



## Waiting in Hope

Rev Jan Fogg

**We are now in the time of Advent - traditionally a time of waiting. Older people have done a lot of waiting in our lives, in all kinds of ways. Waiting to hear about a job opportunity, waiting for the birth of a child, waiting and watching children going through the challenges of life, waiting to heal from an illness, or waiting with and watching a loved one through an illness.**

The challenge, as people of faith, is always to be waiting in hope, to watch with a heart that trusts that God is waiting with us with a vision of harmony, peace and blessing.

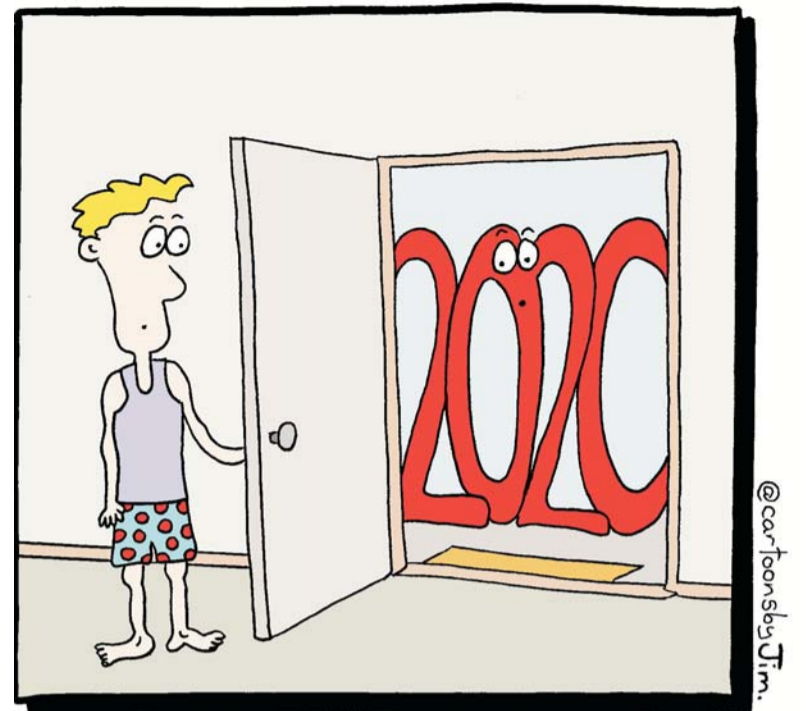
The scriptures also encourage

us not to look back - that using our time and brain power on things past is not the way to go. It's hard not to think back to times that feel, now, to have been easier, safer, and less technical than the current time with its fearful images of fires and floods. As people of age, it's an important task for us to walk with the younger generations to listen, pray and provide hope and encouragement for them to look for and help build stronger and more harmonious communities. That's quite a commitment for age - did we think there were no tasks left for us as we age?

It's also important for those of us who are older to be resilient in our present lives. What is resilience? We can think of it as the ability, when we have 'fallen into a hole', of finding a way out of that hole, of emerging as a

new creature. Not so much 'waiting' in the hole, but exploring ways of climbing out. It might be a physical hole of illness, or a mental hole of uncertainty or fearfulness. Some ways out of the hole may not depend on us being independent, the goal that so many older people seem to hang onto. Rather, accepting and aiming for interdependence - i.e. recognizing how relationships, strong family and friendship links, and helping make up a local community, help to make us stronger and build our wellbeing. Being independent is not often the best way to get out of a hole; being interdependent may provide the gift of someone beyond the hole dropping a ladder in, so we can climb out more readily.

Climbing up such a ladder requires us, firstly, to accept that



**Jeff realised that he wasn't as prepared for the New Year's arrival as he could have been.**

we are in a hole, and to have a commitment to climbing out of it. It requires us to keep our bodies as fit and strong as we can, it requires courage to take the first step, and it requires hope to encourage us to the top.

Being interdependent helps inject a spirit of hope into our waiting. Just as God calls us into dependence, so we are called to offer and receive that gift with others. It is a two-way path. Christmas blessings to all.

## C A R I N G F O R O U R P E O P L E

### Come summer, come swimming



and all that it entails

Trudy Downes, MCNZ Care taker

**Let me share a part of a story from my Dad about his growing up ...**

**"The vivid memories. Sitting at the front window watching the sunset over Kāpiti Island. Lying on my back under the waves watching the sun breaking apart above me - apparently, I was unceremoniously hauled out by my hair. I have loved the surf ever since, though it is a lot colder now."**

Being my father's daughter, I had my own short adventure when I thought I was tall enough to challenge the deep end of the pool. I wasn't as tall as I thought and ended up quietly drowning until my big sister hauled me up and pushed me into

the shallows.

As children, we don't know what we don't know even though we soon learn! As adults, we know the risks associated with children and water, but what are the risks we face in our church and community environments?

Across the Connexion we have risks in common, and we also have 'region specific' risks. A winter puddle in Auckland is not the same as a winter puddle in the South Island which freezes over. Did you know you shouldn't jump in puddles in Christchurch unless you know how deep they are?

What about when we still don't know what we don't know? How do we learn to respond effectively to events we have never experienced?

The answer to the last question is to build resilience - "the capacity to recover

quickly from difficulties". In conversing with others, we have an agreed understanding on how to respond, and then to practice those responses.

During an event, adrenaline might kick in, making us respond more quickly and bravely than we otherwise might behave, but quicker and braver does not mean smarter and more efficient.

Sometimes the adrenaline mutes or switches off 'smart and efficient'. Having a practiced response to fall back on gives us a process to focus on which allows us to turn our quickness and braveness into something effective. Thus, our resilience is created.

You can begin building resilience by starting a conversation in your parish, rohe, workplace or home:

- What do we think might happen to us? Let us also think outside the box.

There are many setbacks in life and they are not all 'health and safety' related.

- What do we need to learn and practice to respond effectively?
- What can we share throughout the Connexion to help others respond well, that they might share stories for us to learn from.

Here are the tough questions:

- Do our big decisions help or hinder in making us ready and resilient?
- Do our decisions go far enough, or do they achieve only the minimum requirements for the here and now?
- Do we change our decision-making methods to consider readiness and resilience first?

Resilience is easy for kids. Dad learnt to swim, I learnt to float and I'm great at blowing bubbles. What does resilience and readiness look like for adults or for a group, a parish or community? How do you make the lessons easy and avoid the hard lessons?

Have the discussion and stay safe in the water this summer!

Ko te wai te ora o ngā mea katoa. Water is the life of all things.

Further information to help discuss a Ready Church is available at <http://www.methodist.org.nz/discussing-a-ready-church>

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