



Dunedin Methodist Parish

Finding Good in everyone Finding God in everyone

www.dunedinmethodist.org.nz

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PARISH BULLETIN

20th October 2013

WORSHIP FOR SUNDAY 27th October

9.30am	Mornington	D Phillipps
9.30 am	Mosgiel	S Pole & Mosgiel LMT
11.00 am	Glenaven	D Phillipps
11.00 am	Wesley	S Pole & Mosgiel LMT
1.00pm	St Kilda	TBA
6.00pm	Broad Bay	No service



MUSICAL SOCIETY CONCERT, today 20 October 2.30pm at the Mornington Methodist Church. Flute, Clarinet and Piano items. Come and enjoy a wonderful program for only \$2.

EXPLORERS GROUP MEETING

Please note that as our usual Sunday for gathering falls on Labour Weekend, the meeting date has been changed to Sunday Nov 10th, 4.30pm in the Mornington Church Lounge. We look forward to hearing Rod Mitchell sharing with us his impressions of attending the 3rd Common Dreams Conference.

STORY FROM THE MISSION

The purpose of Youth Guarantee is to allow students who had not found school a successful place of learning for them the opportunity to re-engage with learning and focus on future goals in an alternative learning environment. Two students have found areas of strength and interest that wish to pursue further in their learning. Student 1 has been accepted into the highly competitive Personal Training programme at Otago Polytechnic for 2014. He will be the only under 18 year old accepted. His acceptance is due to his hard work both in the classroom and at his Work Experience with Powertech Personal Training at Sky Fitness. His consistent attendance at Approach, and the level of responsibility he has taken on as Student Representative for Youth has also contributed significantly to his acceptance.

Student 2 has an interest in Personal Training as well, wanting to encourage physical activity in people. She also likes coaching children's sport, particularly netball and would like to take a school kapahaka group. With all of this in mind she applied for the Human Services certificate at Otago Polytechnic for 2014 and was immediately accepted.

Huge congratulations to both of these students and the hard work they have put into their learning and pursuit of their goals.



A LARGE CROWD of (mainly) women gathered last month for Marion Kitchingman's dramatisation of Wesleyan Methodist suffrage campaigner Annie Jane Schnackenburg, among them Rev Shirley Ungemuth. In the picture Shirley displays a very fine scarf dating to the Otago commemoration of the centenary of the winning of the suffrage in 1893. The scarf bears two symbols that were prominent in the suffrage movement - their own yellow & wine ribbon, and the white camelia.

The Book of Esther – the Movie Study Guide

Come along and be part of an exciting new study of the Book of Esther. This four-part study has been developed by the Y@M group and we can promise an entertaining and thought-provoking experience! Each study includes a 10-15 minute DVD telling the story, as well as a booklet with the text of the story, an activity and questions for discussion. The story itself is outrageous, the production is unorthodox, and the issues that are raised for discussion are vital and relevant.

You don't need to be a scholar!

You don't need to have read the Bible!

There are no wrong answers!

Everyone is going to be talking about it – don't be left out!

So far there are three groups that you can join...

Tuesday nights at 7 pm at Mosleys, starting on Tuesday 5 November

Wednesday nights at 7.30 pm at Russells, starting on Wednesday 23 October

Friday afternoons at 1.30 pm at Hughsons, starting on Friday 1 November

To join a group you can sign up in the foyer at Mornington or phone the host (Andrea Mosley 455-8874, Ken Russell 455-3727, Hilda Hughson 487-6226).

If you would like to start your own group, or if you have any general questions about the studies, contact Ginny Kitchingman 477-5030.

If you would like a copy of the DVD and study guide, they are available for \$10 from Ginny, with all proceeds being donated to the Mission.

Annual Conference of the Methodist Church of NZ, Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa

October 5-9th 2013 at Wesley College, Paerata, near Pukekohe

Theme: God of the Past, Present and Future: God in a Changing World.

People:

Our minister, Rev Siosifa Pole, had the honour of looking after the President of the Methodist Church of Tonga, who addressed the conference.

Evan Lewis was honoured in the Service of Thanksgiving – a lovely, unhurried time.

Mataiva Robertson, who some of you know through MWF, wants to start an Interfaith group in New Plymouth after attending a conference in Geneva, Switzerland entitled 'Building an Interfaith Community', where she discussed Islam, Judaism and Christianity. It was suggested that children in Sunday schools should be encouraged to grow up with an interfaith perspective.

