

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I was up early today and came down to the office to get a good start on things for the week. That and the change of seasons meant that as I pulled into the carpark, got out of my car and glanced towards the western hills I was greeted by the pale blue of the morning sky brushed with pink and red clouds as they reflected the light of the rising sun. I couldn't help but stop look, reflect and rejoice. I know that is rather flowery language. But let me explain.

You may have heard I ended up at in North Shore Hospital from Wednesday to Saturday last week. I was in Auckland for the Presbytery Ministers retreat and my old nemesis Cellulitis turned up. No warning, it came on rapidly over the course of Tuesday Night. In the Morning I was blessed to be able to go to my friend Colin Marshal, who as well as being a Presbyterian Minister is also a St John's Ambulance medic. He checked me out, and rang for an ambulance. So for most of the week last week my world shrunk to a curtained off cubical and a short walk across an isle to the patient's bathroom. My kids all took some time of work to come catch up with me and took care of me. Naomi drove me up in my car on Saturday, and James came and got her on Sunday, Bethany would have been involved as well but was preaching at St Peter's on the Sunday (proud dad, had to share that).

I'd spent Sunday and Monday either in Sitting rooms or sitting with my foot up at home and I am on the mend. So that was why it was great just to be outside and see the morning sky. As I stood and looked scriptures started to come to the fore Psalm 121 'I look to the hills (the western hills rather than the heights of Judah) where does my help come from? My help come from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth.' That verse of great hope in the darkness of the book of laments 'The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases, His Mercy never comes to an end, they are new every morning, great is your faithfulness O LORD'. Finally as the clouds turned almost iridescent the reminder of God's presence with his people in their wilderness journey out of Egypt, the fiery pillar of cloud. A visual reminder for me of God's abiding presence with us and with us by the Holy Spirit. All affirmations that despite the fact it was quite a dark experience and in that ward I felt quite cut off the reality of God's abiding presence and love.

A love shown in the people, family and friends who were in the right place at the right time and in the care of professionals. Also encouragement for all of us that as we read and allow God's word to soak into us that the Spirit uses it as we stop and reflect on the world around us to speak deeply into our lives. Thanks to Lorne for his help in this time and Elaine Holwell for stepping in and speaking at HopeTikipunga on Sunday.

Here are the notices...



Important: Daylight saving finishes this weekend on Saturday night. We reset our clocks one hour... back.

Worship Sunday April 2nd (Palm Sunday)

We complete our journey through the book of Nehemiah this week. It seems appropriate to do it on Palm Sunday as it was through the gates and walls that Nehemiah built that Jesus came, as he fulfilled the hope of the Kingdom of God that those returnees from exile longed for. So we acknowledge that day on the church calendar and we finish our sermon series. Come join us for worship at one of our three sites.

10:00am @ HopeTikipunga - Nehemiah 11-12 (Lorne Campbell)

9:30am @ HopeCentral - Nehemiah 13 (Pauline Hampshire)

9:30am @ HopeOnerahi - Nehemiah 9-10 (Howard Carter)

9:30am Good Friday April 7th - Gathering at the Cross



We are planning to have our combined Churches Good Friday Service around the cross in the green space in front of HopeCentral. If people are wanting to march down to the service people will be gathering up by Church Unlimited and the Anglican Church at 9:00am to walk.

The theme this year is “Behold the man upon the Cross’ focusing on Jesus and using the “I Am” sayings in John’s gospel as a lens to give us insight to who is Jesus who gave his life for us. Pastors and Ministers from our church and others will be sharing two minute reflections on those passages and we will hear John’s account of the crucifixion. We will also be celebrating communion.

Easter Sunday

We will be celebrating Easter (resurrection Sunday) at all our three sites at our regular times this year. We will be starting our sermon series Witness to the resurrection and looking at the wondrous resurrection event through the eyes of the eyewitness accounts we have in scripture.

10:00am @ HopeTikipunga - The Women at the Tomb Mark 16:1-11, Luke 24:1-12 (Pauline Hampshire)

9:30am @ HopeCentral - On the Emmaus Road Luke 24:13-25 (Lorne Campbell)

9:30am @ HopeOnerahi - Mary Magdalene John 20:1-18 (Howard Carter)

Easter Sermon series - Witnesses to the Resurrection

From resurrection Sunday through to Pentecost we will be exploring Paul’s list of people and groups who met the risen Jesus (1 Corinthians 15:3-8) and in particular looking at the gospel narratives of those encounters. I am hoping this will give us assurance of the physical resurrection of Jesus from the dead which is the central event



of our faith and enable us to be confident in sharing this with people. In his Book *the Verdict*, UK lawyer and Christian Val Grieve says “A famous QC once said, ‘when I have a poor case in court, I make a long speech; but when I have a really strong case, I simply call the witnesses.’” For the resurrection the witnesses provide us with a strong case for its validity.

