

Dear friends

In the face of international events we often feel helpless. One of the things that mass media has done for us is it has made things like the war in Ukraine very immanent and real. We see it each day in news casts, it swamps our social media feeds, and it invades our thoughts. I recently saw an interview with the head of World Vision on the border of Ukraine and Romania providing care for refugees escaping the escalating violence. He said, that we don't need to feel helpless, rather we should feel hopeful. That hopefulness should spur us on to act in the face of the crisis rather than to simply react emotionally. Here are a couple of ways that you can do that.

First is pray: Prayer changes things

I want to commend Lorne's initiative to you, of opening the doors of HopeCentral for people to come and pray for Eastern Europe between 12 and 1pm Monday to Friday. There are some resources there that will help you in that endeavour. We can pray by ourselves but gathering to pray (as much as we can with that other bully COVID around) allows us to know we are not alone, we are part of what God is wanting us to do. Bring our broken hurting world to him.

Secondly, the man from World Vision spoke of providing resources, giving, for the care and concern for those affected by this war. Be it through World Vision or other aid agencies. I was moved by a report of a Syrian refugee settled now in Germany driving across Europe to help this new flood of refugees, because he knew what they were going through, and he had received similar care himself.

Thirdly, you can join your voice to the many who are condemning the actions of Russia and calling for an end to the invasion. Be it online or by writing to the consulate here. Not to condemn a people but to call for peace and a restoration of right relationship.

On another matter, I must admit that I have found the book of Leviticus and all its laws quite hard to read. In my going through the bible in a year reading plan, Leviticus is the Old Testament reading at the moment. This morning's readings were from Leviticus 13:1-59. A chapter about the regulations around skin infections and I must admit it has never seemed more relevant to me. Yes, on a big scale it speaks of public health measures which were mandated to keep the community safe. But for me after Sunday I had arranged for a doctor's visit just to check up on my cellulitis, it is getting better but Kris wasn't happy about the progress. So the upshot is that I am back on antibiotics and have been told to keep my foot up and rest for the week. (I'm writing this from home in my office with a keyboard on my knees and my foot up on a kitchen chair). I was not happy about this, I want to get back to work. It was good in the reading of Leviticus to be reminded that the priests would check on the infections after seven days and if it hadn't improved greatly, they would decree another seven days isolation. I sensed the Spirit just confirming that this was the right course of action for me as well, so to rest into it and get well. So I'll be off work/working from home, this week. But I am contactable.

Here are the notices...

Sunday worship March 13th

We continue our timely and encouraging journey through the book of Revelation.

HOPETIKIPUNGA @ 10am - Revelation 8 (Billie Portch)

HOPECENTRAL @ 9:30am - Revelation 9 (Lorne Campbell)

HOPEONERAHI @ 9:30am - Revelation 7 (Howard Carter)

Note all services require a vac pass. There is a non vac pass service in the lounge at Central at 9:30am connected to the main service via live streaming.

Zoom service

The worship service at Central is zoomed each Sunday.

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.

The host will ask for your name so we can put it on the computer screen so after the service people will know who you are.

After the service we will break into small groups so people can catch up, pray with each other. If you are on a landline you can unmute yourself by pressing *6. If you have someone on a landline in your group please introduce yourselves to them.

Prayer vigil for Eastern Europe

- 12noon-1pm each day this week @ Central
- Please come in through the BIG BLUE DOUBLE DOORS on Bank Street
- Come along for 1 minute ... or 5 ... or 15 ... or whatever ... and pray for the unfolding situation in Ukraine & Russia.
- Non vaccine pass. Up to 25 people max at one time.

As we read through the book of Revelation together, one ministry that is referred to as "the prayers of the saints".

"... the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of God's people" Revelation 5:8. "The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of God's people, went up before God from the angel's hand" Revelation 8:4

God loves us to pray. We often forget how important this ministry is – as one of our Council members texted today “Prayer is the only answer at the moment amidst the anarchy and madness”. Spurgeon said “Prayer is the slender nerve that can move the muscles of The Almighty”.

Please see attached a prayer sheet that you might like to use as you pray... thanks to Adrian Whale for the liturgical prayers.

[Bibles for Ukrainian frontline soldiers](#)

In our Revelation series, wars and rumours of war are part of God’s unveiling plan for His world – in the hope that people will repent and turn to the God of love and hope.