Lyn Frith, whom many of you will remember from her time in Dunedin, is knitting beanies for children in a Women's Refuge – they can have 70 children at one time! Hence they have their own preschool.

I met Rhonda who has done 20 works of art incorporating words from modern hymns.

Dr Damon Salesa (University of Auckland), the first Pacific Islander to be a Rhodes Scholar, addressed us on 'Critical Trends amongst Polynesians'. He can see a 'generational shift' where Pacific Islanders don't marry someone from their own ethnic group, speak more English and leave churches. In Auckland, poverty is a huge issue for this group, as they often move in with another family so their housing needs are not recognised. Pacific Island children participate in education but the system is not equitable. Damon believes the first and greatest need is for food, health and safety, then addressing their well-being, before good education can be beneficial.

Dr Tracey McIntosh, head of Sociology of the Department of Auckland and Co-Chair of the Children's Commissioner's Expert Advisory Group on Child Poverty, gave a presentation about her work.

- Poverty of hope, the lack of opportunities is the worst poverty of all.

- Society has as much poverty as we can tolerate.
- Young women in adult women's prison, aged 16-18: all economically disadvantaged, have all been excluded from education system by 13, all been victims and now perpetrators of violence.

Place:

If you have any spare money, Rev Ian Faulkner, the principal of Wesley College, would like more in his discretionary fund. (\$50 would buy 2 pairs of shoes). The decile 1 school is doing very well academically, culturally and in the faith development of their students. They have a team of chaplains 'the tight five'! The working dairy farm income allows 50% subsidy for the over 200 borders. The students gave up holiday time to participate in many aspects of the conference.

Progress: The President-elect is Rev Tovia Aumua, a Samoan; vice-President elect is Dr Bella Ngaha from Te Taha Maori. Next year we'll meet in Hamilton, 8th -12th November.

We now have a national Fijian Synod: Wasewase ko Viti kei Rotuma. This joins Sinoti Samoa and Vahefonua Tonga. There was sustained debate about trans-cultural congregations and which synod people belong to.

Nigel Pitts addressed Conference about building issues The Connexional Property Committee is "considering amending requirements in the face of the much more relaxed stance now promoted by the government": 5 years to have a building assessed, 15 years to carry out earthquake strengthening work, and a further 5 years if it is a listed heritage building. Nigel asked for 'flexibility' in the process, not necessarily longer times.

The proposed position of national Youth Co-ordinator was not supported due to the diverse nature of our church, no budget, and no job description. There are, however, 2 teams to support both Children and Youth. The Tauivi (everyone except Maori) Youth led us in devotions and exercises several mornings!

The Council of Conference asks Parishes to explore ways in which they can 'Let the Children Live *Tukua Ngā Mokopuna kia Puawai*' locally. This is likely to be by working with and through agencies already working in the area, such as our Mission Hub.

The Samoan synod in Auckland has used trained people to run anti-violence seminars in several parts of the country. One family approached the presenters wondering what they'd done and said to their grandfather who has changed dramatically after attending a seminar.

From the Mission Social Services report: When our communities are sick, we are all sick...if we fail to see God in everyone, we all suffer.

Mornington Methodist Church was mentioned in 2 Conference reports: CWS for our Direct Partners fundraiser for water cisterns in Palestinian villages,; Faith and Order Committee, with David Kitchingman (and Explorers Group) as a corresponding member. As part of the Catholic-Methodist dialogue there is to be a hymn exchange. 'We are Many we are One' is the Methodist contribution. I offered to write some prayers in te reo Maori for the Faith and Order Committee. They have printed 5 trial orders of service for Communion.(I have a copy) Others commented on the need for a short order of service, and one more suitable when lots of children are present

You can check up on Conference on the Methodist Church of NZ website – photos there too.

Hilda Hughson

A LIVING WAGE – SOME THOUGHTS

Recently, I saw the last part of a panel interview in which the commentator Rod Oram was arguing for the basic minimum wage for workers to be raised from \$14 per hour to \$18 per hour. He holds, as I do, that raising the minimum wage is an investment in our business future. In fact, the minimum rate that is given to employees who are 16 years or over is \$13.75/ hour (\$11/hour for starting out workers) ; \$110 (\$88) for an 8 hour day or \$550 (\$440) for a 40 hour week. As shown, the rates are lower for starting out workers, particularly 16-19 year olds who are undergoing training – as shown in brackets above.



