



# 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>	
<b>Parish Prayer Convenor</b>	Elaine Merrett	489 7663
<b>Pastoral Convenor</b>	Beryl Neutze	476 7447
<b>Mornington:</b>		

## PARISH BULLETIN

19<sup>th</sup> October 2014

### WORSHIP FOR SUNDAY 26<sup>th</sup> October

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

**MUSICAL SOCIETY CONCERT** 19 October 2.30pm at the Mornington Methodist Church. Items from Highland Harmony, a barbershop group and Items from a Gamelan. All welcome. Adults \$2.



**MORNINGTON MEMBERS** please add to your diary the next **Leaders' Meeting on Tuesday November 4th** in the lounge at 7.30pm. Thanks, Hilda.

**MMMMM, yummy truffles!** Christmas will be here before you know it, so if you would like truffles as small thank-you gifts to give away, take to a function, or nibble on yourself as you wrap Christmas presents, now is your chance. If you would like to support the annual fundraiser for the Mornington Toy & Games Library, you can give your order to Rebecca Neaves (I have to have orders in by Sat., Nov. 1). The truffles are \$6.00 a dozen, freeze very well, and will be delivered to you at church on Sunday, November 16 (or to your home on Saturday, the 15th if that is easier). Thanks to everyone who has supported us year after year, it is very much appreciated!



### **OPEN EDUCATION: THE WISDOM OF THE AGES**

The final session of Open Education this year will be held on Wednesday 22 October (one week later than usual), at Mornington Methodist Church, Galloway Street, starting at 7.30pm. As usual it will offer a group of presenters sharing what they do best. And this year is the Year of the Grandparents! Yes, some of our older folk sharing their stories, and talking about how they relate to their grandchildren in this difficult world. Don't miss this session: it will be a great one. Sign in for Judy Russell's delicious pre-session meal or ring her (455-3727). Bring a fellow grand parent: there are plenty of them about in our community.

### **FUTURE OF THE PARISH**

Many of the conversations we have so far about our Parish is on its future. Please pray for the future of our Parish and especially the kind of mission we anticipate to engage and to share in its life. Thank you, Rev Siosifa Pole.

## **FUNDRAISING QUIZ NIGHT to raise funds for suicide prevention**

The Life Matters Suicide Prevention Trust is hosting a fun quiz night of trivia questions to raise money for the production of educational leaflets and to fund educational events on issues of mental health and suicide prevention.

Date: Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> October 7pm

Venue: Mosgiel RSA 6 Church St, Mosgiel.

\$30 per team registration, max of 8 people per team.

Amazing Prizes!!

To register a team please contact Nikki Cockburn at

[cockburn.nikki@gmail.com](mailto:cockburn.nikki@gmail.com)

or ring Greg Hughson on 027 212 1048/479 8497

<https://www.facebook.com/events/716046238450852/>

## **STORY FROM THE MISSION**

*Arahina: The After School Programme*

There had at times been some challenging behaviours shown by the children. Being consistent with expectations, and continuity of Kirsty and I always being there has shown improvements every week. Now we find children running to the van when picking them up from school with enthusiasm, and tears on occasion when having to return home after having so much fun.



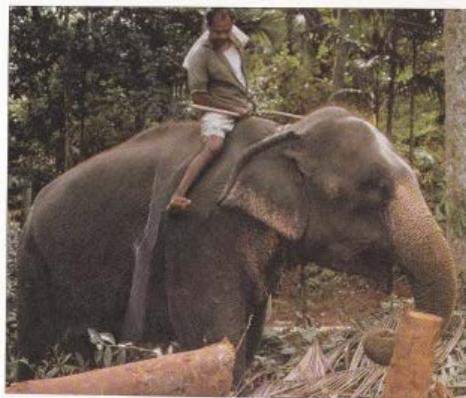
We have had such good weather that our programme has included outdoor activities as much as possible. Visiting the local parks to check out play equipment, taking the t-ball kit for games along with inline skates and hoola hoops. The children love taking a picnic and make their own afternoon tea then cart it to the park in the 'cribby box' then eat and play. We checked out the Mosgiel Sign, climbed trees and explored up the hill to see what the building was at the top and rolled down the hill. It was exploration and fun.



