

Ross and Kathy Callaghan's 2013 Christmas Newsletter

Ross and Kathy Callaghan wish you a very Happy Christmas, and pray that you will have a safe and prosperous 2014.

We trust that 2013 has been a good year for you. It certainly has been for us. We continue to enjoy our so-called "retirement" and occupy our time with lots of meaningful activities focused around our family, travels, church and community. It's lovely to have plenty of time, and yet to feel that what we are doing is both enjoyable for us, and a blessing to others! During the year we have lost a few dear friends and family members which has given us a stronger determination to use our time positively in this phase of life, while we still can. Fortunately we have both kept fit and healthy (except for Ross's back which is still not good), helped by regular walks and times at the gym. Kathy still enjoys researching our family history, and Ross working on his Bible studies. During the year we have had many people staying with us, which has been a real joy, and we have just bought a new car so we can transport visitors and family around more easily! Outside, our house looks lovely at the moment with lots of spring flowers set against our beautiful lake. We certainly are blessed to live in Paraparaumu!

Highlights for 2013 have included:

- **Family**

We had a holiday with **Debbie and Fraser** north of Sydney in March, and visited them again in Melbourne in June. **JJ** is now 7, **Heidi** is 5 (and off to school next year), **Luke** is 3 and **Dan** is 1, and all are doing really well. The Cunninghams are certainly a busy family! How Debbie manages to coordinate her family activities and her involvements at Church and kinder is most impressive! We are looking forward to an Australian Christmas with Debbie and the family this year and having another holiday with them in New South Wales next March.

The big excitement for **Sarah, Michael and Blake** (3) was the birth of **Isla Grace Stevens** in April. Isla is beautiful and Blake is a wonderful big brother. Sarah and Michael have bought a bigger car to carry their growing family and are planning a new deck at the back of their house so there is more room for the kids to play. Sarah is back to singing barbershop with the Wellington City Chorus.

Phil and Sarah are now living in Melbourne. Phil has sold off part of his business in NZ and has set up a new business in Australia. He makes badges and T-shirts and sells them online and at weekend conventions. The business has made a good start and it certainly keeps Phil busy. We get to see him regularly in NZ or Australia and skype is great!

- **Travels**

In March we met up with Debbie's family in Forster, New South Wales, then in June we took a cruise to Vanuatu and New Caledonia, followed by a week in Fiji, then a week with Debbie in Melbourne. Wonderful! In November Kathy went to the Sweet Adelines convention in Hawaii and was able to catch up with many of her old friends. Next year is our 40th wedding anniversary and we are planning another trip to America (Los Angeles, Miami and Washington DC) and a 2-week cruise around the Caribbean. We like cruising!

- **Community activities**

We continue to be busy in our local community. Kathy still sings with the Kapiti Women's Choir and has a major role on the committee for the Kapiti Genealogical Society. After 5 years Ross has just stepped down from leadership of our church but we will continue to have extensive input there. Next year we are seeking to be even more involved in broader community activities through our sing-alongs, travel shows, and ministry to the elderly.

So you can see that we have had a busy but fruitful year. We are grateful to God for the friends and family that we share our lives with and trust that you will know more of His blessings this Christmas. Our prayer is that you would know *the peace of God that passes all understanding* and that you too will have a busy, fulfilling and fruitful year in 2014.



Ross and Kathy heading for the Pacific Islands



Dan, Luke, Heidi and JJ



Sarah, Isla and Blake



Sarah and Phil

We keep our family website up to date so you can get lots more detail on our activities from <http://callaghans.yolasite.com> (Our website includes photos of our trips, and a link to the book that Ross wrote during the year about the life of Kathy's grandfather).

Merry Christmas and lots of love from Ross and Kathy Callaghan

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