



# Dunedin Methodist Parish

*Finding Good in everyone Finding God in everyone*

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

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## PARISH BULLETIN

4<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2012

### WORSHIP FOR SUNDAY 11<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2012

9.30am	Mornington	S Pole
9.30 am	Mosgiel	E Merrett
11.00 am	Glenaven	S Pole
11.00 am	Wesley	E Merrett
1.00pm	St Kilda	TBA
6.00pm	Broad Bay	No Service

### AWAY AT CONFERENCE

I will be at the Annual Conference of the Methodist Church in Wellington from Friday the 2<sup>nd</sup> of November to the Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> of November 2012. While I am away our parish stewards will take care of the administration of the parish.

### MEMORIAL SERVICE

A memorial service is being held on Sunday 18 November, 1.30pm at the Simpson Park Complex, Harrington Street, Lawrence for Deacon Francis Westaway, a long time member of the Otago Southland Synod and a tireless worker for the community of Lawrence in his position as Deacon. All who knew Francis are invited to this service, and afternoon tea will be served afterwards.

Any questions to Rachael Masterton ([rmasterton@actrix.co.nz](mailto:rmasterton@actrix.co.nz) or 4764867) though Rachael is away at Conference from 1-7 November.

## CHRISTMAS TRUFFLES

Christmas is just around the corner (again) and the Mornington Toy & Games Library is offering to lessen your load by offering yummy truffles for \$5.00 per dozen. If you are interested in placing an order, please contact Rebecca Neaves. A big thank-you for everyone's continued support over the years, it is genuinely appreciated.



**OUR OWN COLIN GIBSON** was interviewed on National Radio's Spiritual Outlook last Sunday. Producer Justin Gregory introduced Colin....

*For forty years and almost 400 hymns, Dunedin composer Colin Gibson has been praising his God through song. Staunchly Kiwi and fiercely liberal in his writing, he's strived to use the imagery and the idioms of New Zealand to discuss a theology that speaks to his faith, his politics and his nationality. He's touring the country right now, teaching a series of workshops on the art of the hymn . . . .*

You can hear the fascinating 24 min interview by Googling National Radio, and in the Search box print "Colin Gibson" Click on "Spiritual Outlook" for October 28.

## MORNINGTON METHODIST CHURCH - CHEQUES

This notice is to clarify how to write cheques for offerings for the support of our church. Hope this helps.

Regular offerings on Sunday morning go to the Dunedin Methodist Parish, and are used mainly for the support of the presbyter; for these offerings, please make cheques payable to 'Dunedin Methodist Parish'.

If you are wanting to support specifically Mornington Methodist Church, cheques need to be made payable to 'Methodist - Mornington Property Committee'. These can also be placed in the offering plate in an envelope labelled with what you would like the money to be used for, eg. insurance, electricity, cleaning, etc.

To support the Sunday School or Y@M, please make cheques payable to 'Methodist - Mornington Leaders Meeting'.

*Mary Thompson, Treasurer Mornington Methodist Church.*

## **SYMPATHY**

On behalf of the Mornington congregation and the wider Dunedin Methodist Parish, I would like to convey to the family of **Margaret Gibbs** our sympathy and condolences for her death on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> of October 2012. In the same Spirit, I like to extend our condolences to the family of **Sydney McAra** for his death on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> of October 2012. Our thoughts are also with the family of **Norah Featherston** for her death on the 18<sup>th</sup> of October 2012. It is our prayers that God's Spirit will give to these families peace and comfort during this time of their grieving.

## **THANK YOU**

I would like to thank to the Mornington congregation and the wider Dunedin Methodist Parish for your practical and prayerful supports for the families of Margaret Gibbs, Sydney McAra, and Norah Featherston during their time of mourning because of the loss of these loved ones. I am sure these families are truly appreciated your support and your encouragement. May God will continue to give us strength as we continue to support these families.

### **Story from the Mission**

Mercy Hospital has once again been incredibly generous to us. They have upgraded their senior staff computers and asked if we would like 6 of the old ones for the Mission. A great idea – 3 for the Hub so we can set up a small computer suite for use by our families and 3 for Arahina for the children at the After School and Holiday Programmes. Dave and I set off to collect them and came away with **13 and a printer!** It took some juggling but we managed to fit them all into my station wagon and they are now awaiting good homes.

