

DUNEDIN METHODIST PARISH

Finding Good in everyone Finding God in everyone

www.dunedinmethodist.org.nz



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PARISH BULLETIN

23 October 2022

WORSHIP FOR SUNDAY 30 October 2022

9.30am	Mornington	D Poultney
10.00am	Mosgiel	D James
11.00am	Glenaven	No Service

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.

MOSGIEL METHODIST WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Tuesday 1st November @ 1:30pm in Mosgiel Methodist Church.

All members & friends are invited to our meeting. Our guest speaker is the Mayor of Dunedin Mr Jules Radich. This is our friendship day where we invited other Mosgiel church groups. Those wishing to attend please phone Elaine on: 489-7663



In 1997, Michael Sandel, the American philosopher, talking about inequality said that *it isn't just that it is unfair to those at the bottom; it's that too great a gap between the haves and the have-nots hollows out civic life. It diminishes the possibility that we can share and live a common life, sufficient to foster shared values, sufficient to the kind of life and the kind of citizenship wherein we can deliberate about common purposes and ends.*

I was reminded of this idea of common life last week when over drinks a former, and very senior, public servant told our small gathering that his granddaughter was having non-binary acceptance “shoved down her throat” at school.

I'll confess, my immediate reaction was to discount the likely granddaughter response of indulging a loved grandfather's pointed questioning, and the cognitive biases triggered by social change (suddenly something never thought of is everywhere, EVERYWHERE! Or at least, in one or two small articles once or twice a week in news media that runs hundreds of articles in the same period).

Afterall, what is so contentious about accepting another person's expression of their self? And to be so upset when this is about quite a small percentage of the population?

But then I thought of Sandel's shared space, and it seemed to me that there was an implied accusation from my friend that our common life was being disturbed by those who would like it if the rest of us could be more flexible in our pronoun habits.

How can we progress if change – by its nature – will always disturb previously settled common purposes and ends?

And then of course, I remembered that our historic shared values haven't always been that flash. I vividly remember the campaign against the Homosexual Law Reform Bill in 1986, Norm Jones in Invercargill promising the destruction of the family. My mother remembers a time when divorce had to have a guilty party (in our case, like many, it was the wife) and when there was no welfare support for single parents. It was only the mid-1980s when we collectively decided that married women had the right to refuse sex with their husbands.

Our common life in the early 1970s required a significant portion of the population to accept second class status, to an extent that threatened their wellbeing, mental and economic.

There are challenges today that need facing that will require changes to habits and attitudes: the chronic and systemic academic underperformance of boys in school; that it is men disproportionately who are victims of workplace accidents; the widespread exclusion of those with disabilities from work; the intergenerational transmission of poverty via our mad, bad, and dangerous to live with property market.

Change is hard. Perhaps sometimes the pendulum has to swing the other way in order for us all to discover where the new middle is. Perhaps for human beings, striving for a settled state of affairs is good but actually achieving it is not.

But most of all, perhaps when change comes we must examine our own selves as much as the other to see ourselves in each other's basic humanity, and from there, the benefit that comes to us all from including as many as we can, fully, in our common life.

Laura Black