

DUNEDIN METHODIST PARISH

Finding Good in everyone Finding God in everyone

www.dunedinmethodist.org.nz



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PARISH BULLETIN

23rd February 2020

WORSHIP FOR SUNDAY 1 March 2020

9.30am	Mornington	C Gibson
10.00am	Mosgiel	H Watson White
11.00am	Glenaven	C Gibson
1.00pm	St Kilda	TBA

DATES TO REMEMBER

Wednesday 26 February	12noon	Mornington MWF
Wednesday 26 February	7.00 pm	Mosgiel Church Leader's Meeting
Sunday 1 March	6.00 pm	Explorers
Thursday 5 March	1.30pm	Lenton Studies Mosgiel Methodist Church

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

MOSGIEL METHODIST CHURCH LEADER'S MEETING to be held in the church lounge on **Wednesday 26 February 2020 at 7pm.**

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.

EXPLORERS - On Sunday 1 March at 6pm all Explorers are invited to a 'Welcome to 2020' pot-luck meal and social time, our hosts Liz and Murray Petrie. Please bring a plate and your husband/wife/partner/friend. Please let our hosts know of your intention to attend, with a message to <liz.petrie@xtra.co.nz> sent by this Sunday 23 February.

Our first regular meeting will be held on 22 March, when we will hold an open-to-all meeting to discuss the forthcoming Assisted Dying Bill which will be put to a public referendum at the General Election.

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.**

KOREAN VISITORS at Mornington last Sunday were JOHN and JEAN RAH, specially invited by long-time friends George and Judy Davis. The couple live in Macandrew Bay, and their friendship with George and Judy has had many faces over a period of some 25 years. Their son, Paul, was a cello student of Judy - one who has gone on to considerable prominence, and now a professional cellist based in Germany. John is a businessman, but has a particular interest in the English language. He had expressed an interest in Colin's leadership in worship, which was a reason why he and George had decided last Sunday was a good day to be at Mornington. The couple were assured by many people of how welcome they were, and invited to come again.





HAPPINESS

We live in a culture which has become suspicious, cynical and world weary. Sophisticated pleasures are commodities to be traded, and the anxieties and disappointments of life often blot out our capacity for joy. However, anyone who spends even a moment with young children is aware of how the capacity for happiness is present in all humans. The magic of a soap bubble; the play of sunlight; the sound and sights of the natural world; the welcoming smile for a friend, all offer delight if we can retain our sense of wonder, and see with the child's eye.

The cover of a recent Listener (Feb 1st) caught my eye: *"The Happiness Revolution: why wealth is no longer the secret to life satisfaction"*. The article it refers to describes the work of celebrated UK economist, Richard Layard on *'happiness economics'*. The author quotes Layard: "I think that happiness is actually what people most care about...how happy their child is...whether they are happy in their work...their marriages. We want everybody to be happier and that to my mind is the definition of a good society."

I wish I'd discovered Layard's work back in 1999 when I was finishing my degree in Pastoral Theology because I was writing a paper on happiness, which I called, in good academic language: *The Role of the Positive Emotions in the Pastoral Encounter*. Among the positive emotions I explored: were: gladness; appreciation, compassion, hopefulness and delight. In Scripture we find many references to 'positive emotions' such as in Paul's Letter to the Galatians (5:22-23) *'the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control'* All these emotions are included in the word *love*.

Although love is often talked about in Christian circles, people who have left churches often describe feeling judged, criticised, or excluded because they were 'different'. Gender, physical or mental disabilities,

marital state, or financial position, are all been seen as barriers to acceptance. Despite Jesus' insistence on the true meaning of neighbour, loving one another often only includes the 'in group'. However, in 'true community', as we sing in Colin's hymn '*We are many, we are one*', we experience love in action, as people care for each other with acceptance, kindness, appreciation, honesty and compassion. We become 'chosen' family to each other, celebrating significant occasions, supporting each other through difficult times, offering companionship and practical help when needed. As we learn each other's stories, we often discover hidden gifts, give and receive greater respect and may even find we *love* one another.

