



Dunedin Methodist Parish

Finding Good in everyone Finding God in everyone

www.dunedinmethodist.org.nz

Presbyters:	Rev. Siosifa Pole	455 2923
	Rev. Dr. Rod Mitchell	477 3700
Parish Stewards:	Dr George Davis	453 6540
	Mrs Hilda Hughson	487 6226
	Mrs Earlene Owens	489 8146
Tongan Steward:	Mr Kaufusi Pole	455 0096
Parish Office:	Siosifa: parish@dmm.org.nz	466 4600
	Katrina: admin@dmm.org.nz	
Parish Prayer Convenor	Elaine Merrett	489 7663
Pastoral Convenor	Beryl Neutze	476 7447
Mornington:		

PARISH BULLETIN

1st February 2015

WORSHIP FOR SUNDAY 8th February

9.30 am	Mornington	S Pole
9.30 am	Mosgiel	G Watson
11.00 am	Glenaven	S Pole
11.00 am	Wesley	G Watson
1.00 pm	St Kilda	TBA

HAPPY BIRTHDAY to the following children:

- ☺ Christopher Gray, who turned 6 on 6th January!
- ☺ Simone Sarup, who turned 12 on 9th January!
- ☺ Alice Mosley, who turned 5 on 21st January!
- ☺ Sammy Sussman, who turned 7 on 23rd January!
- ☺ Celia Cannon, who turns 11 on 5th February!



THANK YOU - I would like to acknowledge the pastoral responsibilities of Rod Mitchell, Parish stewards, and leaders of congregations while I was away on holiday with my family. I really appreciate your effort in taking

care of our people. I wish you all God's Blessing as we continue to support one another in God's mission this year. *Rev. Siosifa Pole*

STORY FROM THE MISSION

From Arahina: Food share have been sending some interesting food for the children to try. The abundance of eggs, alfalfa and a lettuce arriving along with pita pockets meant we tried out savoury sandwiches. We hard boiled the eggs and the children had fun peeling them and cutting them up to use. One child was fearful of cracking the shell because he had never experienced an egg cooked like that before. The amazement and relief on his face as no liquid ran out after he hit it on the bench was lovely and he really enjoyed eating it too.

DUNEDIN CELEBRATION OF HARMONY DINNER (during World Interfaith Harmony Week, February 2015)

Time: Tuesday 3rd February 2015 from 6.30-8.30pm

Venue: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Fenton Crescent, St Clair, Dunedin

Please bring a vegetarian dish or dessert to share. Whanau friendly: face painting and other activities for children will be provided. Featuring: The Dunedin Interfaith Choir (led by Colin Gibson), guest speakers, poetry readings and more! Transport to venue available: contact David Kitchingman 476 7767 or dmkman@es.co.nz

Organised by the Dunedin Interfaith Council. EVERYONE IS WELCOME!

AN OPPORTUNITY TO BE INVOLVED:

During 2014, some of our worship focused on the elements of air, water, fire and earth. This year, as we continue to reflect and participate in the unfolding of evolution from the Big Bang 14 billion years ago, our focus shifts to birds, fish, plants and animals. I am looking for people interested in working with me to assist in developing this worship series.

Between now and mid-April, a number of our worship services will explore how birds teach us about spirituality, for example, through themes of freedom, height perspective, trust in provision etc. Later in the year, we will focus in a similar way on fish, plants and animals.

Do you have a particular interest in one or more of these themes? I am looking for people who can come up with good inspirational stories, image material, quotes that can inform, cartoons, evolutionary material that shows our links, in the first instance, to bird life. Hymns, songs and prayers linking to the theme will be appreciated. Can you think of colourful stories that would help focus our worship? Do you have images that would assist us in praying for the way in which we are treating our bird life? Have you read any articles on the web, in the newspaper, or in books – or seen a film - that reflects the theme? You may have some personal experience you have written about – or found a creative web site – or read a poem

If you would like to share in this in some way, please feel free to send me the material, talk to me about it, and/or come along to one or more of the discussion groups listed below.

Please don't let your ideas be discounted by yourself or others – I often find that one idea may simply trigger a new line of enquiry. So, anything that sparks interest for you is a valid part of this conversation, which is open to any and all, who are part of the Dunedin Methodist Parish.

Material can be sent to roddieg@xtra.co.nz or 19 Northview Crescent Roslyn 9011

Dates for discussion groups: a time to share interests and items for worship services

Focus on Birds: Wednesday Feb 25th at Mornington Church 7:30pm

Focus on Fish: Wednesday April 8th at Mornington Church 7:30pm

Focus on Plants: Wednesday June 10th at Mornington Church 7:30pm

Focus on Animals: Wednesday August 26th at Mornington Church 7:30pm

Let us all be willing to assist in offering something better for future generations.

