

Dear friends,

This week I am writing the pastoral email from my office. I have a camp chair set up so I can put my foot up as much as possible. But let me assure you I can still put my foot down when I need to (Joke). I want to thank you for all the encouragement and prayers I have received over this time. While I attempt to handle the loss of half the big toe on my left foot with humour (my mafia nick name is Howard 'Nine Pins 'and that's because I've rounded down) it has been quite traumatic, and I find myself going through a roller-coaster of emotions .

We are going to be sending out two pastoral emails this week. One today with all the information you will need for the coming weekend and then one after the council, meeting on Wednesday December 1st when we make the decisions around how as a church we will respond to the new COVID protection Plan (Aka the traffic Light system). I couldn't help thinking that anyone who travels through the centre of Whangarei knows how difficult traffic lights and their phasing can be.

There are three key things I want to communicate in this email

Firstly, is how we will be doing our combined service on Sunday (in Red). It is Enosa and Felicity's last official service with us and Enosa's graduation from the Knox Center for Ministry and Leadership. We want to make it as special and have as many people involved as possible. Ironically and possibly poetically for an internship which has been dominated by COVID that means doing it online.

Secondly, with the governments COVID protection Plan coming into effect on Friday I want to encourage you to make sure you get your vaccine passport. The information on how is in the body of this email. Also if you need help you can go to a local pharmacy, if they are doing vaccines, will be able to assist you with passports. Please if you have any trouble contact us here at the office and we can arrange a time for you to get together with someone from the church to help you.

Lastly, We have had some advice from the PCANZ, and while it has been helpful in the end it says that each Parish Council needs to make a decision about its own "*worship life and Mission in its own context*". I ask you to keep the council in your prayers as we make decisions around COVID in our meeting on Wednesday December 1st.

As part of the advice we received there was a reflection from the PCANZ Core Doctrine Workgroup. If you would like to read that reflection here is the link.

https://www.presbyterian.org.nz/sites/default/files/council_of_assembly/resource/DOCTRINE%20CORE%20GROUP%20-%20MAINTAINING%20OUR%20UNITY%20IN%20CHRIST%20UNDER%20THE%20COVID%20PROTECTION%20FRAMEWORK.pdf

Here are the notices.

Worship Sunday Combined 10am December 5th

This Sunday we will not be meeting face to face at our three sites for worship. We are going to have a combined service and the easiest way we can do that is to hold it electronically via zoom.

The service as well as our regular worship is to celebrate Enosa's Graduation from Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership and to farewell him and Felicity. His time with us as an intern is over. It seems quite poetic that we should have such a celebration via zoom as his time with us has been dominated by the Pandemic, also with the border in place we cannot have the family with us live, so let's join together online.

Rev Dr Geoff New, the acting Principal of KCML will be preaching (again he cannot be here in person due to issues round flights) and be involved in the graduation for Enosa. We will have involvement from Enosa's family from Italy and South Auckland. After the service we will be making time for people to talk with Enosa and Felicity in break out rooms.

WE want to make this as good a celebration as we can, so can I encourage people to get together in small groups for the service. If you have a HDMI cable or a google cast you can use a big screen TV for the zoom feed.

If there are people who desperately want to be at Central for this then there maybe a limit of 25 under the non-vaccine passport system at Red.

The zoom 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.

Please note that the process has changed. The phone number is 09 884 6780 you will need to input for the meeting

The number when Meeting ID prompted: 89285364673 followed by the # key. Then you will be asked for a further ID number or to press the # key again. Press the # hash key again.

I apologise for the change Zoom changed its call in system without advising us of it.

Getting a vaccine passport

Those of you who are online can go to <https://mycovidrecord.health.nz/> and sign up. You will need a unique email address (ie not one you share with someone else). And a form of ID like a drivers licence

If you are not online or computer literate then ring the COVID passport hotline 0800 222 478 and request one. You will need a form of ID. It will be mailed out to you.

Advent devotions

If people are looking for advent devotions here is a link to a series of devotions based on scripture and the writings of well-known Christian thinkers and writers throughout history (CS Lewis JRR Tolkien etc). It is called The Grand Miracle and produced by the Christian History Institute. It is downloadable as a PDF for the church's google drive.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Sgruj4Ktxs_5BRWYwWd1M1ceMhd7eT2I/view?usp=sharing

Fill the Christmas Wheelbarrow @ Central!

