

Alpine Presbytery

resourcing the braided river

Newsletter 25th January 2024

Cut off for items for the next Newsletter is **Thursday 1st February**

Dynamite Bay Lego Masters Holiday Club Programme

St Andrew's, Hokitika ran the Dynamite Bay Lego Masters Holiday Club programme from Tuesday 16 January to Thursday 18 January 2024. The programme started at 10.00am, finishing at 4.00pm. Dynamite Bay Holiday Club leadership team and St Andrew's team started at 9am to pray together and to organise the programme for the day.

Each day there were 24, 23, 20 children involved in the programme. Consistently the same children came every day. The programme was all about sowing the seed of the gospel. The principle was to develop a relational ministry programme with the children and their families. The ratio of leaders to children was one leader to either 4 or 6 children. This allowed relationships to develop and each leader was supported by one of the three senior team leaders. The St Andrew's team supported children who required extra support in certain activities such as making loom bands and bead bracelets. There was a LOT of Lego.

The Dynamite Bay team was well resourced and presented a programme which was thoroughly thought out and put together. The children were focused and mostly well engaged. There was a lot of fun, laughter and interaction between children and leaders. It was very heart warming to see.

The two teams worked well together and as the programme progressed became one team. The parents comments were very positive about the programme and the Holy Spirit was present as the children sang songs about the love of God and listened to the Bible stories to reinforce who loves them and why.

Well done to all involved in this initiative!

LOTS of Lego, Lego based games, Cake Decorating, Pillow Faces, Loom Bands, Bead Bracelets, and more, was enjoyed by those participating in the programme



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Upcoming Retreats, Christchurch

(led by Megan Blakie, The Village; associate member of Christian Spiritual Directors Association of New Zealand)

Join Megan for absolutely stunning views of Sumner beach while enjoying some invigorating yet relaxed reflective time at Sister Eveleen Retreat House. See her professional profile at: <https://acsd.org.nz/spiritual-director/megan-blakie/>

S/he God - Exploring God images

(open to men and women)

Thursday 29 February, 7-8.30pm, cost: \$25

A guided retreat that focusses on feminine God-images and invites us to reflect on our mental pictures and understanding of who/what God is. This short evening retreat has visual prompts, and draws feminine images from the Biblical tradition, to help us immerse ourselves in, and connect with, the feminine concepts of the Divine.

Register and details: www.sistereretreat.com/event-details/s-he-god

Trusting the Voice Within

**Thursday 14 March, 9.30am to 2.30pm,
cost: \$70 includes morning tea, lunch & afternoon tea**

A guided retreat about women's spirituality. We'll have the opportunity to explore together and give voice to the diversity and similarities of Christian women's faith experiences (which haven't always been honoured or acknowledged by our various faith communities/traditions).

How has our faith been shaped by the lived-in experience of a female body?

Is God more than 'He'?

What is nurturing your faith now?

This day-time retreat gives voice to the diversity and similarities of women's faith experiences, which haven't always been honoured or acknowledged by our various faith communities/traditions. Bring along your experiences and a heart of discovery.

Register and details: www.sistereretreat.com/event-details/trusting-the-voice-within

Haere mai Tautimai ki te kaupapa hirahira 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)

From the last Newsletter

- Blackcurrants at St Albans
- Rev Henry Mbambo—anniversary of his licensing
- Presbytery Treasurer
- Summer reflections #2 *The ways we 'other' others*
- *The Gift of Summer*—Retreat at Moeraki
- Sister Eveleen Retreat House 2024 Programme
- Christian Fellowship for Disabled

Summer reflections #3 Reflexes & Mirroring in relation to Māori and Te Tiriti issues

Martin Stewart

Whether we like it or not we are having to do some thinking about the place of the tangata whenua and the Treaty of Waitangi/Te Tiriti o Waitangi in our national life. I think it is a good thing that we get to talk about it even though I strongly disagree with the political impetus of some who are suggesting that the principles of it should somehow be up for debate or even a referendum. I realise that even making a statement like that could get the backs up of a few people, but I hope you can bear with me and see what I offer as a contribution to your own thinking. This is not an article instructing you on what to think! And, more importantly, there are plenty of people more equipped than I to discuss the issues I am raising. Rather, I want to invite a deeper look into what makes us tick.

