

DUNEDIN METHODIST PARISH

Finding Good in everyone Finding God in everyone

www.dunedinmethodist.org.nz



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|-------------------------------|---------------------|--|
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PARISH BULLETIN

21 AUGUST 2022

WORSHIP FOR SUNDAY 28 AUGUST 2022

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|---------|------------|------------|
| 9.30am | Mornington | C Gibson |
| 10.00am | Mosgiel | D Poultney |
| 11.00am | Glenaven | TBA |

MEETING OF THE MORNINGTON METHODIST WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Wednesday 24th August, 2022 in the Mornington Methodist Church at 2pm. All members of the Fellowship and friends of the Church are invited to attend this Meeting. Our speaker will be Rev Donald Phillipps who will speak on the 200 year history of Methodism in New Zealand. Please join us for this presentation and afternoon tea.

MORNINGTON CHURCH WORKING BEE

Saturday August 27th. Plan to prune trees and vegetation in the garden between the building. Please come with suitable pruning tools.

Commencing at 9:30 a.m. Contact Cam 021 995 130

MOSGIEL METHODIST WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Invitation to all interested people to our next meeting on Tuesday 6th September at 1:30pm in the church to hear Bishop Kelvin Wright speak to us about his interest in photography and show us his photos - he's a wonderful photographer. All are very welcome.



We say, sometimes with more hope than justification, that “things will be alright in the end”. And less often but still regularly, we offer the codicil” if things aren’t alright, then it’s not the end (yet)”. As we battle into a third year of COVID, a lot of us have taken to leaning on these crutches more and more.

The more faithful amongst us might also throw in “God doesn’t give us more than we can handle” (a perhaps slightly wishful, and definitely partial extrapolation of 1 Corinthians 10:13: *There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.*

Note the *also make a way to escape*, part. We can be faithful and still cope by escaping. (Although Corinthians speaks to **temptation not suffering** – the experiences of people being given far too much to cope with, continue everywhere.)

In one of my favourite science fiction books, *The Sparrow* (Maria Doria Russell) one of the characters, musing about providence, is rebuked by one of the Jesuit priests who says, effectively *but God also requires that we manifest*.

I like this, it means that we must attend if the grace of providence is to fully shine.

So, our agency – free will – remains the determinant.

But how much agency do we have? And what is it made of? And what if there are not as many escapes, because we are talking about suffering here, not temptation?

Until last week, I had thought of resilience, the ability to weather or bounce back from misfortune, as a reservoir of bounce ready to be deployed. A kind of personal Tigger, snoozing on standby until needed. Something into which additional bounce could be poured in to top up, and which got pulled on like sock elastic during harder times.

I have been corrected. In conversation with friends one of them connected me with a paper by Emeritus Professor Robbie Gilligan (Social Work, Trinity College Dublin) which describes resilience as something altogether different.

He says resilience **arises** from a *process* which creates an ability to either a) overcome the odds, b) sustain competence under pressure or c) recover from trauma.

And that resilience is a **variable** quality, derived from repeated interactions between a person and the favourable features (however many there are) in the surrounding context of a person's life, usually their early life.

A person's resilience is not universal to all circumstances. But only those situations where the qualities of the person fit the stressful context. So, I may be good with work pressures, but utter pants at traumatic moments. I could be adept in the face of financial troubles, but stagger in the face of losing a close personal friendship.

By the way, those "favourable features" are quite limited:

- Developing good executive functioning at the age of 3-5
- Secure attachment to a positive role model from very early life through to adolescence at least
- Lifelong experience of connection to social capital (your specific network of family and friends – the reliable expectation of support and validation is a major factor: we are each other's resilience)
- Persistent experience of social cohesion (having a positive experience of your place in the world – our affirmations of others' place in the world and mana are their resilience)
- A strong "alliance" with helpers (when needed) – this is distinct from a "relationship" in that an alliance is time-limited, focussed on an outcome, and achievement oriented: think of the difference between how you engage with a new plumber vs a new friend!

It's hard to retroactively create executive functioning and secure attachments if they didn't happen at the right time. But we can create an expectation of ready support and affirming the dignity of, and a reliable hope of a positive future for, **everyone** in our society.

Both are useful escape hatches from the things others cannot bear.

God just asks that we turn up (as much for ourselves as for each other, as it turns out).

Laura Black