Many of us know happy people. Perhaps the happiest person I've ever known was Jan Bayley. I first met Jan in 1984, when she was recovering from the rare incurable illness which was finally to cause her death 15 years later. In her book, *Shift Happens. The X Factor...An Unlikely Blessing* (1998), Jan describes how a near-death experience, and other spiritual experiences convinced her that death is not the end of life. Everyone who met Jan was infected by her laughter, her wise, loving heart and her delight in the everyday pleasures of living. In spite of times of severe pain, her strong spirit refused to give in and she remained hopeful and accepting of her journey. In her book she wrote: '*I am empowered in my life, for however long it is, to the fullest knowing that spirit or soul is just a blink away*'.

To make sense of her experience Jan created a '*map*' of her journey which follows a circle. Beginning at *Mellow Meadow*, where *Lightening Strikes*, we move to the *Desert of Despair*, *See-Saw Park*, *Befuddlement Bush* and the *Isle of Isolation*. The turning point is reached at *Crisis Canyon*, which is also called *Transition Trail* or *Valley of the Shadow*. This is the place where we need to make a choice to 'stay stuck in illusion and avoidance... to conform and make compromises ...or strike out and find what is the authentic 'me' ...' A positive choice leads to *Lake Recovery*, *Rocket Range*, (where anger gives us the energy to bring about 'change in the world'), on to *Bay of*

Tranquility, up Understanding Mountains for a 'view from the top', through the River of Consciousness, where we reach Cappuccino Cafe on the edge of Mellow Meadow where the whole process may begin again. At any part of the journey there is the possibility of a Spiritual Sunsplash.

Jan describes how her experiences have brought her a sense of a higher self in a greater universe. There is a feeling of connectedness to the whole entirety and to the surety that there is an inescapable whole. There is a oneness of which we are part...a feeling of rightness ...a wonder-filled sense of expansion from which I can see everything in a new light'.

In my 'happiness paper' I looked at various ways we might experience happiness. I'm sure we can all think of people who fit some of these titles:

The Comic:

Perhaps the fullest expression of the comic is the clown, who gently and lovingly mocks our solemnity and pretension. Retaining the playful child's curiosity, spontaneity, and openness, the clown struggles to make sense of their environment. They teach us that the complexities of life are often absurd, that play is for all ages. They also remind us that comedy and tragedy are often intertwined; the happy face and the sad face both equally part of the whole being.

Medical researchers have found that laughter has healing effects. It improves breathing, lowers blood pressure and strengthens the immune system, relaxes muscles and increases endorphins; the natural body chemicals that make us feel happy.

The Poet

The poet is often able to name our experience for us in fresh and unexpected ways.

Poets who wrestle with their emotions, and their relationship with God, enable us to put words to our own experience. They become like old friends offering comfort and wisdom because they have 'been there'. They offer us their honesty, companionship and hope.

The Painter

The visual artist expresses feeling through line and shape and colour. Sometimes, using a camera to reveal their discoveries about people and the world, the photographer produces unforgettable images speaking with a powerful prophetic voice, revealing suffering and injustice, moving us to action through compassion.

The Musician

Every film maker knows how music can evoke an emotional response. When music expresses the particular emotion we're feeling there can be a great sense of release, of being 'heard' beyond words. As anyone who has sung in a choir knows, the physical experience of singing is energising, and singing together helps to create a deeper sense of community.

The Dancer

Dance has always been an essential part of life in human society. There are many references to dancing in the scriptures, and it's a frequent metaphor in hymns and prayers, although seldom part of mainstream western church communities.

In performance, the dancer may express emotion through movement so that the watcher is profoundly moved. However, dance need not be restricted to performance. Any movement to music often lifts emotions, even if the dancer is in a wheelchair!

The Mystic

*My fiftieth year had come and gone, /I sat, a solitary man,
In a crowded London shop, /An open book and empty cup
On the marble table-top.*

*While on the shop and street I gazed, /My body of a sudden blazed;
And twenty minutes more or less/It seemed, so great my happiness,
That I was blessed and could bless.*

W.B.Yeats. lines from 'Vacillation'.

Marcia Hardy