



Mairangi & Castor Bays Presbyterian Church

JUNE 2024 NEWSLETTER

Minister: Rev Dr Tokerau Joseph

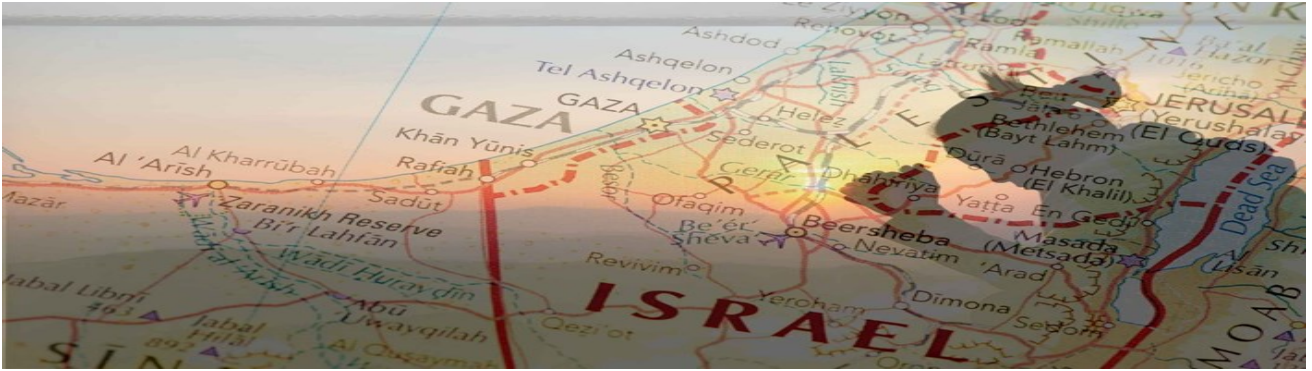
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Mainly Music card making activity

UPDATE FROM TOKERAU



What can Christians make of the Gaza situation, and what should we pray for?

By Rev Dr Stuart Lange (NZ Christian Network)

It is not difficult to understand why, in response to last year's terrorist atrocities and the seizure of 252 hostages, Israel decided to enter Gaza and target Hamas. However, no matter how much care might have been taken, the Israeli bombardments and assaults in Gaza's many densely-inhabited urban areas have inevitably resulted in death or serious harm to many non-combatants. The situation in Gaza is very hard for many civilians, with relocations, widespread destruction of homes and livelihoods, large loss of life, many thousands injured, little food, water, medicine, fuel or electricity, nowhere to go, and much grief, fear and anguish. Likewise, the Israeli hostages and their families are also greatly suffering, along with all those who lost loved ones in the Hamas attack, or were injured or traumatised.

Despite the warnings to civilians ahead of assaults, the release of some hostages, some aid deliveries, and truces and talks about truces, war and suffering continue, and the majority of hostages have not been freed. The declared objectives of Hamas and Israel remain very different: Israel wants to destroy Hamas' governing control over Gaza and to live in greater security, while Hamas wants to annihilate Israel itself.

In the face of such a sad and seemingly intractable situation, how might Christians from around the world pray? Here's a few suggestions:

Pray for all those who suffer, for God's comfort

Pray for Gaza's Arab Christian minority, who are doubly vulnerable

Pray for the survival and release of all remaining hostages

Pray that there might be a softening of heart among those who hold power on both sides, and that ways may be found to relieve current civilian suffering, and to allow for effective humanitarian assistance.

Pray for what may seem impossible: that leaders on both sides may decide to work towards a deep and enduring peace, with the aim of two peoples safely living alongside one another, with justice, goodwill, and respect

Pray for the Jewish Christian minority, that they may be a strong influence for faith, forgiveness, reconciliation, and righteousness

Pray for the Jewish people to find salvation and spiritual freedom in Jesus, and their true calling under God (Romans 11:25-29)

Pray for God's purposes to be fulfilled, and his Kingdom to come

WORDS FROM KAREL

“HOPE”

Circumstances persuaded me to change what I would write about in this article. I read some weeks ago that about a third of adolescents and young people and a quarter of people aged between 25 and 30 in Aotearoa New Zealand were feeling hopeless. They were concerned about the future opportunities for themselves as well as the lack of action to alleviate climate change and environmental degradation.

