



Dunedin Methodist Parish

Finding Good in everyone Finding God in everyone

www.dunedinmethodist.org.nz

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PARISH BULLETIN

24th June 2018

WORSHIP FOR SUNDAY 1st July

9.30 am	Mornington	R Mitchell
10.00 am	Mosgiel	S Pole
11.00 am	Glenaven	R Mitchell
11.30 am	St Kilda	S Pole

Dates to remember:

24 Jun	2.30 pm	Musical Society concert - Mornington
27 Jun	2.00 pm	Mornington MWF – Mornington Church Lounge

MUSICAL SOCIETY CONCERT - This afternoon at 2.30pm at the Mornington Methodist Church, an attractive concert of Beethoven piano music, songs by Gershwin and others, and cello pieces, played by Kathy Thompson accompanied by Louise Drummond. Come and enjoy some cheerful musical relief from the winter cold.

MORNINGTON METHODIST WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP - Meeting for June will be our A.G.M. & will be chaired by Rev. Marcia Hardy. This will be held in the Church Lounge on the 27th at 2p.m. Please remember the three Collections for this month - the Monthly Collection; Fellowship of the Least Coin; Dunedin Methodist Mission, Social Service Collection. All Welcome.

NEWS ITEM - THOSE CAGED CHILDREN

In a move that church historians describe as unprecedented, clergy within Attorney General Jeff Sessions' United Methodist denomination have formally charged him with child abuse for separating migrant children from their parents.

The formal complaint against Sessions, a longtime Sunday school teacher and former elected church delegate, cites specific "chargeable offenses" outlined by church law, which additionally include racial discrimination and disseminating unsound doctrines.

Sessions' local pastors are canonically responsible for approaching him directly to repair the harm he's caused and "achieve real accountability," but of course they will now be under tremendous political pressure to save him from embarrassment by ignoring these charges entirely.

Comment More than 600 United Methodist pastors and laypeople have already signed the complaint, so Sessions may have to face the judgement of the American people within his own Church.

PROFESSOR PETER LINEHAM of Massey University was our speaker at Open Education this week and gave one of the most interesting and informative lectures we have heard in recent years. Peter is one of New Zealand's most well known and respected historians and has for many years written and lectured extensively on the religious history of New Zealand. He is frequently called upon to comment on matters pertaining to current religious and church events and invariably provides an invaluable perspective that bridges the gap between the religious and the secular.

This week Peter gave an illustrated address covering the changes, sometimes eventful and dramatic, and othertimes subtle and gradual, that have marked the development of the Church in all its diversity in New Zealand. Most of us, having been in or around the life of:"our" church the last 70 years, were able to identify the changers we have seen and place them in the perspective of the wider church for a more charitable view of what has happened in our life time.

PHOTO Euan, Andrea, Rod, David (Salvation Army) Colin, Gordon join with Peter Lineham (third from left) after the event.

Profit from the meal was \$195 and from the lecture was \$130, both amounts to be remitted the Methodist Mission's the HUB.





STORIES FROM THE MISSION

Client Support Work Milton: A young Mum Samantha was referred to the service by her lawyer. Samantha had a date for a Family Group Conference and she was scared her children would be removed from her care. This was causing Samantha great anxiety. She did have a social worker from another agency supporting her however Samantha felt her worker was not very helpful. She did not feel confident the feedback from this worker would be favourable at the Family Group Conference and that it would result in her children being removed. Samantha asked if I could support her at the Family Group Conference. After gathering information from Samantha and assessing her situation, it became clear Samantha had been engaging with the other agency for 3 years. During that time she had had a change of 3 workers – due to employment changes, and her current worker was fairly new. When asked if there have been any concerns around her parenting while working alongside the other workers Samantha stated there wasn't to her knowledge. Samantha said she got on with the other workers and she found them to be supportive.

Samantha was encouraged to meet with the worker from the other organisation to talk about her fears and concerns in regards to the Family Group Conference and to address with the worker the lack of support she was feeling at this time. Samantha did not feel confident in doing this on her own. I asked Samantha if she would like me to support her in a home visit alongside her worker. Samantha was agreeable to this.

A joint home visit was made and Samantha – with support, was able to talk with her worker to let her know how she had been feeling. The worker was unaware of Samantha's fears regarding the Family Group Conference and this allowed Samantha to talk about how she was feeling about it and of the support she was receiving from the worker. The worker was open to Samantha's thoughts and hadn't realised Samantha was feeling the way she was about their working relationship. This also allowed the worker to give Samantha feedback on the good things she has observed at their home visits.

