

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

On Sunday we finished our series *Colossians: Christ and Christ Alone* I want to thank the preaching team who contributed to this series: Lorne Campbell, Elaine Holwell, Chris Garland and Cath Bremner. I personally found it a revitalising experience, being reminded of the efficacy of the gospel. Thank you also for being prepared to have video messages as part of the series, while its not ideal it allowed us to work through pastoral issues and COVID without the pressure of getting people in at the last moment.

If you missed any of the messages or would like to listen back don't forget that all the messages are online on our HopeWhangarei website or you can access them as Podcasts on Spotify!

We are right into Advent, and it's great to see advent wreaths and candles at each of our three sites. This week we start a short sermon series called, '*Christmas It's Worth Singing About*'... So yes we will have lots of carols and hopefully some new Christmas songs as well. But we will be working our way through the songs in the first two chapters of Luke's Gospel. The birth narrative in Luke's gospel actually reads like a musical, everyone seems to burst into song, Mary sings with joy when what the angel told her is confirmed when she meets Elizabeth and sees she too is pregnant, it is accompanied by an unseen dance routine, as the baby in Elizabeth's womb jumps for joy at the arrival of the messiah. Zechariah, after a long silence bursts into song when his son is born and named John, and in the production number to end all production numbers the armies of heaven sing for joy at Christ's birth. Traditionally these songs have been known by their Latin first word. Mary's song is the *magnificent* (my soul magnifies the Lord), Zechariah's is *Benedictus* (bless the Lord) and the angels song is the *Gloria* (glory to God in the Highest). I'm not greatly into musicals, I guess I'm of the age when I'm still haunted by my daughters singing show tunes from Disney cartoons, and I am glad that they were a bit too old for Frozen and 'let it go', but I love what Luke's songs tell us about the birth of Jesus. I love the way in which they bridge across from the Hebrew Scriptures to the gospel, and I am encouraged by the way that they invite us all to join in and rejoice. Men and women, young and old, heaven and earth sing for joy and tell out the wonders of God sending the messiah. Maybe it is just what we need at the end of a hard few years, maybe it allows us to rediscover the wonder of all God has done, amidst the cynical commercialism and sentimentality with which Christmas is treated.

Here are the notices

[Worship Sunday December 11th](#)

Come join us for the third Sunday in Advent as we start our brief advent series Christmas, its worth singing about: the songs in Luke's birth narrative.

10:00am @ HopeTikipunga - Zechariah's song Luke 1:57-80 (Howard Carter)

9:30am @ HopeCentral - Mary's Song Luke 1:39-56 (Lorne Campbell)

9:30am @ HopeOnerahi - The Angels' Song Luke 2:8-20 (Dennis Thorne)

There is a children's ministry at HopeCentral, children join us for worship and then leave during the service for their exciting creative programme.

Zoom service Sunday December 11th

The zoom service will be the 9:30 am service from HopeCentral. The link for the service is.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83111922245>

If you are using an app on a mobile device the meeting ID number is: 83111922245

You can join via landline.

Please note that the process has changed. The phone number is 09 884 6780

The Meeting ID you need when 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.

Please Note: Sunday December 18th will be the last Sunday for 2022 when we will have a zoom service. Zoom services will resume in February 2023. We are wanting to give as many of our wonderful volunteers as possible a rest over the summer holiday period.

Christmas and Holiday Service Times

Over Christmas and the first half of January there will be combined services at HopeCentral on January 1st, 8th and 15th which will be led by each of our sites, allowing us to start 2023 with a celebration of who we are and our different ways of doing things as well as our oneness in Christ.

December 24th @ 9:30pm - A Candlelight Christmas eve service (It will be a real cracker)

December 25th @ 9:30am - A 45 minute Christmas celebration

January 1st, 8th & 15th @ 9:30am HopeCentral - Special Holiday Services combined

January 22nd - Hope Whangarei meets back at our three sites at our normal times.

Carols on the Grass, HopeTikipunga 5pm-7pm Sunday December 18th

Come join the folk from HopeTikipunga and the wonderful young people from Holy Ground camp for a free BBQ and a time of singing carols on the grass at HopeTikipunga. Invite your neighbour, your friends, your family even that person you find it hard to get along with, to join us in this community celebration of Jesus birth. Oh, and a bouncy castle... for the kids.



Can you bake shortbread or other Christmas cookies for the Chaplaincy team for Tuesday 20th December at 9-30 am. If so it would be greatly appreciated. Contact Elaine Holwell for more details. Thankyou

Anybody willing to pick up Stanley Sheehan on Sundays???

Stanley Sheehan now lives at Parahaki Court Rest Home 45/47 Kamo Rd Regent. Colleen and Hein would love to see him continue to fellowship here and would really appreciate sharing picking him up and dropping him off. Please phone Colleen at the office 4380016



Help needed for Christmas Eve

If you are able to help out with serving tea/coffee on Christmas Eve please contact Karen at the office or email karen@hopewhangarei.nz



Giving to others this Christmas?

There are some people in our fellowship and beyond who could need a helping hand this Christmas. We are not doing Christmas boxes this year ... BUT ... a voucher could be a great help to some ... If you would like to buy a voucher and bring into the office at Central ... we can make sure they get to those we know who need it.

The Onerahi Men's group (Wednesday 9:30-12noon)

...met for a special end of year lunch at the Fat Camel last week (see photo!).

The group will restart again next year, meeting at Neil Rein's shed for pool, darts, fellowship and devotions.

They also do occasional projects together to help others out. Good on you guys!



Blessing

Short and sweet this week. We finished our series on Colossians on Sunday and Paul, writing in his own hand, proclaims this simple blessing on his readers, a blessing for us as well

Grace be with you. *Kia tau te aroha noa ki a koutou.*

Colossians/Korohe 4:18b

Howard Carter

SENIOR MINISTER
HOPEWHANGĀREI

December 6th 2022

PS: - On Monday I went for a walk to the racecourse side of the Ruakaka Estuary. Right at the end of the sand bank at the estuary mouth was a hangout of Kahurihuri (pied Shags). Hang Out by the way is the proper title for a group of Shags. They are always such amazing birds and it seemed that in this hangout formal attire was the order of the day and they were resplendent in their black and white. I named this photo... there is always one... and as I contemplated it I couldn't help but think of the challenge of following Christ in the world today and Paul's words in Romans 12:2 *"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will."*

