



# 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

4<sup>th</sup> November 2018

### WORSHIP FOR SUNDAY 11<sup>th</sup> November

9.30 am	Mornington	D Poultney
10.00 am	Mosgiel	LMT (Merrett)
11.00 am	Glenaven	D Poultney
1.00 pm	St Kilda	TBA

### Dates to remember:

6 Nov      1.30 pm      Mosgiel MWF – Church Hall

**MOSGIEL METHODIST WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP** Tuesday 6th November, 1:30pm in Church HALL when Fay Richardson will tell us about the recent MWF Convention. All Welcome.

**THE RED CROSS IN DUNEDIN is looking for donations to equip homes for former refugees.** They urgently need single sheet sets as well as single duvets and covers. Also they are very short on cutlery, mugs and double duvet inners. Any help with providing these items would be greatly appreciated! Please deliver these items to the Red Cross offices located at 31 York Place, Dunedin. Greg Hughson and Amy Armstrong, Dunedin Churches Welcome Refugees Committee

**ELECTRONIC ORGAN FREE** for the taking.

**FOR SALE Giant Russian Sunflower plants \$1 :50 each.** To raise money to employ a gardener to tidy our Church gardens. Please phone 489 7663.

**NO, IT WASN'T THE ANNUAL PETS SERVICE** but according to BEV SUTHERLAND we shall have to become accustomed to her canine friend JESS. And with her on Sunday was friend and dog trainer, RAEWYN. Raewyn has been instrumental in recommending and preparing other dogs for Bev and if Sunday's performance is anything to go by the choice of 'huntaway' Jess for Bev is a pretty good one, and the congregation warmed to her. Jess is for more than friendship. She is already well trained to make life easier for Bev, and eagerly responds to commands to pick up this, or go for that. Good on you, Bev and Jess. Rumour is, this couple are already 'goin steady.'



## **WALLS OR DOORS – THE THREAT OF NATIONALISM**

The headlines get more troubling. President Trump wants to make America great again – but what was it that made America great to begin with. Has he forgotten the words inscribed on the base of the Statue of Liberty, which faces east, across the Atlantic, towards the Old World:

*Give me your tired, your poor,  
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,  
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.  
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me,  
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"*

Let's not imagine that the so-called United States is alone in its retreat into nationalism. The United Kingdom is disunited around BREXIT and its claim that separation from European union is essential. It's happening in Sweden, in Germany, in Catalonia, in Brazil. It's an excuse for dictatorship in countries around the world. Why should China and in India, each with populations exceeding one billion, be concerned for smaller neighbours, except as consumers of their products. How brave, or independent, will Aotearoa be when the pressure is applied?

The nationalism that bedevils the present-day world has been with us too long. It has given rise to, literally, a hundred wars over the past century or so. It will not be changed by strengthening nuclear arsenals. It will certainly not be changed by trade wars initiated by the already super rich. The desire that one's country should be great is a perversion of the truth when greatness is measured by armaments and bank balances.

Centuries ago, in that Old World, thinkers first challenged the claim that governments speak for God. Now we may declare that conscience and religion are matters between the Creator and the created. But religious fundamentalism still gets in the way. It puts a book between God and God's people – a book that must be understood its way. Freedom of belief is denied those who see things differently. That's the danger of religion-based nationalism – it justifies itself by insisting on a self-serving interpretation of the truth. It is patriotism at its worst, threatening liberty and personal integrity. Despite its claims it cannot save souls.

How are we to distinguish between that sort of patriotism/nationalism on the one hand, and a Christian view of the future of the world? We might start, as we should, with what Jesus did. There's the story of his

entry into Jerusalem, and he weeps because the city fails to recognize what he has come to do, who he is. Jesus loved his people and wanted nothing but the best for them. Jesus' patriotism is a love for nation that doesn't pit it against other nations – but it is a love that acknowledges shortcomings.

There are times when we can celebrate a national achievement – when we give a voice to the voiceless. Like it or not, we're part of whatever community into which we're born, and proper patriotism takes note of that in-born love that makes us want our people to be as good as they can be. But Jesus' lament symbolises our mourning for the times when our nation does something wrong, as it inevitably must do. Look just under the pomp and ceremony and see the ugly wounds. 'My country, right or wrong,' is a thing that no real patriot should ever say. C. S. Lewis said that love of country "becomes a demon when it becomes a god."

Perhaps the most important distinction for Christians is that our first priority is the will of God, over and above love of country. To his own people, even to his own disciples, it seemed as if Jesus was betraying them by spreading his message to Gentiles. Jesus taught us that if loving one's country is a godly thing, it does not build barriers. At the very heart of our faith is the belief that he died for people of all nations.

The future is not to be found in a return to Eden. In its unique way the Book of Revelation pictures the God of the future, before whom there *'was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language....'* We will not become a great nation by seeking to re-create an imagined, and exclusive, past.

We all live on one small planet that we are relentlessly destroying, because we cannot, will not, acknowledge our neighbours as our partners in creation. 'Every nation, tribe, people and language.' is an image not just for Christians proclaiming their allegiance to God, but it is for every single person. It is an image that stands over and above any allegiance to country.

**Donald Phillipps**