

DECEMBER 2021 - JANUARY 2022

# THE CHRISTIAN Writer

## SEE INSIDE FOR

*Celebrating the Life of Janice Gillgren*

*Canterbury Writers Seminar*

Report by Peter Lawry

Book Reviews:

*Dog Tucker* by K Drinkwater

*Boo Goes Tutti Frutti,*

*Hello! Kia Ora! Welcome New Friend!,*

*Bumblebees Have Smelly Feet,*

All by Rachel Weston

*Timothy Tui and the Southern Ocean Special,*

*Francesca Fantail and the Wild West Coast*

*Sandfly Festival* by Geraldine Paul

*Because of Mercy* by PD Dawn

Writing Competitions Prize Winners  
and more...

A magazine of NZ Christian Writers



**Mission:** *Connecting Christian writers in New Zealand.*

**Vision:** *To cultivate, encourage and inspire a vibrant community of Christian writers throughout New Zealand.*

**Values:** *Christian faith, God's Word, professionalism, quality and social outreach.*

**President:** Justin St Vincent: [president@nzchristianwriters.org](mailto:president@nzchristianwriters.org)

**Editor and Membership Secretary:** Kathryn Paul: [editor@nzchristianwriters.org](mailto:editor@nzchristianwriters.org)  
For magazine contributions, address changes, membership queries.

**Treasurer:** For subscriptions, donations: [treasurer@nzchristianwriters.org](mailto:treasurer@nzchristianwriters.org)

### **Join Us! Annual Subscriptions—2 options:**

- 1) Digital magazine: Full membership \$40 / Student membership (up to 25yrs) \$20
- 2) Printed magazine: Full membership \$55 / Student membership (up to 25yrs) \$35

**Join us through our website:** [www.nzchristianwriters.org/join/](http://www.nzchristianwriters.org/join/)

Credit/Debit card payment is available online or pay by bank deposit, phone or Internet banking to: NZ Christian Writers, a/c 12 3040 0547346 00, Reference: [Your name]

### **Book Review Requests:** (current members only)

Mail a copy of your book to our Book Reviewer, Julia Martin

286 Karapiro Road, RD4, Cambridge 3496 or email: [reviews@nzchristianwriters.org](mailto:reviews@nzchristianwriters.org)

**The Christian Writer** is our bimonthly magazine published by NZ Christian Writers and distributed to all members. Contributions from members are always welcome. If you have some advice, encouragement, or an announcement of an event of interest to members, do send it to the editor for consideration by the 10th of the month before the next publication date. Submissions should be emailed as a word document attachment and be no more than 500 words long, except at the discretion of the editor.

The editor reserves the right to condense and/or edit any contributions for reason of space. Ideas and opinions will not be edited but editing of a technical nature may occur to maintain a high standard of writing. Views and opinions expressed do not necessarily state or reflect those of the editor.

© Copyright 2021

This issue printed locally by

**BookPrint.**  
Making Bookshop Quality Easy

Contact David at  
[hello@bookprint.co.nz](mailto:hello@bookprint.co.nz)  
09 443 1775  
[www.bookprint.co.nz](http://www.bookprint.co.nz)

# The Christian Writer

Dec 2021 – Jan 2022

ISSN 2537-8708 (Online)

VOL 38. No 6

ISSN 1171-0098 (Print)

## Contents

Page 2	Contact Details – Editor   Membership Secretary   Book Review Requests
Page 4	President's Report – Justin St Vincent
Page 5	Editorial: Love One Another – Kathryn Paul
Page 6	Notices
Page 7	Celebrating the Life of Janice Anne Gillgren – Kathryn Paul
Page 8	Professional Writing Services – Free Advertising for Members
Page 10	Waikato Writers Group Launched – Julia Martin
Page 11	Book Review: <i>Dog Tucker</i> by K Drinkwater – reviewer Julia Martin
Page 11	Book Review: <i>Boo Goes Tutti Frutti</i> by Rachel Weston – reviewer Julia Martin
Page 11	Book Review: <i>Hello! Kia ora! Welcome New Friend!</i> by Rachel Weston and Deborah Hinde – reviewer Julia Martin
Page 11	Book Review: <i>Bumblebees Have Smelly Feet</i> by Rachel Weston – reviewer Julia Martin
Page 12	Book Review: <i>Timothy Tui and the Southern Ocean Special</i> by Geraldine Paul – reviewer Julia Martin
Page 12	Book Review: <i>Francesca Fantail and the Wild West Coast Sandfly Festival</i> by Geraldine Paul – reviewer Julia Martin
Page 12	Book Review: <i>Because of Mercy</i> by PD Dawn – reviewer Julia Martin
Page 13	Crossword by Eion Field
Page 13	I Love You Lord – poetry and photography by Max Carr
Page 14	Definition of Blank Verse – Literary Devices
Page 18	Canterbury Writers Seminar – Peter Lawry
Page 19	Find a Local Writers Group / Welcome to New and Returning Members
Page 20	Holiday Fun Writing Game
Page 22	Prayer of Praise – Lesley Edgeler
Page 23	Writing Competitions Prize Winners

## CW Competitions

Page 24	Level One Results	Page 32	Level Three Results
Page 29	Level Two Results	Page 35	Competitions for February 2022

### Website:

Our vibrant, user-friendly website is full of interesting information, such as details of seminars and copies of past magazines. It also gives each individual member an online presence. We encourage all members to reach out to other Christian writers. Feel free to share our website link with them so they can join us. As a member you are the best advocate for growing our collective of NZ Christian Writers.

**[www.nzchristianwriters.org](http://www.nzchristianwriters.org)**

# President's Report



Welcome to our December 2021 to January 2022 edition of *The Christian Writer* magazine. Congratulations to our competition winners for 2021. You have worked on developing your writing craft

and we thank you for participating in our writing competitions this year. For those who are new members to NZ Christian Writers, do feel free to check out the Competitions page on our website. Thank you to Debbie McDermott who continues to do an excellent role as our Competition Coordinator. Members will be able to download our newly-updated Competition Topics Reference Sheet 2022 to keep on file throughout next year. Competition criteria, formatting, guidelines, plus prize details are available here: [www.nzchristianwriters.org/competitions/](http://www.nzchristianwriters.org/competitions/)

It is with deep sadness we share with our members the passing of Janice Gillgren. Many of us are mourning, especially those in our collective who knew her well. She was such a positive person and keen writer, and an enthusiastic leader of our Northland Christian Writers group for many years. Our members will remember Janice as a wonderful writer, mentor and friend. I have several fond memories of connecting with Janice, including at a speaking engagement in Northland, events in Auckland, and at our Retreats as well. Janice was a great encourager and will be dearly missed.

This magazine's cover photo was provided by Imelda Cruz Wood. Well done Mel on another great photograph for *The Christian Writer*. Mel explains this photo is of St Peter's by the Sea, an inter-denominational church at Castlepoint, Wairarapa. A framed version of this photograph is on exhibit at the ConArt Gallery in Masterton. We are hosting another photography competition for our 2022 magazine covers. Selected winners will have their photo featured on the front cover of our magazine. Please email me your entries to this address: [president@nzchristianwriters.org](mailto:president@nzchristianwriters.org) prior to January 10th 2022.

Have a fantastic Christmas and wonderful start to the New Year season. May the light of Jesus go before you in 2022. From all of us at NZ Christian Writers.

*In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. - John 1:4-5, NKJV.*

Blessings  
Justin St Vincent



# Editorial: Love One Another

by Kathryn Paul



Unity and loving one another are essential characteristics of the body of Christian believers. It's okay to have diversity and various opinions but we must never allow different perspectives or points of view to damage the unity or expression of Christ's love between us.

Jesus said if we loved one another the world would know we are His disciples. I don't have to agree with everything I read or hear from others, but I do have to love them and treat them as I would like myself to be treated – with care, patience, grace and respect.

We don't have to believe or trust everything we are told, even if the person or people at the source are Christian. Anyone is capable of making an error so it's important to research things carefully and check facts before taking on information and passing it along to others.

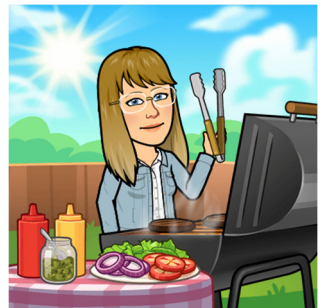
It's also important not to allow differences of opinion to become such a big distraction that we forget our calling – the 'Great Commission'. Sharing the Gospel with love needs to be our highest priority. The only thing we can take with us from this life into Heaven are souls. Let's ensure we continue to use our writing gifts to share truth with hope, sow good seeds and give God glory through our testimonies.