Not long after the Family Group Conference a follow up home visit was made to Samantha. Samantha reported the Family Group Conference went ok. Her relationship with her worker is good and she now feels like she is getting the support she needs. Samantha since the meeting has been open to suggestions and supports that were offered at the Family Group Conference and now views these supports as being positive.

Corrections: Half way through April a new, young student was allocated to the Foundation Skills 1 class. However after two weeks I had not seen him, he kept declining the class saying he was too worried to come down to the Programmes building. On the third week he was convinced to come on the Friday lesson when the class was in the computer suite. The next week was the same, he came just for the Friday lesson, however, in the couple of weeks that have followed this student has attended every lesson. I heard him talking to one of the other students during their coffee break where he told them it wasn't anything like he thought it would be, he was comfortable with how the work was presented to him, he liked the feeling he was achieving something and not being told off, he didn't feel like he was stupid like he did at school. The other student, a guy older by around 30 years, told him he loved coming down to Programmes, that he should stick with it and learn as much as he could so he could use it on the outside.



One summer night in 1924, in her home in Sawrey in the Lake District, Beatrix Potter and her American friend Louisa (Louie) Choyce were listening to a recent invention, the gramophone. Beatrix had purchased a recording of nursery rhymes and songs, played by the Little Mayfair orchestra and sung by “Uncle Charlie”. The tracks included ‘The Jazzing Nigger’ and ‘Ten Little Nigger Boys’ (which some of us might also recognise as ‘Ten Little Indians’.) Writing later to her friend on her return to the United States, Beatrix wrote, ‘it made me laugh remembering how you “took off” that man’s nosey twang. The most tolerable was the 10 little niggers because the manner was less out of place in that ditty.’

What is striking today is that she shows no conscious of the racist implications of the term ‘nigger’ nor of the rhyme, which lists the gradual disappearance of the boys, culminating in the marriage of the final boy—‘and then there were none’. In contrast to modern recognition of the absolutely offensive nature of the language and the story, contemporary English taste saw nothing problematic. After all, hadn’t the English Parliament abolished the iniquitous slave trade in 1833? And her diary, records without comment, her own chance meeting with an elderly negro, now a freed slave wandering the north as a penniless vagrant.

Negros, if no longer actually traded as slaves, had become useful as comical subjects for children’s books. In 1895, a twelve-book series known as the ‘golliwog’ books was a publishing phenomenon, starting with *Two Dutch Dolls and a Golliwog*.¹ *Little Black Sambo*, written by the bored wife of a Scottish surgeon in India in 1899, had followed as a runaway best-seller. (I can still remember delightedly receiving a copy as a child in 1939). And Agatha Christie’s detective novel, though it

appeared in 1939 in America as *Then There Were None*, was published in England as *Ten Little Niggers*. At the time, no-one remarked on the title or on the connection between the jeering nursery rhyme and the plot of the book.

Although one of the fundamental teaching of Jesus involved unconditional love and respect for others, good Christians have in the past cheerfully regarded slavery as an unavoidable condition for others than themselves (hadn't St Paul told slaves to obey their masters?), or for some a legitimate business opportunity, and I don't suppose Beatrix or her well-to-do American friend saw anything racist in their enjoyment of an innocent nursery rhyme—much funnier the posh accent of an English singer. Nowadays, I hope, we are more conscious of the damage demeaning language, let alone demeaning behaviour, can cause.

And damage to the way our faith is regarded in the community. The way we talk, the way we behave, can in our supersensitive, superconnected world inflict great harm not only on our individual reputation but on the reputation of the whole Christian faith community to which we belong.

The whole Catholic world is staggering under the weight of revelations of child abuse among its clergy and religious orders; that burden is throwing the shadow of suspicion over all Christian denominations. Our naive eagerness to 'do good', we are told by the professionals in social service, can be the very reason why church volunteers are not welcomed into sensitive areas of social service. Bible in Schools, taken over largely by convinced evangelicals, has become the object of suspicion and resentment among many parents; so much so that our national State Educational system is poised to reject it completely. The generality of western secularised populations, including our own very secular society, properly regard the ugly residual traces of fear and hatred of gay people among Christian denominations, as archaic and hypocritical ('love your neighbour as yourself'). The very label 'Christian' is no longer 'safe' in

the minds of many. (Compare the way in which the actions of a relatively few extremists have corrupted the general reputation of all Muslims.) Offence is easily given in the nervous world we now live in, and slander spreads like lightning.

We can't change the unthinking laughter of Beatrix Potter and Louie Choyce; we can look to our own behaviour and the words and attitudes we display (or hide), and ask is this the mind of Christ in today's world?

Colin Gibson