

Dear friends

In my devotions this morning I was reading Lamentations 3: 15-23 and the reflection on it in Adrian Plass' book *When You Walk...* a collection of his contributions to the Bible reading fellowship notes over the years.

The book of Lamentations is a collection of poems grieving on the fall of Jerusalem in 532BC and the Jews going into exile in Babylon. In the words of Dr Miriam Hinksman it's a poly-symphonic cry of sorry, where the voices of men and women are raised before God. It's a book in the bible that is really a gift to us, of all the range of human reaction to loss and sorrow being gathered together and presented to God.

Of course Lamentations 3: 15-23 is the most well-known part of the book because it contains a powerful affirmation of trust in God's faithfulness and love.

"This I remember and have hope that the steadfast love of the lord never ceases and his mercies never come to an end, they are new every morning, great is thy faithfulness (v22-23)".

Plass says that there are two things that really stick out from this passage and help us. The first is that the whole book is very real. It reflects the way things actually are.

"... you can argue until your face is bright purple with little pink spots all over it how life ought to be for Christians, because all I shall say to you is that 'oughts' rarely work with clockwork precision. People get bashed and hurt and bewildered by events, and if we are honest we must admit that troubles seem to fall with equal weight on believers and unbelievers alike"

Secondly Plass says these verses also speak of the encouraging knowledge that the poet has, presumably from facing suffering and struggle in the past, that despite the love of God will never end and it is new every morning.

"When you dwell in the Kingdom of God, nightmares may come, but there is always the miraculous possibility of a new morning"

Plass finishes with the prayer, '*Help us to be honest and faithful, Lord.*' I hope this is as helpful for you as it was for me today.

Here are the notices...

COVID alert level 2

We are now in COVID alert level 2, with the delta variant limits changed to what they were before. We are now able to meet in groups of up to 100. It is mandatory for people to sign in for contact tracing when they come to church, wearing of face masks is highly encouraged. We do acknowledge that for some this is not possible for medical reasons. People are asked to respect those who wish to maintain social distancing, this includes hand shaking etc. Wash hands regularly, and ***please stay home if you are unwell***, and exhibiting cold and flu like symptoms. We can serve morning tea at services, and will be serving food with our cup of teas from this Sunday. On the government website it tells people traveling to faith gatherings to keep 2 m distance from people they do not know. The government's best health advice is that it is important for people to be fully vaccinated.

Worship Sunday November 7th

There will be worship at all three of our sites this Sunday as we continue our series looking at the book of Revelation.

10:00am @ HopeTikipunga - Enosa Auva'a (Thyatira: Revelation 2:18-29)

9:30am @ HopeCentral - Lorne Campbell (Pergamum Revelation 2:12-17)

9:30am @ HopeOnerahi - Howard Carter (Smyrna Revelation 2:8-11)

Zoom service 9:30am Sunday November 7th

There will be a zoom service on Sunday. It will be a **streaming of our 9:30am service** from HopeCentral.

The link is

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89285364673>

If you are using an app on a mobile device the **meeting ID number is: 89285364673**

You can join via landline the phone number is 09 884 6780 you will need to input the meeting number when Meeting ID prompted: 89285364673

We will be inviting people to stay and catch up in break out rooms after the service.

If we are in COVID alert level 3 lockdown. The zoom service will be the only service and will be at 10am.

Special baptism service 6:30pm November 7th - HopeCentral

We have four people being baptised or reaffirming their baptism by emersion after completing the Alpha course. The special service will be at 6:30pm this Sunday at HopeCentral hall. Due to COVID level restrictions we having to limit the numbers coming to 100. But are excited to have people with connections to both central an Onerahi being baptised or reaffirming their baptism by emersion.

We have many family members and friends of those who are being baptised and people from the Alpha course coming, and because we are limited to 100 people via COVID we are asking for people who want to attend to **please register by contacting Colleen at the office via email colleen@hopewhangarei.nz** or by phone 438 1667 by **1pm Thursday November 4th**.

Because we are having to limit numbers we will be running zoom. The link is:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89285364673>

Evening Worship 6pm November 14th

It seems that COVID has meant that we have not been able to gather for evening worship for the past few months. However I'd like to invite you to come along next week to our regular time of Sung worship, prayer and reflection on the word.

Parish Clerk

We are in the unusual position of looking for someone to serve as our Parish Clerk. We are very much indebted to Dennis Thorne who has served in this capacity for the past two years, but is wanting to dial back his commitment. The church council has the power to co-opt people (or at least come to the congregation and ask them to add a member to the council. We are looking for a person who is willing to serve on our Church Council as our parish clerk. There is a job description available. It really requires someone with a good administrative mind and working knowledge of things Presbyterian. If there are expressions of interest please contact Howard Carter 027 7508602 or by email howard@hopewhangarei.nz

Christmas tree festival at St John's Church

Billy Portch is heading up HopeWhangarei's contribution to the Christmas tree festival at St John's Church this year she is making decorations around the theme of fishes and bread. So is inviting anyone who would like to participate and make decorations to come together **at 9:45am at HopeTikipunga on Monday November 8th**. A great way for people to get together and get to know each other while doing some craft work together and being part of a missional activity.

Billy says "This is a low key way of giving a Christian message at Christmas time to the unchurched."

Community Christmas Morning Tea – Wednesday November 17th @ 10am – Hope Tikipunga

Come along and relax over a coffee/tea and a cookie

Kathryn Watson & Margaret Trigg will come with some great Christmas ideas for you to make

For catering and craft numbers **RSVP to Helen by 12th November**

Helen ph. 437 3656 or 027 4373 016

heljo@themcgregors.net



Girls Brigade Garage Sale 7am November 13th

Delayed because of COVID the Girls Brigade garage sale is now on Saturday November 13th. If you have good quality good that you would like to donate to the Girls Brigade please drop them down to the church **before November 12th during office hours (9:00am-2pm Monday to Friday)**. Tell your friends and neighbours about this great opportunity

Blessing

When your world seems to be upside down it is good to be reminded of God's abiding presence, and the nearness of Christ who dwells in us by the Holy Spirit.

Psalm 16:8 says

I am always aware of the LORD's presence;

he is near, and nothing can shake me. (Good New Translation)

Kua waiho tonu e ahau a lhowā ki toku aroaro:

kei tōku ringa matau nei ia, e kore ahau e whakakorikoria.

Howard Carter

SENIOR MINISTER
HOPEWHANGĀREI

NOVEMBER 2ND 2021

