

# Alpine Presbytery

*resourcing the braided river*

## Newsletter 18<sup>th</sup> January 2024

*Cut off for items for the next Newsletter is Thursday 25th January*

### Blackcurrants at St Albans

When our lovely gardener (Peter) went on holiday at Christmas, Jennifer was asked to pick vegetables from the Community garden. This included a long row of Blackcurrant bushes all needing picking next week. I made a start, but after picking some, the task looked just too daunting. I thought "I can't do these on my own" so, after church on Sunday I asked for help. Well! what a lovely team we had. This great team worked over two days, cutting the canes into a large tarpaulin and then dumping them onto a large table we had set up in the hall. We then sat around and stripped the currants into ice cream containers. The currants were then transferred into smallish plastic bags and popped into the freezer. We chatted, stories were shared, some members didn't like earwigs which got squashed quickly, the little beetles, the tiny spiders also suffered the same fate. The fellowship around the table was fantastic: a great way for team building. Cups of tea were also part of the morning. Peter and Ruth did arrive back in time to help out.



Rev Henry Mbambo, of St David's in Ashburton, celebrated 25 years this week since he was licensed by the Central Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa this week.

Well done Henry!



### Presbytery Treasurer

Christine Arnold has now fully retired from her role as Presbytery Treasurer, and we extend our heartfelt thanks for the wonderful work she has done over the years.

Keith Christie has taken over the position. The email address to contact the Treasurer remains [treasurer@alpinepresbytery.org](mailto:treasurer@alpinepresbytery.org)

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## Summer reflections #2 *The ways we 'other' others*

Last week I reflected on the good people who step up while the usual ministry leaders are on holiday. This week I am exploring a trait that pops up more frequently in my work than I would wish.

It's the way some people or groups 'other' one another. You know, the way we talk about others in categories that disparage and depersonalise people. We all probably do it without realising: 'Oh the younger generation, they are so needy and entitled;' 'those politicians feeding from the taxpayers' trough;' or 'those lazy people on the dole.' If you have younger people in your family circle, or you meet a politician getting about their work, or you know someone struggling to find a job, of course you don't leap in with disapproving comments. You might even like or value them. But as for the rest of them... Just imagine if people treated you this way!

I have sat in church meetings or church services where similar forms of 'othering' have been given voice with words used as a form of judgemental cluster bomb (who cares who gets caught up in the shrapnel?) to make some kind of point about how righteous they are by comparison. We lump people into categories and other them. Liberal. Conservative. Progressive. Fundamentalist. Bible-believing. Trad. Happy-clapper. It is easy to stay at the shallow end and fling labels at people we perceive to be different from us, but it begins to fall to pieces once any of us steps across the perceived divide and get to know some of the people from those 'other' churches. On the other side you find all kinds of nuances and, big surprise, the extent of our commonality. You find people deeply committed to living out their baptisms and wrestling with the scriptures just like you. You find storied people glorious or battered, challenged or challenging, but embraced despite it all by their experiences of forgiveness and grace. You find people who doubt and struggle and triumph just like you. You find people who sin and fall short of the glory of God (yes, *everywhere!*). Most of all you will find stories of people for whom their particular church community has offered sanctuary, friendship, and meaning. In other words, you find people who have been met by Jesus on the road and declared 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?' [Luke 24:32]. If you listen well, you will constantly discover people who defy the very labels you used to categorise them with.

If anyone thinks they have a stronghold on all that is true simply ask yourself about what has changed in your thinking since you were a lot younger. Anything? Back then would you have had any issues with the you that you have now become? Surely! What wise counsel would you now like to offer your younger self?

A classic 'othering' phrase appears in the Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector [Luke 18:9-14]. 'The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: "God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector.'" People who pray I-thank-you-that-I-am-not-like-other-people-prayers do indeed stand by themselves. They are immersed in divides – righteous/unrighteous, me/you, we/they. Tragically, their sense of God with them leads to smugness and judgement. They become immersed in understanding themselves by who they are against.

I think this 'othering' is an infection in our life, I really do. Some flashpoint issues have divided us over the years, but it is no excuse for self-righteousness and the tossing of labels. Pointing fingers at each other is a shocking witness to the life of God among us. Why does our commonality seem to be the least-explored thing in our life together?

The tax-collector over there is our brother in Christ. So too is the Pharisee!