These figures make for a bleak outlook for many workers, especially the young and those with family responsibilities in looking after young children. In February Oram featured in "Business Day" arguing the case

for more investment by business leaders in the support through larger pay packets for the obviously poorer workers. As an example the case of a Pacifica family was given where the two adults in their 40s or 50s were looking after 4 grandchildren all under 6 years old. This is not an extraordinary case, even here in Dunedin. Most families in this situation are too poor to afford homes so live in ever more expensive rental accommodation. With rental for a basic house with 3 or 4 bedrooms costing \$250 to \$400 per week, and with a car to run the children around, food becomes an option rather than a given.

Most unfortunately, in many households where these conditions prevail violence occurs, and arguments are frequently precipitated over the distribution of money. Add to this mix two other dangerous vectors – alcohol and gambling then we can see that tragedy is a likely outcome. For the poor, recourse to alcohol is a much used way of softening the daily hardships that are faced. [I hope not to hear any of you tut-tutting when you read this]. As well, gambling, with its attractions of excitement and joyous possibility of winning the big one seem to go hand in hand with hardship and alcohol abuse. A question of concern for the many poor is whether giving more money for work would allow investment in food, savings and food or merely go into more gambling and alcohol consumption. Stumbling over this question should not be a barrier to positive action such as might be provided by more basic pay from employers and appropriate support services by the State.

The central problem for business leaders is whether greater basic pay for workers will result in greater product output or that happier workers will be less inclined to opt out of work or go on strike. Rod Oram points to the Costco-Walmart study from the US in 2006 which can be read in full in <http://bit.ly/WJSh8O>. This study argues clearly that in the instance of low paid employees, that an increased hourly payment equalled happier employees who related better to customers and thereby improved turnover to a significant measure. Now many NZ business leaders argue the opposite case based on the model that business can only thrive within its financial constraints if employee costs are kept low, and that will be the most effective way to grow the business. It is the sort of Chinese market model of a cheap labour force helping drive financial success adopted into the NZ environment. However, with the growing middle class in China, business leaders and the Beijing Government are beginning to realise that chronically low wages have an impact on the successful outputs of production, particularly in this age of widespread and influential mass media.

Historically New Zealand has been seen as a haven of care for those at the lowest rung of the socio-economic ladder. One of the most important social roles of the government has been to provide a cushion against the privations of economic hardship. Over the past 20 years this role has been attacked and diminished. Much of the social responsibility for those needing food, clothes and shelter seems to be falling on community aid agencies. Second-hand clothes and bric-a-brac shops seem to proliferate in the city and are visible indicators of need. On the other hand they also point to a positive trend – that of not discarding useful items to the waste collectors but taking them down to the Sallies or other agencies to be recycled; a sort of charity by proxy for those disposing of once-valued commodities. However, the Government is hampered in its ability to develop policy or strongly suggest that minimum wages be improved, particularly to the level suggested by Oram and other commentators. The government wants to be seen to be fostering business, and while the accepted business model is for cheap labour to provide services and products for the rest of the population, then little change can be expected.

Where does this leave the Methodist Church and other Christian groups. Well, we are one of the community service agencies providing succour for the poor through the food basket collections on Sundays; the provision of training for young starter or out of work people; protesting intermittently to the local and national government offices about the need for action on this issue; making representations to the media, particularly at election time of the need for helpful policies on the question and providing support for our own Mission initiatives led by the indomitable and inimitable Laura Black. But don't you get the feeling that we are not doing enough? The Methodist Church was founded for exactly this sort of cause – fighting in the corner of the oppressed and the poor. We need to regain our direction and put energies into the things which matter. In fact, one might argue that the existence of the Methodist Mission proves that we are active in the matter.

Well yes, and no. The Mission is locally supported by the church, but that is not enough. Once, the twin planks of the Methodist church were spiritual guidance and social action. It is hard to see that happening today to any extent when the Mission is not a central feature of all Methodist Churches. Perhaps this is a time for review. Along with saving buildings we need to save the people. Rather a case of saving the people, and putting them in a situation where they can save (for) themselves, actually.

GF Davis 14 October 2013.