

DUNEDIN METHODIST PARISH

Finding Good in everyone Finding God in everyone

www.dunedinmethodist.org.nz



Find us on Facebook: **Dunedin Methodist Parish**

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PARISH BULLETIN

9 October 2022

WORSHIP FOR SUNDAY 16 October 2022		
9.30am	Mornington	D Poultney
10.00am	Mosgiel	E Merrett
11.00am	Glenaven	D Poultney

RETIREMENT

Rev Rod Mitchell is officially retiring from his preaching position within the Parish at the Mornington AGM on 30 October. He has worked in a ministerial role for 50 years he disclosed on Sunday 2 October. A real achievement. There is to be a planned presentation to him during the service. Please leave donations toward this presentation gift in a specially marked envelope at one of the coming services prior to the AGM date. Thanking you Cam Weston

Week of Prayer for World Peace
16th-23rd October 2022



You are warmly invited to our annual Dunedin Interfaith Council's

"Prayer and reflections on peace gathering"

at Mornington Methodist Church, corner of Whitby and Galloway Streets
 Wednesday 19th October 2022, 7.30-8.30pm followed by supper

EVERYONE IS WELCOME

Further information : Greg Hughson 027 212 1048 or
 greghughson@hotmail.com

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Please join our Dunedin Interfaith Council facebook group via
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1566890406855982>



THE OTHER SIDE ACADEMY

John Wesley picked up very strongly the Gospel imperative to visit those in prison. The prison reformer John Howard drew spiritual strength, challenge and lasting inspiration from a sermon by Wesley and statues of both men are present adjacent to one another in London's St Paul's

cathedral. In the *Touchstone* for October 2022, Aaron Hendry, Youth Worker, notes that renewed calls for tougher sentencing and more punitive measures as a response to the current spike in ram raids is unlikely to be successful because it perpetuates the cycle of reoffending and ensures that more victims will be created.

The website for Ara Poutama Aotearoa (pathway of excellence) The Department of Corrections predicts that approximately 52% of the entire sample of offenders released from NZ prisons in 2002/2003 will have been convicted of a new offence and returned to prison within 5 years. Although it may not be strictly comparing apples with apples, this contrasts with a 2015 study by De Leon which found that 88% of those who completed a 2 year stay at a Daytop therapeutic community were employed, crime-free and completely abstinent 5 years later. Similarly The Other Side Academy, set up in down town Salt Lake City, Utah, USA, in 2015 found that on 31 Dec 2019 for the 51% of the entrants to a 2 year therapeutic community programme who stayed for the full two years and graduated, the drug-free, crime-free and employed rate was 70% and that this rose to 89% for the 62% of the students who elected to stay voluntarily for a third year. The recidivism rate of graduates was 15% and the employment rate on graduation 100%.

The Other Side Academy was set up in 2015 when 100 felons, with an average of 25 arrests and a total for the group of 600 years of imprisonment still to serve, were offered a chance to reform themselves in a therapeutic community in down town Salt Lake City. They were given a building to live in by the State and some money for getting started by A hundred women who care and the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter day Saints but had no ongoing benefits and had to support themselves. They used the money to buy a truck and started a moving business with the theme: "We are a bunch of felons and we want to move your valuables. We have experience." Everything flourished and they developed a further business with a thrift shop and a State prize for business entrepreneurship. Joseph Grenny describes the venture in a TedxOgden talk, available on YouTube, on "What I learned about happiness from a hundred felons." The philosophy of the program was to provide an alternative to those facing long-term incarceration as well as those seeking a change from the life they've chosen in the past. Many of those who sought entrance into the Academy were

convicts, substance abusers or homeless. This school accepted men and women, both pre-and post-sentencing, who were ready to learn a new and better way to live. They found that personal behavioral change does not happen in a week, a month or even a year. Those seeking admission into the Academy had to commit to attend for thirty months. Lasting change required intensive on-site education and practice. The academy taught students both fundamental personal management and relationship skills such as keeping one's promise, accountability, love, charity, and dependability. Sex offenders, arsonists, "dual diagnosis" applicants, or others who needed special counseling were not accepted because their special needs were not able to be met in the programme. Experienced peers were employed in place of therapists or doctors who didn't share the same life experience as the students. Those who were unwilling to live by house rules, keep pace with the rigorous schedule, or be honest about their behavior were discouraged from applying. Grenny reported that he learnt about intimacy, integrity and community from the felons. He said that all lasting happiness in life is determined by our capacity for truth, love and connection. In his view, suffering is a consequence of the lack of these. Among the comments made on how we heal were: (i) the truth is, how others treat me doesn't determine of affect my worth; (ii) the truth is my worth comes from God; and (iii) truth is the work and love is the motive.

In travelling on the pathway to excellence in helping those on the wrong side of the law to reorganize their lives and find happiness, it is evident that there are a number of different approaches that are worthy of consideration. If alive today, John Wesley might well be agitating for options such as therapeutic communities with staff who have themselves been through the recovery process and which, apart from being provided with a building, are financially self-sufficient with income generated by work programmes rather than government funding.

Bruce Spittle