

Ross and Kathy Callaghan's 2016 Christmas Newsletter



Ross and Kathy Callaghan wish you a very Happy Christmas, and pray that you will have a safe and prosperous 2017.

Writing our annual newsletter always gives us opportunity to reflect on the blessings we enjoy, and, for us, they are certainly many. A wonderful marriage; living in a beautiful place here in Paraparaumu; three amazing children and the six best grandchildren in the world!; being retired and staying healthy; being involved in lots of activities and being able to bless so many people through these activities; travelling to so many interesting parts of the world, and of course, having so many special friends and family - like you - with whom we share life.

Yesterday we ran a carol service for about 80 elderly people in a local hospital. It was a wonderful time of celebration, as we sang the familiar carols and reflected on the birth of Jesus – the One who came to *bring peace on earth and goodwill amongst men*. It contrasted for us again the *great joy* that comes from knowing the real meaning of Christmas and the hopelessness, confusion and uncertainty that so many are feeling in this rapidly changing world. Our prayer is that this Christmas you will, like us, know *the peace of God that passes all understanding* and will have a blessed and fruitful year in 2017.

Highlights of 2016 have included:

- **Our family.** **Debbie** turned 40 this year and we travelled to Melbourne for the party (which was done in style). Debbie is continuing her studies towards a new career in speech pathology. JJ, Heidi, and Luke are doing well at school and Dan at kinder. **Sarah** has not been well with a very nasty autoimmune condition, and her immunologist is running out of ideas for how to help. Sarah has been amazing in how she has coped, even continuing her part-time teaching for most of the year. Blake and Isla are doing well at school and kindy, and we see them regularly, which is great. **Phil** has had an excellent year with his shows, cricket and museum jobs, and a great trip to Europe for a well-deserved holiday. He has just found a new place to live in Melbourne so things are very much looking up for him.
- **Our travels.** We went on a great cruise to Fiji and Tonga on the 'Pacific Pearl' with friends from America, and then after Debbie's birthday we drove from Melbourne to Adelaide following the Murray River. (The videos are on YouTube under **calros3**). We also had a few trips around New Zealand – to Rotorua for a family wedding; to New Plymouth to visit Ross's Auntie Norma (who is 96); a mystery tour around the lower North Island for our 42nd wedding anniversary, and Kathy had a quick trip around the South Island with other friends from America. Next year we will be cruising around Australia to celebrate Ross's 70th birthday. We still love to travel!
- **Kathy's genealogy.** Kathy is now widely recognised as an expert in family history research. This year she researched Ross's mother's side of our family (the Tysons and the Grahams) and carried out research for many local people who requested her help. A special highlight was researching and then writing a book about the life of Frank O'Flynn, an early NZ politician.
- **Ross's model ships.** Ross started up a new hobby this year - making model ships. The first was an intricate fishing boat made from a kit in the same way as the original, and the second was a model paddlesteamer, constructed from scratch using photos of the original.
- **Our community activities.** Kathy continues to sing with (and sometimes directs) the Kapiti Women's Choir, is part of the local genealogy group, and keeps fit by doing aquafit and cycling on her new bike. Ross still plays golf, even with his bad back, and is once again, the club mid-week champion. His best round this year was a 72. Together Ross and Kathy ran lots of singalongs for elderly people in our community and every Sunday led our wonderful "Youth Group" (of mostly over 80 year olds who are still young at heart). In Youth Group we study the Bible, sing, watch movies, have lots of laughs, help when needed, and thoroughly enjoy each others' company.



Debbie (40), with Heidi, JJ, Dan and Luke.



Kathy's genealogy



Ross's model ship



Youth Group



Sarah, Isla and Blake with Uncle Phil

You can get lots more detail on our activities from our family website <http://callaghans.yolasite.com>

Merry Christmas and lots of love from Ross and Kathy Callaghan

81 The Drive, Paraparaumu Beach, New Zealand. phone (64) 4 2970733, +64210452925 rosscallaghan@gmail.com