Rod Mitchell

Otago Southland Synod and Time of Sharing

20-22 February 2015

Camp Columba,

89A Kaiwera Road, Pukerau, Gore

Cost:

\$50 for the weekend per person OR
\$10 per day per person (for day visitors)

Starts: from 12noon Friday

Ends: after tea on Sunday

Friday:

1pm Lunch

2pm The business part
of the Synod starts.

Epworth Book stall will be available over the weekend.

Saturday: Passing on the Flame!

Led by Rev Alan Webster

Alan offers a series of workshops such as Sharing Your Faith, Quiet Worship, Creative Ideas for Services, Prayer, Journalling, Post-modern Worship.

For our Synod this year, he has put together a custom package that will address the question of how we pass on the flame to others...to people in our orbit, to a new generation, to people who've heard it all before and people who know very little about the Christian faith. This workshop will be using a discussion and interactive process.

Come and be inspired!

Sunday: A Quiet Day

Led by Rev Peter Taylor

A time for reflection, finishing with a Communion
Service and tea, before heading home.

Please let Rachael Masterton know if you are coming (whether it be for the whole weekend or part of it) for catering and accommodation purposes.

This time is being subsidised by the Synod and everyone is welcome.

Rachael's contact details are email: rmasterton@actrix.co.nz, phone: 03 4764867, or post: 267 Taieri Road, Wakari, Dunedin, 9010 **by February 16th**.

THE (AUCKLAND) BAKER'S PRAYER

Bread and butter which is in Grey Lynn

A bakery is your game.

Thy eaters come,

Thy will be done

In Ponsonby as it is in Grey Lynn.

Give us this day our daily bread

And please give us our pastries

As we give those pastries to those who are friends of ours,

And lead us not into mediocrity

But deliver us from plain White Bread,

For thine is the Ciabatta

And the Pumpkin Rye loaf,

Forever and ever,

Amen.

(Spotted in an Auckland newspaper, while on holiday. It confirms the widely- held belief that Auckland is the Sinful City of Sales.)



With the customary holiday season done and dusted, welcome back to normal church life for another year - whatever "normal" may turn out to mean.

Since our last column (Dec 21) the media has been blitzed by an avalanche of hype - stuff written, spoken, pictured and opined of islamic extremism. And while tempted to block it all out and watch the cricket (not an unpleasant diversion, I must admit), my instinct is that we indulge such wishful escapism at our peril. For me, a would-be pacifist, I face the same dilemma as many of similar ilk - how can such appalling atrocities be ignored? Advocating a vigilant, informed tolerance of all things islamic, Chris Trotter said, *ODT Jan 16 "Tolerance is a militant goddess - never to be confused with acquiescence or clever apologeticstolerance knows that her great enemy, intolerance, only ever triumphs when ordinary decent people confuse doing the right thing with doing nothing."*

But *what* to think, and *what* to do? That is the question. Of the Moslem faith I find myself tragically ignorant, and what little I do know fits me up for the most terrible prejudice. A casual remark by an old friend last week was a case in point. An erstwhile Methodist colleague, ordained only a few years after me, has become a Moslem. Shock, horror! What in God's name could have prompted that, was my gut response. A broken marriage? Surely not. Of course it's none of my business. But it's the shock and the accompanying sense of outrage that has me worried in the cocoon of my comfortable faith. Simply the notion that anyone such as X, with his strong grounding in the *Christian* faith, his 20 odd years of professional ministry and the maturity such experience brings to any man, that he should in his latter years turn away to become a Moslem - was somehow an assault on my sense of credibility.

And how come the irrational shock of just that small piece of news, was greater (for me) than the legitimate shock of all that other horrible stuff coming out of France, Iraq and Nigeria over the holiday period - all so abhorrent of those who kill indiscriminately in the name of radical Islam. That is something I *do* have to reckon with, and maybe you too.

I've done my own (limited) internet research on the way that traditional Christian interests are dealing with the presence of Moslems in their midst, and I warn you it is a bewilderingly complex scene. Indeed, while by no means free of the rampant prejudice so predominant in countries of similar cultural background, we in New Zealand have so far largely escaped the extreme levels of controversy that are sweeping USA, Canada, UK, France, Belgium, Germany, and other Christian democracies where the immigration of Moslem people in recent decades has made a large and visible impact. I give you but three 'models of possible response'

THE FIRST is from the clamour from the Christian Right, predominantly in USA, and their call to arms against what they see as a deliberate and insidious strategy on the part of world Islam to take over Christendom. Typical was an email that landed in my box recently, distributed by hardline Republican interests .