A mental health definition of hopelessness: *“Hopelessness is a subjective emotion which has a negative physical and psychological well-being and affect the process of viewpoint for the future - one of losing control, confidence, courage and the energy to reach one's goal. Hopelessness can threaten a patient's recovery and rehabilitation.”*

I was talking to a woman while watching my granddaughter play netball. A few moments into our conversation we begin to talk about families. She told me she feared for her two oldest sons who had been made redundant and had come home to live with her. They experienced hopelessness and saw the future for themselves as bleak. Their anxiety had obviously spread to her. That's typical because hopelessness and anxiety can be contagious and spread like a virus. Nikolas Kristof, whose articles in the New York times I always find worth reading, recently wrote an article on “Hope.”

He writes, *“What I've learned from four decades of covering misery is hope - both the reasons for hope and the need for hope. I emerge from years on the front lines awed by material and moral progress, for we have the good fortune to be part of what is probably the greatest improvement in life expectancy, nutrition and health that has ever unfolded in one lifetime.”*

The apostle Paul has interesting things to say about hope in Romans chapter 5. After arguing that we are made right with God through faith (trust) and that we share in God's glory.

He writes in verse 3, *“We also boast of our troubles, because we know that trouble produces endurance, endurance brings God's approval, and his approval creates hope. This hope does not disappoint us, for God is poured out his love into our hearts by means of the Holy Spirit, who is God's gift to us.”*

Paul is a realist. He knows trusting in Jesus Christ and being made right with God is not a magic formula and that everyone lives happily ever after, never facing the awful stuff that happens to people. Troubles and difficulties produce sound character able to endure and focus on the good things Jesus brings. This allows us to be able to see through our difficulties and live in hope for a different future.

Several things in our time encourage people to experience hopelessness. The media, newspapers, radio, TV and social media tend to portray stories of bad news.

They want to attract attention to themselves often for advertising and revenue purposes (“click bait”). Bad news attracts our attention, a media maxim is “if it bleeds lead it.” This distorts our perception of what is going on in the world. Good news is difficult to obtain in traditional and social media. Yet if we search for good news, we find that there is more of it than the bad news.

Once we have personally succumbed to feeling anxious and hopeless we start experience most things around us as supporting that point of view. Years ago, I attended lectures by visiting counsellor and psychotherapist trainer Muriel James at Auckland University. In her first lecture she invited people from her audience of about a hundred to create bad situations for her which she would reframe to make them positive. Whatever people said to her she reframed it into something positive. Then she changed tack and got people to challenge her with good things which she then turned into negatives. This is the way depressed, anxious and hopeless people transform their world to confirm their understanding of the world. However, positive reframing is not helpful to those who find themselves in a truly hopeless situation, people who try to live on an inadequate benefit, those who work multiple jobs and still cannot make ends meet, feed and house themselves and their family, those who cannot access the health care they need and those who live in a violent household and cannot see a way out. A life of crime or self-medication with illegal drugs may appear as an attractive option. This happens far too often in Aotearoa New Zealand.

On the world stage things have got better. Nikolas Kristof writes: “...Arguably the most important trend in the world in our lifetime has been the enormous reduction in global poverty. About one million fewer children will die this year than in 2016, and 2024 will probably set yet another record for the smallest share of children dying before the age of 5. When I was a child, a majority of adults were illiterate, and it had been that way forever; now we’re close to 90 percent adult literacy. Extreme poverty has plunged to just 8 percent of the world’s population.”

We all know that life has difficulties. I have yet to meet the person who lives the charmed life where everything is perfect. What keeps us going through the difficult times is hope. The possibility of a different future from what we are now experiencing in a difficult time.

Hans Rosling, a Swedish development expert, used to say that he wasn’t an optimist but a possibilist. In many situations, with effort, we can change things for the better. One of the great things we can do as people following the way of Jesus is to create possibilities for hope among the hopeless who have need for hope.

We can actively explore ways to create hope for the hopeless and in our approach to those people we engage with be beacons of hope.

UPDATE FROM PARISH COUNCIL

Report from the May Meeting of Parish Council

I constituted the meeting with a reading from Joy Cowley's book 'Come and See' where she likens the depths of prayer to the story in Luke where Jesus advised Simon Peter to go back out into deep water and try casting his fishing net out again. I was led to the subject by Tokerau's recent announcement that there will be a prayer session in the church each Tuesday at 09:30 – open to all.

