



PLAINS PRESBYTERIAN

19TH JULY 2020



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Sunday the 19th July as the 7th Sunday of Pentecost. I thought it time I learnt something of the church calendar. This as is often the situation I just became more confused than ever.

The Christian Church appears to be referring to that period in the church year from Pentecost Sunday right through to Advent as the season of Pentecost, I guess there is no harm in that except that there is only one Pentecost Sunday in the year, that being the 7th Sunday after Easter day. This year it fell on May the 31st. The period from Pentecost to Advent is sometimes called ordinary time, a time to get our act together so that we can go forward in faith - not necessarily knowing or understanding what that might mean for us as a community of faith. So, the scripture readings during this time are usually stories of faith, stories of the struggle to be faithful, stories about 'going out in faith' – stories about taking risks, stories told so that we can be encouraged, enthused and even inspired to go forward as people of faith.

The Bible has many stories / examples of people of faith, the readings I listened to last Sunday were of people of faith. In the book of Genesis in Chapter 25 reading from verse 19 we learn of Jacob and Esau.

The story from Genesis is about people trying to hold on to the promise of God against all odds. Abraham left his homeland and his family at age 75, trusted God even in the face of Sarah's barrenness, and had his faith tested time and again. Rebekah also left her homeland to become the wife of Isaac. Her own barrenness caused Isaac to plead with God that the promise of children and blessing would not come to an end, as her pregnancy had been rough, complicated, and perhaps even life-threatening. Two generations of people had torn themselves from their roots and headed on a seemingly hopeless path of sacrifice, and all because of God's great promise: "I will make of you a great nation."

There may well be times we too have to be prepared to tear ourselves from our roots, or a place where we have lived for a long while, to head out on what might seem to be an equally hopeless path of sacrifice. Yet the whole story of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Sarah, Rebekah, and Rachel came to be understood as a part of the greater story of the blessing of God on what we could describe as an obscure people - but a people who believed that they were under the guidance of a God who truly cared for and loved them.

We see this happening in our lifetime. Twenty-five years ago, a young lady by the name of Stephanie Herron was called to help run a mission at Macia in Mozambique. Stephanie had trained as a veterinarian and after working in that field for several years she felt God had other plans for her. Steph struggled with the thought of this challenge for some time but finally decided she had to go. Stephanie serves under "World Outreach" At her village she helps run Bible training studies with quite intense lessons, I note Michael being mentioned now a third-year student. Other activities are helping with health issues, teaching knitting, and sewing and overseeing the pantry, but NOT the cooking. The problems in the pantry appear to be keeping the rats out and searching for weevils in the stored drum of beans!

Stephanie asks that we pray for their health and safety, to date no problem with the covid virus but other problems, one staff member with a bad dose of Malaria, another with a foot in plaster after a fall, and then another diagnosed with mild diabetes – there are plenty of health issues apart from the virus. Please remember Stephanie in your prayers.

-Denis Brown

[Ashburton Christian School are looking for a Specialist Teacher Aide to work 1-1 with a 5-year-old boy with autism.](#)

- Up to seventeen hours a week Monday to Friday – suitable for job sharing
- Permanent Position
- No previous experience required – training will be given
- Needs to be patient, understanding and perceptive
- You will need to work as part of a team – who are involved in caring for the child
- Further information from Margaret Butler – m.butler@acs.school.nz
- Please send CV and covering letters to Margaret Butler
- Applications close Friday 24th July 2020

Discovery.

While walking around my garden this week, I discovered some dwarf snowdrops flowering in the garden. While searching through my church resources, I discovered this poem called Snowdrops written by Deborah Mercer.

Hard cold earth and sky leaden grey, Gloomy canopy that's bearing down Upon a bitter, brooding winter day, When nature seems to wear a baleful frown, When Christmas seems a hundred years ago, And springtime seems a hundred years ahead, When hearts are heavy, souls and spirits low, When all seems desolate and drab and dead.

Then, suddenly, I glimpse a patch of white, The purest glowing white I've ever seen; To see the unexpected, lovely sight Of tiny, gleaming bells and leaves of green, I kneel to look more closely, to behold The miracle of life that's nestling there, Springtime's message starting to unfold, Just looking seems to be a sort of prayer.

A prayer of trust that springtime comes each year; A prayer of hope for warmth and life and light; A prayer of thanks that God is working here and waiting in those tiny bells of white. These bells are silent, do not make a sound, Yet, in my heart, it seems I hear them ring; A song of praise that echoes all around, and fills the winter sky with songs of spring.

After the cold of winter, the milder weather comes as a blessed relief to us all. The beauty of nature reminds us once again of one of God's Greatest gifts - Spring. The time when the earth awakens from its long sleep and bursts into new life. (Reminding myself we have a few weeks to go before we really see spring; snowdrops just give us a taste)

- Dorothy

St. John's Methven

St. Johns Focus Group have suggested holding our annual Shop Day on Friday 23rd October, (virus permitting).

Also suggested having a Thanksgiving Service, possibly in August, where we will collect non-perishable food items for Presbyterian Support, since we missed out on our usual Harvest Thanksgiving service. Regards, Adrienne

St. Andrew's Rakaia

Tuesday 23rd July

10:30 AM | Rakaia Fit Kids with Miranda A time for friendship, fun, and support. Welcome to all pre-school children.

1:00 PM | Steady As You Go | Balance, strengthening and gentle exercises for senior folk's health and well-being.

2:00 PM | **St. Andrew's Mission Meeting**

*Jams, pickles, and a fresh brew of Heather's Marmalade for sale in the St Andrew's Foyer.

Reports of happenings this past week.

Rakaia Friendship Gathering. April, May, and June no friendship meetings, so it was time to get back into action. Tuesday 14th July with a delayed starting time most of our regulars arrived and we all enjoyed a great meal, followed by with lively music from a very entertaining group of folk from the Ashburton Organ Club, Skiffle Group. Lots of fun and sing-along songs. Very enjoyable.

Also, lots of bargains on our Bring and Buy stall. Thank you to all our supporters and especially Wilcox for their donated vegetables.

End of Holidays "Shout" Community Meal Thursday 16th July, supported by approx. 40 people of all ages enjoyed sausages, vegetables, and a delicious chocolate cake. Tayla Davidson our local karate champ demonstrated her skills and taught the children a few "moves". Thank you Tayla and thanks to all the wonderful donated grocery items, which will now be given to the Rakaia school next week when school resumes.

This Sunday, Rev Paul Eden with the message Relentless Kindness based on the bible readings.

Ephesians 2: 4-10 Ephesians 4: 31, 32. followed by with the song, Amazing Grace.

Sunday Services for July

19th	9:30 am	St. Andrew's Rakaia	Pastor Paul Eden & Worship Team
	10:30 am	St. John's Methven	Rev. Neville Burns
26 th	9:30 am	St. Andrew's Rakaia	Rev. Neville Burns
	10:30 am	St. John's Methven	Rev. Arii – combined with Staveley

Words of Repentance:

O Lord you have examined my heart and know everything about me.

You know when I sit down or stand up.

You know my thoughts even when I'm far away. Psalm 139: 1-2

Create in me a clean heart, O God.

Renew a loyal spirit within me.

Do not banish me from your presence,

And don't take your Holy Spirit from me. Psalm 51: 10-11