



# Dunedin Methodist Parish

*Finding Good in everyone    Finding God in everyone*

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

<b>Presbyters:</b>	Rev. Siosifa Pole	455 2923
	Rev. Dr. Rod Mitchell	477 3700
<b>Parish Stewards:</b>	Dr George Davis	453 6540
	Mrs Hilda Hughson	487 6226
	Mrs Earlene Owens	489 8146
<b>Tongan Steward:</b>	Mr Kaufusi Pole	455 0096
<b>Parish Office:</b>	Siosifa: <a href="mailto:parish@dmm.org.nz">parish@dmm.org.nz</a>	466 4600
	Katrina: <a href="mailto:admin@dmm.org.nz">admin@dmm.org.nz</a>	

## PARISH BULLETIN

18<sup>th</sup> May 2014

### WORSHIP FOR SUNDAY 25<sup>th</sup> May

9.30 am	Mornington	C Gibson
9.30 am	Mosgiel	S Pole
11.00 am	Glenaven	C Gibson
11.00 am	Wesley	S Pole
1.00 pm	St Kilda	TBA

### OPEN EDUCATION: A FRESH EYE

Following the hugely successful visit of Professor Lloyd Geering, which not only challenged our thinking but also raised \$300 for the Solomon Islands disaster relief fund, we next welcome an expert staff member from the Dunedin Public Art Gallery. She will give a richly illustrated talk about some of the religious paintings held by the Gallery, and how we might learn to look at them. This session will be on Wednesday May 28, at Mornington Church, Galloway Street, commencing at 7.30pm. Bring a friend, help us build our audiences. There is a koha of \$5. As usual, Judy Russell will provide a scrumptious pre-session meal at 6pm. Cost \$15, ring Judy (455 3727) to book your place.

**MID-WEEK SERVICE** will be Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> May 2pm at "Maran-atha". Anyone requiring a ride please phone 489- 7663.

**SPECIAL LECTURE** – Professor Kate Pickett's and Professor Richard Wilkinson's Special Public Lecture on Inequality, sustainability and well-being. Professors Pickett and Wilkinson (authors of "The Spirit Level") shall first present the evidence showing that reducing the income differences between rich and poor is crucial to achieving higher levels of sustainable well-being in the future. They shall then go on to suggest the policies which can ensure that greater equality becomes deeply embedded in our societies. All Welcome.

**Inequality, Sustainability and Wellbeing**

**Monday 26 May, 5.30pm**

**College of education auditorium**

**Union street east. Dunedin**

**MORNINGTON METHODIST FELLOWSHIP** meeting for May will take place on Wednesday 28th May, at 2 p.m. in the Church Lounge. The Guest Speaker will be Mr Glen Mitchell from the Dunedin City Council - the subject is "Earthquake Preparations". This will take place at 2.30 p.m. I am sure we are all interested in what will happen to the Church buildings - but more so I believe we all need some tips in thinking about our own homes. Don't forget your small change for the Fellowship of the Least Coin. All welcome.

**MUSICAL SOCIETY CONCERT** today, 18 May, 2:30pm at Mornington Methodist Church. The programme features the Rare Byrds recorder consort, and duo of Sydney Manowitz, violin and Donald Cullington, piano. All are welcome to this great concert. Adults \$2, Children free.



**HAPPY BIRTHDAY** to David Cannon, who turns 13 on 21<sup>st</sup> May.

**BEV IS SEEKING ASSISTANCE** to experience a new hobby. She wishes to begin her twitching career by spotting one or more of the local kaka, (large green parrot) one of the lords flying creations. To aid Bev in her pursuit please join her in the Orokonui car park at 1:30p.m. on Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> May, if able, to assist Bev in her wheeled pursuit of these remarkable birds or if simply wishing to enjoy the ecosanctuary yourself. The tracks through the

forest are well graveled and marked and the café serves a good cuppa. Come and twitch with Bev. Photos will be taken.

### **CONNECTIONS - THE BOOK**

Well folks, the good news is that the much heralded Book with selected *Connections* articles is here, and we're real pleased with the way it looks. And now the next step is have a launch worthy of all the time and effort we have put into the writing, assembling, formatting and Philip Garside's very good publishing.

The launch will be held **next Sunday** during the **Mornington** service, led by Colin Gibson. And we have invited Professor of English at O.U., Lyn Tribble, to be our guest of honour for the occasion. As promised, there is one complimentary copy for each family/person that wants one, and these will be distributed next Sunday. The first print run was of 200 copies. Orders for additional copies will be taken at \$10 per copy, and will be filled after we have visited each congregation in the Parish, and depending on how stocks hold out. We do not anticipate a further print run, and for that reason we need to be very careful about our initial distribution.