In the meeting we:

- Spent time as usual on pastoral matters and Tokerau led a prayer for those we know of who need support. It is important that Pastoral Visitors keep Norma, Tokerau or me advised of those whom they believe are needing of support.
- Authorised a baptism for 28 July and were questioned as to whether we would be able to cope with the number coming !!
- Authorised assistance for our 11-17 year olds who wish to attend the Presbytery Youth Camp at Hunua from 28-30 June
- Had a progress report from Stephen Martin on the Interior work being done at the Manse which should be completed by 6 June. The work on the Church roof has largely been completed.
- Considered our Finance Report for April which is already showing the cost effects of the work projects (Manse and Church).
- Heard from Roopali who is currently leading our Hindi Mission of the success of the fun filled Bingo night (more than \$2,000 was raised) and of their growing plans for a bus excursion.
- Learned of an Armchair Travel Event which is to be held at 11am on Tues 18 June when Norma will cover her and Cliff's recent Finland, Greece and Italy trip. All welcome to this.
- Agreed on the wording of an explanatory article on offerings for inclusion in this Newsletter
- Set up a Working Group to come up with proposals on how we can improve the way we attract and welcome newcomers. Ideas will be welcomed – talk to Raewyn or me please
- Decided to express interest in having a Ministry Intern as part of our Parish. An Intern is a person training to become a Minister.

Stewart Milne (Parish Clerk)

OUR FINANCES

It's coming up to Budget time in our Parish. The procedure that we go through is we look at forecasted expenses and income to work out what our level of offerings would need to be to break even for the 2024/25 year. Then we make a budget recommendation to the August AGM.

2023/24 has been an expensive year with costly maintenance required to our Manse (Interior and Exterior) and to the Church roof. We will have a substantial deficit for this 2023/24 year but fortunately we had the reserves to cover the amount needed.

Looking ahead to 2024/25 our expenses keep increasing and we will be losing some revenue due to less interest from reduced reserves.

Most of us are now contributing through Automatic Payments and while some have adjusted the amount of their contribution as costs have increased others haven't. However, our Parish has a long standing and clear policy that our members who are on fixed incomes should not feel they are under pressure to give more when they simply can't afford it. Fortunately, we have some who can and who are committed to the future of this church.

Not everyone is aware that our Parish is levied by the central church (PCANZ) and by the Northern Presbytery to assist with meeting their costs. The formula used includes the number of members that a church has. For our church the levy is currently at the level of \$118 per member a year. Consequently, if a member is not contributing financially this cost is having to be borne by others.

Please give this matter of giving your prayerful consideration and if you are in a position to increase your offerings to our church that will be very much appreciated. However, we repeat that members who cannot afford to increase their level of giving should not feel under pressure to do so.

If you do not already have an allocated offerings number which will result in an end of year tax receipt thus allowing a 33% refund from IRD please contact the Church Office 4786180 or office@bayspc.nz for an offerings number. The system of numbers that we have ensures confidentiality can be achieved. At the time of getting your number you can choose to donate via the envelope system or by Automatic Payment from your bank account to the Church Westpac account 03 0180 005234 002 or to the ASB Account 12 3042 0002489 00 with your offerings number as identification – or you can use your name if you prefer. Thank you.

Stewart Milne (Parish Clerk and Treasurer)

MOTHERS DAY – A VERY SPECIAL DAY

I was on Welcoming Duty on Mother's Day and started by asking if anyone in the Congregation believed that their mother was or is the best mother in the world. Remarkably from what I could see every hand went up – how can that be? What a tribute to mothers !! – aren't we lucky.

I then shared some quotes which I had sourced, and which Ian has asked me to share:

- A mother is she who can take the place of all others but whose place no one else can take.
- God could not be everywhere and therefore he made mothers.
- Life doesn't come with a manual it comes with a mother.
- Of all the gifts that life has to offer a loving mother is the greatest of them all.
- Mothers are like glue. Even when you can't see them, they're still holding the family together.
- A mother's love for her child is like nothing else in the world. It knows no law, no pity, it dares all things and crushes down remorselessly on all that stands in its path.

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And on a lighter note:

- If evolution works, how come mothers only have two hands?
- The phrase 'working mother' is redundant.
- A mother is a person who seeing there are only four pieces of pie for 5 people promptly announces she never did like pie.
- It's not easy being a mother. If it was easy fathers could do it.
- And from Phyllis Diller "What I want for my children is all the things I couldn't afford for myself - and then I can move in with them."

Stewart Milne



PROPERTY MAINTENANCE WORKS

Recently, the congregation approved significant expenditure on maintenance works for the Manse property on Maxwellton Drive. Budget approval was also required from the Presbyterian Church Property Trustees, being the owners of Church property.

The interior works are well underway (May 2024) with forecast completion in the first week of June. The major focus is the replacement of the old plaster ceilings although significant other works including improving ventilation in the bathrooms, is also being undertaken.

