



Dunedin Methodist Parish

Finding Good in everyone Finding God in everyone

www.dunedinmethodist.org.nz

Presbyters:	Rev. Siosifa Pole	455 2923
	Rev. Dr. Rod Mitchell	477 3700
Parish Stewards:	Mrs Hilda Hughson	487 6226
	Mrs Earlene Owens	489 8146
	Joy Clark	455 9534
Tongan Steward:	Mr Kaufusi Pole	455 0096
Parish Office:	Siosifa: parish@dmm.org.nz	466 4600
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Parish Prayer Convenor	Elaine Merrett	489 7663
Pastoral Convenor	Beryl Neutze	476 7447
Mornington:		

PARISH BULLETIN

6th December 2015

WORSHIP FOR SUNDAY 13th December

9.30 am	Mornington	Professor David Tombs
9.30 am	Mosgiel	E Merrett
9.30 am	Glenaven	Combined at Mornington
11.00 am	Wesley	E Merrett
1.00 pm	St Kilda	TBA

EXPLORERS GROUP: A reminder of the end-of-year pot-luck meal together this Sunday 6 December at Mornington at 6.30 pm.

THE WORST DAY FOR COWBOYS - A brand new Christmas play will be performed by Y@M at Mornington and Glenaven on 20 December. Featuring cowboys, cacti, and the usual combination of singing, dancing, jokes and the Christmas message!

ORDERS OF SERVICE & BULLETINS OVER CHRISTMAS BREAK

The Mission Office will be closed from midday Wednesday 23rd December until Monday 11th January. Could you please ensure your Orders of Service over this period are sent to Katrina (admin@dmm.org.nz) no later than 12 noon Thursday 17th December. The final bulletin for 2015 will be the 20th December edition and the first Bulletin for 2016 will be 17th January. Thank you everyone, wishing you a very happy Christmas.

THE CHAMELEON AND THE OSTRICH - Y@M sold 50 copies of this new parable, raising \$200 for the Syrian Refugee Appeal. Great effort!

AT THE RIVERTON SYNOD last Saturday 28th

November Rachael
Masterton and
Dorothy Willis
Graduated the result
of 4 years study with
Trinity College and
Marion Ruda from
Riverton received her
Lay Preachers
Certificate. Rachael &
Dorothy were
presented with a
stole.



SYRIAN REFUGEE APPEAL - The ecumenical meal and following service held at Mornington Methodist last week raised \$700 for the CWS Syrian Refugee Appeal. The presence of David Clark, Dunedin MP, attracted a much larger attendance than usual at such ecumenical events, and numbers of the ordained clergy were present (Dr Clark himself is also a Presbyterian minister). A good preparation for the arrivals of refugee families here mid-next year.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY to Ramone Sarup, who turns 8 on the 6th of December!

OTAGO SOUTHLAND SYNOD was held at the Riverton Union Church Sat 28th Nov. This was to enable Dorothy Willis and Rachael Masterton to be presented in person with their Licentiate in Ministry graduation certificates from Trinity College. Riverton hospitality was excellent! Some things we discussed (Hilda's list):

- Presbyters can officially take 4 weeks' annual leave plus 5 days in lieu of public holidays which fall on Mondays (their usual day off). New leave forms must be filled in.
- Conference may trial being held every 2 yrs to save money. Presidential Team is now changed 2 yrly.
- We received an email from Greg Wright reminding us that users of our buildings may need insurance in case they damage our property and need to pay, or if their property left on our premises is damaged. Church property is insured for church users. The piano and Toy Library are separately insured. Update on Earthquake strengthening.
- Dunedin Parish will need to discuss future ministry as Siosifa has been with us for over 5 years. Please let Hilda or someone else on Parish council know your thoughts before Feb 2016.
- Papers on "Physician Assisted Dying" and "Green Church Aotearoa" were discussed, along with Episcopacy and ecumenical relationships. (Anglicans want us to have Bishops)
- We shared thoughts on Dame Susan Devoy's suggestion that we do away with 'Christmas' and use 'Happy Holidays' instead.
- Nicola Grundy and Te Aroha Rountree updated us on Trinity college - it has moved back to St Johns; has 5.5 staff; travel subsidy available for people to attend courses; courses 6-8pm to suit students who are working; providers of Theological education have decreased from 92 to 5!
- Let the Children Live grants are still being given out every quarter.
- There are changes in financial systems and reporting which our treasurer, Lynley, is working on.