The Bible society recently produced a leaflet on the work of the Ukrainian Bible Society which shares some of the exciting news of lives being changed as soldiers read God’ word for themselves. You might like to watch this short video of Bible Society’s work there:

<https://ne-np.facebook.com/BibleSocietyNewZealand/videos/bible-distribution-to-ukrainian-soldiers-and-civilians/472772587528627/>

Plus also see the prayer vigil attached for Eastern Europe

[End of Tax year – donations receipts 2021/2022](#)

The end of the financial tax year is fast approaching. Any donations received into the church bank account by the 31st March will be included in the 2021/2022 tax donation receipts. If you have any questions please contact Karen in the church office Monday – Friday 9am – 2pm or via email karen@hopewhangarei.nz.

[Saturday March 19th - Churches Together Northland](#)

Churches Together Northland will be holding an autumn gathering via zoom on Saturday March 18th. The keynote speaker for the day is Rev Viv Coleman. Viv will be speaking on the wellbeing of people in church leadership. The webinar is open to all and if you are interested, please let the church office know and we will give you the zoom link. Viv will be speaking from 10:30 to midday.

[Updating our church directory](#)

If you have joined our church within the last 3 years or you have a new address, home or cell phone number, email address within the last 3 years could you please contact the office on 438 1667 between 9-1 or email colleen@hopewhangarei.nz Thankyou.

[COVID Health and Safety](#)

Basic health and safety measures for COVID will remain constant under the new COVID Protection Plan.

Hygiene: washing and sanitising hands.

Mask wearing: Mask wearing at gatherings like worship is “strongly” encouraged...

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

Please respect physical distancing: we are aware that some people are still very conscious of physical

Distancing and we 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's best health advice is to get vaccinated.

Government COVID suppression plan

Under the government COVID suppression plan (AKA traffic light system) Northland is under Red.

Our services will require the vaccine pass and numbers at each service are limited to 100. A non-differentiated service will be held in the lounge at HopeCentral, under Red it is limited to 25 people.

With omicron in mind the government are also encouraging people to have a buddy system with another person or household, if in the eventuality of having to self-isolate then you have someone to check on you and shop for you if required. Please feel free to let us know at the church if you need assistance. Ring church office: 438 1667 or Howard Carter on 0277508602.

Blessing

It was good to spend time with our service leaders on Saturday, in particular some new people who are taking on that role at Central. For me it was good to again be reminded and focus on our vision and mission at HopeWhangarei. Our vision, to be a flourishing Christian community, our mission 'to connect people to God and to other people. My new testament reading this morning was from Mark 12:28-44 and at its centre is the two greatest commandments, to love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your mind and your strength, and to love your neighbour as yourself, which is at the heart of our mission statement. Again it drew me back to thinking about our vision and mission statement, and it may seem the focus is on us becoming and doing things, but at the core is what God has done for us. We will be a flourishing Christian community, not because of numbers or growth or even vitality but because at the core of being church is sharing in the abundant life that we have in Christ, because of his death and resurrection, because of God's abiding presence with us by his Holy Spirit. We will be about connecting people to God and each other because that is what God has done for us in the first place, as John says in his first epistle, 'it's not that we love God but that he first loved us and gave his son as an atoning sacrifice. We are connected because we are now brothers and sisters in Christ. We desire to see others experience and know this reality, because we are aware of its reality amidst all the stuff that goes on in life.

So the blessing today is really an encouragement to the core of the Christian faith.

"The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these." - Mark 12:29-30

Na ko te whakahokinga a Ihu ki a ia, Ko te tuatahi o nga ture katoa, Whakarongo, e Iharaira: Ko te Ariki, ko to tatou Atua, he Ariki kotahi: Kia whakapaua hoki tou ngakau, tou wairua, tou hinengaro, tou kaha, ki te aroha ki te Ariki, ki tou Atua: ko te ture tuatahi tenei.

Howard Carter

SENIOR **MINISTER**

HOPEWHANGĀREI

March 8th 2022

PS: - High tide at McLeod's bay domain is a wonderful place for watching birds. I drove out there on Monday and was able to sit in my car with my leg up and take some photos of Karoro (black backed gulls) Torea (oystercatchers) Tara (terns) and of course my favourite Poaka (pied stilts).

Here is a photo of a Poaka preening. Balanced precariously on one leg, head upside down, yet he still seems to have a grin on his slender long bill. I can relate to this, not just the red leg, maybe you guys can as well.

