

DUNEDIN METHODIST PARISH

Finding Good in everyone Finding God in everyone

www.dunedinmethodist.org.nz



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PARISH BULLETIN

28th March 2021

WORSHIP FOR SUNDAY 4th April 2021

9.30 am	Mornington	D Poultney
10.00 am	Mosgiel	D Phillipps
11.00 am	Glenaven	R Mitchell
	St Kilda	TBA

DATES TO REMEMBER

Sun 28 th March	4.30 pm	Explorers	Mornington
Fri 2 nd April	9.30 am	Walking the Cross	Mornington
Fri 2 nd April	8.45 am	Walking the Cross	Taieri
Wed Holy Week	7.30 pm	Vigil Service	Mornington
Thur Holy Week	3.00 pm	Celebration of Holy Communion	Mosgiel

DUE TO THE OFFICE being closed on Good Friday, please ensure all bulletin notices and Orders of Service for Sunday April 4th are in to bulletins@mmsouth.org.nz before lunch time on **Wednesday 31st March**. Many thanks.



LENTEN STUDIES - Each THURSDAY @ 2pm at 40 Forth Street, Mosgiel. All very welcome PLEASE COME TO SUPPORT DAVID as he puts a lot of effort into our studies which helps us to centre on EASTER.

EASTER GOOD FRIDAY - CHURCHES ON THE TAIERI COMBINE FOR:

- Walk of the Cross beginning at 8.45am at St Luke's Anglican Church, Gordon Road.
- Good Friday Service 10am at St Mary's Catholic Church, Church Street.

GOOD FRIDAY WALK AROUND CHURCHES IN MORNINGINGTON: Begin to walk From Catholic church 2nd April at 9.30; move to Presbyterians; then to Methodist, and final stop is at Anglicans. About 15-minute service at each church. Rod.

HOLY WEEK

Wednesday Evening 7.30 pm Mornington - There will be Vigil Service of readings and reflections based on the Stations of the Cross. This is a quiet and meditative service.

Thursday Afternoon 3pm Mosgiel - After The last of our Lent Bible studies there will be a celebration of Holy Communion in which we remember the anointing of Jesus and bless oils for use in anointing the sick.

THE MORNINGTON CHOIR was recorded singing on 19th Nov 2019 a selection of songs selected by their leader Colin Gibson and the majority of that choir have also added their personal thoughts on their membership of it. These treasures of the choir's output are now available either as a 2 CD set or on a USB memory stick. If you would like a copy in either format or multiple copies please contact Cam Weston on 021 995 130 or 03 4545600 to place an order. Due to a donation which funded this project there is no charge for a copy in either format.

CALLING ALL EXPLORERS - Our first meeting for the year will be held in the Mornington Methodist church lounge, Galloway Street on Sunday 28th March, from 4.30 to 5.30pm. An opportunity to air and share our individual

theological grumbles, groans and grouches gracefully. Try us, if you are doing some thinking about your own faith or the state of the world. We are an up-front, friendly bunch, our conversations are informal and we welcome all comers and all shades of opinion. And bring a friend.

CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES FACING ISLAM

Dr Najib Lafraie was the speaker at our first Open Education night for 2021, organized and chaired by Colin Gibson. A good number attended, including many from our wider Dunedin community.



Najib began by sharing with us about the basics of Islam. The word Islam derives from a root Arabic word meaning submission, peace and well-being. He quoted the Quran, 98:5 “ All they were ordered to do was to worship God alone sincerely devoting their religion to Him, turning away from all falsehood, to establish regular prayer; and to practice regular charity, for that is the true religion”. This verse describes the various distinctive aspects of the life of a Muslim (and I would suggest, a Christian also).

Najib then shared that in 2020, NZ was assessed as being the most Islamic country in the world, with the highest Islamicity index of all countries.

(See: <https://www.stuff.co.nz/business/industries/123197239/new-zealand-ranked-the-most-islamic-country-in-the-world-in-annual-index>)

The Islamicity Index is based on assessment of economics, legal and governance processes, human and political rights records, the quality of international relations and other factors. NZ has been in the top five on this scale for several years. From this we learn that Islam is concerned about the quality of life of whole communities. As many (not all) in NZ have a high quality of life, our Islamicity Index is high. (It would be interesting to know how high we rank on a Christianicity index, but such a measure does not exist!)

Najib went on to list some specific things that are acceptable in contemporary NZ culture (and some Churches) that are challenging for Muslims, including the charging of interest on loans, acceptance of the decriminalisation of prostitution and the acceptance/sanctioning of same-sex relationships. Najib sees these positions as contradicting the teaching of

the Quran; the literal word of God, and hence not acceptable to God or to God's true followers.

Najib then spoke about the ongoing impact of the March 15th 2019 terrorist attacks. It was the aim of the gunman to promote the white supremacist cause, to create division in our society and to reduce Muslim immigration to NZ. As a result of the attacks, his actions have been universally condemned and measures to confront white supremacy are now being established by our security services. There is now a greater understanding of Islam in our NZ society, and greater acceptance and support flows to the Muslim community than before. Memories of the Christchurch massacres continue to haunt Muslims across the world. There is still a great deal of pain, suffering and grief. The security of Mosques across NZ has been enhanced. Muslim communities are now more responsive to contact with non-Muslim Kiwis as a result of the huge outpouring of love and support after March 15 2019. More Muslims have become involved in politics.

Recently, on the second anniversary of the attacks, the NZ Catholic Bishops wrote a letter of solidarity to the NZ Muslim community, including these words: " We pray to our loving God, that all violence may cease and that diversity of faith may be seen as an opportunity for dialogue through which all may be blessed". Najib expressed gratitude for this letter and the sentiments it contained.

During the question time Najib was challenged on his (traditional Islamic) view of same-sex relationships. He put forward the view (supported by some Christians) that homosexual thoughts were to be viewed as a "test" from God, not to be expressed in action. This view was challenged with the comment that if a thought or inclination derives from a loving God, surely could not any (loving) action which flows from that thought or inclination be blessed by a loving God? This discussion could have continued for a very long time. Najib acknowledged the sincerity of the views expressed, which he acknowledged were different to his own sincerely held views.

Colin Gibson expressed sincere thanks to Najib on behalf of us all, and presented him with a small *koha* of appreciation.

It is hoped that a video recording of this talk might be made available soon.

Greg Hughson