Recently a friend, long-standing member and past level two judge, Janice Gillgren passed into eternity. Although it's with sadness that we adjust to her going, we can look forward with joy to being where she is. Throughout her lifetime, Janice encouraged many people with their writing. She was a journalist, mentor and writers group leader. Her life of contribution will continue to have an impact on the world. Let's ensure we take as many people with us as we possibly can to where she is now, by demonstrating and communicating love.

I pray you have a lovely summer with plenty of time for writing and creating expressions of joy. Check out the writing game on pages 20-21 and have some creative fun.

With love in Jesus,  
Kathryn Paul

*I love to hear from our readers! Email:*  
[editor@nzchristianwriters.org](mailto:editor@nzchristianwriters.org)





# Notices

## Our 40th Anniversary Retreat!!



### Writers Group Leaders Wanted

We need a leader in the North Auckland region due to high membership growth. Please email Justin at [president@nzchristianwriters.org](mailto:president@nzchristianwriters.org) or Kathryn at [editor@nzchristianwriters.org](mailto:editor@nzchristianwriters.org) to find out more details.

### Book Reviews Criteria

Members are welcome to request a book review of any of their published books, whether recently released or not. The main criteria is the book has some Christian relevancy. For more information on how to have your book reviewed in *The Christian Writer* please refer to page two.

### Hawkes Bay Writers Group Continues

A big thank you to Jennie Chappell for the time and commitment she has given leading the Hawkes Bay Writers Group. Jennie has now stood down due to personal commitments and we are grateful and pleased to announce Debbie McDermott will be the key point of contact for the group. See our list of Writers Groups in the magazine for more information.

### Photo Competition 2022

Once again we invite members to get creative and send us photographs suitable for the cover of our magazine. Please send your photo submissions to Justin at [president@nzchristianwriters.org](mailto:president@nzchristianwriters.org) by January 10<sup>th</sup> 2022. Photos must be high quality 300 DPI (dots per inch).

### Job Vacancy – Castle Publishing Ltd

Admin and Accounting person required. A unique opportunity to work in the Auckland office. For more information contact Andrew Killick – Publishing Manager [andrew@castlepublishing.co.nz](mailto:andrew@castlepublishing.co.nz)

# Celebrating the Life of Janice Anne Gillgren

13 January 1959 – 7th November 2021



**A glance back at snippets of contributions from Janice the writer...**

*Creating a piece of written work is something like pulling a rabbit out of a hat, I think, or pulling substance out of thin air. How it happens is a mystery, which I believe demonstrates our Creator's inventiveness. He is incredibly creative, as everything around us reveals, and He created us to be creative too.*

(From *Igniting Your Writing Spark*, 31<sup>st</sup> Blog in 'Why Write?' series – by Janice Gillgren, *The Christian Writer* magazine April-May 2011)

*Can we actually, really, truly make a difference in our world? Henry Wadsworth Longfellow penned this poem:*

*'Lives of great men all remind us,  
We can make our lives sublime,  
And, departing, leave behind us,  
Footprints on the sands of time.'*

*The challenge is to actually make the effort and take the time to do things that will outlast us.*

(From *Writing to Make a Difference* by Janice Gillgren, published in *The Christian Writer* magazine February-March 2015)

## **Parting thoughts from some of us who knew Janice...**

*'She was such a help to me when I was trying to get my writing into focus...'*

*'I talked with her for hours in the back of your van on the retreat trip. What a lovely, strong woman...'*

*'Janice always seemed so vital and had so much passion for her writing...'*

*'I recall she gave up her solo room at the writers retreat to bless someone else and shared one with me. Thank you, Janice. I enjoyed giving a writers group lesson with you. You will be missed by us all. But like the grass is here today and gone tomorrow, we will be with you again soon.'*



# Professional Writing Services

**Free advertising! Are you a member who can offer other members a professional service relating to writing or book publishing? If so, you are welcome to send in your advertisement – maximum 100 words, to [editor@nzchristianwriters.org](mailto:editor@nzchristianwriters.org)**

## ASTUTE EDITING

### Candice Hume

E: [info@astuteediting.co.nz](mailto:info@astuteediting.co.nz)

## AUDIOBOOK RECORDING

### Make Your Words Come Alive

Former Rhema announcer Rob Holding is offering a special introductory price of \$150 per 10,000 words to turn your written book into audiobook format.

And, so that you can hear for yourself what the end product will sound like, he will provide you a sample of the first chapter for free.

Audiobooks produced to ACX specifications.  
Contact:

**Rob Holding:** 027 450 9421

E: [robholdingnz@gmail.com](mailto:robholdingnz@gmail.com)

## A WORD ABOUT EDITING

I am a freelance editor having received a Diploma of Proofreading and Editing from NZIBS in 2012. I have edited a large range of documents including novels, biographies, magazine articles, websites, and university assignments.

In August 1968, while beginning teacher training, Jesus Christ changed my heart and the whole direction of my life. I am passionate about working with Christian writers, helping them polish their work until it shines.

I endeavour to read the writer's intentions, not just their words, helping them shape their writing into a more accurate, natural and pleasing form.

**Graham Pedersen:** 027 440 5851

E: [gpetersen@hotmail.co.nz](mailto:gpetersen@hotmail.co.nz)

## CASTLE PUBLISHING

Christian and Family publishing services in New Zealand.

<http://www.castlepublishing.co.nz/>

## CAVIT ENTERPRISES

Proofreading and Copyediting Services

I offer assistance to enable your manuscript to be free of annoying mistakes, repetitions, wordiness, etc, so that it can be sent to a publisher as a 'clean' document.

Most genres considered.

Fees to fit your budget.

**Brian Cavit** Dip Edit

E: [cavitent@gmail.com](mailto:cavitent@gmail.com)

## CHRISTIAN EDITING

My name is Lola Goulton and I run Christian Editing Services.

I hold a Bachelor of Commerce Degree in marketing and have over twenty years' experience in human resources, including writing and editing a company newsletter, developing a government website, contributing to a textbook, and writing and proofreading more client reports than I can count.

I specialise in editing Christian fiction and advising pre-published and self-published authors on the business side of writing, publishing and marketing. Find out more at <https://christianediting.co.nz/resources/> or <https://christianediting.co.nz/blog/> and sign up for a free two-week course on revising and self-editing your novel.

**Iola Goulton**

E: [igoulton@christianediting.co.nz](mailto:igoulton@christianediting.co.nz)



## DAYSTAR BOOKS

### Christian Publishing Services

Do You Want Help With Your Manuscript?

- What to do with it. (Free assessment available.)
- How to get it published.
- Where to find an editor.
- Help with self-publishing.
- Tips on writing.
- Ideas for publicising your book.

The one-stop shop of the DayStar team of consultants, authors, editors, graphic artists...are keen to help you.

We specialise in non-fiction but will also look at other genres and make appropriate referrals.

Ask for our brochure and discussion about any aspect of your manuscript:

E: [Info@daystarbooks.org](mailto:Info@daystarbooks.org) Check our website [www.daystarbooks.org](http://www.daystarbooks.org)

## PINPOINT PROOFREADING

### Present your important written work in perfect English!

Qualified, experienced teacher, English specialist, will proofread your article, book, academic or business document, web page, magazine, inter alia, returning it to you in concise and error-free English.

Competitive fee. Quick and efficient service.

Good references. I do not publish but I can point you towards help. For a quotation, contact:

**Lissa Weight:** 021 0851 6944

E: [lydiaweight@gmail.com](mailto:lydiaweight@gmail.com)

Visit the link below to join NZ Christian Writers on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/newzealandchristianwriters>

## WILD SIDE PUBLISHING

### Demystifying the self-publishing process

Writing a book is hard enough without all the annoying and persistent questions about the next stages of the process (and the costs) buzzing your brain! We get it! Wild Side Publishing can help. Here's all you need to understand the process and costs:

- Submitting your manuscript.
- Proofreading and editing.
- Cover design and text layout.
- Printing quotes for NZ stock.
- Worldwide listing for print-on-demand paperback and eBook.
- Distribution to NZ stores and libraries.
- MailChimp and Facebook targeted marketing.

Visit [www.wildsidepublishing.com/get-published/#publish-or-print](http://www.wildsidepublishing.com/get-published/#publish-or-print) and download the free guide to self-publishing.

