

We Start With...

This month

A two minute period of silence - a moment of peace.

From the ‘Chair’

Margaret Feist’s funeral, on Tuesday 12th August, remembered her special contribution to her many roles, and was well attended by those her life had touched. The Rev. Dr Kerry Enright’s first action was to ask those attending to talk to someone near to them whom they didn’t know; in acknowledgement of Margaret’s always drawing in the stranger, the new person, to make them feel welcome. The church was rapidly abuzz – she would have liked that.

Margaret was born in London in 1932, the daughter of a Baptist minister. Her family moved to New Zealand in 1945, initially to Auckland. Margaret found friends and her social life – and Don - with SCM while at university. Her father moved to Dunedin with his job, and Don moved to study at Knox Theological Hall, so Margaret’s first job as a teacher of English was at King Edward Technical College.

Don’s first ministry was at Matiere in the King Country, where he and Margaret lived in shearing quarters. Time in Gore saw her busy with family and in her role as ‘the minister’s wife’. On arrival back in Dunedin Margaret returned to teaching at Kaikorai Valley HS; she became a school inspector and the national moderator for School Certificate English.

Margaret and Don had a very active life in the Dunedin community, thoughtful and supportive and always contributing their special skills. As we know, Margaret was very affected by Don’s death in 2012. Nevertheless, she continued to belong to and contribute to many groups, including Sea of Faith. In March this year she read to our group a ‘Letter to my Grandchildren’ she had written 15 years ago, and she was a member of the Dunedin Sea of Faith committee to the end. We will miss her strength and support and warm smile.

Alan, this month’s speaker, is a tower of strength to Dunedin Sea of Faith in a number of capacities. A man of many commitments, through his efforts the Archibald Baxter Trust has been established and looks like achieving its several important aims. Alan will talk about Archie and the treatment he received when he refused to put on a uniform and kill other humans. This is a story of great importance to New Zealand’s historical record and has a special resonance here in Dunedin.

Gretchen

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Alan Jackson

Archibald Baxter

**A memorial for men of
conscience & courage**

Thursday, 27th AUGUST

**Highgate Church buildings,
Maori Hill**

**Tea and Coffee will be available
From 3pm**

NEW TIME

**The programme will start
at 3.30pm**

Contribution - \$4

Last Meeting

At our last meeting, Amy Anderson told us quite a bit about Pope Francis' encyclical. Lo and behold, when the National *Sea of Faith* Newsletter arrived later in the week, the headline was all about that very topic. "*Laudato Si'*, [from *Laudato Si'*, *mi' Signore*: "*Praise be to you, my Lord*"] is the most astonishing, and perhaps the most ambitious, papal document of the past 100 years since it is addressed not just to Catholics, or Christians, but to everyone on Earth" (*Guardian Weekly*)

The Pope is critical of greed and selfishness which threatens the poor as well as the earth as our home now and in the future. I hope he is more successful than the other great man who had a lot to say on the same topic and who ended up on a cross for his troubles.

Dunedin's Future

I recently listened to a businessman who noted that Dunedin's population has not changed very much over the last 10 years – more students but fewer non-students. Jobs lost to firms shifting to Christchurch are a real threat to our livelihood and the trick is to know what to do to get more jobs into this city we all love so much.

We are all past the age when we can start a new business venture to create those new jobs but I do think that by spotting the positive in our city and talking about that, writing the occasional encouraging letter to the ODT, speaking optimistically to our friends, we can do a lot to maintain the spirit of the city.

I thought the idea of the big hotel in the city was a good one but I didn't like the design in that location – if it had been rotated so that it projected into the harbour (like a similar one in Wellington) it could have done the same job. At that rate, why not a berthed cruise ship closer to the city – that would be quite a different sort of hotel.

Conference

The National Sea of Faith conference is being held in Auckland from 2nd to 4th October.

This is always a wonderful, friendly and thought-provoking event, with four keynote speakers and plenty of time to discuss what you've just heard after each address. The panel discussion with all speakers on the last morning is the highlight that makes the conference very special.

Members will have got their conference information by now. Others who are interested are very welcome to attend – you can find information and forms at sof.org.nz.

The conference theme is '**Responding to an increasingly uncertain future**'. The first speaker, Sir Lloyd Geering, launched Sea of Faith in New Zealand and, at 96, will give a profound and thought-provoking presentation.

David Perez

About half of our regular Sea of Faith members attended the Hospital Chaplains' event to hear about end-of-life spirituality. David surprised many of us when he quoted a woman who said that she would like to die of cancer as the treatment meant that she would have time to put her affairs in order and say all her goodbyes. Now that is a different way of looking at life.

There is going to be more of those events and they seem to be planned to coincide with the day our Sea of Faith meets. Thoughtful Thursdays then...

From a book received as a present...

If you had to be obsessed with money, sex, sports, religion or food, which one would you choose?

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