



Dunedin Methodist Parish

Finding Good in everyone Finding God in everyone

www.dunedinmethodist.org.nz

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Mornington:		

PARISH BULLETIN

27th July 2014

WORSHIP FOR SUNDAY 3rd August

9.30 am	Mornington	R Mitchell
9.30 am	Mosgiel	S Pole
11.00 am	Glenaven	R Mitchell
11.00 am	Wesley	S Pole
1.00 pm	St Kilda	TBA

PARISH PRAYER GROUP CONVENOR

The Parish Prayer Group had its first meeting on Wednesday 23rd July at Wesley hall, 7pm. There were six people attended and we decided that Elaine Merrett would be the Prayer Group convenor. It means that anyone in the parish who needs prayer for any issue can contact Elaine and she will pass on the message to the members of the Prayer Group. Contact Elaine on 489-7663

PULPIT SWAP SUNDAY

This Sunday, 27th July is the Pulpit Swap Sunday for the Taieri churches. It means ministers of churches are going to preach in other churches. Lawrie Rankin from the Presbyterian Church will preach at Mosgiel Methodist Church and Siosifa Pole will preach at Mosgiel Presbyterian Church. This is an ecumenical event for the Taieri Churches.

EXPLORERS GROUP meets on Sunday 27th at 4.30pm in the Mornington Church Lounge. All interested people are most welcome to join us.

THERE WAS A TIME when the worship team was very small - the minister, the pianist/organist and if the congregation was very fortunate, the choir leader and his/her band of well trained warblers. With the development of worship teams we have become accustomed to wider participation - to the enrichment of our worship experiences.



AS last Sunday at Mornington, where the team numbered SEVEN. Here they are - Esther Oh (flautist) Ian Pearce (Bible reader) Trish Patrick (liturgist) Anne Abernethy (pianist) Siosifa Pole (preacher) Colin Gibson (organist and choir leader) Amy Jones (Candle) A pretty good team eh!

STORY FROM THE MISSION

A number of Support and Advocacy clients have successfully achieved goals, with many feeling positive about the future. Clients are grateful for the support they have received and are often pleased when reminded that these positive changes are as a result of their own hard work. Sometimes we just need reminded that we have the skills to achieve things ourselves. I am very pleased to be part of an organisation that works in a truly strengths based way, empowering clients to help themselves. This philosophy and work leads to life long, sustainable changes that clients achieve themselves.



THE PROPHETIC FOOL

Something which fills me with pure delight is the sound of a baby chortling or laughing a real belly laugh. I defy anyone not to, at least, raise a smile at the sound. I well remember when our babies delighted us in this manner. I have often pondered what triggers a sense of humour in a tiny baby. The best I can come up with... it's a pure gift of creation/evolution to the human being, some blessed with more of it than others and in different styles.

In the wee small hours one morning I listened to a programme produced by the BBC. The topic being 'Fools and Jesters'. The presenter discussed the role of these individuals in historic times. They were an integral part of the royal court, frequently called upon to entertain and amuse. You will recall Shakespeare included them in his writing. Their role sometimes assumed a deeper significance, because at times they spoke into current political situations, using humour to deliver otherwise unpalatable truths. They were holding up a mirror as it were, reflecting back to the monarch and courtiers the realities of life. This contained an element of risk. If the monarch didn't approve of the act, they were in danger of, at best banishment from court, or worst execution for their efforts.

Our Old Testament biblical prophets whose role was to reflect the state of the nation were not known for their rollicking humour, so perhaps the title of Prophetic fool would not apply. However Jesus had his moments of irony, satire and hyperbole, but his reflections of the political scene brought him to an untimely end. Being a fool for God can be a dangerous thing.

The role of the Prophetic fool is still very relevant today. Fortunately these fools are still out there, rejoicing in the title of 'Stand-Up' Comedian. They are not found within the intimacy of the royal court, but maybe performing a gig at a Royal Command Performance might fit the description.

The television comedian satirically points out the cost to the tax payer of keeping the royal family. Their exalted position and their very human foibles provide ongoing material for the Stand-up Comic. Not to mention the politicians!! They too come in for their share of lampooning. In NZ we have programmes like 'Seven Days' and 'The Best Bits.' Historically, McPhail and Gadsby were popular Preophetic Fools. These programmes encourage us to think more deeply about current issues. Nobody in possession of power is likely to escape the ascerbic comment of the comedian. Thankfully we live in a society with a reasonably thick skin, where freedom of speech is considered a human right.

The cartoonist is another style of 'fool' or 'jester'. The best of these humourists have a wonderful gift of distilling political issues in a deceptively simple yet skilfully observed cartoon, drawing our attention to the irony or stupidity of behaviour or situation. Tremain and Bob Scott would be my favourites. Leunig of course, never fails to compassionately but incisively illustrate the human condition. Cartoonists come in for their share of criticism and censure from time to time, as they tread the satirical line between truth and perceived slander or

defamation. Legal advice is probably sought as a safety net on a fairly regular basis before going to print.

Comedy programmes on television and film are other vehicles for portraying the human condition in an overstated (usually American) or understated (usually British) way. In fact some screamingly funny programmes have more of a documentary feel, the reality expressed being so apt.

The multiplicity of avenues for the expression of humour have possibly influenced the evolution of democracy and vice-versa. It's interesting to note that, in less democratic societies, the use of humour and the ability of comedians to perform their function as prophetic fools is severely curtailed by censorship, if not banned completely. Like most things, humour has its dark side. When motivated by hunger for power, oppression of the marginalised, blaming and shaming those vulnerable to the vagaries of political decision making, humour can be unspeakably cruel and ceases to be funny. This is a distortion of prophetic foolery, lurching into the realms of propaganda.

Used humanely and with compassion, humour has the power to inform, clarify, lend perspective and defuse inflammatory situations, transforming attitudes and beliefs. It also has the power to unite and yes, even redeem, at a personal and collective level, offering light and hope in a less than hopeful situation.

As people of faith, we too can assume the role of 'prophetic fools'. Indeed Mornington Methodist is well endowed them, thank God!!!! I suspect this will be true of the rest of the parish too!

Many years ago, in another life, David and I well remember being chastened by a minister who saw great danger in 'too much mirth.' We were exhorted to 'be of sober mind'. We were shocked to hear we were endangering our spiritual growth if we watched too many comedy programmes and used humour in inappropriate ways ie. anything to do with church, the bible etc. " There's nothing funny about the wrath of God !!!!” we were admonished. Apparently God didn't have a sense of humour and neither should we.

For a short space of time, we dutifully paid heed to the admonition... a very short space of time!! On arriving home from that particular bible study, it was a race to the door. We were determined NOT to miss the start of the weekly episode of 'Yes minister.'

God bless the Prophetic Fools of the world.

Trish Patrick