

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

At present I am reading James Bryan Smith's book '*The Good and Beautiful Community*' it's the third book in his series on spiritual development and Christian discipleship (the other two in the series are *The Good and Beautiful God* and *The Good and Beautiful life*). You can tell by the title that it is focusing on our lives together as the people of God. Our vision at Hope Whangarei is to be a Flourishing Christian Community, and I am finding Smith's book helpful in focusing on that third word in our vision... community. Smith starts his look at community by focusing on a word that comes from the King James Bible translation of **1 Peter 2:9**

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a *peculiar* people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light;"

The word is *peculiar*. In the NIV it translates *God's special possession*, which picks up that idea of being set apart for God but as Smith points out does not capture that call to be different as much as *peculiar* does. Now it maybe that anyone sticking their nose into any of our sites on a Sunday morning might actually think *peculiar* is the right word. I can't help but think of the old Australian film about an Italian immigrant getting used to Aussie culture, saying *They Are A Weird mob*. But as Smith goes on to show, it means different, people who will give generously to others, who will forgive others, who love others even when that love is not reciprocated, who will dare to be different. What makes us *peculiar* says Smith is that we serve a *peculiar* God, unlike any other. The Roman and Greek gods (small G) who maybe fascinating and intriguing, but only because 'they look remarkably like humans-often at their worst'.

'The God that Jesus reveals is *peculiar*. This God loves humans so much that he became one of them and died for them. This God forgives when it is not deserved. This God is generous, never vengeful. If the God of Jesus displays wrath, it is only because this God is good and loving and is rightly against sin because it hurts his beloved children. No one could make this story up. There is nothing like it in all religious literature. That is because in all the other religions there is no God like the one Jesus reveals.'

We are *peculiar* because we know this *peculiar* God and his love for us and we choose to live it out in our lives together.

Here are the notices.

### [Worship Sunday March 12<sup>th</sup>](#)

Come join us at one of our sites as we continue our journey through the book of Nehemiah looking to scripture and Nehemiah for council and wisdom as we work at seeing our vision of being a Flourishing Christian Community that connects people to God and one another, become more and more a reality.

10am @ HopeTikipunga – Nehemiah 7:4-43 (Lorne Campbell) Communion

9:30am @ HopeCentral – Nehemiah 8:1-18 (Chris Garland)

9:30am @ HopeOnerahi – Nehemiah 6 (Howard Carter) Communion

### Phone Book update

We are updating the phone book for publication shortly.

Please let either Karen or Colleen know via email [karen@hopewhangarei.nz](mailto:karen@hopewhangarei.nz) and [colleen@hopewhangarei.nz](mailto:colleen@hopewhangarei.nz) if there are any changes to be made.

If you would like your photo in the book please supply a jpeg image or call in to the office and we can take a picture for you.

The phone book will be available printed (A4 size) or an email pdf format – please let us know what you would prefer. *Could we have all updates and photos by the 13<sup>th</sup> March please.*

### Staff Leave

Karen Cullen is still on leave till Monday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2023. Please contact Colleen between 9-1pm Monday to Friday if you have an urgent query.

### A chance to use your **art** to help us in our prayer life

In May each year from **Ascension to Pentecost 18th -28th May** the church is involved in a worldwide prayer movement called Thy Kingdom Come. This year we are inviting artists in the church (floral artists, painters, photographers etc.) to help us with our prayer. Each day in the season of Prayer has a different theme (focusing on the character of God) and we would like to invite you to produce a piece of art to be a focus for each day's theme in the church (Central) as it is open for prayer. A list of the themes will be put out at our services this week for people to look at and put their name down besides one of the themes... We will coordinate the days if we get more than one per day...

### Sermons online

If you have missed one of the sermons in our Nehemiah series, just a reminder that you can listen to the sermons online at <https://hopewhangarei.nz/sermons/> . They are also available as podcasts on apple and Google podcasts and on Spotify... just search HopeWhangarei.

### ZOOM-ing our morning services

We are planning on resuming (or should that be re-zooming) our morning service from central after Easter, over the winter months. If there are people who would like to train to be on the roster for camera operators and also hosting zoom please let Howard Carter know...

[howard@hopewhangarei.nz](mailto:howard@hopewhangarei.nz) the more who can help out the easier it is on everyone.