Outside, subsiding retaining walls are being replaced along with the cracked driveway. Numerous large exotic trees, including one in a neighbouring property on the boundary, have been trimmed back to open up the rear of the property to sunlight and improve the outlook.

Given the premium location of the Manse property and its solid “bones”, keeping it in good order is well worthwhile, although we look forward to seeing the works finished off so our Minister, Tokerau, and his family, can all return and settle back into their busy routine in a better standard of accommodation.

The Property & Finance Committee has also commissioned work to replace a section of the Church roof above an area that has had an on-going leak issue, along with other more minor roof maintenance work, all of which is on track for completion before June.

Stephen Martin (Property Convenor)



QUARTERLY COMMUNION SERVICE



Our next quarterly Communion service is on Sunday, June 9.

If you are unable to attend the service, your Pastoral Visitor can deliver the blessed elements to you after the service.

If you would like a delivery, please contact your Pastoral Visitor or Norma Baker on 443 3108 before June 9.

ARMCHAIR TRAVEL TALK



The Fellowship Group invites you to a morning of wanderings through Finland, Estonia, Italy and Greece with Norma Baker. Join us on June 18th at 11:00 in church lounge room 1.

Feel free to bring a friend or two along.

Norma

NOTICES

Northern Presbytery is hosting a Youth Camp 28 – 30 June at Camp Hunua.

This would be a wonderful opportunity for some of our young people to attend as a way of building their Christian faith and connections with each other. This can also help build our connections with them and contribute to the development of a youth and children's ministry in our parish. We are hoping to get about seven youth to attend at a cost of \$130 per camper. I am asking if you might consider helping to sponsor some of our young people to attend as a way of alleviating the financial pressure on them and their families. This will be a great investment for our mission and future. Please see me for any further information.

Rev Tokerau Joseph.

Community Emergency Hub First Aid Resources needed!

We need your help!

If you have any crepe bandages, gauzes, slings and a pair of good strong dress making scissors, please could you donate for the "CEH First Aid Box"

Contact Dorille - 09 479 3953 or 027 692 3738

Demand on Food Banks is High:

The Foodbanks which we support (Presbyterian Support/Family Works and the Lifeboat) are among the many charities which are providing food for about 12% of New Zealand's population. That is about 630,000 people. The demand is increasing with rising unemployment and the cost of living. Foodbanks report that about one third of clients this year are seeking food support for the first time.

Our contribution of pasta, cereals, rice, canned food, jams, biscuits are very much sought after and appreciated.

ALL DONATIONS GRATEFULLY RECEIVED!

Stewart Milne - Parish Clerk

SPECIAL COMMUNION, LUNCH & FELLOWSHIP

Twice a year we hold this special event which consists of a short half hour service at 11.30am conducted by our minister, then followed by lunch together in the lounge. The recent occasion was held on May 7th. Norma Baker organises the lunch with a team of helpers as well as transport to and from the church.

When this was first introduced, it was for those who were unable to get along to the 10am Sunday service but over the years they have been joined by others who find the service and lunch to be a great occasion for worship and socialising. This event is held on a Tuesday so that those attending the Seniors Group can join in.

Our next Special Communion Service, Lunch and Fellowship will be held in November and will be advertised.

Stewart Milne (Parish Clerk)



REGULAR PARISH ACTIVITIES

- **SENIORS SOCIAL CLUB**

1st & 3rd Tuesday of the month 10am - 12pm

Contact Tangi 022 657 3223 or Raewyn 410 4423



- **BORN AGAIN BODIES**

1.00-2.00pm Wednesdays Church Hall.

Further information Ian Rankin Ph 479 2320 or 027 332 7235



- **ENGLISH CONVERSATIONS**

1pm - 2.30pm Wednesdays Meeting Room 2.

Further Information Stewart Milne 478 5786 Grace Liu 021 0487978



- **HOUSE GROUP**

7.30pm Wednesdays at the Shadbolt's

Contact Dorille Shadbolt Ph 479 3953.



- **DEE'S SOCIAL GROUP**

Thursdays 10am-2pm Mairangi Bay Church Hall

For further information Tangi Joseph 022 657 3223.

- **MAINLY MUSIC**

Fridays during School Term only. Church Hall 10-11am

Ph Karen Ruffell 021 02263846

- **FAMILY FUN NIGHT & SHARED MEAL**

1st Friday of the month Church Hall 6pm

Ph Tangi Joseph 022 657 3223

- **PARISH COUNCIL**

7.30pm every 3rd Tuesday of the month Church Lounge

Ph Stewart Milne 478 5786

*Please send photos of Parish activities through to
office@bayspc.nz*

Quick Contacts

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