



# Dunedin Methodist Parish

*Finding Good in everyone    Finding God in everyone*

[www.dunedinmethodist.org.nz](http://www.dunedinmethodist.org.nz)

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## PARISH BULLETIN

**26<sup>th</sup> August 2018**

### WORSHIP FOR SUNDAY 2<sup>nd</sup> September

9.30 am	Mornington	R Mitchell
10.00 am	Mosgiel	D Poultney
11.00 am	Glenaven	R Mitchell
11.30 am	St Kilda	G Abernethy

### Dates to remember:

Today	4.30 pm	Explorers meet, Mornington Church
28 August	7.30 pm	Mosgiel Leader's meeting - Church Lounge

**MOSGIEL FOOD BANK** requires the following items: Noodles, Pasta  
Sauces and Spreads - jam, honey, marmite, vegemite, peanut butter.

**EXPLORERS MEET TODAY** - This afternoon, at 4.30 in the Mornington Methodist Church, Galloway Street, Dr Rod Mitchell launches his revolutionary Alternative Lectionary, one that addresses modern culture and scientific discovery. Don't miss this exciting meeting with Rod, whose ideas have already attracted interest in Auckland, Palmerston North and Christchurch educational and church circles. All welcome, no charge.

**MOSGIEL LEADER'S MEETING** to be held in the church lounge on **Tuesday 28 August** at 7:30pm.

**THE MOST RECENT OPEN ED MEETING** was most interesting for the message by speaker PAUL GOURLIE and the diverse nature of the audience that came to hear what Paul had to say. The given topic was "Modern Islam" but Paul (a leader in the local Islamic community) spent much of his time relating his own fascinating life story and his reflection on the steps that have led him to where he is today - an advocate in the Dunedin inter-faith community for peace, justice and unity, and an influence for all those things in the student community, especially through the students who choose to live and work in the so-called Peace Embassy of Aotearoa NZ, some of whom joined us for the occasion. We all warmed to Paul, who is a familiar and welcome figure at Mornington services, a significant

bridge between Moslem and Methodist expressions of faith. *PHOTO* Paul Gourlie with some of the international audience, from America, China, Syria, Aotearoa, Tonga, and West Papua.





## DO ALL THE GOOD THAT YOU CAN

May Angelou famously\* wrote *they may forget what you said — but they will never forget how you made them feel.*

I suspect this was originally a call to compassion, to the accordance of dignity to the other; for basic human respect.

But in our market-oriented world, and particularly in politics, it has become rather more a call to frame debate in terms of feelings above all else, sacrificing substance and complexity for “messaging”.

In the last month we’ve seen this in every Trump utterance – he rarks up his base with dramatically insupportable “logic” on a daily, hourly basis, to a quite wearying degree. (Defining Branolini’s Law for those of you with Google and a stomach for light profanity.)

We see it in the ongoing catastrophe that is Brexit (or more properly the way the UK government is “planning” for Brexit, i.e. via slogans rather than, you know, actual plans).

Locally, we’ve seen it in the Government’s new plastic bag ban, announced part way through the official review, even though – uncomfortably – 94% of plastic waste in the oceans comes from fishing nets, and a study from the Danish Ministry for the Environment this year showing that plastic bags are BETTER for the environment than cotton tote bags. (Cotton tote bags have to be reused *thousands* of times to have the same environmental footprint as a supermarket flimsy<sup>s</sup>).

And unfortunately we see this anxiety – to present the very best feeling about our work – all the time in social services.

Staff at the Mission collectively attend upwards of a dozen inter-agency meetings in Otago, Southland, and Wellington, every month, in pursuit of collaboration. (We have invitations to more than double that number.)

Too often, the meeting turns out to have been the extent of the collaboration. If there is further work to be done, it is almost always on creating the conditions for further “collaboration”!

I have known staff who were close to overwhelmed with work, because of all the do-nothing-feel-good meetings they were going to.

One of the greatest gifts of Methodism is our phenomenal history of pragmatism. The fundamental commitment to getting out of bed today, and doing something, and getting out of bed tomorrow and doing that something better or more or finding another something to do. Our understanding that perfect is the enemy of good enough and our deep theological commitment to living in the Spirit daily.

I recently briefed a bunch of new MPs confused by officials’ briefings on social services. My advice was ask them: What will it do? Why do you think this will work? How will you know it has? (Being the same three questions we ask of every inter-agency meeting Mission staff get invited to.)

The message that our clients should feel good about our work with them, of course, is paramount. But our work should equally do something, make a difference, create **change that works**. Surely, this is not too much to ask?

\* Except that it was almost certainly first coined by Carl W. Buehner, a high level official in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

§ <https://www2.mst.dk/Udgiv/publications/2018/02/978-87-93614-73-4.pdf>

**Laura Black**