

DUNEDIN METHODIST PARISH

Finding Good in everyone Finding God in everyone

www.dunedinmethodist.org.nz



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PARISH BULLETIN

6th September 2020

WORSHIP FOR SUNDAY 13th September 2020

9.30am	Mornington	M Hardy
10.00am	Mosgiel	D Poultney
11.00am	Glenaven	D Phillipps
1.00pm	St Kilda	TBA

DATES TO REMEMBER

Wednesday 16 September @7.30pm – Open Education @ Mornington Church
 Wednesday 30 September @ 7.30-9pm – 2020 Peace Lecture @ St David Lecture Theatre, Otago University.

SPRING FLOWER SERVICE - Sunday 13th September is Spring Flower Service at MOSGIEL. Can our people please bring your flowers bunched ready for delivery. I will have the tickets printed ready. Sunday morning will be fine to bring them. Many thanks, Elaine.



OPEN EDUCATION: TALKING WITH IAN HARRIS - On Wednesday, 16 September, in Mornington Methodist Church, starting at 7.30pm, Open Education is sponsoring a visit by Ian Harris, Wellington journalist and popular theologian. Ian is well known through his columns in the Otago Daily Times and Touchstone, and he is a thoughtful, engaging and interesting speaker. Although we cannot provide the usual dinner, and Covid precautions (signing in, social distancing) will be in place, this will be an excellent opportunity to share in something different and stimulating. The usual koha of \$5 will obtain, and all profits will go to support Dania, a war-blinded Palestinian refugee woman moving into new accommodation.

THE PEACE LECTURE FOR 2020 - An event not to miss! The 2020 Peace Lecture will be given by New Zealand's former Prime Minister and Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, Helen Clark. "Seeking Peace and Hope together in the Age of Covid: A Conversation with the Rt Hon Helen Clark." St David Lecture Theatre, University of Otago (off Castle Street North), Wednesday 30 September, 7.30-9pm. Sponsored by the Dunedin Abrahamic group and the Otago Tertiary Chaplaincy team.

CAN YOU HELP? - Her name is Dania Saadoni. A Palestinian Arab refugee born in Gaza, she was blinded by an Israeli tear gas canister exploded on her property. Now a young woman in her 20s, she has been offered a house in Dunedin, but urgently needs financial support to purchase household goods to equip it. If you are able to donate even a small amount that will help towards her independent living. Please contact Colin Gibson (453 6662, or colin.gibson22@icloud.com).



COVID-19 - THE LOGIC OF HOPE

A nursery rhyme my grandmother taught me when I was probably 4 or 5 was already very old in 1800 when her grandmother was born. In fact, it probably goes back at another 200 years to Shakespeare's time. That's what makes nursery rhymes so wonderful. They've been round for so long, and we still find them intriguing, and satisfying, and fun.

I'm back in the kitchen of Grannie's house, and she's sitting by the Shacklock range, probably stirring something that takes a long time in the making. Maybe I had asked one of those questions (that littlies ask) to which there is no real answer – or, at least, not one that Grannies know. Whatever the case I do still remember her reciting:

*There was an old woman lived under a hill,
And if she's not gone, she's living there still.*

It would be silly to suggest that I remember now what I thought then about her answer. What did happen was that the words caught my attention, and stuck - I've never forgotten them. And the more I think about them now, the more sure I am that, as with me, so for a thousand, thousand other little kids I then learned my first lesson in logic. "If she's not gone, she's living there still" – of course!

At this present moment in the life of our world, and of humanity in particular, we need all the logic that we can summon to deal with the Covid-19 threat. It is too large for most of us to handle, and we want to be led by people – politicians, community leaders, health professionals - who take these matters seriously. We are not helped at all by world leaders who deny the reality of the pandemic, and still speak of it as if it were not much more than a dose of the 'flu. And while they say such things, tens of thousands of their own people die.

Nor is it helpful when those on the side-lines want to lay blame on something, or, more particularly, somebody, for the predicament we're in. What makes this all the worse is that they speak as if there were a conspiracy

going on – people in ‘the know’ holding back information, or preventing proper measures being taken.

It is, of course, quite natural that we should want to know the truth, as it were, as soon as it has been established. We want to be treated as mature individuals, and not as children who need protection from reality. If we are honest with ourselves we will admit that our ability to understand and absorb the truth, and learn from it, varies from person to person. We can nod wisely and say, “Yes, of course...!” in order to cover up our incomprehension.

And as has been illustrated constantly over these past months, we can be asked, invited, even instructed to do this or that thing so that the health of the community will be maintained. But our ignorance, our prejudices, and our plain and simple selfishness get in the way. This we know to our cost – at least on the basis of overseas experience - that human error is a major factor in the spread of the pandemic.

Not knowing is hard to accept. For thousands of years, probably, humans have connected ignorance with ‘darkness’, as if darkness were a bad thing. But we live lives that alternate naturally between darkness and light. Without the darkness of night there would be no relief, no rest, no recuperation. We should not mindlessly fear the dark – and, especially, we should not people our darkness with figments of our imagination.

Ignorance is not bliss. Nor is it simply a sign of human weakness. Ignorance surrounds us. In a recent article I found these words: “Modern-day science is a unique tradition of knowledge, inasmuch as it openly admits ignorance regarding *the most important questions.*” It is important for us all to hear a scientist say that. They don’t know, yet – but they expect to know. That’s the nature of their hope. Our hope is our faith in them – they deserve our patience.

But it also asks for an attitude towards the future that is positive - to say the very least. If we face the future fearfully, then it may be that the future will be fearful. I believe we should listen again to the words of Jesus. Here is one version: “But keep up your courage: I have won the victory over the world.” He challenges us, and he promises us. He keeps his promises.

Donald Phillipps