**Ray Curle:** 09 439 5717

E: [ray@thewildside.net](mailto:ray@thewildside.net)

## WORDWYZE PUBLISHING

### Assisting Authors to Self-Publish

Services Offered:

- Professional Proofreading & Copy Editing
- Interior Layout and Design
- Cover Design
- E-book Conversion
- Upload to POD services for Global Distribution
- Local Print Preparation
- Photography and old photo retouching

**Colleen Kaluza:**

E: [colleen@wordwyze.nz](mailto:colleen@wordwyze.nz)

Visit <http://wordwyze.nz>

## WRITING ANSWERS

I have over 20 years of experience as a copy editor and proof reader. I work on non-fiction books/articles/memoirs and also academic editing/proof reading.

I work with authors to prepare their work for self-publishing. I make sure their documents are print ready and, for example, I tell them that they do need to use mirror margins on their documents and no, the printer won't do that for you.

I have qualifications in technical and professional communication, editing and proof reading, science and laboratory technology.

I am in my happy place when editing and thoroughly enjoy turning people's prose into award winning documents.

### Janette Busch

E: [WritingAnswers1@gmail.com](mailto:WritingAnswers1@gmail.com)  
or [Janette.Busch@gmail.com](mailto:Janette.Busch@gmail.com)

## WRITING & EDITING SERVICES

As a career journalist and book editor, I've spent a lifetime working with words.

I spent 13 years in secular media working for the Northern Advocate, NZ Women's Weekly, NZ Herald, and then in London as a feature writer for *Woman* at IPC magazines.

After that I specialised in writing for Christian publications, namely *Daystar* magazine, *Challenge Weekly* and I was editor of *Christian Life* news-magazine.

I've edited books on a variety of topics, including missions, biographies, fiction, travel, poetry, music and theology.

My goal is to help writers on the road to publishing and make their words sparkle and shine.

### Marie Anticich (027) 660-9933

E: [marieanticich@gmail.com](mailto:marieanticich@gmail.com)

## Waikato Writers Group Launched

by Julia Martin

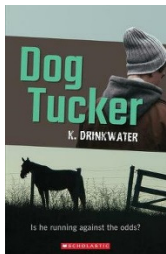
A new writers' group for the Waikato was launched on Sunday October 3rd at the Hamilton Garden's café with eight people attending. Experienced writers, Colleen Kaluza and Eugene Moreau, are leading the group and welcome writers of all levels of ability and experience.

With about 30 NZCW members in the Waikato region, this group has great potential and we encourage members to join us, bring their friends, and share their writing journeys.

The group plans to meet monthly and further details of meeting times, dates and locations will be available from the leaders.



## Book Review



### Dog Tucker

By K Drinkwater

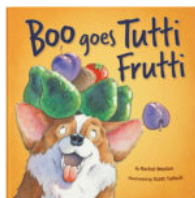
Review by Julia Martin

First published 2009, Reprinted March 2021 by Scholastic New Zealand and Australia

Thirteen-year-old Devlin has had a bad start in life. Placed in foster homes and bullied at school, he feels unwanted and unloved and develops an aggressive and rebellious attitude towards everything and everyone. When he's placed on a foster-uncle's farm, he is shown tough love by the widower and is forced to work hard with chores and home schooling. All his attempts to escape fail.

Things change gradually when he takes up the challenge of caring for a non-performing racehorse that's destined for pet food – dog tucker! Here he finds his niche and his life takes on a new perspective and purpose.

Devlin's story is a powerful reminder that a bad start in life doesn't have to define a person or determine their future. As he discovers, good choices and attitudes can lead to good outcomes. Aimed at readers ten and older. Great for encouraging boys in their reading.



### Boo Goes Tutti Frutti

By Rachel Weston

Review by Julia Martin

Weston Books 2020

An amusing story that has all the ingredients of a successful children's picture book. It features a naughty but lovable pet dog that gets into all sorts of trouble with forbidden fruit, leading to the trashing of an immaculate home owned by two strange sisters and a granddaughter.

The story makes full use of rhyme, repetition and onomatopoeic words and is superbly illustrated by Scott Tulloch. It's bound to become a children's favourite, especially when read aloud.

## Book Review



### Hello! Kia ora! Welcome New Friend!

By Rachel Weston and Deborah Hinde

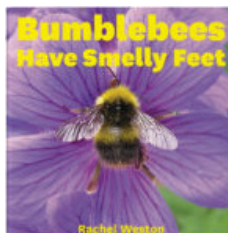
Review by Julia Martin

Weston Books 2020

This picture book is a valuable teaching resource to prepare children for a strange new environment such as starting pre-school education. In practical ways it teaches the value of caring, kindness, thoughtfulness, smiling and sharing to support the settling process.

The Golden Rule – 'When you smile at someone, your smile says to them, HELLO! KIA ORA! WELCOME NEW FRIEND!' is repeated throughout the story to emphasize the need for friendliness, sociability, and inclusion to be shown towards those who are new to an environment.

It's a powerful message for all ages and situations and is one we should all take on board!



### Bumblebees Have Smelly Feet

By Rachel Weston

Review by Julia Martin

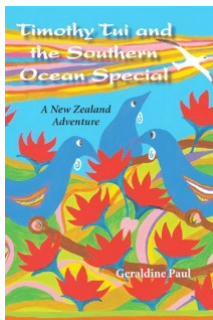
Weston Books 2019

This educational resource is a treasure chest packed full of amazing facts about bumblebees. The information is set out beautifully with superb illustrations and coloured photographs, and includes extra projects and activities for children's further learning and involvement.

I found this interactive book fascinating, and while it's written for children's education, I'm confident adults will enjoy reading it as well.

As the back cover says: Bee Amazed. Bee Informed. Bee Delighted!

I certainly was!



### **Timothy Tui and the Southern Ocean Special**

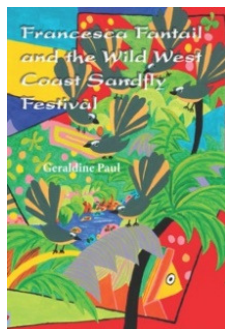
By Geraldine Paul

Review by Julia Martin

Published 2007 by Wild Strawberries Publishing

This is an intriguing chapter book that showcases the beauty of New Zealand's geography, flora, fauna and birdlife from the vantage point of three tui. They are flying aloft royal albatrosses who are training for the prestigious Southern Ocean Special Race.

It's the adventure of a lifetime for the birds, but is fraught with dangers and an evil plot to destroy their friends and spoil their chances of winning the race. I found the story engrossing even though it's written for children.



### **Francesca Fantail and the Wild West Coast Sandfly Festival**

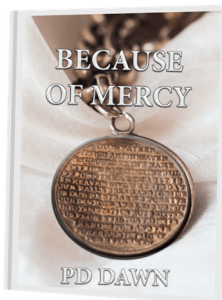
By Geraldine Paul

Review by Julia Martin

Published 2014 by Wild Strawberries Publishing

This second chapter book also focuses on New Zealand's incredible native birds and is concerned with a competition called the Wild West Coast Sandfly Festival. It involves teams of fantails competing for the Grand Festival Prize in cooking competitions in the Fiordland National Park.

The story is full of drama and intrigue and like Geraldine's other book, has a strong Christian message as the birds communicate with their Creator.



### **Because of Mercy**

By PD Dawn

Review by Julia Martin

Published by PD Dawn 2021

Pam Davies has written this novel as the first in her Coin Trilogy under the pen name PD Dawn. The story is set in a rural part of the Waikato in the early years of the twentieth century and follows the relationship of the two main characters – Rose and Henry.

As a young woman's life expectation back then was marriage and children, Rose longed to be wanted and loved, but no one seemed to want her. Following a serious riding accident, she is rescued by Henry, a childhood friend and someone she secretly admires.

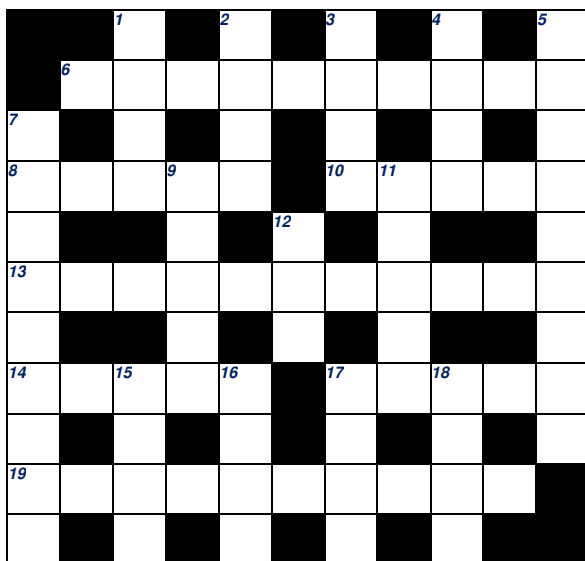
Just when their friendship is blossoming and Henry proposes to Rose, World War 1 breaks out in Europe and the local men begin to enlist. At first Henry is spared from going to war because, as a farmer, he's regarded as an essential food provider. But when he's given a white feather as a symbol of cowardice, he makes the decision to go to war to prove he is an honourable man.

