

Dear friends,

I really appreciated having a day off on Monday and enjoyed the freedom to get out with my camera again. I went for a walk along the beach to the Ruakaka Estuary to get photos of Dotterels and, hopefully Godwits starting to arrive from their long flights from the Arctic. There are not many times



that I go for a walk at the Estuary when it does not rain... usually when I get to the farthest point from the car. Monday was no exception, the storm clouds rushed down off the Brynderwyns, and it started to rain. At that point however, I was captivated by some orange flowers growing on the dune, almost glowing with the dark clouds behind them. They are Gazanias, (aka as Stripped Treasure flowers), a native of South Africa. They are an environmental weed in New Zealand (sorry for using them), but are flourishing as sand dune restoration provides a perfect environment for them. I couldn't help but see these flowers on the sand bank with the

stormy clouds behind as a great image of us as Christians, hopefully growing and glowing, with Christ's help in the harsh and uncertain COVID environment in which we find ourselves.

In our staff devotions this morning we read 1 John 2:1-6 where John reaffirms that Christ is the means by which our sins are forgiven, and we are made right with God, but also calls us to live a life that reflects who Jesus is and how Jesus lived so we may give glory to God. We can often, quite rightly, reflect on the fact that Jesus has saved us from sin and bought us into his kingdom, and forget that we are saved to, and for as well, saved to be Ambassadors of God's Kingdom, for the Glory of God. Living in a matrix of right relationships: with God through Christ, with each other as brothers and sister in Christ. with the people outside the Church, so they may know the great love of God for them, with the created world around us which has been the focus of our Season of Creation, and with our possessions and resources. We are justified by Christ, and we are continually being sanctified by Christ. John also encourages us that we have Jesus as a mediator and help in that ongoing process, and if we trip up, which I know I do, we are confident that if we confess our sin, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sin and cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).

This week we are moving down alert levels. Auckland will move to Alert level 3, and if you are like me and have family in Auckland, you will know how relieved the big city folk are to see this move back towards some semblance of normality. We are to remain in alert level 2 but with changes back to what Alert level 2 looked like before. The council had made the call that we would continue to meet via zoom for the month of September so we will be meeting this Sunday via zoom. The COVID exec is waiting for clarification about social distancing, as this impacts on the capacity of our three sites, under level 2 before we make decisions about October.

Here are the notices...

### [Daylight saving](#)

Please note that Day light saving starts this weekend. Please put your clock forward an hour or you will be extremely early for Church on Sunday.

### [Sunday worship 10am Sunday September 26<sup>th</sup> via zoom](#)

We will be continuing our Season of Creation series looking at the creation Psalms and how they speak to us today about God's world and creation care. This week Enosa Auva'a will be preaching on

Psalm 19, the God who made the sky and stars and who speaks to us by his word. Enosa will be leading and preaching as this service is part of his assessment for Ministry readiness.

We will be singing the new song that Felicity and Enosa shared in the service last week.

'This is Amazing Grace' by Paul Wickham <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sKNBSsv9mxw>

You may even want to gather together with friends or neighbours or as a connect group for the service.

Here is the link for the service <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) 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.

### [Lorne's message and Howard's prayer from last week's service](#)

People have requested written copies of Lorne's message from September 16<sup>th</sup> and a Prayer I wrote and used to give thanks for New Zealand.

Here are these documents online:

Mountain Sunday by Lorne Campbell

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/140InpzmTQtquY5Q2PcBldgPL7OqIpRYQ/edit?usp=sharing&oid=111575909398590697754&rtpof=true&sd=true>

Prayer of thanks for New Zealand Howard Carter

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/12n32UH2U6hT644Mkkw0Up3a7LSDueXm3/edit?usp=sharing&oid=111575909398590697754&rtpof=true&sd=true>

### COVID Alert Level 2

**Worship:** Gatherings for worship are to be no more than 100, with provision for 2-meter gaps between people and the wearing of face coverings (the government website says highly encouraged, however the communication from the PCANZ says mandatory) and mandatory signing in by QR code or manually for all attendees. The PCANZ has recommended that its churches continue to meet via electronic means for worship for the meantime, which is what we had planned to do for September anyway.

**Church buildings:** The church buildings are open to outside users who are required to submit an Alert Level 2 (delta variant) health and safety plan to our health and safety officer (Karen Cullen) this will include cleaning etc. Rooms are required to have a capacity number (based on 2m per person displayed).

**The Office:** The office is open and staffed from 9:00am - 1pm each day of the week Monday - Friday. Some staff will be working from home at this time. Staff will wear face coverings when dealing with the public. If you come into the office, you will need to sign in for contact tracing (either

with our QR code or manually). We would encourage people to ring ahead and let us know if they are coming in to see us. Phone the office at 09 438 1667

**Connect groups and other small groups:** Under level 2 (delta variant) Connect and other small groups can meet. If you are using the church building you will have to abide by the health and safety regulations for the Church building.

Connect groups are welcome to meet in people's homes. Under level 2 delta variant you can have social gatherings up to 50 people. Our guidelines are that the group makes the decision if it wants to meet under level 2. There are definite health and safety protocol to follow. A record of those attending will need to be kept and sent to our health and safety officer Karen Cullen. People need to sanitise their hands on arrival. If you are not well please stay away. Our understanding is that mask wearing is not mandatory neither is the 2metre rule. Please let the office know if your connect group is meeting.

You may even want to have your connect group meet on Sunday morning or simply have some friends over and join in the service together.

## Blessing

While I started talking about a call to our faithfully living as ambassadors of God's Kingdom, I want to leave you with encouragement from Paul's introduction to the first letter to the Corinthians. Encouragement that God is faithful and will keep us right to the end.

He will also keep you firm to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>9</sup>God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

*Mana hoki koutou e whakau a taea noatia te mutunga, kia kore ai koutou e ekengia e te kupu i te ra o to tatou Ariki, o Ihu Karaiti. <sup>9</sup>He pono te Atua, nana nei koutou i karanga kia uru tahi ki tana Tama, ko Ihu Karaiti, ki to tatou Ariki.*

(1 Corinthians 1:8-9)

Blessings

*Howard Carter*

SENIORMINISTER  
HOPEWHANGĀREI

21 September 2021