

Hi there and Christmas greetings from the Callaghan family.

We hope that 1999 has been kind to you and that you are looking forward to the new millennium with expectation (with or without all the hype!).

At this time of year we normally look back on all that has happened and reflect on the goodness which God has extended to us. Again this year we have known His blessing in our busy lives and we have had some very special highlights. There have been a few down times as well, but overall this has been a year where we can 'count our blessings' and where in lots of way we have been surprised with 'what the Lord has done'. Here are our highlights:

Joy to the World

Debbie and Fraser got married in January and we all enjoyed the wonderful celebration. They have now bought a lovely little house not far away from us in Lower Hutt and have lots to do there. Debbie really enjoys her work in emergency management. Together Fraser and Debbie lead a home group in our church and they have set up an outreach for lonely young people in the city centre.

Sarah completed her final year of training college and we were very proud when she was capped with a Bachelor of Education. She is a natural teacher but is still looking for a job for next year. She had a special responsibility for mentoring a troubled child in a new police initiative to help young people stay out of trouble. Sarah continues to be a youth leader in our church. She turns 21 in February.

Philip has had a great year. He was the head of his school and got involved there in lots of activities, including a trip to Tonga to paint a high school which had been damaged in a hurricane. Philip was baptised this year and has developed lots in his Christian life and in his musical abilities (singing, guitar and harmonica). His life improved immensely when we gave him a car and now he has two jobs so he can run it: selling in a music shop and putting out open home signs for a land agent. Phil is saving up to go to America next year to lead at a summer camp. After that he will re-evaluate what he wants to do in the future.

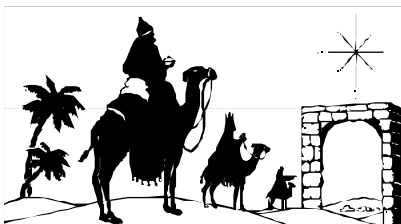
Kathy has had problems with her ears (Meniere's disease) but the medication now has it pretty much under control. She continues to have a significant input at Soma Medical Centre and enjoys her singing in the Faultline Chorus. This year they were placed second overall in the national competitions and first in the small chorus competition. A great achievement!

Ross has kept up with his running and does a little in the gym as well. He is in his final year as National Chaplain for Girls Brigade which has been a positive ministry experience. Ross has had a very successful year in his work with training contracts all over the country and he even did some work in Malaysia.

This year *Ross and Kathy* celebrated a special milestone: our 25th wedding anniversary. To celebrate we went on a trip to USA and Canada. First stop was Seattle (where we found Ross's suitcase had been lost) and then it was on to Idaho to visit with a family that looked after Debbie when she was there a few year's ago. Next we went to Vancouver where we joined a bus trip up into Canadian Rockies (beautiful) and a train trip back to the coast. Then it was onto a boat to travel down the Inside Passage and back to Victoria (where the suitcase re-appeared) and Vancouver. This was a wonderful trip with amazing scenery, lots of interesting experiences and some very special memories. We'd love to show you the scrap book or the video!!

Later in the year we had a trip around the northern part of the South Island. This travel sure is wonderful isn't it? Otherwise we have been busy on family, ministry and, of course, our garden. It looks lovely at this time of the year with lots of colour showing off our new paving.

These newsletters are a great way of catching up with friends and family at this time of the year, aren't they? We do hope we'll hear from you or even better get to see you in the near future. We hope that 1999 has been as good for you as it has for us, and that you know God's richest blessing on all you do in the days to come.



We'll be visiting family in Auckland and Hamilton before Christmas and will be pottering around afterwards (before we go back to work so we can save for next year's travels!). We'd love to see you if that's at all possible.

Love from Ross and Kathy Callaghan.