The following are the arrangements for distribution to other worship centres in the Parish. **Glenaven & Broad Bay** - 11am service next Sunday 25th. **Wesley** 11am service next Sunday 25th. **St Kilda** - next Sunday 25th. **Mosgiel** - a list of those wishing to receive a free copy will be made, and the books will be made available at Mosgiel next Sunday. Orders for additional copies will be taken at all services, or can be phoned to Ken Russell 455.3727.

**EXPLORERS GROUP** - The Group, which next meets on Sunday 25 May at 4.30 pm in the Mornington Lounge, has prepared "Notes from the Explorers Group on future directions for the Parish". This 14-page document has been distributed to members of the Parish Council but is readily available for anyone else who might be interested. To receive a copy (printed or electronic) please contact David Kitchingman (at 476 7767 or [dmkman@es.co.nz](mailto:dmkman@es.co.nz)).

## DCC ETHICAL INVESTMENT POLICY AT RISK – PLEASE HELP!

The Dunedin City Council has this week passed a resolution:

*'That the Council's develop a Socially Responsible Investment Policy for the Waipori Fund, based on the following criteria:*

*1. Exclusion of direct investment in*

*A. tobacco*

*B. armaments*

*C. fossil fuel extraction*

*E. gambling*

*F. pornography.*

*2. The lowest workable materiality threshold for each industry type.*

*3. In relation to fossil fuel extraction, in the event a materiality threshold is applied, exclusion of the top 200 companies by proven carbon reserves.*

*4. A phased approach to divestment, should it be required to achieve the relevant materiality threshold across excluded industries without promoting undue volatility in the Fund, over no more than two years.*

*5. Efforts to extend this policy to indirect investments where manageable within existing resource constraints.*

*6. Guiding principles for the Fund Manager, to be applied to reinvestment, which promote exclusion where the activities of the organisations involved:*

*B. would be illegal in New Zealand*

*C. are inconsistent with the United Nations' policies on health and safety, child rights or human rights*

*D. are expected to result in long-term, permanent, detrimental change to the environment.'*

Once drafted, the policy will still need to be passed by the full council, and **there is significant lobbying from the oil and gas industry and investment industry for the policy to fail.**

PLEASE take 5 minutes this week to write to the Mayor and Councillors at PO Box 5045, Moray Place, Dunedin 9058 or [dcc@dcc.govt.nz](mailto:dcc@dcc.govt.nz) expressing your support for this policy to be passed.

Many thanks, Laura Black

## SPECIAL MEETING FOR ALL MEMBERS OF DUNEDIN METHODIST PARISH

Do we want to see more congregations slowly disappear from Dunedin Methodist Parish as dictated by Insurers and Government requirements?

Or do we want to tell our Grandchildren in the years ahead that we attended the event that made Methodist congregations and their values thrive here in Dunedin?

This is an important invitation to come to a meeting where the future of the Methodist Parish is being shaped. So please come and offer the best you have in listening and ideas.

Theme: “Seeking courage and wisdom at the Crossroads”

[We need to share our God given gifts and passions if we are to journey together into a new exciting future.]

Place: Wesley Church Halls, Hillside Road, South Dunedin

Date: Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> May

Time: 9:30am – 3pm

Planned: By Executive Leadership as requested by the Property, Finance and Resources Committee at its last meeting.

Membership of Executive Leadership: Presbyters Rev Siosifa Pole and Rev Rod Mitchell, Parish Stewards Hilda Hughson, Earlene Owens, and George Davis (convener). The Leadership small group is mindful that one planning day has already been held and despite good results from that day, the Property and Finance committee rightly wanted to be extremely clear about the future direction of the Methodist presence here in Dunedin before committing to any expenditure or serious disruption to any congregations. Thus this day is being planned to gather and eventually give the Property, Finance and Resource Committee all the best information that will allow them to operate with confidence in their recommendations to Parish Council.



*At short notice we borrow last Sunday's sermon by the Rev Helen Jacobi, recently installed Vicar of Auckland's St Matthews-in-the City, whose brave*

*challenge to the Anglican General Synod we strongly support. Our thanks to the Rev Helen, and best wishes for her ministry in a church known for its prophetic outreach.*

*Ref : John 10.* The image of Jesus as the shepherd is perhaps one of the most well known in history. Paintings, statues, sculptures, some of the earliest frescoes from the catacombs in Rome depict Jesus as a shepherd. The 23<sup>rd</sup> psalm which the Singers will sing at the conclusion of this sermon is certainly the best known psalm. The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want ...

Somehow Jesus as a shepherd has become a soft image in our collective minds – maybe it is the cute woolly lambs, or the image of a handsome Jesus, long hair, standing on a hill with his shepherd's crook; it all seems romantic and rustic and bucolic.

In reality shepherds were a tough bunch – as they are today – living and working outdoors in all weathers; keeping their sheep safe from wolves and rustlers; finding water and pasture for them in a very dry Palestine; making sure they grew ready for market.

The prophet Ezekiel picks up the strength of the shepherds when he accuses the leaders of the day of not being shepherds to the people.