Everything now changes for the couple and their lives are torn apart.

The author's graphic description of the conditions and horrors of the battlefields and the suffering and futility of the war are well-researched and powerfully depicted.

All through the novel there is a spiritual thread drawing the two main characters towards a merciful God who can bring forgiveness and give them hope and a future.

It's a gripping story with passion, treachery, betrayal and grief, and I look forward to reading the second part of the trilogy.



## Clues Down:

1. Finest
2. "... that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength."
3. Brother of Jacob
4. In music, opposite to sharp
5. What Goliath put to David
7. Manual trade of Jesus
9. Jesus' command "Feed my..." John 21.
11. Vee-shaped cut
12. Strange
15. A matter on the agenda
16. To engrave
17. An assignment
18. Possesses

**Crossword** by Eion Field

## Clues Across:

6. Eldest in the Bible, not necessarily an elder
  8. Appropriately
  10. Before a certain time or date arrives
  13. Think before acting
  14. Audible sound
  17. A jandal
  19. Getting physical
- (Solution page 34)

## Poetry and Photography by Max Carr

### *...I love you Lord...*

Each time you painted flowers or splashed rainbows in the sky,  
Each time you guided honey bees; gave wings to butterflies,  
Each time you scattered snow flakes, and that not just a few,  
I hear you say, I LOVE YOU.

Each time I hear some laughter or sweet bird-song through the trees,  
Each time I stroll the shoreline; smell the perfume of the seas,  
Each time I rise at dawn and see the sprinkling of the dew,  
I hear you say, I LOVE YOU.

Each time I see a moon beam dancing though the night,  
Each time I see the breezes tossing some kid's kite,  
Each time I sit and muse a while and smell the coffee brew,  
I hear you say, I LOVE YOU.



Each time I sight reflections in the stillness of the lake,  
Each time the kitchen's flooded by the odours of a cake,  
Each time I slip within a church and bow at someone's pew,  
I hear you say, I LOVE YOU.

Each time a passing rain cloud refreshes earth and flowers and trees,  
Each time the starry skies above take me to my knees,  
Each time the Calvary story comes into clearer view,  
I hear you say, I LOVE YOU.

So dear Lord, I bow my knees and sometimes I just weep,  
I am so glad my heart and soul you've promised you will keep,  
Within your care until that day I stand on Heaven's shore,  
So let me say to you dear Lord, I LOVE YOU ALL THE MORE.



# Definition of Blank Verse

Courtesy of [www.literarydevices.net](http://www.literarydevices.net)

Blank verse is a literary device defined as un-rhyming verse written in iambic pentameter. In poetry and prose, it has a consistent meter with 10 syllables in each line (pentameter); where unstressed syllables are followed by stressed ones, five of which are stressed but do not rhyme. It is also known as “un-rhymed iambic pentameter.”

## Features of Blank Verse

- Blank verse poetry has no fixed number of lines.
- It has a conventional meter that is used for verse drama and long narrative poems.
- It is often used in descriptive and reflective poems and dramatic monologues — the poems in which a single character delivers his thoughts in the form of a speech.
- Blank verse can be composed in any kind of meter, such as iamb, trochee, spondee, and dactyl.

## Types of Blank Verse Poetry

- Iamb pentameter blank verse (unstressed/stressed syllables)
- Trochee blank verse (stressed/unstressed syllables)
- Anapest blank verse (unstressed/unstressed/stressed syllables)
- Dactyl blank verse (stressed/unstressed/unstressed syllables)

## Short Examples of Blank Verse

1. The dreams are clues that tell us take chances.
2. The source of faith in happiness and
3. Daylight changes, and it is time to take
4. The Night frost drips silently from the roof
5. Human cadences always searching for this
6. The moon takes its bath in lovely silver dust.
7. The buds luminous in white sway happily, and sparkling valleys darkened by angst.
8. Only if mountains might give me a push. Only if sunrise lights could converse hope.

9. Listen to your heart while using your wisdom. A valuable treasure you have is your ta
10. Beholding red and golden sparkles of sunlight. Sweet-sparks of light glowing before the eyes.
11. Within the stars your dreams can be fulfilled, now you can fly the unlimited starlight
12. If passports are passwords to the heaven above, then we shall read the Riddle
13. If there is a twelfth player, who does not play,
14. He only leaves the field when free.
15. Birds chirp in the orchard of the cherry and try to sing a little later.
16. Enemies reached at the inimical stage of enmity.

## Examples of Blank Verse from Literature

The Earl of Surrey introduced blank verse in English literature in 1540. Milton, Shakespeare, Marlowe, John Donne, John Keats, and many other poets and dramatists have used this device in their works. Have a look at some examples of blank verse:

### Example #1: *Mending Walls* (By Robert Frost)

Something there **is** that **doesn't love** a **wall**.  
That **sends** the **frozen-ground-swell** **under it**,  
And **spills** the **upper boulders** in the **sun**;

This poem has no proper rhyme scheme. However, there is consistent meter in 10 syllables of each line. It is following the iambic pentameter pattern with five feet in each line. Only the first line is written in trochee pattern. All the stressed syllables are marked in bold.

### Example #2: *Hamlet* (By William Shakespeare)

But, woe is me, you are so sick of late,  
So far from cheer and from your former state,  
That I distrust you. Yet, though I distrust,  
Discomfort you, my lord, it nothing must. ...

Hamlet gives us a perfect example of a typical blank verse, written in iambic pentameter. Shakespeare employed the deliberate effort to use the syllables in a particular way. He brought variation by using caesuras (pause) in the middle of the line, as in the third line. Shakespeare has other literary pieces that are also good sources of blank verse examples.

### **Example #3: *Dr. Faustus* (By Christopher Marlowe)**

You stars that reign'd at my nativity,  
Whose influence hath allotted death and hell,  
Now draw up Faustus like a foggy mist  
Into entrails of yon labouring clouds, ...  
So that my soul may but ascend to Heaven ...

Marlowe developed this potential in the late 16th century. Marlowe was the first author who exploited the potential of blank verse for writing a powerful speech, as given here. The pattern utilized here is iambic pentameter.

### **Example #4: *Ulysses* (By Alfred Lord Tennyson)**

It little profits that an idle king,  
By this still hearth, among these barren crags  
Match'd with an aged wife, I mete and dole  
Unequal laws unto a savage race ...  
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.

Just look at the above example in which the first line is written in regular pentameter. However, there is a little variation in the stressed pattern in the following lines that is again revived in the last two lines, and does not follow any rhyme scheme.

### **Example #5: *Macbeth* (By William Shakespeare)**

Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow,  
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,  
To the last syllable of recorded time;  
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools  
The way to dusty death ...

William Shakespeare wrote verses in iambic pentameter pattern, without rhyme. *Macbeth* is a good example of blank verse. Many speeches in this play are written in the form of blank verse.

### **Example #6: *Frost at Midnight* (By Samuel Taylor Coleridge)**

But thou, my babe! Shalt wander like a breeze  
By lakes and sandy shores, beneath the crags  
Of ancient mountain, and beneath the clouds,  
Which image in their bulk both lakes and shores.  
And mountain crags: so shalt thou see and hear  
The lovely shapes and sounds intelligible  
Of that eternal language, which thy God...

Coleridge has used iambic pentameter – ten syllables, with five stressed syllables in this example. Though there is no rhyme scheme, readers can feel the rhythm of a real speech due to proper use of meter in this blank verse.

### **Example #7: *Thanatopsis* (By William Cullen Bryant)**

To him who in the love of Nature holds  
Communion with her visible forms, she speaks  
A various language; for his gayer hours  
She has a Voice of gladness, and a smile.

This blank verse does not have any rhyme scheme, but it brings a slight rhythm and cadence that mimics a pattern readers could hear and feel like listening to nature.

