

DUNEDIN METHODIST PARISH

Finding Good in everyone Finding God in everyone

www.dunedinmethodist.org.nz



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PARISH BULLETIN

16th February 2020

WORSHIP FOR SUNDAY 23rd FEBRUARY 2020

9.30am	Mornington	R Mitchell
10.00am	Mosgiel	D Phillips
11.00am	Glenaven	H Watson White
1.00pm	St Kilda	TBA

DATES TO REMEMBER

Wednesday 26 February @12noon – Mornington Methodist Womens Fellowship
Thursday 5 March @ 1.30pm – Lenton Studies Mosgiel Methodist Church

BAPTISM:

This afternoon at Mornington, Baby Mia Horsfall is to be baptized, members of the congregation are very welcome to attend.

BULLETIN POINTS FROM PARISH COUNCIL – 12th February

PARISH COUNCIL met this week, among other business we would like to draw these issues to your attention.

1. The next Synod is at Pukerau from Friday 28th February to Sunday 1st March. This impacts on Communion Sundays for Mornington and Glenaven, Holy Communion will be celebrated at both places on the second Sunday of the month. Mosgiel's arrangements are unchanged.
2. Methodist Conference this year is in November from 14th – 18th November. Conference will meet in Wellington.
3. We have received a communication from the Connexional Office in Christchurch in regard to the Coronavirus epidemic and appropriate hygiene. We discussed the administration of Holy Communion, the passing of the Sign of Peace and joining hands for the Grace. Next week's bulletin will have an article discussing this and we encourage Leader's Meetings to do some work on this matter.
4. We note and affirm steps towards a deeper biculturalism by Methodist Mission Southern, Maori language job titles now stand alongside English ones. So Laura as Director is also *Kaihatu*. We need to discuss our own biculturalism as a parish and ask how we might embody this.

DAVID'S LEAVE

I am taking a few day's leave from this Thursday (20th) to Tuesday 25th.

MORNINGTON METHODIST WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Wednesday 26th February at 12 noon in the Church Lounge. We are beginning 2020 with a shared social lunch. All men and women are invited to join with us. Please bring a luncheon dish for the shared lunch to be served at 12.30pm. Please also remember the Fellowship of the least coin collection.

LENTON STUDIES starts Thursday 5th March @ 1:30pm at Mosgiel Methodist Church. All members of the Parish and friends welcome. – Our study is "CHRIST IS FOR US". It offers the opportunity to explore the Bible readings in a seven-session study. It will help participants understand, appreciate, and engage in meaningful and life-changing spiritual practices and offer gratitude for God's salvation through Jesus Christ. **Followed by a cuppa.**

QUIET DAYS - You are invited to take time apart with God in the lovely environment of St Margaret's Anglican Church and Retreat Centre at 4 Seaview Terrace, Brighton, from 10am to 4pm on the following dates: Friday March 27, April 24, June 26, July 24, August 28, September 25 and October 23. Contact Maureen Harley on 021 107 1401 or 03 456 0573 or maugernnz@gmail.com. There will be a period of sharing followed by silence. Some reflections will be made available. You are invited to use the time and facilities as best works for yourself. Bring your own lunch. A koha will be appreciated. If you are interested, write these dates into your calendar.

