



Dunedin Methodist Parish

Finding Good in everyone Finding God in everyone

www.dunedinmethodist.org.nz

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PARISH BULLETIN

21st OCTOBER 2012

WORSHIP FOR SUNDAY 28th OCTOBER 2012

9.30am	Mornington	D Phillipps
9.30 am	Mosgiel	R Masterton
11.00 am	Glenaven	D Phillipps
11.00 am	Wesley	R Masterton
1.00pm	St Kilda	TBA
6.00pm	Broad Bay	No Service

PR&F MEETING

To be held on Thursday 25th October, 7.30pm at the Mission Office.



MOSGIEL

There will be an after service lunch on Sunday 28th October.

EXPLORERS GROUP

Explorers Group meets on Sunday Oct 28th at 4-30pm in the Mornington Church Lounge. All interested people most welcome.

BETH MAJOR

Beth is going into Woodhaugh Rest-home for 2 weeks on Wednesday 24th October to give Lewis a break. He will be spending time in the North Island with family. Beth will be pleased to see visitors.

CELLISTS OF OTAGO

The Cellists of Otago proudly present a concert featuring international artists Anna Leese - soprano, and Heleen du Plessis - cello. The concert will be held in St Hilda's Collegiate Chapel on 28 October at 2.30pm. (Please note the starting time.) This will be a "not to miss" concert.

Doors will open at the school at 1.30pm to accommodate an expected full house. Admission \$15 per adult, \$10 per student (with I.D.) \$5 per child.



PASTORAL CARE OF OLDER PEOPLE WORKSHOP

Rev. Anne Russell-Brighty is again running her workshops on the Pastoral Care of Older People in Dunedin on November 2/3 and 23/24. As the population ages there are increasing numbers of elders both in and outside of our churches. Anne's course draws on both her own experience and the wisdom of those who attend her courses. The programme has been very well-received e.g.

"I found this course stimulating, affirming and challenging",

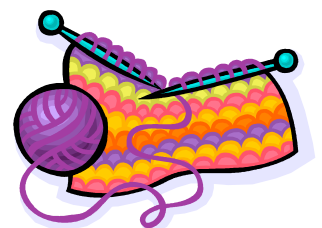
"Thank you for your time, care, preparation and empathetic method of delivery. I look forward to the next stage of the journey."

"The experiences of others in dealing with certain issues were very much appreciated." For further information contact trishp@selwyncare.org.nz

Or <http://www.selwyncare.org.nz/145/courses/-/workshops-available.pdf>

KNITTING REMINDER

We're having another collection of booties and bonnets for the Methodist Mission HUB. We would like to collect them before October 24 so that they can be placed into attractive gift parcels. If collection is required please contact Marion 4767767.



MORNINGTON LEADERS' MEETING REPORT:

- Congratulations to Colin Gibson for the sterling work raising funds for the Water for Life appeal - brilliant!
- From 27 November and over the Christmas - New Year period Ian Pearce will be the interim Chair of the Mornington Leaders' Meeting. The meeting decided at the meeting on Tuesday 16 October to rotate the position of chairperson.
- The Mornington group "YAM" enjoyed being able to go to "Hatched" at the Fortune Theatre as a result of generous personal support.



TAIERI CHRISTIAN CARE FOODBANK

Needs donations of Fruit cake mix or sultanas or raisins to make Christmas cakes. Also small iced Christmas cakes and Christmas wrapping paper. Thank you.

TOUCHSTONE

Dear Friends,

I am writing to clarify the status of the insert in the October Touchstone. I would be grateful if the following statement which has been approved by the Methodist Publishing Board could be included in your church newsletters.

The October publication of Touchstone included an insert which was a paid advertisement from Family First imploring parishioners to campaign against marriage equality.

The Methodist church of NZ does not endorse the Family First group, or its political position. For those that wish to write a letter in favour of marriage equality, please view www.marriageequality.co.nz

Rev David Bush,
General Secretary, Methodist Church of New Zealand

VINCE NEAVES added a rather unusual and novel facet to last Sunday's services at Mornington when he and his tutor, Sinclair McLaren, played their bassoons. It looks a particularly difficult instrument to play, but Vince did a very creditable performance of a composition by Greig - good preparation for his Level 3 NCEA exam the following day. We wish Vince well in his music career. A lot of hard work ahead, but great satisfaction as well.



Story from the Mission

The Mission has been working to include volunteers in their work –here is an example of one volunteer's worth. Since having a stroke 2 years ago June was left with cognitive impairment, subsequently, this has impacted on her confidence where social events and learning new tasks is particularly stressful and challenging. After some discussions with June she agreed to be introduced to a volunteer and after getting to know and trust them in the safety of her own home they now attend SPAN together. The role of the volunteer is to quietly introduce June to other members and encourage her to participate. When she feels more confident and able we will all work together on the next step which is to support her with arranging transport so she can eventually attend SPAN independent of the volunteer. This may take several weeks to achieve but the volunteer is skilled and committed and the final result will be well worth it for everyone.

JULIET LINDA WILSON was baptised last Sunday afternoon at her home at Owaka, before a large community of family, friends, and church representatives. It was a short but very moving occasion, where her parents Nathan and Linda too the same vows as at earlier service, almost two years before, they brought their first daughter Annabelle to Mornington Church for baptism.

Photos show Nathan, Linda and Juliet with Ken Russell, and Neil McCulloch on behalf of the Church presents a baptism candle to the parents.