*Martin Stewart*

### Haere mai Tautimai ki te kaupapa hira hira nei!

#### (Join us for this important event!)

Come along to a series of interactive and immersive kōrero in February 2024 about pre-Treaty history, Te Tiriti/The Treaty, the impact of Christianity and Colonisation among Māori, and some of the differences between Māori and Pākehā worldviews and their possible intersection through a biblical lens.

Whether you're a novice or want to remind yourself of our history and present as a nation you're welcome to come along!

**Dates:** Feb 1, 8, 22 and 29 (4 Thursday evenings)

**Location:** Linwood Avenue Union Church, 378 Linwood Avenue (Parking around back of church via Tilford St entrance and also along Tilford St)

**Time:** 7-9pm

**Cost:** Koha to attend each evening (you can come to 1 or all 4 evenings)

**Newsletter Items:** Please share this Newsletter around your Parish, especially with members of Session/Parish Council and all office bearers.

Details of events, or requests to be added to the distribution list should be emailed to [gail@alpinepresbytery.org](mailto:gail@alpinepresbytery.org)

**Presbytery Directory:** All Parish Offices have been given a log-on to Infodile, so please contact them initially if you need any contact details.

Due to our obligations under the Privacy Act, logon access is not openly available; anyone wanting this should send a request to Gail at [gail@alpinepresbytery.org](mailto:gail@alpinepresbytery.org), advising of their position in their Parish or the Presbytery.

## ***The Gift of Summer—Retreat at Moeraki***

**Saturday, 17th February 2024, 9.45 – 3.30 pm.**

**Coronation Hall, Haven Street, Moeraki, North Otago**

Drawing from the deep well of Celtic Christian wisdom and imagination, may Summer's light, abundance and colour bless you on this contemplative day retreat.

Music, poetry, song, reflection and quiet times will gently accompany you and as you begin your journey towards Easter you are invited in the afternoon to learn how to prayerfully draw and illuminate a simple Celtic knotwork design to take home. This is a spiritual, intuitive and creative way to discern and experience the presence, love and grace of the Holy. You don't need any artistic or drawing experience to come along to the retreat.

**Cost:** \$80.00 includes morning and afternoon tea, all resources and artist materials. Please bring your own picnic lunch. Fresh fruit, sweet treats, teas and coffee will also be served at lunchtime.

Guided by the Rev. Dr. Hilary Oxford Smith, with harpist Julie Saraswati

For more information and to book your place, go to [spiritofbradan.com/retreats-and-workshops/a-celtic-summer-retreat/](http://spiritofbradan.com/retreats-and-workshops/a-celtic-summer-retreat/)

## **Sister Eveleen Retreat House 2024 Programme**

For details of all events being offered at Sister Eveleen House throughout this year, you can download their brochure here: [www.sistereretreat.com/post/our-new-annual-programme-for-2024-is-out](http://www.sistereretreat.com/post/our-new-annual-programme-for-2024-is-out)

### **Christian Fellowship for Disabled**

The Christian Fellowship for Disabled are an inter-denominational group who meet as equals – people with and without disabilities. Their vision is to see all people, especially those with a disability, living out their full potential in Jesus Christ, through the local church and in their community.

Their mission is 'EEE' – to **evangelise**, sharing the hope that is in the Gospel of Jesus Christ; to **equip** people with disabilities to fully engage with their community and realise their potential; and to **elevate** awareness of the abilities of people with disabilities

The Christchurch branch meet on the second Saturday of every even-numbered month, with occasional social events in odd-numbered months.

Enquiries to Dave 027 2094864/[davepalmer@xtra.co.nz](mailto:davepalmer@xtra.co.nz)

Find out more at <https://elevatecdt.org.nz/cffd/>



Thanks to Charles Dunleavy

08-01-2006

IS IT "PARABLES" OR  
"PEARABLES", BECAUSE WE MIGHT  
HAVE A GOOD OPPORTUNITY FOR SOME  
CROSS PROMOTION HERE

### **From the last Newsletter**

- Rev John Hunt
- New Years Honours List
- Summer Servants
- Ethics & Risk Management Workshop
- Kete Aroha o Waipounamu
- Call for Research Participants
- Sister Eveleen Retreat House.
- New Vacancies at ICHC

### **Resources**

A selection of resources and links to resources to assist you with your work and outreach can be found on our website here: [alpinepresbytery.org/resources/](http://alpinepresbytery.org/resources/)

### **Online Worship Options**

Visit the "Resources" page of our website to view the links from those of our churches offering this.

### **Alpine Presbytery**

**Culture & Strategic Framework**  
[Click here](#) to download this document, updated September 2020