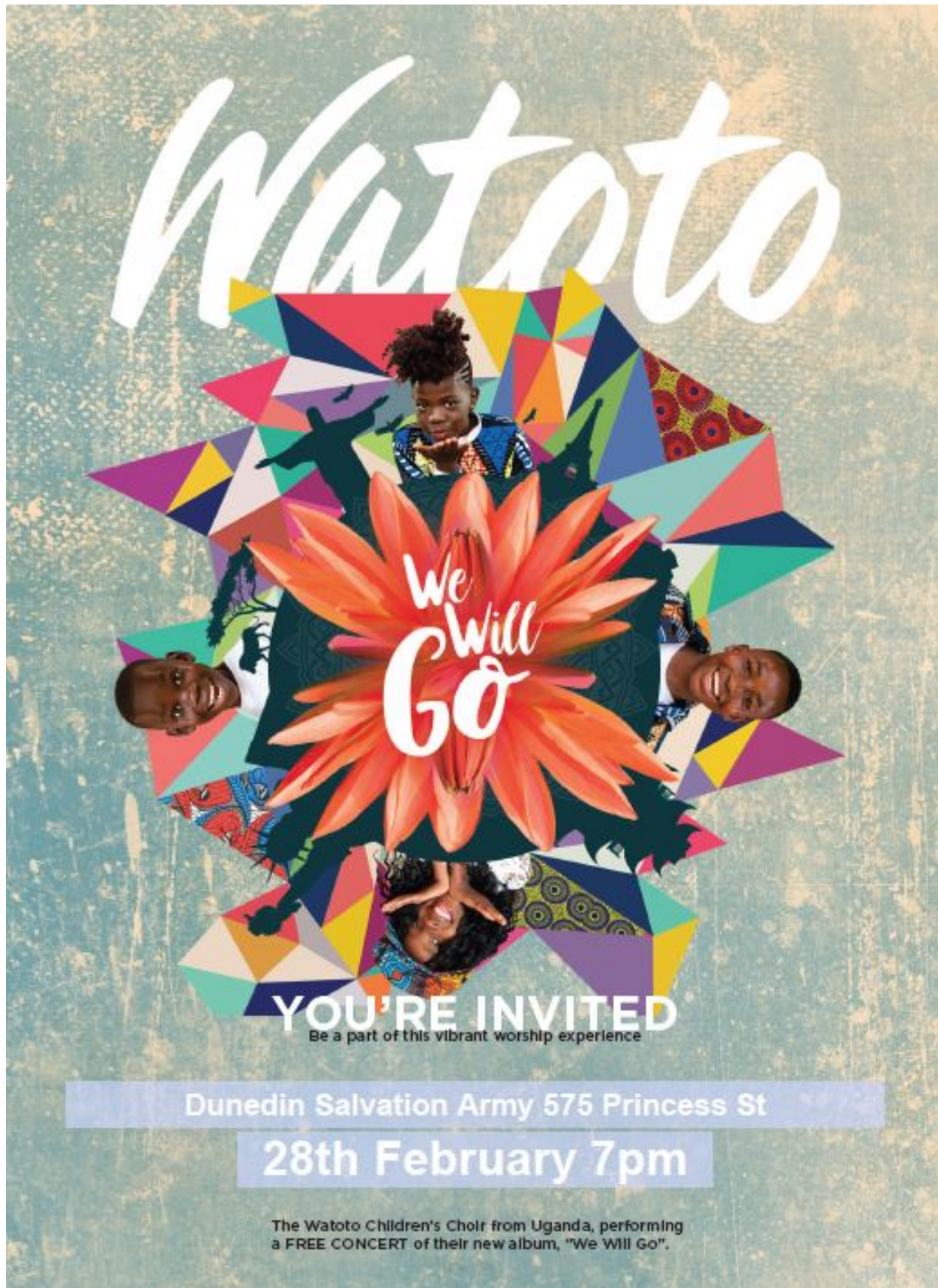
GUIDED RETREATS - You are invited to join a guided retreat based on a special time of the Church year, under the guidance of an experienced spiritual leader. These retreats are all held at the St Margaret's Anglican Church and Retreat Centre at 4 Seaview Terrace, Brighton, from 10am to 4pm on the following dates: 29 February (Lent), 30 May (Pentecost), 28 November (Advent). Contact Maureen Harley on 021 107 1401 or 03 456 0573 or <maugernnz@gmail.com>. A koha will be appreciated for the work of the leader and the use of the facility. If you are interested, write these dates into your calendar.

AN EXTENDED PERIOD OF REFLECTION - You are invited to join a 6-day silent, directed retreat in the vast open spaces of the Maniototo, led by a retreat team of Kelvin Wright, Barbara McMillan, Judith Anne O'Sullivan and John Franklin. Dates: from Sunday 1 March 1100am to Friday 6 March, lunchtime. Cost \$475; registration and enquiries to John Franklin <John.franklin94@gmail.com>. Registration closes 21 February.

THE CHURCH WAS CHOCKA - except for two or three empties in the choir. It was an occasion few of us will ever forget - a meeting last Friday night hosted by the Centre for Global Migrations, which featured a conversation between ALISON PHIPPS, UNESCO Chair in Refugee Integration through Languages and the Arts at Glasgow University, and BEHROUZ BOOCHANI, writer, filmmaker and former detainee at Australia's infamous detention centre at Manus Is, Papua New Guinea. Behrouz is currently in New Zealand pending his application for political asylum being heard. The discussion was far more than a narrative about the demeaning hardships of life on Manus - today's equivalent of a Nazi concentration camp - but rather a unique insight into the nature of the refugee experience, the imperative to flee the appalling circumstances that prevail in many countries (such as Syria) and the willingness to risk everything to do so. Alison and Behrouz are each talented poets and writers, and we the audience were held spellbound by excerpts from their writings and their deep reflections on the lives being lived by the world's millions of refugees. The evening was enhanced by two of Dunedin's leading poets who read from their works. To be chosen as the venue for such a memorable occasion was a high honour for our Mornington Church, and Colin Gibson's standing in the university and in Dunedin's refugee community was a big factor in that honour



WAITOTO CHILDREN'S CHOIR



As the children share their personal stories and present live worship music from Uganda, you'll see firsthand the power of God's love transforming lives around the world.

This concert is free and has a duration of 1 hour 15 minutes

Go well with God, go well with good.