## ***OPPORTUNITIES AT APPROACH***

**There are great opportunities for free training at the Methodist Mission's Approach Community learning service, perhaps for you or the people you know.**

### ***For young people***

We're getting close to the end of the school year and if you're a parent or grandparent, you may know young people who aren't sure about their next steps. If they're without qualifications they may be destined for a future of hardship, low-skill jobs (assuming they can get work) and perhaps even worse.

Approach Community Learning's Youth Guarantee programme is an opportunity for them to get back on track with entry-level qualifications towards employment or a springboard to ongoing learning and skill training.

### ***For adults***

Approach also has training for adult jobseekers. If you or someone you know has 'holes' in their qualifications that are hindering them from getting work, or maybe the job they really want, Approach may have free training available.

For example, one of our recent students was referred to us because he was short of just six maths credits to be accepted into Enrolled Nursing. We were able to help him with tutoring which meant he was able to complete and successfully pass the maths assessments.

We provide individualised coaching and support within a group learning environment. Our small size and low student-staff ratios enable responsive, flexible delivery and maximise opportunities for success.

### ***Call Approach***

If it sounds like Approach learning might be good for someone you know, why not give Gail Geels a call on 487 7959 for a chat about the options available and the next steps.



It is not a bad thing, occasionally, to admit how views once opined with confidence have changed, even if in so doing one has to be equally honest about the discomfort, even embarrassment of doing so.

Four years ago to the day there was possibly no greater New Zealand supporter of Barack Obama than yours truly. Indeed, I hailed his victory in the Nov 2008 election with unrestrained rapture. Here are few paras from my *Connections* article of Nov 9, 2008....

I quoted Obama *It's been a long time coming, but because of what we did on this day, in this defining moment, change has come to America.*

I said *In the global village, so great is the influence of the USA on what happens to the rest of us that long before the marathon presidential election had reached its climax this week, millions of us had decided that there was something in the bearing of Obama, his ability to inspire, his serene confidence in the face of daunting odds, the surety of the hope he engendered among the youth of his country, his deep concern for those for whom the American dream was little more than a fiction, that what was good and right for America was good and right for the world!.... the presidential aura of the man and his towering oratory has likened him in the minds of many of us to Martin Luther King. As the great reformer himself said, he had only glimpsed the promised land, and now some 40 years later, in the election of an aspirational Barack Obama, the fruits of that land are measurably closer for people of colour. Unquestionably, here in this slim commanding man is one who was born to lead. (a 21<sup>st</sup> century Moses?)*

*I have waxed lyrical, but so did hardened political commentators that day in Chicago as they dropped their professional objectivity to mark a very profound decision - simply put, that a black man, son of a Kenyan Muslim man and a white American woman, with an extended family living in obscurity in rural Kenya, had been overwhelmingly elected to the most powerful office in the world.*

In conclusion I embraced the overwhelming euphoria I felt was in common with millions who saw such promise for America and the World in those early post-election weeks. *Sometimes it's hard to hold back. It's a time to be happy, to be more hopeful of God's future for a fractured anxious world.*

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But now it is 2012 and the same Barack Obama has a fight on his hands for re-election. I can't honestly say I repent of the euphoria of 2008, but as a non-American who had such hope for his presidency four years ago, I feel I have a responsibility in this same column to now express disappointment and regret - in particular at foreign policies that have Mr Obama's name written all over them.

This disappointment has, for me, been highlighted in the so-called presidential debates, Obama v. Romney - not because in the first debate Obama was unbelievably lacklustre, not because Romney has surprised even his own supporters by rising to the occasion, nor even because the same president has singularly failed to recapture the vision and inspiration that saw him elected in 2008 - but because every time foreign policy issues came to the fore, Romney was able to claim he endorsed everything that Obama has done, the only proviso being, he said, he would have done them sooner and with great urgency.

Let's consider this. Some have said this is a tactic on the part of the Romney camp - to pre-empt Obama on issues where they think the President might score points with the American public and to keep the focus of the Republican attack on the economy where they believe is their best chance of success.