### **Example #8: *Tintern Abbey* (By William Wordsworth)**

Five years have past; five summers, with the length  
Of five long winters! And again I hear  
These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs  
With a soft inland murmur. – Once again  
Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs ...  
The landscape with the quiet of the sky.  
The day is come when I again repose ...

This example does not follow any rhyme scheme, but it is written in blank verse with iambic pentameter patterns of unaccented and accented syllables.

### **Example #9: *This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison* (By Samuel Taylor Coleridge)**

Well, they are gone, and here must I remain,  
This lime-tree bower my prison! I have lost  
Beauties and feelings, such as would have been  
Most sweet to my remembrance even when age  
had dimmed mine eyes to blindness! They, meanwhile...  
The slip of smooth clear blue betwixt two Isles  
Of purple shadow! Yes! They wander on  
In gladness all; but thou, methinks, most glad,  
My gentle-hearted Charles! For thou hast pined...

Coleridge has jotted down these lines as a spontaneous feel while sitting in his garden. He has written it in a blank verse without any rhyme scheme, yet it follows iambic pentameter.

## **Function of Blank Verse**

Originating from Latin and Greek sources, blank verse is widely employed as a vehicle in English dramatic poetry and prose, to create specific grandeur. Blank verse has similarity to normal speech but it is written in a variety of patterns, which bring interruptions such as pauses. Therefore, the intention is to produce a formal rhythmical pattern that creates musical effect. Hence, it tends to capture the attention of the readers and the listeners, which is its primary objective.

*Check out the Level Three competition in this issue for more examples of blank verse.*



# Canterbury Writers Seminar

by Peter Lawry

On Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> October 2021, twenty-four attendees arrived at St Albans Uniting Church in Mairehau, Christchurch for a five-hour Writers Retreat led by George Bryant. Interestingly the mix was sixteen ladies, eight men. (I'm not sure if that was significant or not!) This was the first such Christchurch retreat for a few years.

Introductions showed that attendees came from diverse locations not only within Christchurch itself, but from North and South Canterbury, and the West Coast.

Eleven people shared about their recently and soon-to-be published books in a very wide range of genres, from sci fi to devotionals; biographies and memoirs to historic fiction; children's to business books.

A table of published books by attendee authors was a drawcard for our break times; with a number of free booklets by George, and a wide cross-section of books of many different genres available for purchase.

The thrust of the day was to give a comprehensive overview of the book writing process, from first draft to published book. Handouts were comprehensive, with inclusions by George and two other experts: Janette Busch on editing and Jan Pendergrast on children's book authorship and illustration. George spoke from his experience spanning many years, covering each stage of the book development process, including a useful overview of small publishing houses in New Zealand. A final segment compared this against the pros and cons of self-publishing.

The most valuable non-curricular element of the day was meeting attendees with specific skills including experienced authors in specific genres, recently published authors and professional editors. One attendee was an author with extensive success with, and knowledge of, the self-publishing process on Kindle Direct Publishing, which was also helpful.

One copy of George's most recent book, *Life Is*, was offered as a prize in a free draw, and was won by Catharine Hogan, from Rangiora, North Canterbury.



# Join a Writers Group

## AUCKLAND, ELLERSLIE

Sara McGuire  
[sara.mcguire81@gmail.com](mailto:sara.mcguire81@gmail.com)

## AUCKLAND SOUTH

David Moore  
Mob: (027) 481 9996  
[david@crossroadscounselling.co.nz](mailto:david@crossroadscounselling.co.nz)

## CHRISTCHURCH

Dave Palmer  
Mob: (027) 216 5743  
[davepalmer@xtra.co.nz](mailto:davepalmer@xtra.co.nz)

## HAWKES BAY

Debbie McDermott  
Tel: (027) 769 2321  
[deborahmcdee@gmail.com](mailto:deborahmcdee@gmail.com)

## NORTHLAND

Kathryn Paul  
[editor@nzchristianwriters.org](mailto:editor@nzchristianwriters.org)

## PALMERSTON NORTH

Rodney Hickman  
Mob: (022) 676 3640  
[rodneyhickmanpoet@gmail.com](mailto:rodneyhickmanpoet@gmail.com)

## TAURANGA

Ruth Linton  
Mob: (021) 408 661  
[ruthlinton2015@gmail.com](mailto:ruthlinton2015@gmail.com)

## WAIKATO

Colleen Kaluza  
[colleen@wordwyze.nz](mailto:colleen@wordwyze.nz)

## WELLINGTON

Paul Devereux  
Mob: (022) 053 3618  
[paulrdevereux@xtra.co.nz](mailto:paulrdevereux@xtra.co.nz)

Connect with a community of writers in your area. Contact these leaders to find out more.

# WELCOME New and Returning Members:

## Adelaida Molinar

Auckland West

## Alan Crosby

Christchurch

## Barry Jackson

Palmerston North

## Ben Poulton

Palmerston North

## Berenise Arendse

Auckland South

## Carolina Philp

Auckland South

## Cindy Williams

Whakatane

## Clive McKegg

Whangarei

## Elaine Dixon

Tauranga

## Jan Barker

Nelson

## Jasmine

## Songhar-Makal

Auckland North

## Lauren Allan

Taupo

## Lewis Meyer

Auckland West

## Lyn Cameron

Auckland West

## Merrilyn

## Jaquierey

Auckland South

## Mike de Vetter

Whangarei

## Paul Kauri

Cook Islands

## Ruth O'Neill

Lawrence

## Wayne Graham

Pegasus

**All NZCW members are invited to share a Writer Profile and Book Feature(s) on our website.**

**For details email our NZCW president, Justin St Vincent:**

[president@nzchristianwriters.org](mailto:president@nzchristianwriters.org)

## ONE

Play on your own or with friends. Use a counter, throw a dice & begin!

## TWO

On a page write HOPE, surround it with words inspired by hope for one minute.

## THREE

Write about your favourite hobby for two minutes.

## FOUR

Write a funny four-line poem.

## FIVE

Move forward three spaces.

## SIX

Pick two or three movie characters and write some dialogue for a one-minute scene.

## SEVEN

Write a short email of appreciation to Justin our NZCW president and send it.

## EIGHT

Move back two spaces.

## NINE

Write a paragraph using the words: mouse, love, brick and tomato.

## TEN

Write a poem expressing an emotion.

## ELEVEN

Write about a vivid memory, up to half an A4 page maximum. (No minimum required.)

## TWELVE

Write a one-minute devotion.

## THIRTEEN

Write new song words to the tune of 'Jesus loves me this I know.'

## FOURTEEN

Phone someone and read them what you wrote on your previous turn.

## FIFTEEN

*Have a break.*



## SIXTEEN

Move forward five spaces.

## SEVENTEEN

Write a list of your favourite authors.

## EIGHTEEN

Choose a picture on a wall and write the beginning of a story from the scene. (Up to half an A4 page, no minimum required.)

## NINETEEN

Think of your favourite publication and write to the editor.

## TWENTY

Write a sales advertisement for your favourite chocolate or dessert.

## TWENTY-ONE

Write down three things unique about you.

## TWENTY-TWO

Write a new recipe using imaginary ingredients.

## TWENTY-THREE

Move backwards one space.

## TWENTY-FOUR

Move backwards to a space of your choice.

## TWENTY-FIVE

You are stranded on another planet. Write a description of your surroundings. (one-minute)

## TWENTY-SIX

You can hear two birds talking. Write their dialogue. (one minute)

## TWENTY-SEVEN

Miss a turn.

## TWENTY-EIGHT

Write four facts about koala bears. (Can research.)

## TWENTY-NINE

Write a list of six unique character-traits you've observed in people.

## THIRTY

Write down three people you'd like to be stranded on an island with.

## THIRTY-ONE

Write a paragraph to the Holy Spirit and write what you sense is His response to you.

## THIRTY-TWO

Imagine Jesus Christ's return. Write what you will do.

## THIRTY-THREE

Pick any topic and write on it for two minutes.

## THIRTY-FOUR

Write a one-minute speech on peanut butter. Say it to someone.

## THIRTY-FIVE

If you could write any kind of genre, what would it be? Outline a plot.

## THIRTY-SIX

Congratulations, you've reached the end of the game!

# Prayer of Praise

## (With a little help from Oswald Chambers)

Prayer by Lesley Edgeler

Lord, in Your **creation**, Your voice is on the rolling air; we see You in the rising and setting of the sun, in the singing of the birds and in the love of human hearts.

You are like a fountain whose never-ending spray gusts forth to refresh those who fear You.

You are as priceless as the waves of the ocean cascading over the waters.

