

Greetings everyone in this Christmas week.

Howard is away on holiday until January 10th, and so I am writing this week's pastoral email.

What is crossing your mind this Christmas as you take time to reflect on the Christmas story?

What has struck me this Christmas is: Faith. The faith of Mary ... the faith of Joseph ... the faith of the shepherds ... and the faith of the Magi. The Bible tells us that *"So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God"* Romans 10; 17; and that *"... without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him ..."* Hebrews 11:6.

Mary heard the angel speak to her, and against reason of her virginity, she accepted the will of God to bear The Son of God. Joseph had a Godly dream, and against reason of a community that would shun him and Mary, he accepted the call of God to be Mary's husband and the earthly father of Jesus. The Shepherd's were told by the Angel that a Saviour was born in Bethlehem "for all people", and against reason of their social and religious standing, went down to Bethlehem to see what they had been told. The Magi simply went to Bethlehem in Israel based on a star they had seen, and a prophetic word of the Messiah being born in Bethlehem, against reason of their own religion and hundreds of kilometres not seeing the star they first saw in their homeland!

All were rewarded In God's special ways. Mary and Joseph got to have the Son of God living under their roof for over 30 years! The Shepherds *"... went back, singing praises to God for all they had heard and seen; it had been just as the angel had told them"* Luke 2; 20. The Magi, gentiles from the East, *"On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him"* Mathew 2; 11 – they were the very first to worship King Jesus! I am sure that these weren't the only rewards!

God bless you as you celebrate the advent of the Saviour this Christmas.

Rev Lorne Campbell

[Here are the notices...](#)

Please note ... the zooming of our services is ceasing over Christmas and into the New Year

Our services over the next few weeks are all Combined Services and held at Hope Central:

- Christmas Eve: Saturday Dec 24th @ 9:30pm Combined Carols by Candle light (it'll be a real cracker)
- Christmas Day: Sunday Dec 25th @ 9:30am Short Combined Christmas day service. No Tea and Coffee to follow
- New Year's Day: Sunday January 1st @ 9:30am. (Central leading and hosting)
- Sunday January 8th@ 9:30am (Tikipunga leading and hosting)
- Sunday January 15th @ 9:30am (Onerahi leading and hosting)

Church office and pastoral needs

The church office will be closed from 2pm Friday December 23rd through to 9:00am Monday January 16th. Phones will be monitored over that time and our staff will be on leave at various times during that period.

If you have urgent pastoral matters please contact Lorne Campbell 021 1356275 (December 23rd - January 10th) Howard Carter 027 7508602 after January 10th (Lorne is on holiday January 11th - 31st)

Food vouchers

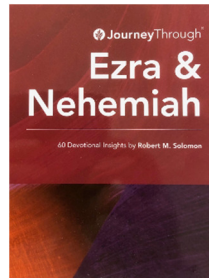
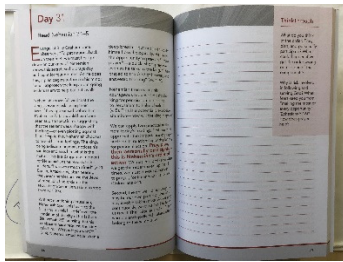
Many thanks to all who have given food vouchers this Christmas. \$1,748.00 has been given and they will be delivered to at least 19 people we know of who have different needs.



Hoooooray! Our Daily Bread Devotionals ... FINALLY ARRIVED!

At last! ... the December-Feb copies of Our Daily Bread have arrived at Central. Do come and collect yours!

Devotional Insights through Nehemiah (and Ezra) - Would you like a copy?



In mid/late January the preaching team are going to be preaching through the book of Nehemiah. Our Daily Bread have published a 60 day devotional Journal (see above). We have 44 of these left after three connect group leaders have got some for their groups. They are kept with Colleen in the Church office. If you would like one, please contact her. We suggest a donation of \$5.00 per copy.

Thankyou

We have received a letter of thanks from Tryphina House, Womens refuge giving thanks for the donations from Hope Whangarei. A big thank you to all of you who give generously.

Hope Central – White tablecloths

We are missing two of our long white tablecloths. If you happen to have them hiding in your ironing pile please drop them back to the office. Thank you.

HopeWhangarei - Giving Year to date

There had been a request from the last AGM that the Board of Managers publish the giving figures to keep everyone up to date. The figures will be included in the pastoral email.

Giving to 20/12/22: \$104,913

Against a budget of: \$116,496

Blessing

Go as far as you dare to those far from Christ – for no one can go beyond reach of God.

Give as extravagantly as you like to those in need – for you cannot spend all the riches of God's inexhaustible supply.

Care as lavishly as you are able for those who are suffering - for you cannot exhaust the love of God.

Keep journeying as a servant of Christ Jesus empowered by the Holy Spirit – for God will always be with you.

And may the blessing of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be with you always.

Amen

Lorne Campbell
20th December 2022