

A prayer for community in a time of pandemic,

written by the Corrymeela Community on the north Coast of Ireland:

God of the good news that spreads faster than fear,
God of the courage that comes from the heart:
Be with us as anxieties rise and with us as uncertainty grows.
Be with us when children ask difficult questions,
and with us when parents seem farther away.
Remind us that to be a community does not always mean
to be physically present beside those we know well.
It also can mean being spiritually present
with those who feel very alone;
and that you as our God, the God made flesh,
are also the God who calls us from the tumult
and tells us to be still
and to know that you are God
with us.
Amen.



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Te Awamutu Methodist Church Website

http://www.methodist.org.nz/find_us/waikato/wairiki/te_awamutu

or just search 'Te Awamutu Methodist Church'

Notices for next Sunday's bulletin to Lynn please

Phone 07 871 3554 or email colinlyn@xtra.co.nz

Weekly Newsletter – 22 March 2020 METHODIST PARISH OF TE AWAMUTU, PIRONGIA, OTOROHANGA

Church address: 261 Bank Street, Te Awamutu



No church tomorrow

Dear friends,

It is a strange new world we find ourselves in!

To gather or not to gather seems to be at the forefront of everyone's minds, and as I write this, I am aware of more and more folk who are taking a cautious approach and staying away from other people as practicable.

Well, since I wrote this, the decision has been made for us.

The Methodist Church is now advising that Methodist services of worship should be suspended immediately.

Therefore, beginning tomorrow 22 March, there will be no church services until further notice.

We will endeavour to keep everyone connected via phone and email, and continue to produce our regular bulletins which we hope will help to do that. The latest advice (Friday 20th) is that smaller gatherings are still permitted, but increased physical space between us is encouraged. We will review our position as new guidelines become available, but in the meantime, please look out for one another. *"Loving your neighbour as yourself in this moment also means doing what you personally can to protect not just yourself but your neighbours.* It is time for all of us... to look after each other and not just ourselves."

There are lighter moments among the uncertainty however – trying to come up with new ways of greeting one another without physical contact has resulted in many laughs. Holding a conversation while keeping a distance is also proving challenging, especially for those of us who are a little hard of hearing. Maybe it is time to brush up on our sign language skills?

I leave you with these words of wisdom from a clergy colleague:

"While lots of things are being cancelled because of corona virus, love isn't one of those. Let's not close our hearts off, let's not allow our hearts to become infected with fear."

Love and blessings,

Shelley.

Lectionary Readings for this Sunday:

[1 Samuel 16.1-13](#) The prophet Samuel anoints David, the youngest son of Jesse, to be king. "The Lord told him... 'People judge others by what they look like, but I judge people by what is in their hearts.'"

[Psalm 23](#) The famous shepherd's psalm of David in which the Lord is described as a good shepherd who, in his kindness and love, looks after all our needs.

[Ephesians 5.8-14](#) Those who belong to the Lord are people of the light and need to give evidence of this by their good, truthful and honest behaviour.

[John 9.1-41](#) Jesus heals a man who was blind from birth and this causes a dispute with the Pharisees who disapprove of healing on the Sabbath.

Services coming up:

March	22	Rev Shelley
	29	Led by Peter with Robin and the choir
April	5	Rev Shelley – Palm Sunday (choir singing)
	6-9	Holy Week Services
	10	Rev Shelley – Good Friday
	12	Rev Shelley – Easter Sunday
	19	Michael Templer
	26	Rev Shelley – ANZAC Service

This month's **Parish Council** will be Tuesday 24th at 2pm.

There will be **no wwexplore** this month.



Pray for Others

- for grieving families
- for those faced with unemployment
- for all health workers
- for decision makers

Donations to our Church

With some banks no longer processing cheques it is becoming more difficult for some members to make their offerings to our Parish. Can I suggest that members consider setting up a regular automatic payment from your bank account. As long as your name is put in the reference section, we can record the amount for your annual donations receipt. Our Parish bank Account at BNZ is 02-0800-0005141-000. If you have any queries or concerns, please do not hesitate to call me Peter Ph 021978343

Our Elegant High Tea

We are still planning to have this at a later date. It sounds like a lot of fun so we will let you know when a new date is set.



MWF

It was thought better to cancel our Fellowship meeting this month.

Instead we encourage you to ring up each member of our group sometime during the month just to have a chat.



A message from Rev Susan Thompson (edited and abridged)

Grace and peace to you all from the Waikato-Wairariki Methodist Synod.

One of the important learnings from the Christchurch earthquakes of 2010-2011 was that a church is more than a building or a Sunday worship service. A church is its people and we can be church wherever we are and whether we are gathered or scattered. Think about ways you can continue to be church within your community if you can no longer gather as you are used to doing.

Anglican Archbishops have suggested that people light a candle in their homes at 7pm on every Sunday that worship services are suspended as a sign of hope. This could be a time to pray for our families, our neighbours, our country and our world. Seek out ways of being beacons of light and a non-anxious presence in our communities.

Our youth are often reminding us that "He waka eke noa: we are all in this together". In all that we do may we remember that we need each other. May we love and serve in the spirit of our God.

Te pai me te rangimārie (all goodness and peace),

Susan