## OF EGOS AND JUMBOS

A few weeks ago I met Sirocco, the celebrity kakapo, at the Orokonui Ecosanctuary. It was an enthralling encounter with primeval New Zealand. A few months ago, thanks to a book recommendation from a friend, I came face to face with another ancient survivor, an all but subconscious hangover from the millennia of human evolution. *The Righteous mind: why good people are divided by politics and religion* is an acclaimed publication by a cultural psychologist, Jonathon Haidt (pronounced “height”).

From this 500-page study, I want to dwell on just one metaphor and my discovery of what can best be described as my own resident elephant. In Haidt’s words: “The mind is divided, like a rider on an elephant, and the rider’s job is to serve the elephant. Intuitions come first, strategic reasoning second.”



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Haidt’s analysis is not all that new, but his rider and elephant metaphor is really potent. Let me try to put it into my own words, at the expense of oversimplifying the psychology. We are all bundles of egos and jumbos, of thoughts and feelings. Consciously, we all operate pretty

well as just egos. We each have a fairly unified world view and estimation of others and ourselves. Our views make sense to us, and if need be we can usually summon up rational post hoc justifications for them. We approve of some things and some people and disapprove of others.

We routinely underestimate the role of our emotions and overestimate the importance of our thinking. Yet feeling came first in our evolution – thinking couldn't develop properly without language and that's a comparatively recent event in our history. Feeling is still the faster and stronger of the two mental states and largely commands our motivation. Our thinking looks after our feeling and blurs the distinction.

So for nearly all of us nearly all of the time we lack awareness of the jumbo in our living room, let alone of one to which our egos commonly defer. We would be surprised to learn how many of our reactions to ideas, events and people are pre-conscious, irrational judgements. We are too busy maintaining our established framework to wonder about the sources of our insights.

The trouble with all this is that it tends to lead, as the book's title suggests, to a state of automatic self-righteousness. Haidt stresses that the take-home message is ancient, if more than enough to swallow. It is the realization that we are all self-righteous hypocrites. He cites Jesus, the Buddha, and a Chinese Zen master. "One shows the faults of others", said Buddha, "like chaff winnowed in the wind, but one conceals one's own faults as a cunning gambler conceals his dice." Whether by sleight of a trickster's hand or sway of a jumbo foot, the net effect can be the same, masking the universal trait of one-upmanship.

As a simple matter of anthropological fact, the moral domain varies across cultures. There are no absolutes of right and wrong. Yet it

hardly ever occurs to us that if we had grown up in another country or even just across the tracks we would almost certainly have developed a different set of moral codes, political allegiances, and, just as likely, religious affiliations.

Let's take examples from these three overlapping areas of morals, politics, and religion. Consider first the pros and cons of controversial moral issues ranging from abortion to euthanasia. Laboratory evidence backs up the contention that such hot button topics trigger instant responses from our deep-seated store of visceral reactions. The elephant leans; the rider is drawn into the same sphere, and then duly supplies the backup arguments.

Next, plunge into politics. Last month's election was the perfect example. Strategic reasoning, not to be confused with strategic voting, had very little to do with it. The elephant is in charge of our political behaviour, not the rider, who merely tags along to the ballot box. Some parties on the great left wing/right wing continuum understand these fundamentals much better than other parties do.

And so to religion, and what better example than the future of our Parish which should be engrossing our attention right now? Chances are high that objective and strategic information – costings of various structural solutions, financial resources at our disposal, statistics of congregational attendances, our age profiles, historical data on church trends, analyses of current Parish and Connexional leadership resources, future census projections, and a long-range vision of how church itself needs to evolve – all this is likely to play second fiddle to how we individually happen to feel right now about where we belong and what will make us most comfortable in the short term.

So is there no good news? While Haidt insists that elephants rule, he does concede that they are sometimes open to persuasion by riders. Come to think of it, that's presumably true of real life elephants and

riders, as shown in the photo above. But, in the metaphorical jungle of the human condition, Haidt's extensive research in neuroscience, genetics, social psychology, and evolutionary modelling considers elephantine illumination a fairly rare event.

So what are the conditions in which personal and tribal rivalry are most likely to dissipate? The answer is couched in simple day-to-day wisdom. It most likely happens in the presence of other friendly elephants, after establishing a few points of commonality and a bit of trust. Friendly conversation or an emotionally compelling story may work wonders.

To which I would add the sheer value of becoming aware of one's complex self, one's bicameral parliament of ego and jumbo, and the constant interplay of reasoning and intuition. B At least, that's where my elephant may be pointing me, its presumptive rider, at the moment.

David Kitchingman