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

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, advising of their position in their Parish or the Presbytery.

Firstly though, I want to suggest two great places for you to do your own research. I am currently finding my way through Jay Ruka's excellent book *Huia Come Home*. Jay works in the Anglican church in Taranaki and approaches his work from a deep commitment to Christ. He engages with the stories of the early missionaries and the issues that arose before and after the Te Tiriti was signed in an enabling and hopeful way. There are some wonderful stories I had never heard before. Check out Jay's website: <https://huiacomehome.co.nz/>. I also encourage you to look at the very useful NZ Government archives site: <https://www.archives.govt.nz/discover-our-stories/the-treaty-of-waitangi>

What I am wanting to focus on in this reflection is the negative reflexes that seem to be operating in our society whenever issues to do with Māori the Treaty/Te Tiriti are mentioned. As Christians, do we have anything to say about these reflexes?

I invite you to pause for a moment and think about your own reflexes. As issues arise on the subject or place of Māori culture, language, and Te Tiriti concerns, where do you reflex? Do you reflex to compassion and care? Do you reflex to an inner groan that could be because you don't like the divisive nature of the way people talk about the issues and how it plays out in our life together? Or, do you realise that you reflex to a number of negative attitudes that have formed in you either consciously or unconsciously. Maybe you find yourself automatically reflexing to an anti-Māori sentiment (it may be happening as you read this and you already find yourself putting up some kind of defensive screen just because of the words I have used).

Have you thought much about these reflexes and what has shaped the way they have been formed in you? I have had to do some work on a number of my own reflexes. I have been very fortunate to have been raised in a home where my parents had some views about racist behaviour whenever they witnessed it. I was also glad to have had that upbringing. It wasn't perfect though, there were some occasional sayings and attitudes that my parents reflexed to that seemed to come from the attitudes of the generations before them. I think it is really important to examine our reflexes. We are all the products of our times. There are a range of attitudes and assumptions in our upbringings that we would now rightly question. I love the way many in our younger generations approach things without the prejudices of the generation I was raised in. I learn from them. I want to keep learning from them.

But more importantly, as a follower of Jesus, I look for him to shape me and attend to my reflexes. I want to mirror the life of Christ in the way I live. I want his ways to so shape my inner being that whenever I am confronted by something I reflex to a Christ-like response.

It is this reflex of a Christ-like response that I want to encourage as we think about issues involving Māori and Te Tiriti. It is more than 'what would Jesus do?' It is what does it mean to die to ourselves and our inherited attitudes and be open to the transforming power of the Spirit of God.

Here's what I see that informs that space. I see Jesus involved in challenging the attitudes his people had towards Samaritans. I see Jesus stepping across the lines of decorum. I see Paul entering the home of the Roman Centurion and finding faith was already there. I hear Jesus telling stories of God reaching across the divides where people are shunned, discarded, or held at a distance. The little, the least, the lost, and the last are constantly raised and embraced. Tables are upturned. Ungodly attitudes are exposed. The tax collector at the temple is praised while the nearby Pharisee is pinged for where his reflexes took him.

Thus, especially in relation to matters regarding the place of Māori and Te Tiriti o Waitangi in NZ life, I have a simple thing I work on as a start to increasing my understanding: if there is any hint of a reflex in me that leads to prejudice (pre-judgement), privileging myself, protecting my privilege, inciting hate, turning away from my sister or brother in need, 'othering' people (see last week's reflection), or acting in ways that intentionally make life harder for people different from me, then I force myself into a deeper examination of who I am and what I am about. I do it to myself over and over again on a whole range of issues. I am less afraid of this now than when I was when I was younger. I have got used to it. It is part of the deal. I want to mirror the life of Christ. I want to grow. I have a way to go, but God is kind and patient.

I figure that by attending to my reflexes and mirroring Jesus that I remove myself from a lofty place and step into a space of openness – the kind of space that can be fertile ground for the sower to toss seeds and bring life. It is Christ bringing life that I seek as we talk about the issues of our time.

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/

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