My invitation to participate in the current Connections roster ended with the short sentence *Go well with God*. I wondered what it would have been like if it had said instead, or in addition, *Go well with good*. The relationship between God and good is raised by the enigmatic statements in the Dunedin Methodist Parish masthead: *Finding good in everyone, Finding God in everyone*. The sentences differ in the central vowel o in three letter word God being doubled in the four letter word good. Words that differ in this way may still have a related meaning, e.g., ten and teen, but usually they do not appear to be related in meaning, e.g., bot and boot, cot and coot, hod and hood, lot and loot, mod and mood, non and noon, per and peer, rot and root, son and soon, tot and toot, and wed and weed. The question arises as to whether God and good have a related meaning. This possibility is raised by the farewell *good-bye* being, according to the Oxford English Dictionary 1933, a contraction of the phrase *God be with you* (or *ye*). For example in 1588 Shakespeare's *Loves labour lost* (III, i, 151) "I thanke your worship, God be wy you". The dictionary comments that the substitution of good for God may have been due to association with such formulas of leave-taking as *good day, good night*, etc.

The words God and good do not appear to have a common origin. The dictionary notes the origin of God is disputed but may come from the root gheu- and mean an object of worship. Good is considered to be a variant of gad, which means to bring together and to unite, so that the original sense of good was to be pleasing, fitting and suitable.

As with poetry and other cryptic expressions, readers are free to place their own interpretation on the masthead enigmas. *Finding good in everyone* is perhaps the easiest to find a meaning for. We can have qualities that may be more or less admirable. From both a compassionate and a Christian perspective, we can be accepting and loving to all, to see others as fellow human beings, and respect others

for simply being alive. It can be easier to love others when we are recognize them as fellow humans with whom we share much and understand that we all have similar basic needs. *Finding God in everyone* may be open to more interpretations. In the vision of God used by The United Church of Canada, God is a creator and we live in God's world, which is presumably the world God has created. God also works in us by way of the Spirit and thus finding God in everyone might refer to finding something that might represent the Spirit of God working in someone. This might show itself by the person celebrating the presence of God, living in a respectful relationship to what God has created, loving and serving others, seeking justice and resisting evil, and proclaiming Jesus as someone who was crucified and then rose. The United Church of Canada sees that God is with us in life, in death and in life beyond death and that we are not alone. Although we might be able to find God in others, as shown by their behavior which could be seen as reflecting the presence of the Spirit of God, this would only be a part of God and that God would also active in other areas such as creativity. In this traditional view of a theistic God, one is able to communicate in prayer with God who is also a separate entity outside of ourselves and who may or may not respond to the supplications made in prayer.

In his 2007 book *God is the good we do*, Michael Benedict notes that all three of the great Western religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—rest on the assertion that a single supreme intelligence of infinite power—namely, God—created order in the universe. Before that there was only chaos and desolation. God separated day from night, above from below, ocean from dry land, put the sun, moon and stars in the sky, and put all living things upon the earth. God created “the world,” the home for humankind, in six days and it was good. However, since the sixteenth century, this account has been seen to conflict with natural science and science-educated believers may hold that while God might not have created the universe exactly as the Bible says, God probably, in some way, set off the Big Bang and put the laws of physics in place,

setting the values of certain physical constants “just right” for the universe to persist and for life to emerge more or less as Genesis describes. God also devised the process of evolution, a process in which he could intervene but which he prefers to let run on its own. This last, more scientific *deist* view of God is less personal than the Bible’s *theist* view, which has it that God not only created the world but watches over it to this day, manages it in every detail, and can be spoken to. In the deist view, God made The Rules, designed some elements, wound it all up rather like a giant clock, and then let it run. The God of deism is, in Benedict’s view, certainly not the God of Abraham, Moses, Jesus or Mohammad. But God’s prior and underlying existence as God (or as The Absolute, the Invisible Ground of Being, Creative Principle, or some such abstraction) is not seriously questioned by deism. Nor is God’s immensity. Benedict challenges both traditional theism and deism and describes a theology of theopraxy. He notes that several philosophers have argued that the Biblical God is a reflection of human moral striving, a projection of human virtues onto the figure of an ultimate father *cum* mastercraftsman and sometime warrior. Benedict’s theology is more radical and understands that God is what we take a good God to want: namely, goodness in deed, *our* goodness in deed. Benedict asks “Is God in the good we do?” and answers “Yes,” but because God is *only in* the good we do, we can all-but-equivalently say that God is only the good we do. Benedict suggests that God is the good we actually do as we do it, not the good we might do, contemplate, plan or remember doing. Nor is God good in the abstract. God is an activity. God performs “himself” through us and at the same time is performed by us. God exists in many places but not everywhere; as many acts but not all. Theopraxy does not see God as being in acts of goodness (thus leaving us to imagine God being elsewhere too, doing “God knows what”) but as acts of goodness, and therefore here, now, with us, “in our hands” only and always.

Go well with God, Go well with good. - Bruce Spittle