



# Dunedin Methodist Parish

*Finding Good in everyone Finding God in everyone*

[www.dunedinmethodist.org.nz](http://www.dunedinmethodist.org.nz)

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|-------------------------|---|----------|
| <b>Presbyter:</b>       | Rev. Siosifa Pole   | 455 2923 |
| <b>Parish Stewards:</b> | Dr George Davis   | 453 6540 |
|                         | Dr Richard Cannon   | 477 5030 |
|                         | Mrs Fay Richardson  | 489 5485 |
| <b>Tongan Steward:</b>  | Mr Palanite Taungapeau  | 456 3144 |
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## PARISH BULLETIN

24<sup>th</sup> July 2011

### WORSHIP FOR SUNDAY 31<sup>st</sup> JULY 2011

|          |            |            |
|----------|------------|------------|
| 9.30am   | Mornington | S Pole     |
| 9.30 am  | Mosgiel    | I Murray   |
| 11.00 am | Glenaven   | S Pole     |
| 11.00 am | Wesley     | G Preston  |
| 1.00pm   | St Kilda   | TBA        |
| 6.00pm   | Broad Bay  | No Service |

### OPEN EDUCATION: A SPECIAL EVENT

On Wednesday, 27 July (note the date), the Open Education programme held as usual at Mornington Methodist Church, Galloway Street, will consist of a special Mid-Winter Feast, followed by a Celtic-style service of celebration, led by Anglican priest the Reverend Helene Mann. The dinner will begin at 6pm, to be followed by the service at 8pm. Judy Russell is our chef and promises a particularly delectable repast. The charge for both meal and service will be \$20; profits will go towards Christchurch earthquake relief. Please book your place for the meal before Monday 25 July by ringing Judy (455 3727).

### MINISTRY TRAINING SEMINAR

The parish will run a ministry training seminar for all the lay people of the parish on Friday the 2<sup>nd</sup> and Saturday the 3<sup>rd</sup> of September 2011. The time and the venue for this training are still yet to finalise. Val Nicholls from Trinity College will lead this training seminar with assistance from the leaders of the parish. This is obviously an opportunity for those in the

wider parish who would like to involve in a more active role in leading worship to attend. This notice will continue to appear in the bulletin to encourage our people to turn up to this seminar as we are looking toward the future with hope.

### **HEAVENLY CHOIRS FOR HOSPITAL CHAPLAINCY**

Knox Church, Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> August, 2.00 – 3.30pm. Followed by afternoon tea. \$10.00. All proceeds to Dunedin Hospital Chaplaincy Otago Healthcare Chaplaincy Support Trust.

Dunedin Harmony Chorus of Sweet Adelines, Knox Church Choir, Otago Girls & Otago Boys Choirs, Southern Consort of Voices, Sunny Side Up.

### **MORNINGTON MIDWINTER MUSEUM MEANDER, SUNDAY 31 JULY 2.00PM**

Mary and Sue invite Mornington folk to join us to meander around the various exhibits at the Otago Museum, followed by soup and buns at our place, 197 Balmacewen Road. Please let us know if you intend to come and if you need us to organise transport for you. We are meeting in the museum foyer at 2.00pm. Phone 464 0787.

**Broad Bay TODAY:** Instead of Siosifa taking Broad Bay's 4pm service this Sunday, Helen Watson White will repeat her service from 10 July. Note new winter meeting time. TODAY'S 4pm service at Broad Bay Methodist Church, Greig Street, will be followed by a light shared meal. All welcome.

**EXPLORERS GROUP** meets 4-30pm on Sunday July 31st at the home of Trish and David Patrick, 17 Skerries St Outram. Thank you, Trish and David, for offering your home as the venue for this meeting.



## **'What is truth?'**

Last week, David Kitchingman's 12 quotations about truth included one that really caught my attention – in fact I'm still wrestling with it, and I would like your permission to simply share some of my thoughts on the matter. It caught my attention because I have, like some of you, been caught up in the reporting on the Royal Commission into the Pike River Mine Disaster – set up to establish, or discover, the truth about what led to this tragedy.

But, firstly, to the quotation in David's list. 'Everything you add to the truth subtracts from the truth.' It comes from Alexander Solzhenitsyn, the great Russian novelist, dramatist and historian. It is important to remember that when you read his challenging and, seemingly paradoxical, statement, he was imprisoned for telling the truth as he saw it. Even the most cursory knowledge of Solzhenitsyn's life illustrates why he could say such a thing – when the State decides what is truthful, and imprisons or exiles those who say otherwise, then where shall truth be found.

Remember the cynical (if that's a fair comment) response made by Pilate when Jesus declared that he (Jesus) was 'the truth'. Pilate apparently said, with a sort of shrug of his shoulders, "What is truth?" – and went out to address the crowds shouting for Jesus' death. Francis Bacon, the 17<sup>th</sup> century philosopher, wrote an *Essay on Truth*, and his first sentence reads: "What is truth", said jesting Pilate, and would not wait for an answer.'

So what is truth? Will a Royal Commission discover the truth? Already we are hearing conflicting stories, submitted by people of experience and standing. Not for one moment do I believe that any of these people are not telling the truth as they see it – but what will a Royal Commission do with the differing, even contradictory, information it receives? Will everyone who reads its findings accept its word? I doubt it. It's was with that in mind that I read and then resonated (as they now say) with Alexander Solzhenitsyn.

When the monarch is crowned, s/he is presented with a Bible, and these words are said: "We present you with this Book, the most valuable thing this world affords. Here is wisdom. This is the Royal Law. These are the lively oracles of God." Sunday by Sunday, in our worship, we hear the

scripture read, and we regard it as ‘the truth’. But when the preacher endeavours to bring those biblical words into 21<sup>st</sup> century experience, do we think of such preaching as the truth – or do we, more correctly, think of the preaching as an attempt to uncover, to give new, but not infallible, expression to God’s truth.

How does truth, set down 2000 years ago, become truth for today. That is a real dilemma for the Christian Church. We do not belong to a part of the Christian family that holds to a belief in either the infallibility of scripture, or the infallibility of those who interpret scripture on behalf of their members. I think we are correct in taking such a position because, to use the words of a hymn by George Rawson we still sing:

We limit not the truth of God  
To our poor reach of mind,  
By notions of our day and sect,  
Crude, partial, and confined.  
No, let a new and better hope  
Within our hearts be stirred:

*The Lord hath yet more light and truth  
To break forth from His Word*

We belong to a Church that has its roots in the 18<sup>th</sup> century when an extraordinary explosion of scientific knowledge was taking place that changed human understanding of the world and its ways. Wesley himself said, “It is a fundamental principal with us that to renounce reason is to renounce revelation, that religion and reason go hand in hand, and that all irrational religion is false religion.” No longer is it possible for the ancient guardians of tradition to have the last word.

One of John Wesley’s great students in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, Albert Outler, endeavoured to sum up Wesley’s attitude towards authoritative truth by seeing it from four distinct, yet complementary standpoints – he invented the phrase, the ‘Wesleyan quadrilateral.’ This asks that we (1) apply biblical understanding, (2) insights from the tradition of the Church, (3) rational thinking, and (4) our communal and personal experience, when making our judgements.

I think that’s what we all do, or can do, every Sunday, in our own way. Truth is not expressed in a series of ‘last words’ but in a humble process of listening and learning every day. Then it becomes not just the ‘truth for us’ but ‘our truth.’

**Donald Phillipps**