



Family Circle February 2008

- Civil Union of Peter and Michael Jenkins
- Big Gay Out
- Rev'd Blair Robertson and Ken Matthews *Requiescant In Pace*

Civil Union of Peter and Michael Jenkins

□ You know there are 64 candles in this church □. Yes and about half of them were lit to welcome the civil union ceremony of Peter and Michael. There are also 3 icons and one goose in St Lukes Presbyterian Church, Newmarket/Remuera. The church was resplendent with lilies and fan palms on a warm summer afternoon. There was a green theme to the floral arrangements; green carnations (Oscar Wilde would have approved), and a long green rope of flowers like the adornment of an empress □ headdress.

The front three rows of the families of Peter and Michael gathered early. Charles Grinter, the celebrant welcomed us in Maori and English. Rev David

Clark, operating the sound system, played Andrew Lloyd-Webber □s Pie Jesu, as first Peter and his mother Jean, and then Michael and his mother Phyllis entered.

Jean had chosen a summery dress with a leaf motif in green and yellow. Phyllis was in darker hues with a fetching mauve hat and two strings of pearls.

Both grooms had matching white rose bouquets. They wore subtly floral striped grey and white shirts, with white collars, dark trousers. Peter had his natural blond hairstyle and Michael a full Mohawk.

Charles read messages of support from friends including from Garth and Anne from the Sensible Sentencing Trust. Peter has maintained their webpages since 2001. He reminded us that this was a serious, joyful and holy occasion. He recounted the two years of their relationship.

Michael and Peter then exchanged rings, symbols of unbroken love and of eternity. The grooms faced each other as the two songs chosen by each groom as a gift to the other were played. The Rose of my Heart sung by Johnny Cash as Peter □s gift, followed by Michael □s gift Come what may sung by Nicole Kidman and Ewan McGregor, with Michael mouthing some of the lyrics to Peter.



The grooms mixed pink and blue sands in one large glass vase as a symbols of their lives and futures being mingled together. Then the celebrant, grooms and the witnesses Liz Nicholson and Quentin Grinter signed the civil union certificates.

Peter and Michael then led the sixteen family members and approximately forty guests from the church, to signed an ornate register of those present at the ceremony.

Kevin Han and Liz Nicholson captured the bouquets tossed from the church steps, where guests mingled and took photos. The grooms exited down Remuera Road in Peter's black Cadillac, with a celebratory tyre squeal. The reception was held at DeeJays Thai Restaurant. During the evening there were several courses and speeches by the grooms, and Liz Nicholson.

Big Gay Out

Peter Lineham

Big Gay Out was very successful from the point of view of Auckland Community Church. We had a great location, the tent next to us was not occupied, and our t-shirts really stood out and made a bold point. There were generally half a dozen people at any one time on the stall wearing the t-shirts.

We gave away a lot of food and that made people very receptive to accepting our pamphlets. We gave away maybe some 300 pamphlets, but that is just a random guess. There were a few significant conversations, and a range of articles from various angles



(Catholic, evangelical, liberal) proved to meet appropriate questions and needs. Despite the dodgy weather earlier and lower numbers overall, it was a fantastic opportunity for us, and many thanks to the people who helped in various ways with food, resources and being involved.

The combined service with MCC also went well. We were well represented and with maybe 10 from MCC we were about 50 people and there was some good interaction.

Remembering Blair Robertson □ Anglican priest and friend to our church.

Shelley Walker

Rev'd Blair Robertson served most of his ministry in the dioceses of Dunedin and Christchurch before moving to Auckland with his partner Andrew in 2002. He presided and

preached at services from time to time.

Blair was serving as a locum in the parish to which I was appointed when I was first ordained, and he stayed on for some time to help me find my feet. I will always treasure his friendship and support both then and since. He never treated me as just his "curate", but rather as a colleague to whom he was lending a hand. We found we had a lot in common - a similar sense of the ridiculous, love for theatre and the arts, to name but a few.

He enjoyed the finer things in life - as evidenced by the 'bubbles' he decreed should be offered to everyone after the funeral! His elegance and Style (the capital is deliberate) were his trademarks. One of the speakers at Blair's funeral remembered meeting him back in his student days - he stood out from the crowd even then. First of all, he was clean(!) and dressed in a light coloured suit, complete with silk handkerchief in his breast pocket and carrying a furred umbrella - Blair was 19 at the time.

Hanging in my wardrobe, I have Blair's cassock and black wool cloak - just the thing for cold Sundays in Southland, but not so useful in Auckland. Blair didn't want to take them north with him - he wouldn't need them and they would take up too much packing space. (No worries about the space they would take up in my wardrobe of course!) "You might as well have them on semi-permanent loan," he told me, "and if I ever want them back, I know where they are." Well, the observant among you who have met us both will have discerned a difference in height - of some considerable amount. Had I altered the garments to suit my lesser inches, I suspect they would barely cover Blair's knees; whereas if I tried to wear them as is, I would need a troop of pageboys to carry the hem like a train!

Blair and Andrew had a great gift of hospitality, and always made me welcome whenever I visited Auckland. My last visit was around six months ago, before Blair became ill. "Come for dinner," I was told. "In fact, stick a toothbrush in your pocket and stay for breakfast!"

Please remember Andrew - and their extended families and friends - in your prayers.

Remembering Ken Matthews □ Board member and friend to our church.

Donald Finlay

Ken and Gordon were a loving couple closely involved with ACC for many years. Ken was on the board from the mid 1990s for a few years. Ken was diagnosed with cancer in June and died on 20 November 2007. Ken Matthews was a big man with a big heart, and dedicated to all he did.

After retiring from teaching, he became general secretary of the NZ Sunday School Union which lasted around 18 years, and during which he carried out his duties in a faithful and dedicated manner, up to just days before his death. His involvement with St Giles church also demonstrated his commitment - church treasurer, session clerk of recent times, and various other administrative duties.

It was this increasing workload, which precluded his attendance at ACC - but he still had us in his heart. He was always ready to help those in need - and members of our community can testify to that. His funeral service was a fitting tribute to his life - his passing leaves a gap in all our lives.