In Your **wisdom** You created us out of Your overflowing love and goodness. You made us able to receive all the blessedness which You had ordained for us.

You ‘thought’ us in the rapture of Your own great heart.

Praise You, O Lord, for Your wisdom is beyond our perception—Your character faultless.

We are the instruments of Your symphony. When we play a wrong note, harmony and unity must be restored. You are the great restorer.

We look to You, Lord, when we are down. You lift us out of darkness and dark despair. When we lack strength, You undergird us. Through Your Word we are nourished and fed.

In Your **Power**, the whole world moves to Your great, inscrutable will. Your orchestration and timing are incredible. Your choreography is consummate. You are amazing, crowned with splendour, eternal and our inspiration.

In Your **holiness**, You ask us to put You first; to seat You on the throne of our lives.

Our disobedience brought us desolation and suffering. But You came to us. The gift of Your only Son reveals your love in amazing degree. “You who did not spare your own Son, but gave Him up for us all—how will You also, along with Him, graciously give us all things?”<sup>1</sup>

In Your **justice**, You showed humanity that compliance with Your dictates would mean eternal life, unspeakable joy and knowledge forever.

You are the lifter of our souls. You are like the warmth of the sun beaming down on us.

You have set a light glowing within us—a wellspring of joy amidst tribulation.

---

<sup>1</sup> Romans 8 v 32

Thank You, Lord God, for Your endless compassion in the midst of calamity and the disappointments of life.

We praise You, because we can rest in Your green pastures while You still the stormy waters.

We call on Your mighty name and You dispel all fear. The enemy is scattered and You, Lord, are triumphant in **victory**.

Your blessings are bountiful and Your love more enduring than all the precious stones ever mined.

We praise You and adore You. Amen.

## Writing Competitions Prize Winners

Congratulations to our end-of-year winners! Also, a fantastic job to all who have submitted entries this year. Every time we write a competition entry, we gain the highest prize of all, which is practise and experience. So be encouraged and keep working at it.

All three Level One prize-winners named below are now promoted to Level Two. Ella Hamlin is now promoted from Level Two up to Level Three. Jean Shewan is now promoted to the Honours List.

In each magazine, place-getters receive points: 15 points for first, 12 points for second and 9 points for third. At the end of May and November, the highest points in Levels One and Two are awarded monetary prizes for first, second and third. Level Three points are tallied at the end of November.

Prizes up for grabs are: **\$60 for First Place**, **\$50 for Second Place**, **\$40 for Third place**. These are now awarded as Manna Christian Store e-vouchers via email. Our next prize-winners will be published in the June-July 2022 magazine edition.

New members begin on Level One. To be promoted to Level Two or Three, contestants need to receive points at least three times on their current level. Our judges also require regular entries and improved writing. Entrants receive feedback via email from the judge.

Level One		Level Two		Level Three	
Christine Platt	36	Ella Hamlin	42	Jean Shewan	63
Pam Driver	27	Jill Clarke	21	Caroline Cook	45
Corrine Sinclair	21	Eion Field	15	Pat Kerr	39
		Kathryn Paul	15		



# Competition Results

## Level One

**Judge: Debbie McDermott**

**Requirement:** Write an engaging devotion or reflection piece that describes to your reader which sounds and smells of Christmas mean most to you, and why. (400 words)

### General Comments

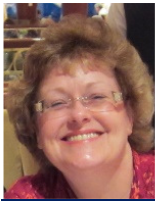
*I was delighted to receive eight well-written entries to this competition and commend entrants for giving it a go. Your good standard of writing resulted in all of you receiving high marks—meaning there was only a small difference in points between those who won this competition and those who did not. Loss of valuable marks was primarily due to grammar and punctuation errors, not following the stipulated formatting guidelines, and/or not fully meeting the requirements of the competition. Do remember that the loss of one mark can be the difference between winning and losing, so endeavour to ensure you thoroughly check your entry for errors before submitting it.*

*(NB: While learning how to set paragraph/line spacing etc may be challenging, I encourage you to get your head around it if you're planning to self-publish your work professionally. Enhancing your writing and publishing skills is a key objective of NZCW so feel free to contact me for guidance on formatting at any time.)*

*When writing an article, devotion or reflective piece that involves one or more of the five senses (in this case, hearing and smell), it is important to use evocative language that will enable your reader to see, hear, smell, taste and touch in their mind or imagination what you or your key characters are seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching in your narrative. Not only will this draw your reader into your 'space', it will also make your narrative that much more memorable for them.*

*First Place winner Pam Driver excelled in using evocative language to engage her reader. In my mind's eye, I could see, smell and taste the 'baby potatoes dripping with butter' and the 'pavlova crowned with gold passionfruit pulp', while the 'salivating aroma of Mum's fruit cake' made me want to drool too. She then goes on to describe the sound of two opposites: 'a jarring voice shattered heavenly harmony' and 'another voice, sweet with compassion and hope'. All these expressions engage as well as elicit a response from the reader. Evocative language involves using adjectives that usually evoke (i.e. bring to mind) a positive memory, mood, feeling or image, whereas provocative language tends to elicit a strong and negative sentiment in another person. Depending on what we are writing about, the dividing line between the two can be very thin, hence the reason we need God's wisdom to convey the right message to the reader.*

# First Place



Pam  
Driver  
of Auckland  
South

## Christmas Opposites

Christmas is heavenly. Harvest's first baby potatoes dripping with butter, nestled beside fresh minted peas straight from Dad's bounteous garden. The salivating aroma of Mum's fruit cake in the oven, choc-full of sultanas and cherries, and her celebrated pavlova crowned with gold passionfruit pulp drizzled gently onto a whipped cream blanket. Mum and Dad are long gone, only the memory remains.

Years later across the ditch, the inherited Hutschenreuther dinner service risks another annual outing on a table gloriously laid with gold and red. The acrid tang of pulled Christmas crackers followed by merry groans as the corny jokes are read; thoughtful and fun presents exchanged; food beyond compare coming from a kitchen bursting with a delicious fusion of smells, as my sister produces yet another family extravaganza. There is heart-pain at the remembrance of our abundant joy.

Then 2020 saw the zoom Christmas innovation, a special meal shared despite being two thousand kilometres apart. Now even a zoom Christmas cannot be repeated. The matriarch, my beloved sister, is also gone.

This death thing is heinous. It parts, pains, and depresses. Despite the bravado of atheists, most of us sense deep within that death just isn't right, that it's not normal despite being routine, otherwise it wouldn't hurt so much. No wonder the Bible calls death an enemy (1 Corinthians 15:26). Why is there death at all?

Many millennia ago, a jarring voice shattered heavenly harmony. "I will ascend ... I will raise my throne above ... I will sit on the mount ... I will ascend above ... I will make myself like the Most High" (Isaiah 14:13-14 NASB). A perfect and resplendent being, a mighty angel, corrupted himself through pride and avarice, and embroiled heaven in war (Revelation 12:7). Like the ultimate spoilsport he is, this fallen angel then seduced humanity to join him in rebellion and misery, with death the tragic consequence.

But there was another voice, sweet with compassion and hope. "I will empty Myself ... I will be a servant ... I will become human ... humble and obedient ... even to death on a cross" (Philippians 2:7-8 paraphrased).

Two absolute opposites.

Amid the stink of blood and sweat, with a virgin's birthing cries and an adoptive father's helplessness, the 'Defeater of Death' was born. Because of that first Christmas, I will hug my sister again, and praise my beautiful Jesus for making it possible.

## Second Place



Christine  
Platt  
of Red Beach,  
Auckland

# My Favourite Christmas Sounds and Smells

---

I've had the immense privilege of spending Christmas on three continents: Europe, Africa and Australasia. The sounds and smells differed in each place, but one sound they all have in common is uplifting music, and one smell is delicious food cooking.

I remember carol singing in the bleak midwinter of London. Our breath swirled in clouds around our faces. How grateful we were to be welcomed into homes and soothed with the warm comfort of mulled wine and hot mince pies.

In Africa we joined exuberant worshippers and sang carols in French. I was fascinated to observe many Africans with music in their bones. They move gracefully and harmonise naturally. It was a joy to be part of that. Our appetites were piqued by the aroma of spicy peanut sauce with chicken and plantain (large cooking bananas), which wafted into the church from the large communal pots being tended under the trees in the courtyard.

I'm about to celebrate my twentieth Christmas in New Zealand. I remember the novelty of my first Christmas here. We celebrated on the beach, being toasted by the sun. I was a newbie from England and had escaped the winter. Christmas on the beach—how amazing! My ears were lulled by the sound of breakers rustling through shells and my nose relished the enticing smells of sausages sizzling on BBQs.