Mission Spot – Chau in Vietnam

Each month I’ve asked our Overseas Missions Advisory Group to highlight one of the missionaries and missions that we as a church support from our budget. With the changing face of mission many of those we support are nationals, who we may never get to see in person this side of heaven, but whose work for the Lord we encourage in prayer and support financially.

Chau, a member of YWAM and based in Ho Chi Minh City, holds a Master’s degree in theology, and has staffed and led a wide range of YWAM schools in Chile, Hawaii and Vietnam.

As a single woman, with older parents, Chau faces both cultural and financial pressures as well as those as a witnessing Christian. To support her outreach through YWAM Chau has worked part-time in a language school teaching Vietnamese to foreigners, and has now begun to work full-time. Although previously Chau was able to combine her YWAM role with that of teaching she will now only be able to continue with YWAM by taking leave or using her holiday time. This she is committed to doing, recently travelling to the far north of the country to teach at a YWAM School.

Alpha @ BOB Café: Launch night – Wednesday May 3rd at 6pm

In five weeks’ time, on May 3rd, the Alpha Team will be hosting the launch night of the Alpha Course @ BOB Café.

Alpha is an 11 week journey for those who are not Christians to find out what Christianity is all about.

The first talk is titled “Is there more to life than this?”

BOB café can only hold 40 people, so with 10 team members running the course, we can only accept 30 guests.

It is anticipated that when invites go public, there could be quite a lot of interest.

So if anyone in the fellowship has family or friends to invite, that you get in quick!

If you are not sure if Alpha is the right setting for someone you want to invite, please watch this, the first Alpha talk from the Alpha Film

series: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hBMMD5C0k-s>

Postcard invitations will be out this Sunday in all three church sites for you to invite a friend.

Please ensure that you your guest is registered as we won’t be accepting people who just “turn up on the night”

The course is free but costs about \$200.00 per person – thank you to all who have said they will support us financially.

If you would like to give to help someone else attend, please contact Karen Cullen.

Registrations are with Colleen in the office: colleen@hopewhagarei.nz or phone 09-4380016

Lorne Campbell and the Alpha team

Community Wellbeing Initiative - Thursday April 20th and April 27th (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 beforehand and one afterwards.

If you are interested please contact Howard for more information or register with Sharon.rossensor@psn.org.nz

Please Note the change of dates... this is to accommodate our facilitators

Can you help with Child care during the Alpha Course?



Is there anyone in the fellowship who could serve the Alpha Course by **being part of a team** to provide childcare for parents who would want to attend the Alpha Course?

This would be a 2 hour commitment most likely on a

Wednesday evening from 6pm – 8pm.

The course starts first week in May for 11 weeks.

If you can offer anytime at all we would appreciate.

As we seek to be a flourishing Christian Community, we would like to make the Course attractive to younger couples who may have children. If you can help ... please contact **Pauline Hampshire** 0272672155 or pauline@hopewhangarei.nz or let **Colleen** know in the office ph. 4380016 or colleen@hopewhangarei.nz

End of Year Tax Receipts

The end of Financial year for tax receipts is this Friday 31st March. Any donations to the church before this date will be included in your tax receipt for the 2022/23 financial year.

I hope to have the tax receipts out by mid-April. Karen Cullen, Administrator.

Blessing

Very simple today. Just a repeat of the blessing that Paul gives at the end of the letter to the Galatians... A book I have come to love more and more over the past month as I've journeyed through it.

The Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with Your Spirit, brothers and sisters Amen.

E ōku tēina, kia tau te aroha noa o tō tātou Ariki, o Īhu Karaiti, ki ō koutou wairua. Āmine.

Howard Carter

SENIOR **MINISTER**

HOPEWHANGĀREI

March 28th 2023

Ps: - I haven't been out with my camera recently. But here is a photo of a Tui in a flax, from over Christmas, which is on a wooden block in my office. A birthday present from a close friend.



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