



Dunedin Methodist Parish

Finding Good in everyone Finding God in everyone

www.dunedinmethodist.org.nz

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PARISH BULLETIN

4 February 2018

WORSHIP FOR SUNDAY 11th FEBRUARY

9.30 am	Mornington	LMT
10.00 am	Mosgiel	S Pole
11.00 am	Glenaven	LMT
1.00 pm	St Kilda	TBA

Dates to remember:

- 7 February: World Interfaith Harmony Weed dinner
- 19 February: Orientation Week CCG tent
- 21 February: Lenten study starts, 7pm, Mosgiel Church
- 23-25 February: Synod meets, Camp Columba.

YOU ARE WARMLY INVITED to attend the annual Dunedin United Nations World Interfaith Harmony Week dinner. Wednesday 7th February 6.30-8.30pm. Venue : Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Fenton Cres St Clair Dunedin. Food: Vegetarian Pot-luck. Please bring a vegetarian dish or dessert to share. Transport available: Contact David Kitchingman 476 7767 or dmkman@es.co.nz

Choir entertainment, face-painting and other activities will be provided. Everyone is welcome, including children

“Building respectful relationships and understanding between people of different faiths has never been more important. Come and make some new friends.”

Organised by the Dunedin Interfaith Council
dunedininterfaith@gmail.com

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1566890406855982/>

ORIENTATION WEEK - During the University of Otago Orientation week, the CCG has a tent at the Museum Lawn and the local churches have a roster to take part in this ministry. The Methodist Church is rostered for Monday 19th February and you are welcome to participate. Let me and Greg know if you want to be involved.

LENTEN STUDY will start on Wednesday 21st of February, 7pm in Mosgiel Church. This study will be based on a study booklet entitled, *Dethroning Mammon* by Justin Welby.

REMINDER: Synod meets 23-25 February, at Camp Columba, just out of Gore. Cost \$50 for the weekend or \$15 for Saturday. Will start approx 4pm Friday and go to about lunch time on the Sunday. Please let Rachael know if you are interested in coming - rmasterton@actrix.co.nz

PREACHING PLAN - If anyone among those whose names are in the preaching plan needs assistance in your service, please don't hesitate to call me. Siosifa

THANK YOU - I would like to convey my thanks on behalf of Kakala and our family to all those who prayed for and visited Kakala during such a difficult time in our family when she was diagnosed with rheumatic fever that damaged one of the valves of her heart. Kakala is still in the hospital but in a very stable condition.

FOR MANY WHO SHOWED UP

for a Parish shared meal on a Saturday evening in mid-December, it was to be a sad occasion, the official farewell to our beloved Pole family prior to their departure to take up a new appointment in



Auckland. But it was not to be, as only a day or two before the Parish was advised that appointment had fallen through and the President was asking the Parish to extend Siosifa's appointment to Dunedin Parish until the commencement of David Poultney's ministry on August 1 of this year. This was a request the Parish had no hesitation in complying with. And so a farewell became a WELCOME BACK, and many of our people gathered around Siosifa, Naomi, Kakala and Naomi Jr to share delight at the turn of events. **But on a more sombre note, we as a Parish can only surround the family with love and prayers since we have become aware of Kakala's illness. They are safe in the loving concern of the Parish and St Kilda communities. Perhaps on reflection it is a blessing the Auckland appointment did not proceed.



Ken was in a bit of bother with his computer, just as the deadline for the first 'Connections' article of the year was looming fast, like the supermoon's imminent arrival. Could I step in overnight? Perhaps I can, if I use a recent reflection in another context as a springboard. It feels good to help out once more, even if my thinking is far from clear – which brings me to the scope of my prevailing thoughts of late, or rather my semiprivate feelings:

FAITH AND FEELING

There's almost too much thinking about faith, from 'Faith Thinking' workshops at the University to 'Faith and Reason' columns in the ODT. If loving God is about the heart, soul, mind and strength, willpower should occupy about 25% of it and brainpower another 25%, whereas the combined emotions of heart and soul should take up 50%.

Notice that I equated the mind and the brain, but that also underrates the place of emotion. As Nobel Prize winner Daniel Kahneman has pointed out, we have two systems in our brains, one more informed by emotion and the other by reason. Yet why is it that the word 'brainy' is taken to just mean intelligent, when it should equally mean emotional?

In plumbing for the elevation of feeling over theological reasoning, I am tempted to appeal to one of the most famous quotations from John Wesley: 'I felt my heart strangely warmed'. I say tempted, because to leave it at that, without any recognition of the broader analytical context of his Journal entry for Wednesday 24 May 1738 would be to misrepresent his full position.