You might say - well, that's electioneering. It goes with the territory. So it does. But consider for a moment that Romney, the acknowledged standard bearer for the doctrine that American power is the God-given solution to each and every outbreak of unfriendly or contrary opinion anywhere in the world, has been handed the luxury in this crucial election of being able to endorse even the peace-president's foreign policy. And what an indictment of the failure of Obama's intention to head initiatives for peace and reconciliation that four years later even the hawks in the opposition believe his policies can be endorsed.

Even in so brief an article as this must be, the reader is entitled to some evidence for my column's change of heart. I'll be as brief as possible.

Much has been made by Mr Obama of the fact that he ended the war in Iraq and that he is fully intending to keep his promise to pull forces out in 2014. He is also talking tough on Iran, imposing the harshest sanctions as a deterrent against a non-existent nuke, and significantly less tough against Syria as it plunges relentlessly into a chaos that threatens potentially the entire Middle East. On the face of it these Obama policies could be said to be consistent with the brave candidate who four years ago declared peace on the world, and a new era of reconciliation and justice from his presidency.

But taking a closer look, and attending to some of the less strident voices within the US - neither overtly Democratic or Republican - a much darker assessment of Obama's "peacemaking" is revealed. As just one example, both candidates have been deathly quiet on "drone warfare" - but this terrifying unmanned weaponry, developed during the Geo W Bush years ostensibly for tactical surveillance, has been perfected by the Pentagon under Obama and is now at the forefront of much of America's military "strategic deployment." In practice, the drones permit Obama to take credit for withdrawing troops while maintaining a silent, almost invisible, yet terrifying arsenal of weapons poised above those nations deemed to be the enemies of America.

One does not need to dig deep for evidence that increasing number of people, military and civilian, live under the daily threat of attack from the deep blue of the skies, guided with pinpoint precision by US military strategists sitting in safety behind banks of TV monitors. In both Pakistan and Afghanistan hundreds and thousands of targets have been "taken out" by these stealth weapons with large but untabulated civilian "collateral damage." Even humanitarian aid workers, among them American citizens working on UN and Red Cross assistance programmes, have been killed in the execution of the new drone warfare.

The number of drones now employed against America's enemies is doubtless a closely guarded secret but it is known they daily patrol the skies over Iran, Syria, and Yemen and who knows where else. North Korea, China, Russia, Cuba? Who needs a nuclear weapon if the Big brother is forever watching with an all-seeing eye and a weapon of such stealth, terror and pinpoint accuracy for instant deployment.

President Jimmy Carter has examined the record of drone strikes throughout the Middle East and concluded that they are “cruel and unusual,” and that they constitute a “widespread abuse of human rights.” *(Ref to Google for a Sept 2012 joint study by Standofrd and New York University researchers on the growing deployment of Obama's "weapon of choice" the drone bomber.)*

Unsurprisingly none of this stuff has or will feature in the mix that is being fed to the US voters, nor will it influence the outcome on Tuesday. This election fixates on the economy and taxes, with now as a wild card super-storm Sandy. The only voice that sought, bravely albeit unsuccessfully, to place such issues in the mainstream of the election debate was independent candidate Ron Paul, a lonely voice who was ridiculed and ignored by the majority media and dismissed as irrelevant by Democrats and Republicans alike. Yet history may well show he spoke a prophetic and truthful word.

US foreign policy is of acute importance to tiny nations such as ours, especially at a time when our independence is under threat and we are being wooed afresh for our allegiance - as witness the recent visit by Defence Secretary Leon Panetta. We have a Government ready and willing to cozy up to US foreign policy, but thank God we have courts less susceptible to American inveiglement - as witness the Kim .Com drama.

None of us have a vote on Tuesday but even from this distance we should avoid the giddy allure of huge-spending candidates - as I have painfully learned. Were I an American, would I vote for Barak Obama a second time? I doubt it. But this election will not be decided on foreign policy issues, and I shall be watching on Tuesday with fingers crossed for Obama, But how tragic that two candidates, miles apart in terms of their life values, have for expedience sake found common ground on foreign policies many of which do not bear ethical or humanitarian scrutiny.

***Ken Russell***