We are told again and again by 'experts' and 'talking heads' that Islam is the religion of peace and that the vast majority of Muslims just want to live in peace. Although this unqualified assertion may be true, it is entirely irrelevant. It is the fanatics who rule Islamd at the present time. It is the fanatics who zealously

spread the stoning and hanging of rape victims and homosexuals. It is the fanatics who teach their young to kill and to become suicide bombers. The hard, quantifiable fact is that the peaceful majority is cowed and extraneous. . . . History lessons are often incredibly simple and blunt, yet for all our powers of reason, we often miss the most basic and uncomplicated of points peace-loving Muslims will become our enemy if they don't speak up, because they will awaken one day and find that the fanatics own them, and the end of their world will have begun.

It's a populist view, calling for ordinary peace-loving Moslems to put their own house in order. It is also tragically simplistic, the equivalent of asking Middle Ages peasant Christians to halt the Inquisition, or German civilians in WW2 to somehow prevent the appalling events transpiring in Auschwitz. Peace-loving Moslems the world over are feeling as impotent and embarrassed over ISIS and extreme Jihad as anything you and I know of so-called "solutions" offered by the Christian Right.

THE SECOND MODEL has an element of unintended comedy. It seems Moslem parents in the Montreal suburb of Dorval banded together to demand the abolition of pork in school canteens in the area. The local Mayor was quick to respond and issued a public statement including the following

"Muslims must understand that they have to adapt to Canada and Quebec, its customs, its traditions, its way of life, because that's where they chose to immigrate....."

"They must understand that Canadians are neither racist nor xenophobic. They accepted many immigrants before Muslims (whereas the reverse is not true, in that Muslim states do not accept non-Muslim immigrants)....."

"That no more than other nations, Canadians are not willing to give up their identity, their culture....."

"Finally, they must understand that in Canada (Quebec) with its Judeo-Christian roots, Christmas trees, churches and religious festivals, religion must remain in the private domain."

"If you left your country for Canada, and not for other Muslim countries, it is because you have considered that life is better in Canada than elsewhere."

"Ask yourself the question, just once, "Why is it better here in Canada than where you come from?" "A canteen with pork is part of the answer."

A lack of pc diplomacy for sure. But in the face of local Moslem arrogance the Mayor spoke for an outraged majority. Racial and religious concessions in multi ethnic communities must work both ways. It is part of the irony that while this and other Moslem demands can be an unhelpful irritant in even the most liberal of communities, some of the same communities have already traversed painful issues by removing Christian prayers from secular schools so as to make them more user friendly for the likes of Jews and Moslems. Canada has many similarities with New Zealand, but is probably a generation further down the track as a truly cosmopolitan community. For better or worse we need to learn from their experience.

The issues confronting Christians Jews and Moslems are bigger, and the dimensions more complex, than this small article can possibly traverse. But the first two models do at least illustrate a wide range of intolerances contributing to the conflagration of antil-Moslem sentiment to which New Zealand is not immune.

Again what to *do*? For me, practicalities dictate only a local agenda. A first small step - go out and meet a Dunedin Moslem or two. Even that will be a first for yours truly!

And so for my *THIRD MODEL* - and please, no derisive laughter.

A news item from last November told that Jews and Muslims converged on Washington D.C.'s busy Farragut Square during an October weekday lunch rush in a show of solidarity. The small interfaith event, organized by the Greater Washington Muslim-Jewish Forum, embarked on a one day, six stop bus tour called #SpreadHummusNotHate that served pita and hummus willing takers in a visible showing of unity between Islam and Judaism. Passersby were encouraged to sing "Salaam, Shalom" – or to write a comment on the tour bus. According to the Muslim-Jewish Forum, the #SpreadHummusNotHate event was intended to counter an "incitement of hate" from Islamophobe Pamela Geller and her organisation, the American Freedom Defense Initiative that placed a series of anti-Muslim ads on the side of New York subway trains.

I'm no great fan of hummus, but what a small price to pay if by one gesture of peace and goodwill even I can make one local Moslem feel less judged and more loved in this their adopted country. I'm determined to do it. An eating occasion with local Moslems, with or without the hummus. Perhaps a restaurant. Maybe a cafe. It's on my bucket list - the least I can do.

Ken Russell