



PLAINS PRESBYTERIAN

27TH JUNE 2021



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"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace."

Alpine Presbytery

From the Executive Officer:

Covid-19 is still with us. As you receive this newsletter, all eyes are on the testing centres in Wellington to see if the dreaded Delta variant of Covid-19 has found a foothold here. We are not out of this yet, not by a long stretch! We have a lot to be grateful for in Aotearoa-New Zealand, given our relative isolation in the world and what has proven to be an excellent pandemic response. Perfection eludes everyone anywhere who has been involved in trying to prevent the coronavirus from gaining a foothold among their people. But, thus far, in NZ the health and well-being outcome has been amazing. What a privilege it has been to be able to have enjoyed the summer season at Level 1 with barely any restrictions! There is a lot to be thankful for!

As the Health & Safety Officer for Alpine Presbytery, I want to offer some pre-emptive words of encouragement and caution to our church membership. If further restrictions are on the horizon for us, can we give some thought to how we might we handle ourselves now as well as then. I recall some pretty sad incidents in the lockdown of 2020, where church communities openly flouted the rules. It proved to be good fodder for the media, and an incredibly poor witness. I imagine, given the long period of calm we have had, that complacency and some carelessness has crept into our church communities as much as it has in wider society. It is understandable. We've been in a long bubble of relative contentment and extraordinary freedom compared to almost all other countries! I wonder if our church communities could be talking about how they might offer leadership should things get tougher. So many of our great church systems kicked in during the lockdown. Pastoral care of the isolated, people helping out their elderly neighbours by doing the shopping, church leaders organising ways to communicate and encourage, and so on. It was terrific! Have we reflected on that and looked for ways we could improve on what we did? What could we do better? I am mostly thinking about how we provide a non-anxious presence in our communities while also being caring and committed to the well-being of others. It could even start with a simple message to our people to scan or sign-in when they walk into any premises. The contact tracing element in the prevention of Covid-19 gaining a foothold in our communities is critical. Could our communities be leading by example? It is a simple enough way to demonstrate loving our neighbours!

But I am particularly concerned about potential carelessness. Carelessness with our words, where we join the chorus of those people who seem to complain about everything rather than be a disciplined, loving, and positive presence in our communities. Carelessness with our actions, where we don't take the Covid restrictions seriously. It came to light in one of our churches that during the lockdown a group of people, almost all in their 80s, had gathered together each week in someone's home for a morning tea or lunch. Just imagine how that story would have gone in the media! And imagine if they had inadvertently passed the virus on to each other and others because of that carelessness! Just imagine Dr Ashley Bloomfield and the Prime Minister talking about one of our churches as 'the _____ church cluster' at the 1pm briefings. I have no idea what those people were thinking, but I know a few things that are true: the lockdown was set up to protect people their ages in particular, thus they let their peers down horribly, and the credibility of the witness of all of our churches would have been severely affected if they had been caught openly flouting the rules.

So, I want to encourage the leadership in our churches to talk about these things and encourage the people they serve to give thought to the way they handle themselves and others. We are in testing times and I hope, as a community of believers, that we can stand up and stand out by offering great leadership in our communities.

Best wishes
Martin Stewart



REPORT FROM A MEETING OF PLAINS PARISH GOVERNANCE COUNCIL 22nd June 2021

Devotions: Johanna reading from 2 Corinthians regarding the Unity of the Church and the desire to give and share what we have with gratitude. We need to turn to God in times of difficulty and look for the right way to do things.

Johanna prayed for wisdom for the meeting

Correspondence: Letter from Assembly Secretary regarding 'Emergency Assembly' – If Assembly cannot be held in person, needing to add electronic alternative to Book of Order if

Draft Protocols for meetings and Provision of Sacraments had been prepared by Liz Depree. These were discussed and Liz will update before signing off at next meeting.

Some of discussion included:

- Need to advise Funeral Directors we have no Minister. First contact to be made with Clerk and/or Area Contacts. (These can be found elsewhere in the Bulletin)
- Rolls need to be checked and updated. Joan will send each area copy of most recent Roll for updating
- Reminder that Mission/Focus Group meetings are open to any member of the Parish
- Reports from Mission/Focus Groups to be emailed to Clerk following meetings. Clerk will forward to Governance Council members.
- Governance Council minutes will be sent to Mission / Focus groups
- Governance Council meetings are open to parishioners – contact Moderator

Regional Reports:

Mayfield: Letter of sympathy to be sent to Symons family. List of repairs required at Mayfield Manse presented from Property committee. Repairs need to be done.

Rakaia: Bereavements noted. Food parcels and curtains given to those in need in community. Microphone system needs updating. Money available up to \$1500 for this. Plants 4U on 2nd October

Methven: Some members needing transport to Church. Severe flooding in Mid Canterbury - assistance with food suggested. Brick Club – Jayne is grateful for help from Elspeth Jaine. Some maintenance at Manse required

Property & Finance:

Letter of resignation received from Treasurer, Gill James. A letter of thanks be written to Gill. Gill has been grateful for assistance from Ann Allott, treasurer at Haketere parish. A note has been put in the weekly Bulletin asking for expressions of interest in the position of Treasurer for Plains Parish.