*“Ah, you shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves! Should not shepherds feed the sheep? You eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fatlings; but you do not feed the sheep. You have not strengthened the weak, you have not healed the sick, you have not bound up the injured, you have not brought back the strayed, you have not sought the lost, but with force and harshness you have ruled them. So they were scattered, because there was no shepherd; and scattered, they became food for all the wild animals. My sheep were scattered, they wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill; my sheep were scattered over all the face of the earth, with no one to search or seek for them.” (34:2-6)*

The prophet rails for some time about how the leaders have failed the people and how God will now step in and be the shepherd. When Jesus picks up the metaphor of the shepherd his listeners would recognise the well known Old Testament passages such as Ezekiel. And Jesus continues the theme of criticising the leaders, this time the Pharisees, for their lack of care and at times their abuse of the people.

This passage we read this morning in John follows directly on from the story of the healing of the blind man, during which Jesus offers a strong critique of the Pharisees. Jesus barely catches a breath before he is after them again, upping the temperature levels by calling them thieves and bandits. They are the ones

who climb the walls of the sheepfold at night and steal the sheep. They come to “steal and kill and destroy”.

This strong language has another layer to it – during the siege of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 AD (which is prior to when John wrote his gospel) the “Sheep Gate” was one of the gates blocked by the revolutionaries who were fighting the Romans.

As the Roman troops closed in, the extremist Jewish fighters would not let the people hiding in the Temple escape to safety. There was no shepherd to lead them out through the gate. The gate was locked. This memory was seared into the minds of those who did eventually escape the slaughter and leave Jerusalem to the sacking Romans.

One commentator says the word translated “bandit” in this passage actually means “insurrectionist” or “revolutionary”. We might use the word terrorist. The mothers of the girls kidnapped in Nigeria are praying that a shepherd might lead their girls to safety, when their own government has seemingly done nothing. The #Bring Back our Girls campaign has drawn the world’s attention to the plight of these girls; and we pray today that they will be brought to safety.

There are hundreds of thousands, millions of other girls in our world trapped, with gates closed, in poverty, with no access to education, and no shepherds to lead them out. The emotion and anger we feel about the girls in Nigeria gives us maybe an insight into the character of the words of John’s gospel carefully chosen to arouse the emotion and memory of the listeners of his day.

John layers all these images in his account of Jesus the Good Shepherd. Whenever the gospel writers go after the religious leaders of their day, *we* who are religious leaders of *today* could well pay attention. We too can easily fall in behind the Pharisees who liked to make the rules, be in control, and have no doubts as to who God is or what God says and does. God says and does, what the Pharisees *say* God says and does. The Pharisees are the ultimate gatekeepers.

Today (Sunday May 11) the General Synod/ te Hinota Whanui of our church meets at Waitangi. This is quite a big deal. It meets only once every 2 years and gathers representatives of all our dioceses and hui amorangi, including the Diocese of Polynesia. General Synod is the place where decisions that affect the whole life of our church are made.

Tomorrow (Monday 12 May) the Synod will hear a report from the Ma Whea Commission on Same Gender Blessings and Ordinations. This Commission has been led by former Governor General Sir Anyand Satanyand and they have held meetings and taken submissions from all over the Province. Some of you I know were involved in presenting to them. The Commission has come back and presented the Church with 10 options – it is now like a secret Anglican code as people discuss whether they want option D or E or I.

Once they have heard the report and the debates the members of the General Synod will have the future of *our* church in their hands. They have a clear choice in front of them – will they close the gate? and try and keep the church locked in the 1950s or the 1850s, thinking that if they all pile up in the gate and stand there they can stop the movement for justice and inclusion of our lesbian and gay sisters and brothers which our hearts so yearn to see.

Or will they open the gate and follow Jesus, the shepherd who is calling them by name, to come out from behind their fears and prejudices, and to welcome all equally at this table and in this pulpit and at this altar to be married.

We here at St Matthew's have long had the gates open wide and we are richer for it. And we call today on *our leaders* to step up, to be without fear and to allow the voice of the Shepherd to call them forward. The time of waiting is over, we will wait no longer. We will wait no longer to welcome all equally to preside at this table, to preach in this pulpit, and to be married at this altar.

Unfortunately we know that even if General Synod makes a positive move this week for the blessing of same gender unions the equality of marriage will still be a way off as that will involve complicated changes to our constitution. All the more reason for the process to get started today. And in the meantime our clergy who are already ordained and living in same gender relationships will be freed from the tyranny of double standards and those awaiting ordination can pass through the gate as well. Jesus says at the end of our passage today "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly." (10:10). I came *not* to lock people up in the Temple; I came *not* to lock them up in the sheepfold; I came *not* to tie them up in rules and outdated biblical interpretations; I came that they might have life. Life – love, companionship, service, calling, work, joy, freedom, bread, wine, prayer, a future, hope, purpose – life in abundance. "I came that they may have life and have it abundantly". Please God, make it so.