But it so happens that I no longer share his Aldersgate assurance that Christ alone is the 'Captain of our salvation' by saving us from the 'the

law of sin and death'. Nevertheless, what I do still deeply appreciate is the instinct that led Wesley to highlight the effect on his heart of his encounter with the Jesus event.

If this may seem a case of splitting hairs, its relevance may become clearer with reference to the protest that took place this last week on the grounds of Parliament during the first sitting day of the New Year. About 400 people gathered to express their opposition as Christians to the action of the Speaker, Trevor Mallard, in deleting from the traditional daily prayer the final phrase 'through Jesus Christ our Lord'.

Among Christians there will be two main responses to the Speaker's rather unilateral break with tradition. Understandably, many will share the views of those who made a stand for sacred continuity, not so much, they said, to protest as to proclaim, 'to see the name of Jesus exalted, not excluded'.

Others, with varying degrees of regret, will take a similar view to that of Bill English (a practising Catholic) who accepts the need to recognise the extent of contemporary diversity, and therefore to avoid imposing one's own beliefs on others. Hence the growing acceptance of a multifaith environment.

I have considerable sympathy with both points of view. After all, I'm pushing for greater acceptance of the role of feelings in faith, and here's an instance in which deeply cherished feelings may be hurt.

While the two responses may be seen as occupying slightly different camps within the Christian community, they have much in common. Neither sees such a situation as posing any particular searching questions of Christian beliefs themselves. It simply calls for adjustments in addressing other faiths and non-faith, not any fundamental revaluation of the 'Faith of our fathers, holy faith'.

But could it just be possible that society has begun to sense that the phrase 'Jesus Christ our Lord' no longer adequately defines his place in world history and individual destiny? Can he not still evoke a transformative emotional impact without being saddled with the supernatural apparatus of a bygone age?

For myself, as I get older, I seem to have come full circle, beginning with a childlike trust – trust being one of the primary eight emotions according to Robert Plutchik's theory, and very much akin to faith itself. Once I got past some initial fear (another of the primary emotions), my Sunday School bequeathed many memorable words (quaint pronouns and all) and indelible music:

Jesus, Friend of little children,
Be a Friend to me;
Take my hand and ever keep me
Close to Thee.

There followed decades of Christian prayer and philosophising, not to mention wholesale denial thereof. Finally, I seek to come back to a life-affirming trust again, in which Jesus continues to occupy a special place (though not as 'Lord', I have to say). Don't ask me to define it, but maybe as great Lover or Light might be getting strangely warmer.

Never leave me nor forsake me,
Ever be my Friend,
For I need Thee from life's dawning
To its end.

As I contemplate the future beyond my end, possibly even a post-church one, I surmise that it will be the affirmative communal feelings in the legacy of faith that will really matter, and not so much the

cognitive framework in which it has been passed on so far. Ultimately, it won't depend on whether grace, love and fellowship are exclusively mediated 'through Jesus Christ our Lord'.

David Kitchingman

**Special thanks to David Kitchingman who produced today's Connections article at short notice when my computer broke down. KR*



STORIES FROM THE MISSION

Client Support: *Milton:* A referral was made to the client support service for a man who was off work due to needing surgery. He was away from the work place longer than anticipated and had used up his annual and sick leave entitlements. While waiting for more surgery and not having clearance to return to the work place Tony was living off his bare essentials. He was referred to our service to see if he was entitled to any assistance from Work and Income.

When the Client Support Worker met Tony, his first comment was he didn't expect Work and Income to 'help out' as he didn't think he would qualify for anything. He also felt Work and Income would want a lot of paperwork and ask a lot of questions which he says had put him off from contacting Work and Income.

Together they rang Work and Income to see if Tony was eligible for any support while he was unable to work. To Tony's surprise he was eligible. Over the phone Tony went through the process of what he needed to do to apply for support. This took a bit of time as W&I explained how to apply online and what paperwork Tony needed for

his application. An appointment was made - however the expectation was that Tony would have made his online application and gathered all necessary paperwork before his face to face appointment.

The **thought of this was overwhelming** for Tony but after further discussion and with the support of the client support worker to help Tony through the online process, he was happy to proceed with his application. This took 2 appointments with Tony's client support worker. Once Tony has finished his online application and gathered the needed paperwork he was happy to attend his Work and Income appointment on his own.

Tony stated to the client support worker **if he had done this on his own he would've given up** after the last phone call with Work and Income as there were so many questions to answer and paperwork to **If you would like to support the Mission's work with a donation, please visit www.givealittle.co.nz and search for The Methodist Mission.**