



# 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

2<sup>nd</sup> June 2019

### WORSHIP FOR SUNDAY 9th June 2019

9.30 am	Mornington	Combined with Mosgiel
10.00 am	Mosgiel	Rev. David Poultney
11.00 am	Glenaven	Combined with Mosgiel
1.00 pm	St Kilda	TBA

### DATES TO REMEMBER

19 June	7.30 pm	Reading the Bible as Waters Rise
26-27 July	Coming Up	Finding Faith in Secular Times

## READING THE BIBLE AS THE WATERS RISE

Our next Open Education speaker is Dr Emily Colgan, of Trinity College, Auckland, who has been studying what the ancient texts of the Bible have to say about the natural environment, put into the modern context of climate change. This is a significant subject for us all these days, as the Pacific Ocean begins to inundate the islands and extreme weather events cause major damage everywhere in the world. Join us at Mornington Methodist Church, Galloway Street, on Wednesday 19 June at 7.30pm (koha \$15). Bring a friend to hear an excellent speaker. There will be the usual pre-talk dinner, professionally catered by Judy Russell (\$15, for bookings ring 455 3727)

**COMING UP – FINDING FAITH IN “SECULAR TIMES” - What can we learn about Christian witness from the experiences of recent converts to Christianity? Dr Lynne Taylor, Sommerville Lecturer in Pastoral Theology, Theology Programme, University of Otago**

*Friday 26<sup>th</sup> July, 7-9pm Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> July 9am-12.30pm*

Dunedin City Baptist Church, 19 Main South Road, Concord, Dunedin

Each Course costs \$20. Please register online

at [www.otago.ac.nz/continuingeducation](http://www.otago.ac.nz/continuingeducation)



### A FEW THOUGHTS.....

Our son was married a few weeks ago and a contingent of Australians attended the wedding.

Inevitably, conversation turned to our Prime Minister who, without exception, they claimed as the person they coveted as Australia's PM. It seems that many, many people in Australia are 'over' hard-nosed, ruthless politicking, and are yearning for the compassion, sense of justice, and groundedness embodied in Jacinda.

Given Australia had already experienced a female PM in the person of Julia Gillard, I was reflecting on why her leadership might have failed to impress many Australians.

Of course those reasons would be many, but I wonder (amongst a zillion

other factors) if Julia led by emulating the way many male politician conduct themselves in the world. Jacinda seems to have the ability to function out of who she truly is, a woman, grounded in her femininity, authentic, compassionate, able to stand in her integrity, firm in her resolve. No doubt she will make mistakes and will need to bear the political and personal consequences, but I suspect she will do that with grace. I heard an interview between an Australian Political Analyst and a British political Journalist. The Political Analyst made the observation that maybe it was the smallness and isolated nature of New Zealand which made it possible for someone like Jacinda to be acceptable as PM. Did I detect a slightly patronising note in his tone as he reflected on NZ's place from a global perspective? The British Journalist, very perceptively I thought, suggested that maybe it was a reflection of who New Zealanders were as a people.

Of course, she's not everyone's 'cup of tea' as one will quickly discern should conversation turn to the topic. History hopefully will remember her as an effective all Round leader with a profound sense of compassion and justice and the ability to express these qualities in sensitive and appropriate ways. Is this who WE are as a people?

### **On a totally different note...**

At Open Ed. last week we watched a beautiful film about Japanese gardens. Apart from its visual beauty, the narrator discussed the inspiration for the different types of gardens, and their contemplative function in the lives of the Japanese people. Every tree, plant, flower, moss, rock and pebble is consciously chosen and lovingly placed in position by the gardener who is highly attuned to his or her consciousness. Great thought and care is lavished on the garden's design both at the micro and macro level. The same thoughtful care is given to form, simplicity and elegance in their art of Ikebana or flower arrangement.

In garden design and flower arrangement, in all manner of contexts, the Japanese concept of Ma is of huge significance. Roughly translated it means space, form, or interval between two structural parts. This space or interval being just as important as the structures defining it. This space, emptiness or selflessness comes from a Buddhist and Shinto idea. In the west, we

mostly perceive space as emptiness, but in the east, spaces have meanings; space shapes relationships, possibilities and interactions.

In music, the spaces between the notes create unique harmonies and rhythms. In writing, spaces between the words facilitate reading and comprehension. (I believe it was the Irish who first thought of putting spaces between words.) Punctuation gives pause for clarity and drama. In the spoken word, the pause is vital for conveying meaning, gravitas and humour.

**Someone once wrote;**

...pots are formed of clay, though the space inside them is the essence of the pot; walls with windows and doors form the house, though the space within them is the essence of the house. I used to love setting up the venue when organising a retreat. How the space looked and felt was a crucial part of the whole experience. It didn't matter what the place itself was like, the important thing was what was, or was not, put in the space. Less always better than more. The notion of emptiness is part of our faith tradition too. Monasteries, convents and other Christian communities require the emptying of one's self as a release from the unnecessary trappings of daily life, hence vows of poverty, and in some Orders, the rule of silence.

In our own church I've heard the minister pronounce a 'space of silence' as we are invited to reflect on or pray about something or someone.

Meditation is a vital part of our faith although often a challenge to achieve because spaces of silence and emptiness can be a bit scary, both at a personal level and collectively. I recall a minister years ago preaching about the dangers of meditating. He saw it as an invitation for Satan to fill the space with treacherous and ungodly thoughts. For him it was Satan's tool to be avoided. However, Psalm 19:14 reads 'May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight...' Philippians 4: 8 compels us to meditate on anything that is praiseworthy or of virtue.

Spaces of silence and emptiness are to be treasured for they are full of promise and possibility. Spaces where the mystery that is God can break through and touch us in ways that will surprise and delight.

**Trish Patrick**