Tying the knot and cutting the knot

Hi Jo

At church a fortnight ago, a brightly coloured pamphlet accompanied the monthly issue of the Church's *Touchstone* magazine. It came from protectmarriage.org.nz, or Family First New Zealand. It opposes the Marriage (Definition of Marriage) Amendment Bill, and solicits opposing submissions by the closing date of 26 October. So you've only got five days to have your say, against or for the Bill.

Touchstone itself quoted a remark from the incoming President of our Church, Rex Nathan, about the Conference next month: "There might be something which comes out of left field. Same sex marriage could come up but it probably won't get much floor time at this Conference because it's not already on the agenda." Too bad, I thought, if Armageddon suddenly erupts in the next week or so.

That reminds me of the full-page article in the ODT last month on church views about the Bill. The Methodist response was: "We have not had an opportunity to discuss same-sex marriage and do not have an official policy." Well, here's one opportunity to at least start a discussion.

To be fair, the same issue of *Touchstone* carried a useful centrefold pair of articles. One was about "Same-sex Marriage – Pros and Cons". (The author of the "Pros" section was Uesifili Unasa, a former minister in this parish.) The other article dealt with the three main schools of thought among Christians and in secular society:

- 1) "Traditional defence of heterosexual marriage", drawing on perceptions of biblical and natural precepts.
The view held by the vast majority of Christians and other world faiths.
- 2) "The Middle road."
Increasing numbers of Christians who respect tradition but contend that Christian understandings can change over time to include gay couples.
- 3) "Secular liberalism."
Secularists for whom marriage does not involve religious notions, but who would allow religious groups to opt out of progressive legislation.

So why is our church indecisive in this area of social policy? Presumably because it's aware of straddling the ground between groups (1) and (2).

It's also aware of how its own membership is increasingly multicultural. But does that excuse its reluctance to grapple with the gay marriage argument, especially when other churches or groups presume to speak unequivocally in the name of Christians generally?

To a limited extent, yes. It may at least reflect a recognition of how complex life can get at the intersection of religion and culture – exactly where marriage is peculiarly sited. While living for a while in a society which practices polygamy, I became more aware of that intersection, in fact of the overlap between the two, since religion itself is a cultural phenomenon. What the great divide over marriage proves is that appealing to any interpretation of religion for definitive guidance on it is at least highly questionable. Differing conclusions drawn from virtually the same premise bring into doubt both the separate conclusions and the premise itself.

In other words, the rights of the Church to make ex cathedra pronouncements on what we should think and on how society orders its life have really come to an end. Because that is such a deflating admission to make there are parts of the church that still resist it altogether. And even in communions such as ours that have begun to shed the notion of divine right the withdrawal symptoms make relinquishment a painful process. We should know. If this parish has learned anything from recent experience it is that the concentration of authority in a few appointed hands can be fraught with the risk of misjudgment and distortion.

But does that mean abandoning the field to those who are only concerned to mount a rearguard action? No, but neither does it mean replacing one simplistic answer with another equally simplistic one. The issue is only partly a matter of equity. The key to cutting the (Gordian) knot is to recognize that marriage is fundamentally a human institution onto which various religious interpretations have been grafted over millennia. Assumptions as to the application of patriarchy and the ramifications of procreation largely fashioned its early development. As an evolutionary concept it must constantly adapt to its social environment, and it has always been doing so, though usually at a snail's pace.

Time was, as recently as 1662, when the Anglican Prayer Book declared that marriage was “ordained for the procreation of children” and required the woman to vow “to obey” her husband. Even within the lifetime of most of us, our own marriage service largely followed suit. Marriage was

“instituted of God” and “so many as are joined together otherwise than God’s word doth allow are not joined together by God.” Yet one of the optional orders of service nowadays begins much more simply: “Marriage is the free association of a man and a woman...”

To which might soon be added, “...or a man and a man, or a woman and a woman”.

But not if Family First has its way, and, in fairness, let no one underestimate what a change there will be in the long history of marriage if the Bill becomes law.

An interesting section in the Family First pamphlet is headed, “Political U-turns”. It cites a number of politicians from various parties who have changed their stance, even in the short space of time since the Civil Union Act in 2004. Admittedly, broken promises can be nasty, but any implication that changes of heart and mind are always a blight on a person’s character must be resisted. If it wasn’t for value U-turns of countless people over time we would still be labouring under a very lopsided regime of patriarchal marriage.

Ironically, the institution which Family First is campaigning to protect is currently undergoing other changes beside those it sees as the greatest threat. Increasingly, many couples who have strong commitments to their partnership are choosing not to marry at all, not even “for the sake of the children”. And of those who do marry in Western countries something like a third refuse to vow “till death do us part”.

So there are those who choose to *reject* marriage even in its current form. And there are those who aim to *protect* it from what they see as a betrayal of its fundamental essence. And now there are those, evidently in increasing numbers and with a different view of its fundamentals, who want to *project* it. They want it to embrace a minority whose eligibility has hitherto been widely dismissed as unthinkable.

In marshalling its case against the Bill, Family First makes much of the rights of children. In arguing that “every child has the right to a mum and dad” it may well touch a chord within a large section of the electorate. But what it seems to overlook about children is that they grow up and a high percentage, certainly not just the heterosexuals among them, look for a mate, fall in love, and dearly want to tie the knot. That, to my mind, is the reality which society is beginning to acknowledge and which sooner rather than later may cut the knot in this divisive debate.

David Kitchingman