

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

“Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.”

-Colossians 4:2-6

This passage comes towards the end of Paul’s letter to the church at Colossae. Rather than a list of general admonitions it is a ‘tightly constructed section’ speaking of the Christian duty to spread God’s word. Biblical Commentator Dick Lucas puts it like this...

“It answers realistically the question, what can an ordinary group of believing people do to make sure outsiders hear of Christ? It assumes that the church is committed by lip as well as by life to witness to the saving message, while accepting that comparatively few individual Christians are called to preach.”

Put very simply it means Praying for people to hear the Good news (v2-4) and then Speaking to people about God (v5, 6). Praying is split into two sections our own steadfast constant prayer for the people in our own context. Praying with thanksgiving for the grace we receive from God. Then also for those involved in the proclamation of the gospel, and those who are suffering for that proclamation, like Paul was doing.

Prayer is the start of mission and the key to evangelism. As we pray and focus on God and God’s great grace we are more and more aware of God’s love and concern for those around us. As we pray for those involved in preaching and mission work, I believe, it shows us the importance of such endeavours. Which leads on to it being incorporated in our conversations and communications with people outside the faith.

In our mission process here at HopeWhangarei we believe that Mission starts in prayer.

In May we are asking you to focus on two things in prayer. One is Alpha, which fits in with Paul’s prayer for us that we may proclaim with clarity the mystery of Christ... It is exciting that we have about thirty people along for the Alpha dinner tomorrow night. Please pray that many of them will be keen to carry on the Alpha journey and hear the good news of Jesus Christ. Please pray for those leading the evening and course for the Holy Spirits help to listen to the guests and answer their faith questions.

Secondly, we are inviting people to join in a season of Prayer between Ascension and Pentecost (May 18th-28th). Praying for five of our non-Christian friends, family members or work colleagues to come to Christ, and praying for the church to be renewed by the Holy Spirit. In this season of prayer called ThyKingdomCome we are joining Christians all around the world who put aside time in this season to pray for the renewal of the church and for people to come to know Christ... As one communication puts it...

“From Hong Kong to the far north of Canada, from both Maori and English-speaking churches in New Zealand to Japan and South Korea, from Argentina to Finland, Ministers

and congregations have made Thy Kingdom Come their own adapting and growing this great wave of prayer so that it becomes a natural part of their mission and ministry.”

Here are the notices...

Worship Sunday April 30th 2023

This Sunday we worship at all three of our sites each with their individual flavour and feel. Come join us as we start the second half of our Easter season sermon series, looking at Witnesses to the Resurrection.

10:00am @ HopeTikipunga – Matthew 28:16-20, Acts 1:1-11 (Kris Middendorf-Carter)

9:30am @ HopeCentral – John 20:24-31 (Howard Carter)

9:30am @ HopeOnerahi – John 21 (Lorne Campbell)

Zoom service 9:30am May 7th

As the weather gets colder we will be reinstating our zoom service. It will be the 9:30am service from HopeCentral. **It starts THIS SUNDAY**

The link is <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84819102883>

If you have the app on your phone or other device then the meeting ID is: 848 1910 2883

If you are joining by landline then dial 09 884 6780 and follow the instructions. The meeting ID is the same as for mobile devices.

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.



Alpha @ BOB café ... starts this Wednesday May 3rd.

Do be praying for all our guests that are coming plus the team (42 people in total) that the evening will go well and that many guests will sign up for the course.

Again ... thanks to all who have been praying, inviting, giving, serving and supporting this outreach – the Lord knows who you are and loves it when His people work together to see His kingdom come.

Lorne and the Alpha team

Healing Service ... last Sunday @ Central.

Many people testified to the sense of God's presence as people ministered to one another towards the end of the service. It was good to see four visitors come and receive prayer for their needs. Praise God for the opportunity to be a part of His healing ministry.

In the paper it mentioned that we have a service of divine healing this week (May 7th) as well... however this was a misquote... although we do pray for people each week to know God's help and healing.



Hope Tikipunga Challenge 2023

The past four years we have had a challenge to support Family Works (Presbyterian Support)

2023 - Any knitting/crochet is acceptable. We will have a morning tea on Thursday July 13th at Hope Tikipunga and will invite a representative from Family Works to come along and receive the projects.

There are several ways you can contribute

Crochet a small rug, Knit Peggy squares and sew together, Polar fleece is a good option, Patchwork throws are popular or you might like to donate some wool for someone to use.

Enquiries to: Helen McGregor 027 437 3016 or Kaye Anderson 021 109 9002



Coming up ... a ladies morning tea

Hope Central 8th July - 9-30am

Our speaker will be Helen Blaxland speaking about her time in Cambodia and her work in Hospice Whangarei

All welcome

Keep this date free ladies!!!

Giving and Tax Receipts

Giving for the period 1st July 2022 - 30th April 2023 is: \$181,437.00 against a budget of \$194,600.00. A deficit of \$13,163.00

Tax receipts are now available. Please contact Karen Cullen karen@hopewhangarei.nz to request either an email version or hard copy of your receipt.

Blessing

Psalm 66 is a wonderful Psalm of praise where its writer speaks of God's great love and mercy historically in Israel and also in his own life. At the end of the Psalm he gives thanks to God because God hears his prayers... So I leave you with the Psalmists affirmation in verse 19 as an encouragement...

*but God has surely listened
and has heard my prayer.*

*Nei rā he pono kua whakarongo te Atua,
kua tahuri ia ki tōku reo inoi.*

Howard Carter

SENIOR MINISTER

HOPEWHANGĀREI

May 2nd 2023

PS: - Kris and I had the weekend off last week (5th Sunday in a month) and spent the weekend in Kerikeri. The weather was good for resting up and catching up... but not so good for getting out and taking photos of birds. We did visit Aroha Island, a QE2 Trust reserve/bird sanctuary. It was a quick visit between rain showers, and the wind was howling up the Kerikeri inlet. But we did see the local Kōtuku-Ngutupapa (Royal Spoonbill) colony resolutely standing their ground in the face of the storm.