One of the memorable moments two years ago was taking a Christmas box of goodies to a family connected through the church and discover that they were in desperate need of cheer. The tears of gratitude flowed as they received a gift. Just the other day, a man who uses our carpark asked if he could donate something to it like he did last year!

Please consider being a part of blessing others this Christmas by filling our Christmas wheelbarrow with Christmas "fare" ...

Food ... Drink ... supermarket vouchers ... and other goodies are encouraged!

The wheelbarrow is in the foyer at Central and everyone is welcome to place their offerings in it.

COVID health and safety information

We are currently at COVID alert level 2. We will be moving into the Red phase of the new COVID protection plan on Friday 3rd December

Basic health and safety measures for COVID will remain constant as we move to the new COVID Protection Plan.

Hygiene: washing and sanitising hands.

Mask wearing: Mask wearing at gatherings like worship is “strongly” encouraged... it is one of the ways we can show our care for each other... Please make sure that you bring and wear a mask.

Scan or sign in using the COVID tracing app: This is mandatory for gathering such as worship.

Connect groups can continue to gather under the Red setting, with a maximum of 25 people, leaders should also keep a record of who is attending for sake of contact tracing.

Please respect physical distancing: we are aware that some people are still very conscious of physical distancing and ask people to respect this.

Stay at home if you are unwell: The best way we can protect one another is to stay home and join worship via zoom if we are unwell.

The government says the best health advice is to get vaccinated. It is a way in which we can show our care and love for one another.

Vaccine Passport use will be something that the council will be addressing on Wednesday 1st December

COVID symptoms are as follows:

New or worsening cough, sneezing and runny nose, fever, temporary loss of smell or altered sense of taste, sore throat, shortness of breath. Less common symptoms of COVID-19 may include diarrhoea, headache, muscle aches, nausea, vomiting, malaise, chest pain, abdominal pain, joint pain or confusion/irritability.

Close contacts and places of interest: If you have been at a place of interest or in close contact with people who have COVID please follow Department of health guidelines on testing and self-isolation. If you have symptoms or have been in a place of interest or in contact with people with COVID please get tested.

Please contact the church office in that situation for pastoral support and to give us a heads up. We have fact sheets from the government website to help people know what they should do in those situations. We can help arrange grocery drop offs etc.

Blessing

I want to leave us with a Blessing today which I think we will need over the next period of the life of the Church, as we navigate the difficulties of the COVID pandemic, vaccine passports and traffic light Protection Plan. One that is a guiding principle endorsed by Jesus when he spoke of loving our neighbour, and loving one another as he has loved us. There is not a perfect solution that will suit us all...

Psalms 133 is the second to last Psalm of Ascent and it speaks of the pilgrims coming to Jerusalem and as they approach the temple they become aware of the many people around them from different places and walks of life and it gives thanks for the joy of unity.

I haven't been out with my camera this week but last week I was out at Ruakaka and as I mentioned last week I saw a flock of Bar tailed Godwits (kuaka) and amongst them were Lesser (or red) Knots (Huahoa). These two birds migrate long distances together to feed in our summer before flying back to Alaska and Russia to breed. They can usually be seen together. We too with our differences in

this time must be prepared to journey together, even if it's stormy and hard going. Even if we disagree.

Psalm 133

How good and pleasant it is
when God's people live together in unity!

² It is like precious oil poured on the head,
running down on the beard,
running down on Aaron's beard,
down on the collar of his robe.

³ It is as if the dew of Hermon
were falling on Mount Zion.

For there the LORD bestows his blessing,
even life forevermore.

Nā, āno te pai, anō te āhuareka o te nohoanga o ngā tēina, o ngā tuākana
i runga i te whakaaro kotahi

2 Tōna rite kei te hinu utu nui i runga i te ūpoko,

i heke iho nei ki te pāhau,

āe ki te pāhau o Ārona;

i heke iho nei ki te remu o ōna kākahu:

3 Kei te tōmairangi anō o Heremona,

kei tērā i heke iho ki ngā maunga o Hiona:

i whakahaua iho hoki e Ihowā te manaaki mō reira,

te ora mō ake tonu atu.

Blessings

Howard Carter

SENIOR MINISTER

HOPEWHANGĀREI

November 30th 2021

How good and pleasant it is
when God's people live together in unity!

Nā, anō te pai, anō te āhuareka o te nohoanga o ngā tēina, o ngā tuākana
i runga i te whakaaro kotahi!

-Psalm/Ngā Waiata 133:1



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