

From Shelley:

I am setting up a Facebook page so if you are invited to look us up on Facebook - under Te Awamutu Methodist Church - and 'like' our page, that would be great. All are welcome to add messages, and share with their friends.

Parish Directory: Attached to this edition of the Bulletin is a PDF file containing the updated Parish Directory. Please check whether we have your details recorded correctly, and let Shelley know of any alterations or additions. If you have difficulty opening the attachment, or if you would prefer a printed copy, please contact Shelley and we will get one to you as soon as practicable.

Seen on Facebook -

"...in all the confusion, there is one thing you know for sure. You are in God's hands. Keep calm. Panic and fear are also contagious. Take every precaution as advised by health authorities. Wash your hands well. And every time you do, remember whose hands you are in."

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Te Awamutu Methodist Church Website

http://www.methodist.org.nz/find_us/waikato/waiariki/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 – 29th March 2020

METHODIST PARISH OF TE AWAMUTU, PIRONGIA, OTOROHANGA

Church address: 261 Bank Street, Te Awamutu



Covid-19 Week 1 of Alert Level 4

Where do I even begin with an editorial this week? With our country in lockdown what is there to say that hasn't already been said? That the world could be so affected by a virus is like something out of a dystopian novel or a science fiction movie.

The song 'Morning Has Broken' keeps coming to my mind. It has the line 'God's re-creation of a new day'. I do not for one second believe that God caused the virus. But I do harbour the thought that a new day is being created. That people's life priorities may be re-ordered. That what we thought was important may not be so important after all and vice versa.

On my early morning walks the birds are still singing, the sun is still rising (beautifully) and the earth has gratefully soaked up this week's rain. As I passed another walker (keeping a 2 metre distance) coming towards me this morning we exchanged a greeting. I indicated the horizon and said, "The sun is still coming up".

"Yep," he said, "we are still alive".

Lynn

Lectionary Readings for this Sunday:

[Ezekiel 37.1-14](#) Ezekiel has a vision of a valley full of dry bones. "I, the Lord God, will put breath in you, and once again you will live."

[Psalm 130](#) Call out to the Lord in time of trouble. Trust in him and he will save you from all your sins.

[Romans 8.6-11](#) To be controlled by our human nature results in death. But those controlled by the Spirit have life because Christ has accepted them. Even though their bodies die, God will raise them to life by his Spirit.

[John 11.1-45](#) Lazarus becomes ill and dies. By the time Jesus arrives at his house he has been dead for four days, but Jesus goes to the tomb and raises Lazarus back to life again.

Services coming up:

Our worship services are suspended until further notice.

This weekly bulletin will continue and will include a 'Worship at Home' page from Rev Shelley.



Pray for others -

- for our 'essential workers' that they may be safe, keep well and be energised in their tasks.
- for families under pressure as they are confined
- for our prime minister Jacinda Ardern and director-general of health Dr Ashley Bloomfield

A Parish letter from Rev Shelley -

Dear friends, 25 March 2020
We are certainly living in some challenging times! Who would have thought even as recently as a couple of weeks ago that the whole country would be in a state of lockdown so quickly!

With worship services cancelled, our priority as the Methodist Church in this community is to stay in touch with one another, and to support each other through this period. This is something we can all play a part in. Staying in isolation can be very difficult for many people, and while we are

in forced physical isolation from our friends and family members, we can still reach out to each other – by email, text, for the tech-savvy there are platforms with strange names such as Skype or Zoom – and of course by phone. The Parish Council encourages you to phone at least two other church members each week, so that everyone has contact with another person.

To help you do this, the long-awaited update to the Parish Directory has been completed, and already some revisions have been made. If you are receiving this letter via email, you will also get a PDF copy of the Directory which you can print out if you wish. Those without computer access will have a posted copy. If you notice anything that needs correcting, please phone or email me so I can keep it up to date.

Our weekly Bulletin will still be sent to those on the email list, along with some ideas for "Worship at Home". (Those on the postal list get these all at once!) I have adapted the first set of these from some prepared by the Methodist Church in the UK – I hope you find them helpful.

Let's commit to 'gathering' at our usual time of 10am on Sundays – light a candle, think of our Church family both here and around the globe, read the Bible passage/s for the day, and say a prayer or two. If you have access to the internet, there are churches which are providing weekly services – we will provide links to these as we become aware of them. You might like to 'visit' London to take in a service from Wesley's Chapel, which will continue to live-stream worship, adapted for no physical congregation. Their service times are: Wednesday 12:45, Thursday 12:45, Sunday 9:45 and 11:00. All these services will be available at: www.youtube.com/channel/UCUAUqhmhevz5sqhh72LIMxA

Your health and safety are our continuing concern, so please do all you can to keep yourselves and your families safe. We urge you to follow the guidelines from the authorities and stay home whenever you can. Now might be the time to do those things you have been putting off – finish a craft project, phone an old friend, read that book that has been beside the bed for months. Or write a book: start to record some of your family stories to share with your children and grandchildren. Maybe the Great New Zealand Novel has been waiting for this moment.

Some words attributed to John Wesley to see us through this month:
The best of all is, God is with us.

May you and your loved ones be safe, and blessed in unexpected ways,
Arohanui, Shelley.