Parish Links

St Kilda children and youth ministries are flourishing. Sunday School is running well with around 20 children. A couple of Sundays ago the children of our Sunday School had an exam. They were excited to participate in such an event to deepen their understanding of their faith. The Youth Group have been invited to sing and perform on various occasions. They performed an African song at the Prayer Week for World Peace at the Quaker centre. They also performed at the Climate Change Vigil that was held at St. Paul Cathedral. They were also invited to perform a dance to accompany a song on the World Day of Peace that was held at Forsyth Bar Stadium. These children are not only using their gifts in our parish but they are involved in the activities of the wider community. Our church and the whole parish continue to support their ministries.

Bake Sale



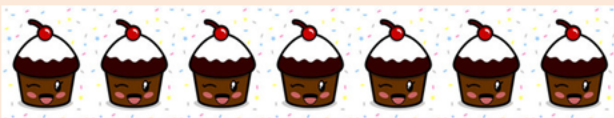
For Hospital Chaplaincy ¶

Thursday 17 December
9.30am Dunedin Hospital
Foyer ¶

Christmas Baking much
appreciated ¶

Contact Frances 474 0999 ext 58130 ¶

Frances.oconnell@southernhb.govt.nz ¶



2015 Food Bank Drive

Monday 7th Dec
6.00 – 9.00pm

Listen for the sirens
in your street - please
place your items in the
'Lions' trailer!



PLEASE HELP TO MAKE SOMEONE'S
CHRISTMAS THAT MUCH BETTER!

Proceeds to
Local Foodbank Only!

PROUDLY SUPPORTED BY THE FOLLOWING ORGANISATIONS





A RUMBLE OF CLERGY.... What exactly is the correct collective term for an impromptu gathering of clergy such as we had with Dunedin North Member of Parliament David Clark last Sunday night? It wasn't a 'convocation' or 'assembly' or anything as formal as that. An internet item suggests a 'RUMBLE' is a suitable word, and that appeals to me. And here's the photo of the event a remarkable rumble of clergy from among 4 Mornington churches pledged friendship and solidarity with David Clark, himself a Presbyterian minister. From left: Revs Peter Cheyne, Shirley Ungemuth, Gordon Abernethy, Donald Phillipps, Rod Mitchell, David Clark, Jan Clark, Rachel Judge, Ken Russell, Alan Judge, Greg Hughson, Siosifa Pole, Fr Cipriano Fernandes.

STORY FROM THE MISSION

Little Citizens: The Kotuku Room: Through completing the milestones we are continually able to reflect on our teaching practices and adapt our approach and implementation to meet the needs of different children, this has been evident when completing one of the children's milestones, as he had little alphabet knowledge. As a group we focus on a letter a week including the phonetic sound and formation of the letter, but the milestone result showed us the need to plan more one on one and interactive opportunities to learn these skills.



In the Kotuku group we are sharing specially made resources with families at home so they can help build on their child's knowledge and skills in a fun way. One of these resources, a colour matching game, was taken home by one of the children so he could build on his colour knowledge alongside his parents and siblings.

Rebecca has been working alongside another child and his family with his individual learning plan where mum requests worksheets and ideas that they can complete at home to help him with his learning before moving off to school.



The one that won't go away

I was ready for Joe Bennett's article in the ODT on November 26 called "Some folk surpass all understanding". He was ridiculing Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury, for his response to the Paris terror attacks. Welby had, in his own words, been "left asking why the attacks happened and where God was in the French victims' time of need." Bennett finds it incredible that it's taken so long for Welby to experience the sort of doubt so many others have felt before, over the suffering caused by senseless acts of cruelty -- "Man's inhumanity to man", as Robert Burns put it, in *Man was Made to Mourn*. If you don't believe in a God of Love, maybe ours is a pretty bleak kind of existence anyway; but if you do, your faith is going to be severely tested: irrational barbarism just doesn't gel with the idea of Love reigning in the world.