Whichever continent I'm on, my top favourite sound is Handel's towering masterpiece, *The Messiah*<sup>1</sup>. He composed the music in just 24 days. The scriptural text was compiled by Charles Jennens. He intended it as a declaration of Christ's divinity, which was in reaction to the increasing popularity of atheism. How much we need that again in our day.

The most well-known section, *The Hallelujah Chorus*, is taken from Revelation 11:15, 19:6,16. KJV

Hallelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.  
King of kings and Lord of lords.  
And He shall reign for ever and ever.

In these days of fear, Covid uncertainty and impending climate change catastrophe, these are truths I hang on to and not just at Christmas. No matter what mess is around us, the Lord God omnipotent reigns. Governments manage as best they can with their limited human wisdom, but the coming of Jesus at Christmas unveiled God's majestic plan for humanity's ultimate welfare. Hallelujah!

---

<sup>1</sup> George Frideric Handel, German composer, 1695-1759

# Third Place Equal



Corrine  
Sinclair  
of Silverdale,  
Auckland

## A Call to Arms

The race is on.

Can we save Christmas?

What! Christmas needs saving?

The ninety percent project must be achieved. Roll up your sleeves kiwis. Jacinda warns, "Delta is knocking on your door, don't let it in."

The New Zealand Herald reports a high jump in Covid 19 cases. Let's present arms, by working together. We believe New Zealand can make it. Vaccinate, Vaccinate, Vaccinate. Let's get back to the things we love.

What do we love?

We love our family, we love Christmas, Christmas cards, decorations, Christmas trees and presents. We love church on Christmas Eve, joining together with friends singing carols and listening to the Christmas message. Most of all we love Jesus, the baby sent from God to "save his people from their sins." (Matthew ch1 v 21 NIV)

But, what if we can't get together this year? We have already missed so much, family in Dunedin, Levin, yes, also in Auckland and Waikato. Some haven't seen each other for months. We've missed birthdays, babies being born, seeing friends and a family get together in Queenstown.

Will we have to miss Christmas as well?

I've been listening to a Christmas carol. 'That Christmas Feeling' sung by Frank Sinatra:

*"I'll be home for Christmas, you can count on me.*

*Please have snow and mistletoe and presents under the tree for me.*

*On Christmas Eve you'll find me where your love lies green.*

*I'll be home for Christmas, if only in my dreams."*

I'm becoming nostalgic. Time to focus on things we can do. We can have picnics on the beach, pohutukawa trees will still blossom, bees will hum as they collect sweet nectar, birds and cicadas join together in early morning chorus. Christmas dinner may not be allowed indoors, but we can still light barbeques and invite our neighbours over as pleasant smoky odours waft over fences. We will serve trifle, jelly and ice-cream with cups of tea and Christmas cake. Presents will be delivered by Uber and we will connect with missing family by zoom, watching them excitedly opening presents under their Christmas trees.

Grandpa will open his bible and read the story of Mary's baby Jesus asleep in his manger, watched by shepherds, angels singing overhead and wise men following his star.

Why? Because the joys and freedom that Jesus brings, far surpass any freedoms that Jacinda can offer.

Happy Christmas everybody

## Third Place Equal



Clive  
McKegg  
of Whangarei

### Trifle made with strawberries

---

Trifle made with strawberries and a little sherry in the bottom; ginger ale sparkling up my nose; the chatter of family; Dad proudly boasting about his latest golf or tennis conquest; Mum clattering the plates and spoons for the next course. These were the joyous and exciting sounds and smells of Christmas in the 1960s for me. My anticipation was deeply rewarded with a day of fun and family.

My parents generally celebrated Christmas with extended family on 23rd December – their wedding anniversary.

Skipping forward half a lifetime, I remember our last Christmas-anniversary together. They celebrated forty-nine years of marriage. The trifle was the same, but Dad would have a fatal heart attack a few months after and no longer be there for us.

Nineteen years later I would visit Mum in her rest home for our last Christmas. She seemed very small, quiet, and a little overwhelmed as we sat with all the others like her at the cheaply decorated tables with their flimsy disposable plates. I don't recall any trifle.

Life, as they say, is short. Markers like Christmas are placed at regular intervals to help us keep perspective. Some are outrageously joyous with the laughter of a new child of our own. Some are heartbreaking when we are estranged from loved ones and hope seems lost. Yet God is present and at work in both.

An aged Moses, reflecting on his life prays: *"Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were born, or You gave birth to the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God... So teach us to number our days, that we may present to You a heart of wisdom."* (Psalm 90:1-2,12 NASB). Through the joy and tears of generations we find that God remains constant. Wisdom is to cling more and more tenaciously to Him – to make Him our dwelling place.



Surely this is the bittersweet taste of Christmas: the sweet strawberries of joy; the sherry-trifle warmth of belonging; and the sharp bubbles of adversity that sometimes make us choke and leave our eyes streaming. For a little boy at Christmas life is full of excitement and anticipation. Only as we grow older do we realise the magnitude of the challenges we will encounter on the journey – and the magnificent grace of God that enables us to face them with hope and courage.

## Level Two

**Judge: Jeanette Knudsen**

**Requirement:** Write a rousing tribute expressing gratitude to police, fire, emergency, healthcare, and any other essential services people you can think of who are required to be on duty at Christmas time. (300 words)

### General Comments

*Thank you to the two entrants who participated at this busy time of year, and congratulations on your contributions. Both of you kept to the topic well within the word limits. The level of correct spelling was excellent and there were few grammar mistakes. Watch the use of semicolons (;), and use colons (:) before a list. Also good English requires the use of full sentences with a semicolon, just as you would for a full stop, except for special effects.*

*The key words in the prescription are ‘a rousing tribute expressing gratitude’, and this is where you gained or lost points. To write a rousing tribute requires enthusiasm and gusto in your writing. Up to 25% of the marks are awarded for creativity, flow and impact, and that means making sure your tribute is rousing, inspiring or stirring. You have to draw your audience in to feel emotionally about your subject and you have to show that you personally feel passion for those who serve the community on Christmas Day.*

*The first-place winner did this well by telling the little story about Christmas dinner and using the pronoun ‘we’ to make it personal. She continued to use ‘we’ as she drew her gratitude to a conclusion. The second-place winner describes well the different activities of the essential services, but needs to expand more enthusiastically in her expressions of gratitude.*

*Just a note about filler words, like ‘likely’ and ‘starting to’. They are best avoided, as are words like ‘paramountcy’, which belong more to the world of official documents or formal papers.*

*Well done, both of you. Continue to hone your writing skills and, to relax, read some well written books over the summer break.*

# First Place



Ella  
Hamlin  
of Napier

## Christmas Emergency

Every Christmas, during our festive holiday making, we are likely to find New Zealand's dependable and devoted emergency service workers, primed for action. While most people may be thinking about with whom to celebrate Christmas, or where to pitch a tent, these servants –who have put up their hand to ensure our emergencies get taken care of effectively, must navigate Christmas with less carefree steps. Indeed, these indispensables have likely approached the cheerful season with increased responsibilities. Sincerely hoping that this time of year is safe for everyone, their service goes further than the paramountcy of society's safety and the efficient running of essential services. Beyond their duty, they will also be required to give a great personal sacrifice –time away from loved ones.

Imagine this scene.

The feast is laid out. The family have arrived with Pavlova, brandy snaps, chocolate coated strawberries, and fruit mince pies. The aromatic blend of rosemary roast chicken, potatoes and gravy, and minted peas is starting to smell sensational. Taste buds are eagerly awaiting, and tummies are rumbling.

Suddenly, the lights on the Christmas tree flicker and die. The cook gasps in horror as the stove dies too. Realizing the power has been cut off, the barbeque is lit, but the cook is panicking. In the middle of the rising chaos, a cell phone sirens. All eyes turn to the one on-call. Great groans escape as the news is received, and our beloved emergency worker flies out the door, into the setting sun, not knowing when they will return. They are off to fix the world. Well, at least, this part of the world that is in upheaval.

We toast them. We serve a plate for them. We pray for them. And we cry tears of joyful gratitude for their return into our arms.

# Thank you Workers!

## Second Place



Jill  
Clarke  
of Wanganui

### The Gift of Thanks

As I contemplate Christmas giving, I give the gift of thanks to those who work on Christmas day. These people forgo personal and family time to assist those of us who are in need of care.

