

# 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

4<sup>th</sup> October 2020

### WORSHIP FOR SUNDAY 11<sup>th</sup> October 2020

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

### DATES TO REMEMBER

Friday 16 October @6.30pm Games Night at the Mosgiel Methodist Church Hall  
 Sunday 18 October – Vice President of Conference Visit  
 Sunday 25 October - Mornington AGM

**MORNINGTON CONGREGATION AGM** Because the Vice President of Conference will be visiting us on October 18th the AGM has been moved to October 25th and will be held at the close of the service before the final benedictions.

**GAMES NIGHT** - Please keep this night free: Friday 16th October, 6:30 pm in the Mosgiel Methodist Church Hall. All parish welcome; please bring your own food - takeaways, or food of your choice.



Photos from our **AGM Dinner** held at Diggers Restaurant Mosgiel RSA. Thanks to Ross for taking the photos



### **MYTHS AND TRUTHS, ANCIENT AND MODERN**

Down through ages, people of ancient cultures have developed stories and myths to help them make sense of the world and the mysteries of life and death, good and evil. They have played an important role in shaping the structure of societies and the lives of individuals within those societies. These myths embody truths in a wonderfully magical, poetic way, inviting us to interpret them using not only our intellectual understanding, but also the eyes and ears of or hearts, which help us absorb the wisdom embedded within the stories.

This ancient tradition of myth and storytelling lives on today in block buster films and books. Our generation grew up with its own stories and films eg Wizard of Oz, To Kill a Mocking Bird, Moby Dick ,Superman etc. I have found it intriguing observing our kids reactions to these movies. They grew up in the 'Star Wars' era among other science fiction stories. These stories, told through the medium of film are imagination grabbing

and compelling; the characters archetypal, themes about good and evil and the story line apocalyptic. More recent ones include 'Harry Potter' and 'Hunger games.' 'Game of Thrones'.

A trilogy from the late nineties which grabbed our kids attention was the 'Matrix', (probably because it was about computers.) It's a series of science fiction stories about a computer programmer who is led to fight an underground war of a dystopian society against powerful sentient computers which have constructed his entire reality with a system called the 'Matrix'. The purpose being to pacify and subdue the human population. It's a very dark film, some of the themes and names of characters reminiscent of theological themes and classical mythology among others. Ultimately the universal theme of the Matrix is the battle of good versus evil, truth versus lie. Some fans, young and not so young, are so intrigued by these movies and books they attend huge conventions dedicated to the characters and ethos of these stories. For some, the line between reality and fantasy gets a little blurred. It could be said that for some, sc-fi, has replaced a somewhat irrelevant Church, as they see it.

So, why do many gen xers and millenials find the modern fantastical sci-fi more acceptable than the ancient fantastical stories of biblical texts? Is it just that it is based on futuristic imaginings rather than 'old school' imaginings and themes which, for them has an aura of prophetic authenticity? Or is it something else?

In a scene from the 'Matrix', a character called Agent Smith (an AI construct) talks about human folly particularly the manner in which they are devastating their planet with out of control consumerism and lack of self discipline - 'the only way they can survive is to spread uncontrollably all over the planet. there is another organism on this planet that follows the same pattern. A virus!' This film was produced in the late 1990s.

We are in the middle of a global viral pandemic which is quietly and sneakily decimating every corner of the planet. Gen exers and millenials might say. 'planet earth is fighting back! And they could well be right!

When discussing the impact of the film with our kids, the realization that the earth is NOT ours to 'subdue and have dominion over', really struck a chord. They agreed with the premise of this archetypal character who claimed that human life behaved as viruses do, spreading multiplying and destroying the planet. The planet had survived for millions of years before human life evolved, finding rhythm and balance. Earth will be around long after human life has self-destructed. Perhaps we need as a race, to pause and think about what is going on here.

Another reason our children and grandchildren might be captured by these stories is the lack of 'mystery' in their lives. Previously the church has 'carried' the mystery for us. For gen exers, church, if in fact they did attend, would be a full on experience with little time to reflect on the mystery that is God . Many have never had the experience of church, sunday school, bibleclass etc.at all. For a number of churches, suspicion of mystery and the unexplained (with the exception of dramatic public displays of the holy spirit) has meant that faith and its expression has, to a degree, been concretised, leaving little opportunity for the still small voice to be heard. Consequently mystery as portrayed in film and TV has real appeal.

What are the implications for the Church of the future if it has to compete with the thrill and often prophetic mystery of science fiction, and a church where all too frequently the hard questions are not being asked and warnings of the scientific community ignored? Truth, in Biblical times and since, has been expressed in the context of the time. One of our sons used to say he didn't believe that God just unplugged the fax (email) after the Bible was written.

'once we see the truth, we can either choose to overcome our struggles, or choose to continue living in a dream world.' (The Matrix.)

'you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.' (Jesus – John 8:32)

Trish Patrick.