Bennett's column is called *Sleeping Dogs*, from the proverb "Let sleeping dogs lie." But he's unable, as I am, to let this particular dog sleep on. The problem of evil is the most serious issue we have to cope with -- and it won't go away.

I said I was ready for it, however, having just finished a book by Ron Hay, *Finding the Forgotten God: Credible Faith for a Secular Age*, which won the 2015 Ashton Wylie Award. Hay meets the challenge of all things incredible, such as the problem of suffering, and "the classic objection to faith first expressed by the Greek philosopher Epicurus

around 300 BC: 'Either God wants to abolish evil and cannot; or he can, but does not want to. If he wants to, but cannot, he is impotent. If he can, but does not want to, he is malevolent. But if God is both able and willing to abolish evil, then why is there evil in the world?'"

Ron Hay turns the question around, quoting St Augustine: 'If there is a God, why is there so much evil? If there is no God, why is there so much good?'

He heads his chapter on the "The Problem of Suffering" with the same point made in another way, from Lord Hailsham's 1990 book *A Sparrow's Flight*: "I do not believe in an uncaring deity. I do not believe in an irrational universe. I believe in goodness, truthfulness, loving kindness, beauty, generosity, loyalty. They all exist and they are qualities which demand an explanation as much as malevolence, cruelty, ugliness, meanness, and treachery... We must not forget that enjoyment is as difficult a thing to account for as misery."

Bennett's article used the phrase "*wilful* acts of cruelty", bringing in the idea that humans have free will, and choose to do these things (or not). This capacity to choose in another direction from natural instincts is an ability which marks them out from animals, with whom they otherwise have so much in common. Ron Hay points out that a great many of the world's evils are man-made, and I would add that in this decade the realization is finally dawning that some of the "natural disasters" of floods (caused by deforestation and erosion), cyclones and other weather extremes (caused by burning of fossil fuels) are man-made too. So that leaves a smaller proportion of the evils, like purposeful cruelty, that are due to human choice.

Cruelty: I often think about this when watching nature programmes where strong, healthy and extremely beautiful predators fasten upon equally beautiful but much weaker, smaller creatures and hunt them down in order to tear their flesh apart with strong, healthy and extremely large teeth. The whole of the animal kingdom is designed to work on the basis of fruitful function: evolution rewards our abilities to hunt and kill by the fact that they work for the furtherance of the species, by gaining us food. Where is the tenderness? Only, perhaps, in

the action of a mother licking her cub after she got a bit mucky around the carcass from which she was being taught to feed.

Love also has a fruitful function. Just as cruelty begets further cruelty in a vicious cycle of revenge, love begets more love, in what playwright Bruce Mason called a *Virtuous Circle*. But how does such a virtuous circle begin, in an animal kingdom that has evolved on the principle of *dog eat dog*? Good question.

I like Shirley Murray's phrase "energy for good", which can be stretched to mean "energy for/of God", meaning Love as it works in the world, as it empowers those who are weak, comforts those who are suffering. Helping is a human capacity, just like hunting and fishing, and it was present in the aftermath of the French attacks, the London attacks, the Christchurch earthquakes. Because we have at our masthead the principle, "Finding good in everyone, finding God in everyone", I have to consider yet another question, not *Where was God in the victims' need?* but *What is there of God to find in the perpetrators?* -- these versions of 'everyone' we are meeting for the first time. If I were able to have one of the perpetrators come into my home, not knowing they were terrorists, I have no doubt I could sit with them, share food and drink, even offer a bed for the night, shake hands, ordinary things. In so doing I might find the humanity in them. But that's never going to happen without a context. We are separated by age, gender, culture, language, religion, experience, geography -- everything you can name. We would not meet on a 'level playing field'.

That's why my kind of church would -- and does -- spend all its energy trying to level the field, to make contexts in which people who are different can meet, and share their humanity. What's this *humanity*? Not just a category in nature, but something extra, it means compassion and goodness, 'that of God', as the Quakers say. Or, to put it in a less grand way, they could meet and be themselves, and discover they're not very different at all.

Helen Watson White