

Dear friends,

Tomorrow is officially the first day of spring. The Tui with their arial courting ballet (or is it territorial battles over our backyard?) and the slight glimmer of green shoots on those bare winter branches seem to testify to the change of season. With that of course also comes unsettled weather, with September and October often the stormiest months for the country.



This September, as a celebration of spring, we are going to be preaching a series in our services on some of the creation Psalms (Psalm 104, 8, 19, 156). There is an ecumenical movement to make September the Season of Creation in the church calendar which we are going to follow. It is designed to do two things.

Firstly, to celebrate the world around us that God has made and which according to scripture joins with us to worship our creator. Be it the trees when the wind blows, clapping their hands, or the flowers of the field bursting forth in their splendour. I was walking along a boardwalk over the Manukau mudflats one morning and it sounded like you were at Eden Park rather than off the point at Onehunga as there was this popping as shell fish sent air bubbles to the surface of the mud... so many of them it was like applause for the one who made them.

Secondly, the season of creation is there also to remind us of the need for creation care: Part of our worship is to care for what God has made. The biggest challenge for us as human beings in this age is the impact that we are having on our environment (climate change, the decline of bio-diversity etc). This care for creation is reflected in the mission statement of the PCANZ in what it calls the five faces of mission -

The Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand believes it is called by God to work with others in making Jesus Christ known through –

Teaching and nurturing people in Christian faith

Loving service responding to human need

Proclaiming the gospel

Seeking to transform society

Caring for God's creation

While we are not following the theme set down for this year (hey we are just putting our feet in the water this year) you can see some of the thinking behind the Season of creation movement and some devotional material and worship ideas by going to <https://seasonofcreation.org/>

The church council has agreed that, unless we are dropped down to level 1 we will continue to have our services via zoom in September so we will be joining together to celebrate the season of creation. We start this Sunday by looking at what I call the Sir David Attenborough of the psalms, Psalm 104, which gives thanks to God for the great balance and diversity in creation and God's great providence.

Here are the notices...

COVID alert level 4

As you are aware we are in COVID alert level 4 which is total lockdown. Please stay at home in your bubble. Travel is limited to local and only for essential matters (food shopping medical care). If you are out in a public place it is important to wear a mask, and to use contact tracing, stay physically distanced from people outside your bubble. All gatherings are banned under this level.

Church via Zoom 10am Sunday September 5th

We will be meeting via Zoom again this Sunday at 10am.

Here is the link <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89285364673>

if you are using the zoom app (available for free from the store for apple users and google Play on android devices) on a mobile device the meeting ID 89285364673

if you are on a landline phone you can dial 09884-6780 and put in the meeting ID 89285364673

We will be using Breakout rooms at the end of the service so people can enjoy fellowship with one another so please plan to stay back and catch up after worship.

It is Father's Day so why not invite the family to join you for church.

Have a Cuppa with the Minister 2:30pm Thursday September 2nd

Normally when I visit people I'm always offered a cuppa. Well, this week I'd like to invite you all to join me for a cuppa tea and a catch up this Thursday at our place... via zoom.

It's just a chance to just keep in touch with folk. So, make a good cuppa and do a bit of baking and we'll get together for an hour this Thursday here is the link.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88568300281>

if you have the zoom app on your mobile device the meeting ID is: 88568300281

if you are on a landline then phone 09884-6780 and enter the meeting ID when prompted.

Newly composed song played to us on Sunday.

We were blessed with Enosa's family leading the service on Sunday.

Here is the link to the video of the song Latafale has composed during lockdown. Sara Millward (you may remember Sarah's father Steve Millward was the moderator at Howard's Induction) is playing piano and Latafale is singing and playing guitar.

<https://youtu.be/iHISHbB1Kbs>

Caring for the poor in our city

155 Community house are reaching out to the poor, the marginalised and the homeless in our city at this time of lockdown. You can read an article from last week's Advocate here:

... <https://www.nzherald.co.nz/northern-advocate/news/covid-19-coronavirus-delta-outbreak-whangareis-homeless-need-somewhere-to-stay-during-lockdown/CY3MMX7LGDXFDXWPPBCK55A2UE/>

Apart from housing, there is also the need to feed the vulnerable. Those wishing to donate to Open Arms' food bank can go to <https://155-community-house.grassrootz.com/155-food-bank/donate>

Alpha News: Zooming our meetings!

Please do pray for the Alpha Course as we endeavour to keep momentum going by continuing to zoom our meetings. For some it has been difficult to zoom in due to technical difficulties. Pray for the team too who are having extra meetings to keep moving on. Last week was the topic "Reading the Bible" and one new person who is coming along has started to read a bible. Praise God for small steps of faith. We may have to do the Holy Spirit weekend by zoom ... please pray for this too.

HopeWhangarei - AGM postponed till October

With COVID uncertainty this month the Council have postponed the Church AGM till October and are looking for a suitable evening to hold it.

Blessing

As we come into the Season of Creation I thought it would be good to be reminded of God's goodness and sovereignty and providence and to be encouraged to rejoice in his great love for us.

Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.

² *Worship the LORD with gladness;
come before him with joyful songs.*

³ *Know that the LORD is God.*

*It is he who made us, and we are his^[a];
we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.*

⁴ *Enter his gates with thanksgiving
and his courts with praise;
give thanks to him and praise his name.*

⁵ *For the LORD is good and his love endures forever;
his faithfulness continues through all generations.*

He himene whakamoemiti. Kia hari te hamama ki a Ihowa, e nga whenua katoa:

2 Mahi atu ki a Ihowa i runga i te koa, waiata haere ki tona aroaro.

3 Kia matau ki a Ihowa, ko ia te Atua: nana tatou i hanga, ehara hoki i a tatou: ko tana iwi tatou, ko ana hipi e hepara ai.

4 Tomokia ona tatau i runga i te whakawhetai, ona marae i runga i te whakamoemiti: whakawhetai atu ki a ia, whakapaingia tona ingoa.

5 He pai hoki a Ihowa, pumau tonu tana mahi tohu: a kei tena whakatupuranga, kei tena whakatupuranga, tona pono.

(I must apologise I don't have my Te Reo bible at home so have not been able to put in the accents in the Māori version of the scripture... they don't have them on the online version).

Blessings

Howard Carter

SENIOR MINISTER
HOPEWHANGĀREI

August 31st 2021