Johanna asked that each area and committees consider future expenditure and this be sent to Finance Committee so that a Budget can be compiled and brought to next meeting

The Hall at Methven needs a further Engineers report as to Earthquake strengthening requirements. This to be done later in the year. The building is sound but there is a question regarding cladding.

Worship Committee: Roster available to end August.

Alpine Presbytery: Johanna will write to Executive Secretary of Alpine Presbytery requesting that a Ministry Settlement Board be put in place as soon as possible.

Johanna closed the meeting with prayer.

Next meeting Tuesday 27th July. 4 p.m. at home of Moderator

A message from Rev. Johanna Warren | Interim Moderator

I am looking forward to working with you all in Plains. As your Interim Moderator my prime task is to work with Governance Council, providing some support as they keep the parish running smoothly. I am very impressed by Council who are wise, prayerful, and good humoured.

We have written to Alpine Presbytery asking that a Ministry Settlement Board be established as soon as possible. You will be invited to nominate representatives to this team whose responsibility is to review the parish and discern the kind of ministry we require.

Meantime, please contact members of Governance Council or me with any queries or suggestions for our health and life as a parish.

You can contact me by phone 03 3070 200 or email: jowarren@actrix.co.nz

Remember you are all welcome at the Mission/Focus group meetings of your area. These are open meetings. You are also welcome to attend Governance Council meetings if there is some matter you wish to put forward in person. It is helpful if you let Denis or Johanna know that you plan to attend and what matter you are raising so we can plan the agenda appropriately.

Lectionary Readings for Sunday 27th June.

Theme; God's saving power is present in Jesus Christ. When the estranged and the sick approach Jesus in faith, restoring power goes forth from him. Amazing things happen whenever the faith of the seeker and the grace of Jesus touch each other.

2 Samuel 1: 1, 17-27; David laments the deaths of Saul and his son, Jonathan

2 Corinthians 8; 7-15; Paul urges the Corinthians to excel in generosity, balancing their abundance with the needs of the less fortunate.

Mark 5; 21-43; In the midst of a crowd, a woman is healed as she touches Jesus. In the presence of her parents and three disciples, a child who has died is raised to life by Jesus.

The Gospel of Mark conveys a real sense of urgency. Needy crowds gather, pressing in on every side. Jesus moves from place to place, attentive to the situation at hand and then moving on to what lies ahead. In Mark, Jesus speaks very little. There are no long speeches or prayers. Mark is fast paced - a gospel of action.

The authority of Jesus is revealed in what he does. The people sense that God is with Jesus in a very powerful way. In the midst of the cacophony of needs and requests, Jesus brings the presence of the living God. Touching Jesus and being touched by him, people experience restoration and healing.

Two stories are interwoven in this text, touching each other; the story of Jairus, a man of prominence with a gravely ill daughter; and the story of a woman with declining health and a poor prognosis of recovery. Jairus is a ruler - a leader in the synagogue who is wealthy and influential. The woman is nameless, without identity in the text, and on the fringes of the community. She is ritually impure, having bled for 12 years. Their life circumstances are very different. In both parables healing occurs as mortal faith and hope touch divine power and love.

Faith cannot be compelled. Faith is deep belief and strong hope rising from within the human spirit, called forth by God. {Taken from the resources written by Hope Morgan Ward}

Finance & Property Committee

Due to Gill's pending retirement, Governance Council is calling for expressions of interest in filling the position of Treasurer of the Plains Parish. Please contact Graeme Mangin, Convenor of Property and Finance, phone 3028150 for further details.

St. John's Methven

Friday 2nd July

St Johns Brick Club 3:15-5:00 pm on Fridays after school during the term 'Exploring God with Lego'. Contact Jayne 0274678105

St. Andrew's Rakaia

Tuesday 29th June

10:30 am | Rakaia Fit Kids | Welcome to all pre-school children. A time for friendships, fun & support.

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

27th June Rev. Neville's Bible readings are Matthew 24; 15 - 25; Daniel 1; 1 - 8. Message reflecting on the story of Daniel.

Contacts for the Parish

Parish Clerk; Denis Brown
039758200; brown.dc@slingshot.co.nz

St. John's Methven; Joan & Alex Wright
3028668; jmacw5442@gmail.com

Mayfield & Staveley; Annette Syme
3030803; annettesyme@icloud.com

St. Andrews Rakaia; Dorothy Knight
3027595; dottsknights@gmail.com

Parish Bank Number;
Plains Presbyterian 02 0868 0091269 00

Administrator; Miranda Addis
plainsoffice@gmail.com

Sunday Services

27 th June	9:30 am	St. Andrew's Rakaia	Rev. Neville Burns
	10:00 am	Trinity Mayfield	Pastor Paul Eden
	10:30 am	St. John's Methven	Worship Team
4 th July	10:30 am	St. John's Methven Parish Service	Rev. John Titlow
11 th July	9:30 am	St. Andrew's Rakaia	Rev. John Titlow
	10:30 am	St. John's Methven	Worship Team
18 th July	9:30 am	St. Andrew's Rakaia	Rev. Silvia Purdie
	10:30 am	St. John's Methven	Rev. Neville Burns

Prayer

Gracious God, you are the source of health and salvation. We are surrounded by people who suffer in body, mind, spirit, and relationships with others. Help us to live deeply with the consciousness of your presence. Upheld by your strength, may our lives be extended to others in the calm assurance of your presence and power. Amaze us as our faith meets your grace. Amen