

# 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

7<sup>th</sup> November 2021

### WORSHIP FOR SUNDAY 14th November 2021

9.30 am	Mornington	D Phillipps
10.00am	Mosgiel	E Merrett
11.00am	Glenaven	D Phillipps
	St Kilda	TBA

### DATES TO REMEMBER

10 November @ 7.30pm - Mosgiel Parish Council Meeting  
5 December @ 10am – Joint Service @ Mornington Methodist Church

**PARISH COUNCIL MEETING** to be held in the Mosgiel Methodist Church on **Wednesday 10 November at 7:30pm**. If you have any items of business you wish the Council to deal with please send them to the secretary Fay Richardson at [malk.com@hotmail.com](mailto:malk.com@hotmail.com) to be added to the agenda.

### **ON FILMING AND UPLOADING SERVICES AT MORNINGTON**

Services at Mornington are now filmed and uploaded to the Mornington Methodist YouTube channel. In line with guidelines from the Methodist Church of New Zealand we have decided that children will not be filmed and out of respect for the sensitivities of many, when we celebrate Holy Communion, between the invitation to the Table and the Post Communion prayer, the camera will pan to the organ pipes so no one is seen.

**CLINICAL PASTORAL EDUCATION** – Susan Hamel of the Mornington congregation, an ordained interfaith minister, is doing a CPE course (clinical pastoral education) and as part of that she is having a series of pastoral conversations which are written up - while preserving anonymity - and presented in her study group.

If you would be willing to have a pastoral conversation with Susan please contact her on [sfh1959@gmail.com](mailto:sfh1959@gmail.com)

### **JOINT SERVICE AT MORNINGTON**

At 10am on the 5th December the General Secretary, the Rev Tara Tautiri, will be with us. You are invited to a joint service at Mornington, where she shall preach.



**This is an article I could more appropriately call Disconnections. Puzzled? Read on.**

As most of our community know, I have recently lost my wife after 63 years of marriage. In addition to a huge outpouring of emails expressing sympathy and affection, this brought a large number of posted cards with further kindly messages of grief and condolence.

However, dropped into my mailbox among them—I hope through accidental timing and not sheer malice—I found a different sort of message. A piece of hate mail. No, not the sender’s hate, but a message I myself truly hate. And because some of you may have received the same message (or something like it) I want to talk about it.

Let me describe it. A small stapled 22-page pamphlet, mostly printed in black and white, though on the front cover the title in red ran THIS WAS YOUR LIFE! And on the back the sender’s name (also) also in red: Senior Pastor Caleb Im Bongim, of the DUNEDIN KOREAN FULL GOSPEL CHURCH.— Not that Pastor Caleb and his local church created the pamphlet. In smaller letters at the bottom of the back cover ran the revealing legend, ‘CHICK USA (909)-0771 [www.chick.com](http://www.chick.com)’. So this piece of fundamentalist nastiness had been passed on from a wealthier American source.

I opened the pamphlet, curious to discover who knew enough about me to declare this was an accurate description of my life. And there I was, in the crudest of drawings, smirking and puffing contentedly on my pipe (I am a non-smoker), with a glass of beer in my hand (a rare occurrence), watching through the window of my substantial house a violent scene of robbery on my large TV, and beside me an enormous black limousine (if only!). Underneath the scratchy drawing was printed in block capitals, AND I WILL SAY TO MY SOUL, SOUL THOU HAST MUCH GOODS LAID UP FOR MANY YEARS. TAKE THINE EASE, EAT, DRINK AND BE MERRY’ (Luke 12:19).

I knew at once what I was in for. And yes, under each picture in a cartoon-like series there ran some New Testament text or other, all pointing the same way. I was immediately attacked by the Grim Reaper, wielding a bloodstained scythe. In three more pictures I was dead, buried and summoned to arise to face judgement. I had been described by the graveside preacher as ‘a good man’, but I was soon to be disabused of that through a thorough review of my entire life shown as a movie (‘For there is nothing that shall not be manifested’).

Seems that as a teen I had passed on dirty stories, lusted after a pretty girl (the only appearance of women in a male-filled world), been a backbiter and disobedient to my parents. My mind had strayed to thoughts of a baseball game while I was supposed to be listening to the sermon. I had treated as bunkum Christ's saying, 'I am the way, the truth and the life', deciding to make it **my** way. And there I was now, a naked cowering soul, on my knees confessing that I was lost, hopeless and GUILTY! My name was found missing from the Book of Life and I was hurled into The Lake of Fire.

But wait! There's more! In five more pictures, titled THIS CAN BE YOUR LIFE! I duly repented, acknowledged Jesus as my lord and personal saviour, and immediately became 'not only one of our best workers but a fine Christian.' I died (again) and was led 'home' to a shining heaven. The final page left a set of instructions on how to proceed; it included reading the King James version of the Bible every day (none of your modern translations, thank you) and joining a church 'where Christ is preached and the Bible is the final authority.'

So it seems that terror and dread of the Judgement in the Next World are still the tools of trade for this sort of crude evangelism, and the destruction of every sense of personal worth or goodness is still the pre-requisite for 'salvation'.

This garbage is not the world I live in, and certainly not the theology of the loving, active faith community to which I belong. It is the Fake News of spiritual charlatans. I loathe its methods and its message, and I am deeply ashamed that this might be taken for Christianity in the real, despairing, spiritually-chaotic world of 2021. I think I'll go back to reading more of those kindly, love-filled messages of consolation. They are good for the soul.

COLIN GIBSON