A retired lady who is a member of our congregation and her son are **urgently needing a 2 bedroom place to live**, preferably with lock up garage and of road parking if at all possible. She will consider any area in Whangarei.

If you can help in any way please phone Colleen at the office on 4380016. Thankyou



**Band Practice cancelled this Wednesday night 8<sup>th</sup> March as Phil and Lynne Cullen are away**

**Second Leaders gathering @ BOB Café for Alpha @ BOB. THIS Saturday March 11<sup>th</sup> 10:30 – 11:30 am.**

This Saturday we have 10 people coming to find out about the upcoming **Alpha @ BOB** Course we will be running after Easter ...



If there's anyone else out there who would be interested and available to find out about leading / helping on **Alpha @ BOB**

Please contact Colleen at the office [colleen@hopewhangarei.nz](mailto:colleen@hopewhangarei.nz) / phone 094381667 or Lorne @ [lorne@hopewhangarei.nz](mailto:lorne@hopewhangarei.nz) / phone 0211356275.

We need numbers to book a table!



**Te Aroha Noa 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration**

You are invited to come and join our milestone celebration of 30 years.

Sunday 19th March 2023

11am after our normal worship service at St Andrew Hall  
1 Hunt Street, Whangarei

Morning tea provided

**Churches Together Northland March 18<sup>th</sup> 9:30am-2:30pm HopeCentral**

Churches Together Northland will be holding it's autumn gathering here at HopeCentral on Saturday March 18<sup>th</sup>. The day will start with worship and communion at 9:30am. We are

Churches Together Northland  
Autumn Gathering  
9:30am - 3:00pm Saturday March 18<sup>th</sup>  
HopeCentral Presbyterian Church  
Cnr Hunt and Bank St  
Whangarei



Guest speakers:  
Rev Dr's Mark and Emma Keown  
Register by 5pm Tuesday March 14<sup>th</sup>  
phone to 09-4381667  
or email [colleen@hopewhangarei.nz](mailto:colleen@hopewhangarei.nz)  
lunch provided \$10

really blessed to have two quality guest speakers here for this gathering. Rev Dr Emma Keown is the Church Enabler for Northern Presbytery and she will be speaking about 'Stepping out into Mission' (from 10:20-11:20am), her husband Rev Dr Mark Keown is the New Testament Lecturer at Laidlaw Bible College and will be speaking on 'Preaching the Epistles' (from 11:30am-12:30pm)... a must for all our lay preachers. There will be business after lunch.

If you want to come for either or both of these sessions or the whole day, please register with Colleen at the Church office by Tuesday March 14<sup>th</sup> (lunch is provided \$10).

### Community Wellbeing Initiative Thursday April 27<sup>th</sup> and May 4<sup>th</sup> (6-9pm)

This is a course being run at HopeWhangarei in partnership with Lifeline and Presbyterian Support Northern. It is for a maximum group of twelve people and we have room available for people who may wish to attend. The vision for the initiative is '*to build a network of people within the church who have the confidence to support others emotional wellbeing.*'

It is described as

The Community Wellbeing Initiative has been developed for people who are 'natural connectors', that is, those who already play an active role in community-facing activities within or beyond the church and/or provide pastoral care to their congregation.

The Community Wellbeing Initiative will give participants skills, tools and resources to look after their own wellbeing as well as be able to support others safely within their church and the wider community during times of stress or distress.

As well as the two in person sessions there will be two online sessions as well. One before hand and one afterwards.

If you are interested please contact Howard for more information or register with [Sharon.rossensor@psn.org.nz](mailto:Sharon.rossensor@psn.org.nz)

### Blessing

We started talking about 1 Peter 2:9 so I thought I'd just finish off with the wonderful conclusion to that paragraph in Peter's letter. Affirming that we are a people connected to God and to each other because of Jesus Christ...

Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

I mua ehara i te iwi, ināianei ia he iwi nā te Atua: kīhai nei i tohungia i mua, ināianei ia ka tohungia.

1 Peter 2:10

Howard Carter

**SENIOR MINISTER**  
**HOPEWHANGĀREI**

March 7<sup>th</sup> 2023

PS:- This image of a Poaka (pied Stilt) at rest, I have to admit gives off a bit of a sinister vibe. Very much reminiscent of the old melodramatic villain lurking in the back ground and peaking over his cape. But it also picks up the grace and the somewhat alien feel of these amazing birds.



