

Dear Friends,

I went out to the surf lifesaving club side of the Ruakaka estuary on Monday. We are blessed to have such a wonderful bird sanctuary so close to the city. I spent some time taking photos of Kuaka (bar tailed Godwits) and Huahoa (Lesser or Red Knotts) that come from Alaska and Siberia in winter (in our summer) here in New Zealand. It was low tide so they had flown as a flock down to the flat sand bar at the river mouth. It was the first time I had seen these birds up close so that was very exciting.

Then I walked back up to the sand dune and was very privileged to see a Tuturiwhatu chick (New Zealand Dotterel). They are quite hard to spot as they are so small and their coloring means they blend in with the stones, driftwood and seaweed on the sand. You usually just become aware of them because this tiny fuzzy dot will all of a sudden move. Plus Mum and Dad stood close by eyeballing me and trying to keep Junior from running in my direction.

The chick seemed so small and insignificant amidst the vastness of the sand bank. The chick then walked down to the waters edge on the riverside of the sand to see if it could get something to eat amidst the foam that was accumulating there. After a while I watched it make its way back up the steep sand bank. I took a series of photos of its ascent which I have called determination. I couldn't help but think of the words of Psalm 121 (itself a Psalm of ascent) which speaks of the journey of a pilgrim back to Jerusalem, across the vast desert, looking at how much of the journey is to come and that last part up the hills of Judea through the dangerous road up from Jericho (Jesus set his parable



of the Good Samaritan there for a reason). This bird looking up beyond the bank was like us looking beyond the journey yet to come and putting our trust in the one who made heaven and earth. The psalmist talking of God's enduring presence to care and to guide just like the ever present attention of the parent birds.

In the end the chick got up the hill one step at a time and at quite a good pace. I know if it

had been me and the hill was of the same scale I'd of had difficulty. It is a good reminder of God's goodness and presence and help as we navigate life's upward slogs and sometimes seemingly desolate landscapes.

Here are the notices...

COVID Alert level 2

If you are anything like me you are sick of COVID however, as the country moves from an elimination strategy to a suppression strategy it is more important than ever that we work at preventing the virus from getting loose in our church community.

Therefore we ask that you adhere to all the government regulations round COVID alert level 2.

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...

Scan or sign in using the COVID tracing app: this is **mandatory** for gathering such as worship. Connect groups should also keep a record of who is attending for sake of contact tracing.

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.

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.

The government says the best health advice is to get vaccinated.

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.

Sunday Worship

There will be worship at all three sites this week. We will be continuing our series on the book of Revelation, focusing on the letters to the seven churches.

Worship Sunday November 21st

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 – Lorne Campbell (Church at Philadelphia Revelation 3:7-13)

9:30am @ HopeCentral – Howard Carter (church at Sardis Revelation 3:1-6)

9:30am @ HopeOnerahi – Enosa Auva'a (Revelation 3: 14-22) Enosa will be via video

Please note that under COVID alert level 2 we are limited to 100 people at our services. If we reach that at HopeCentral we will be re-directing people to the 10am service at Tikipunga. If you live in the Tikipunga area why not sleep in for an extra 30 minutes and worship with the congregation at HopeTikipunga.

Zoom service 9:30am Sunday November 21st

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 find ourselves in COVID alert level 3 lockdown. The zoom service will be the only service and will be at 10am.

[Marjory Smith turning 102 on Saturday Nov 20th.](#)

Marjory (HopeCentral) is currently a resident at Puriri Court in Kamo, and will be turning 102 this Saturday.

We wish her a very special day reaching this amazing milestone.

Please pray for Marjory for strength and that she will have a constant sense of God's presence day by day.

[Baptisms - Sunday January 2nd 2022.](#)

If there is anyone in the faith community that has not been baptised and has been considering this step, please contact Lorne Campbell as soon as possible.

Lorne is offering baptism preparation classes to prepare for this event that would take place during the Combined Service on the first Sunday in the New Year.

Lorne can be contacted on: lorne@hopewhangarei.nz or by cell phone: 0211356275.

[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

[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

Helen says if you can let her know you are coming that would be great but if not, just turn up... there will be enough.

Helen ph. 437 3656 or 027 4373 016

heljo@themcgregors.net

Blessing:

It seems appropriate that we finish this week's email with the promise and blessing at the end of Psalm 121. Commentator and scholars believe it is the words of blessing the pilgrim would have heard as they left their homes on their journey to Jerusalem. A blessing that they could attest to as they stopped before that last part of their journey and saw that God had lead them that far and looked to the LORD to be their help and guide for the next phase of the journey, indeed till they reached their destination.

I Know it may becoming a bit too much, but I thought that with this wonderful blessing I'd add a photo of some birds (sorry): two kuaka flying along the beach at Ruakaka, as these birds epitomise journeying: flying non-stop from Alaska to New Zealand in September and then making their way back via Australia, South East Asia, Japan and the Siberia during our autumn.

The LORD will keep you from all harm—
He will watch over your life;
The LORD will watch over your coming and
going
Both now and forevermore.

Mā Ihowā koe e tiaki i roto i nga kino katoa;
mana e tiaki tōu wairua.
Mā Ihowā e tiaki tōu haerenga atu,
me tou haerenga mai āiane i ake tonu atu.

Howard Carter

SENIOR MINISTER
HOPEWHANGĀREI

NOVEMBER 16TH 2021

