###### logocolour**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**

**27 November 2022**

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| **WORSHIP FOR SUNDAY 4 December 2022** |
| 9.30am | Mornington | D Poultney |
| 10.00am | Mosgiel | G Davis |
| 11.00am | Glenaven | D Poultney |

**ORDERS OF SERVICE & BULLETINS OVER CHRISTMAS BREAK**



The Mission Office will be closed from Midday Friday 23rd December with the Parish team returning to work Monday 16 January 2023.

Would you please ensure that your Orders of Service over this period (the dates 18th December through to 15th January 2023) are sent no later than **12noon Wednesday 14th December** (bulletins@mmsouth.org.nz)**.**

The final bulletin for 2022 will be Sunday 18th December and the first bulletin for 2023 will be Sunday 22nd January.

*Many thanks, Methodist Mission Parish Team*

**WEST PAPUA SUPPORT**

West Papua Support Dunedin is planning to fly the Morning Star flag by the peace poles on the museum reserve at 12 noon on Thursday 1 December to mark West Papua Independence Day. Some speeches will be given.

The 1st of December, marks West Papua’s original independence day when the Morning Star flag was first raised in 1961.

The Dutch had prepared West Papua for independence. However, within months, the Indonesian military invaded – determined to include the resource-rich land as part of their nation.

The United Nations declared that West Papuans were to be given the “opportunity to exercise freedom of choice” through consultation and a referendum, with voting rights for all adult males and females. However, it was only a bogus referendum that followed, with 1026 Papuans (out of 1 million) picked to vote in 1969. Under severe duress, including threats of torture and death, they voted to remain part of Indonesia. The UN shamefully sanctioned the result.

Since then, West Papuans have been slaughtered, tortured, raped, culturally oppressed, discriminated against, denied the most fundamental freedoms and have seen their homes burned to the ground.

The Morning Star flag is recognised as the national flag of West Papua and continues to be the defining symbol for a Free West Papua – “Parpua Merdeka”. Today it is illegal to raise this flag in West Papua and people who do face arrest, torture and long jail sentences. On this day, people from

around the world raise the Morning Star flag to stand in solidarity with the West Papuans. Over the past several years the international community, including a number of the Pacific nations, has become increasingly aware of the West Papua situation and is advocating for their freedom.

You are welcome to attend and show your support for a Free West Papua.



Today I’d like to tell you about the first spiritual teacher I found outside of the Christian faith and one of my favorite 20th century saints.

Eknath Easwaran was born in Kerala, India in 1910 and was raised by his mother and grandmother. After taking degrees in English and law he taught English at the University of Nagpur. In 1959 he traveled to Berkley, California on a Fullbright scholarship and began to teach meditation classes there.

After marrying, he became a US citizen and founded the Nilgiri Press and the Blue Mountain center for meditation. Easwaran had met Gandhi as a young man and was very influenced by him. He wrote Gandhi’s biography in 1973.

Easwaran was what I would call an early proponent of interfaith studies. He translated both Indian texts such as the *Upanishads* and the *Bhaghavad* *Gita*, as well as the words of the Buddha in the *Dhammapada*. He wrote a biography of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, a devout Muslim who raised a non-violent army to help gain Indian independence from Britain.

It was Easwaran’s book *Passage Meditation* that first introduced me to the practice of mindfulness. I came across this work in a dusty secondhand bookshop in St Louis, Missouri back in the early 1980’s. I knew nothing about the kind-looking Indian gentleman pictured on the back cover. Back in the days before the Internet, information wasn’t as easy to come by as it is now! But the book captivated me, with its mixture of heady spirituality and down-to-earth advice. I had literally never read anything like it. It opened my eyes to the transcendent world of interfaith, for Easwaran was as comfortable with meditating on the Prayer of St Francis as words from any of the sacred writers of India.

Although I was not able to meet Easwaran in person, I now, through the magic of YouTube have been able to see some of his talks at the Blue Mountain Center. Earthy and funny, he must have been a delightful person to know. He died in 1999, though his work lives on through those talks and his published books, most of which are still in print.

Easwaran’s meditation system, called the Eight Point Program, is as practical and useful to me now as it was forty years ago. Thousands and probably millions of pages have been written on the subject of how to meditate, but nothing encapsulates the method better than these eight points, because they are a whole-life makeover:

1. **Meditation:** Memorize a passage from an inspirational text and repeat it silently. Aim for 30 minutes a day.
2. **The Mantram:** Choose a holy name or phrase. Repeat silently to ground yourself during stress or when busy.
3. **Slowing Down:** what it says. Try to make your life less busy.
4. **One-Pointed Attention:** Focus on whatever you are doing. No multi-tasking!
5. **Training the Senses:** Enjoy the simple things in life.
6. **Putting Others First**: Altruism and kindness to others.
7. **Spiritual Companionship**: Find a group to support your practice.
8. **Reading the Mystics**: Find inspiration in the writings of all spiritual traditions.

If you are looking for something to read this holiday season I recommend Eknath Easwaran to you. A couple of his books are available from the library and I have copies to lend too!