The telephonist at the call centre who responds to medical alarms and 111 calls. Call centre workers trained to deal with distraught phone calls talk people through the difficulty, listening carefully to discover the most appropriate way to help. They check to find if anyone is hurt, getting details of address or place of the emergency, often keeping the caller on the line to calm them down until help arrives; giving first aid suggestions where necessary.

Fire, police and ambulance staff receive the call. Drivers quickly but safely move personnel and vehicles to where the need is. With their equipment serviced and ready, the fully trained staff are prepared for any emergency. The sound of sirens reverberates through the city; fire, ambulance, police or all of the services required for those in need of help. A team of respondents are ready to assist even on Christmas Day.

Firemen check for damage by smoke or flames. They make sure all house occupants or vehicle travellers are accounted for. Onlookers are kept at a distance while the fire call-out purpose is investigated. Police too are involved in investigation of fire, accident, burglary, disruptive behaviour and law breaking. Ambulance personnel check medical conditions and transport those who need treatment to the hospital for further investigation. Medical staff are at the ready for any arriving patients.

Rescue helicopters, paramedics, surf life savers, nurses, doctors, radiologists, surgeons, dentists, care-givers, cleaners, road workers all go about their work endeavouring to make our Christmas Day a safe and happy one.

My sincere hearty thanks to all.

# Level Three

## Judge: Julia Martin

**Requirement:** In modern language write a poem in blank verse extolling the attributes of God. (20 lines maximum)

### General Comments

*Blank verse is a literary device that was first introduced in the 16th Century and is regarded by many as the most common and influential form used by English poets and dramatists between the 16th and 20th Centuries.*

*Blank verse is unrhymed poetry which is usually written in iambic pentameter. Ideally, it has a consistent meter with 10 syllables in each line (pentameter) where unstressed syllables are followed by stressed ones that do not rhyme.*

*e.g. 'To strive/ to seek/ to find/ and not/ to yield' (from 'Ulysses' by Lord Tennyson).*

*Blank verse lends itself to writing long narrative poems and plays as iambic pentameter has a rhythm that mimics the natural cadence of speech. e.g. John Milton's epic poem 'Paradise Lost'.*

*It frees a writer from the constriction of rhyme yet still creates a more poetic sound and sense of pattern as a result of the regular use of stressed and unstressed syllables.*

*In contrast, free verse has no limitations as it requires no rhyme, rhythm or length of line.*

*The following poem is one I have written on the topic to illustrate iambic pentameter in blank verse*

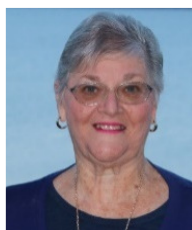
*Almighty God, I lift my voice to you  
For you alone are worthy of all praise.  
Eternal, everlasting Father God,  
Creator and Sustainer of all things.  
Omnipotent, omniscient. You are.  
A God of justice, righteousness and truth  
Whose promises can never fail nor cease.  
Surrounded by your angels robed in white  
Who serve and worship round your awesome throne.  
A holy God who cannot dwell with sin.  
In love and grace you sent your Son to earth  
To save humanity from death and curse.  
Compassionate, long suffering and kind.  
With finite mind, I cannot comprehend  
Your faithfulness, unfailing love and peace.  
A rock, a fortress, anchor for my soul.  
Words fail to tell the wonders of your name,  
Your majesty, your wisdom and your might.  
All praise and glory be to God on high  
Forever and forever more. Amen!*

*This competition topic asked for a poem using blank verse to extol the attributes of God. I realise the form and required length of this poem are difficult enough without having to use a finite mind to extoll the attributes of an infinite God. The psalmists in the Bible sought to do this and I was pleased some members attempted this challenging assignment with success. Unfortunately, I could not consider two of the entries for places: for although they were well-written and commendable, the writers failed to distinguish between blank verse and free verse – as described above.*

*I awarded first place to Jean Crane whose entry was her first at level three. Congratulations Jean on a great start. Jean has carefully researched the features of blank verse and for the most part has kept to the required rhythm and beat. I like her opening question which she then attempts to answer.*

*Second place goes to Jean Shewan who has written a fine poem extolling the attributes of each member of the Trinity. While several lines in the stanzas fail to meet the 10 syllables required for iambic pentameter, the poem has a good beat and flow of ideas.*

## First Place



Jean  
Crane  
of Tauranga

### Who is God?

*Who is God? What kind of being is He?  
Impossible to grasp and comprehend.  
Words fall exceedingly short when trying  
to wrap our minds around our awesome God.  
Jehovah Jireh without origin,  
everlastingly constant, unwavering.  
He knows the past, the present and future,  
is everywhere, and closer than our thoughts.  
Without effort, He always does what's right  
and as He is all-wise, will never change,  
so His thinking can be truly trusted.  
He is caring, just, kind, forgiving, and  
continuously keeps His promises.  
God, eternally glorious and pure,  
possesses endless love, mercy, and grace.  
His righteous holiness joins fully the  
attributes of His perfect, whole, being.  
May our gaze be on God, who is worthy.*

## Second Place



Jean Shewan  
of Christchurch

### The Great 'I Am'

God of the universe, powerful one,  
Father and mother of all living things,  
Jehovah and judge, provider of all,  
Loving and merciful, God the "I am".

Jesus, God's Son, sent down from above,  
Born of a virgin, by the Spirit of God;  
Humble your birthing and death on a cross  
Mighty your rising, a sacrifice for all.

Flame, wind, dove, Holy Spirit of God,  
Inspirer, enabler, giver of gifts,  
Encourager and teacher lighting the path,  
Showing God's glory and love to the world.

Majestic Creator, Lover of all,  
Ascended Saviour, the right hand of God,  
Spirit revealing, empowering the Word,  
God in three persons ruling the world.

### Crossword Solution for page 13:

#### Across:

6. Methuselah 8. Aptly 10. Until 13. Premeditate 14. Noise 17. Thong  
19. Exercising

#### Down:

1. Best 2. They 3. Esau 4. Flat 5. Challenge 7. Carpenter 9. Lambs  
11. Notch 12. Odd 15. Item 16. Etch 17. Task 18. Owns



# Competitions for February 2022

Due by January 1<sup>st</sup> 2022

EMAIL ENTRY AS AN ATTACHMENT, COMPLETE WITH WORD COUNT AND YOUR NAME.

**Font:** Arial, 10 pt **Heading:** Bold Title Case, 18 pt **Line spacing:** Multiple 1.2

**Spacing between Paragraphs:** 6 pt **Paragraph Indentation:** None

**Alignment:** Justified. **Send a photo** of yourself for publishing purposes.

**NB: If you are not sure which level you're on, email Debbie McDermott at:**  
**[level1@nzchristianwriters.org](mailto:level1@nzchristianwriters.org)**

Entries are judged on: Entering, format and layout 15%, Topic requirements 25%, Creativity, flow and impact 25%, Grammar and punctuation 25%, Spelling 10%.

## **Level One**—for members 16 years old and over

**Requirement:** Research and write an essay on the topic of 'The Pen is Mightier than the Sword' from the Christian viewpoint. Provide a bibliography of Scripture references and other sources to support your argument. Do not include the bibliography in the essay's word count. (400 words)



*Debbie*

**Email entry to** Debbie McDermott at [level1@nzchristianwriters.org](mailto:level1@nzchristianwriters.org)

## **Level Two**—for members 16 years old and over

**Requirement:** Write a simple read-aloud children's story about a king or prophet in the Old Testament. Aim for pre-schooler age; e.g. 3-5. Children this age can understand far more than they can read, so words do not need to be for a young reader but should still be clearly understood. (200-300 words)



*Ruth*

**Email entry to** Ruth Linton at [level2@nzchristianwriters.org](mailto:level2@nzchristianwriters.org)

## **Level Three**—for members 16 years old and over

**Requirement:** Choose a Bible verse and, using a lesson from nature, turn it into a devotional. This may include poetry. (250 words)



*Julia*

**Email entry to** Julia Martin at [level3@nzchristianwriters.org](mailto:level3@nzchristianwriters.org)



**NZ CHRISTIAN WRITERS** is a nationwide collective of authors, bloggers, editors, lyricists, poets, publishers, songwriters, storytellers and writers throughout New Zealand. Along with our bi-monthly magazines and competitions we offer inspiring seminars and writers retreats to encourage, inspire and upskill people in their writing.

NZ Christian Writers' vision is to cultivate a vibrant community of Christian writers by connecting them to other like-minded writers in New Zealand. We welcome both beginner and experienced writers.