressive and friendly nature. He is a joy to have around. Sarah is teaching part-time again, and Michael's job was made permanent, so they have a bit more certainty than last year. Sarah still sings barbershop, now with the Wellington City Chorus.

Phil and Sarah are doing really well. Phil had a number of very successful trips to Australia with his business *Verboom Badges and Tees* and Sarah completed her B.Sc. degree, and is now a NZ citizen. Phil continues to enjoy his cricket (he recently made a century) and also his golf. He still hasn't managed to beat his father at golf, though!

- **Travels**

This year we had two trips north visiting family and friends in Taupo, Tauranga, Hamilton, Auckland, Northland, New Plymouth and Wanganui. We also visited Australia twice: once to help Debbie and Fraser get ready for the sale of their house in Melbourne and once to visit them in the new house. We also included a brief stay in Sydney and in the beautiful Blue Mountains.

The main trip for the year, though, was to America. We started with a wonderful 4 day look around New York; then did some family history in Connecticut, and then caught up with lots of friends in Kansas and Oregon. We finished our trip with an amazing Gaither Gospel cruise to Alaska. This ticked off three things on our "bucket list": to go on a cruise; to visit Alaska and to attend a Gaither Gospel music concert. What an amazing experience! We had two concerts a day of incredible music and it was all set in the beautiful Alaskan environment! We felt so blessed to be there. You can read all about our visit to America on our website under "Recent travels". It includes lots of photos!

- **Community activities**

We are now well settled in Paraparaumu and enjoying being a part of the community. Much of our time is spent in our leadership role at Gateway Christian Fellowship. <http://gatewaychristianfellowship.yolasite.com> The church is very healthy and we find it very rewarding to be serving the Lord and His people in meaningful ways. We still volunteer in the hospital at Sevenoaks visiting people in the dementia unit; showing our travel videos and leading sing-alongs for the elderly residents. Kathy is now singing in the Kapiti Women's Choir and is on the Committee for the Kapiti Genealogical Society, which has taken up a lot of her time. She regularly speaks to family history groups about our amazing family experiences in Norway last year. Ross does "Faith Matters" talks for the local radio and has been helping many elderly friends record their family histories on DVD. He still plays golf and got down to a 7 handicap during the year. He even had a round of 69 – the last time he did that was 45 years ago! His back is a problem though, and is not helped by his golf.

So you can see that we are very much enjoying being retired, and are grateful to God and to our many friends for the opportunities that are available to us in this stage of life.



Ross and Kathy in Alaska



Luke, Debbie, JJ, Fraser and Heidi



Michael, Sarah and Blake



Sarah and Phil

God has been very good to us in 2011 and for this we are very grateful. We pray that you would have a wonderful Christmas this year and appreciate anew the wonder of how God sent His Son as a little child. We also pray that He would be with you and bless you richly in the coming year.

We keep our family website up to date so you can get lots more detail on our activities (including photos of our trips) from <http://callaghans.yolasite.com>

**Merry Christmas and lots of love from
Ross and Kathy Callaghan**

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