

DUNEDIN METHODIST PARISH

Finding Good in everyone Finding God in everyone

www.dunedinmethodist.org.nz



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PARISH BULLETIN

20th September 2020

WORSHIP FOR SUNDAY 27th September 2020

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

DATES TO REMEMBER

Wednesday 23 Sept 2020 @2pm – Mornington Methodist Women's Fellowship
 Wednesday 30 September @ 7.30-9pm – 2020 Peace Lecture
 Sunday 18 October – Mornington AGM

MORNINGTON METHODIST CHURCH

I'd like to thank everyone for their positive comments about the carpet tiles last Sunday. The project was a real group effort, and I want to thank and acknowledge everyone involved – Marjorie Spittle for getting the job started and dealing with financial and business dealings (it wouldn't have happened so promptly without her input); Margaret Connor, Hilda Hughson and Beryl Neutze for helping to select the carpet tile; and Greg Hughson, Mary Thompson, Rex and Barbara Weavers for helping to move everything out of the church, and then back in again (they made a daunting task manageable and relatively painless). Now we can all walk around safely and with confidence (thanks for rattling our cage, Bev!). Rebecca Neaves

MONTHLY MEETING of the MORNINGTON METHODIST WOMEN'S

FELLOWSHIP Wednesday 23rd September, 2020 at 2pm at the Mornington Methodist Church.

All members of the Fellowship and the Church community are invited to attend our September meeting.

Emeritus Professor Colin Gibson will enchant us with his presentation "The Thief in the Jar".

Should we still be in Covid Level 2 all health and safety protocols relating to this level will be upheld and afternoon tea will NOT be served.

Please remember the Fellowship of the least coin. Thank you.

MORNINGTON CONGREGATION AGM will be held after church on Sunday October 18th. Could all reports please be sent to me by Friday September 18th to allow time for printing and circulating to the congregation.

Marjorie Spittle

Chairperson Leaders' Meeting

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.



HUMAN RIGHTS

Recently I read the story of a man I have despised for the past fifty years. That same man could only be described as a war hero. This was Norman Jones, National member of Parliament from 1975 until his death from a brain tumour in 1987. Described as a novel, the book “Jonesy” is heavily autobiographical, following Jones’ teenage history working first in an Invercargill foundry and then on a succession of Southland farms learning about both animal and human behaviour. He was especially proud of his skill with a rifle which put him in good stead when he lied about his age and joined the army aged only 16, serving for two years as a private in the 23rd Infantry Battalion in North Africa where he was wounded three times, eventually losing a leg from tank fire. He was repatriated to New Zealand, still only 19 years of age. It's a compelling read with graphic descriptions of desert warfare, experiences which later led him to becoming a pacifist.

I didn't know Norman Jones’ story when I encountered him in the 1980s. He was then one of the leading campaigners opposing the Homosexual Law Reform bill which was eventually passed in 1986 after many wounding and untruthful words were said, both in Parliament and across New Zealand. “Go back into the sewers where you come from”, was his advice to people like me. “Turn around and look at them ... gaze upon them ... you're looking into Hades ... don't look too long – you might catch AIDS” he told his supporters at a debate I attended in Dunedin. John Kennedy, the editor of the Catholic paper *The Tablet*, was supporting him on the platform.

At the time signatures were being collected for a petition opposing law reform that Norman Jones presented to Parliament. (It was disregarded when it was discovered that numerous people signed on a number of occasions.) I remember my late partner Malcolm being quite distressed when he watched the mother of two young boys signing at a desk set up on the corner of Moray Place. He wanted to say to the woman that one of her sons might later discover he was gay and that her action that day might result in him being sent to prison. We so much hoped that the law reform bill might

pass, but with a campaign like this, there was no guarantee. It was a political football with our lives being kicked around, but it was not a game for us.

I am reminded of that situation today, as I follow the debate about the “End of Life Choice” Act that has passed in Parliament after lengthy debate and, for political reasons, is now the subject of a referendum. I see exactly the same tactics being used by opponents, once again being led by the Catholic Church. The phrase “it's the thin edge of the wedge” is being bandied about, just as it was in 1986. Despite the safeguards that are written into the act and that have been reviewed by Parliament, opponents are asking “Is it the right to die or a licence to kill?” The ODT insists on calling the Act “The Euthanasia Bill” a term that conjures up the wholesale slaughter of vulnerable people when it is only those who are dying that can request assistance and they must be deemed capable of making such a request.

I cannot understand why so many people insist they know what is best for others. I am disappointed that Hospice has opposed the Act. They will certainly know that not all their patients die peacefully and pain free. In an opinion piece in the ODT (Fri 11 Sept) palliative care specialist Dr Libby Smales said that, despite the best care, 2% - 5% of patients suffer unbearably as they die. Hospice has a vested interest. They want better funding. They have stated “Only when all New Zealanders have ready access to good quality end-of-life care can a balanced discussion begin.” Does that mean that assisted dying would then be OK? Hospice is not able to offer care to everyone. Malcolm wanted to die there but was unable to do so. Despite excellent nursing care he had a prolonged and miserable death in a hospital room.

The 1986 Homosexual Law Reform Bill was a blessing to many and harmed no one I can think of. It was “the thin edge of the wedge” in that it led to the Human Rights Amendment Act that ended discrimination against gay men and women and eventually to their right to marry. It has changed my life! I believe that The End of Life Choice Act will be similarly welcomed by those people who are dying in uncontrollable pain and choose to end it. It might be me. It might be you. Isn't that our Human Right?

Euan Thomson