

Waitaki Presbyterian Parish
Minister:- Andrew Scott, Ph. 0223552659
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Welcome.....are there any notices?

Call to Worship:- From Faith Forever Singing 63

Sing:- WOV 77 'For the beauty of the earth...'

Prayer of Adoration and Confession...

Hands (with inspiration from Joy Cowley)

We hold our hands out to you Lord, some are smooth and yet to experience life,

Others are wrinkled and scared with life's experiences carved within,

Some have planted veges, fed chooks, cats, children and ducks,

Some have skimmed the pits off plum jam, some have flipped pikelets and baked scones.

Some have skipped stones over smooth waters.

Some have blistered chopping wood, some have frozen feeding out in winter.

Some have bought new life into the world on the lambing rounds or in the maternity ward.

Some have clenched tight to hide pain or anxiety during

troubled times, but then unfolded to brush away the tears.

Life has its ups and downs and we come this morning to be still and know you are with us, O Lord.

We hold our hands out to you like a bowl, to receive your blessings. Lord as you bless these hands with your presence, so bless all their efforts, all the planting, baking, cleaning, feeding, chopping, touching, loving, adoring, receiving and giving.

We confess we haven't always given the much needed helping hand, sometimes we fear to ask for that same helping hand.

Forgive us for all the times we fall short of what you would have us do and be. Thank you for all your blessings Lord.

Amen

Sing...WOV451 'Lord Jesus Christ, you have come to us...'

Reading.... Matt 10 v 40-42

Reflection... From 'Whoever Welcomes' by Wes Howard – Brook

Whoever Welcomes

By Wes Howard-Brook

I know what you people are up to."

Ryan looked up from his lunch plate and into my eyes. He said it simply, yet as if in on a conspiracy. I asked, "What do you mean?"

"For months, I've been coming to this lunch," he continued, "trying to figure out who you people are and why you're doing this." He paused. "You're not from a church. You don't talk about God or the Bible. You just smile and serve all this food week after week." He paused again. "But then I figured it out."

I smiled back and waited to hear what mystery Ryan had solved about why we were there. We smiled and waited, as if naming it aloud would somehow take away from the truth we both knew. Finally, Ryan said, "You're doing this because Jesus said you'd find him among the poor, and you're looking for Jesus."

Ryan, of course, was right. We had begun our weekly lunch at the Community Hall in our suburban town over a year ago. It started because one of our Bible study members had heard Jesus' words, "You have the poor with you always" and, as she put it, "was convicted." Marilyn said, "Where are the poor amidst my suburban life? Nowhere." So, one day she brought a pot of soup and some sandwiches and set up a table outside the local food bank to see what would happen. In a few months, it had become a feast. A helpful city council member suggested we use the Hall and it became a weekly banquet. About fifty people come: homeless folks, low income seniors, people who hear that there is a "free lunch," volunteers who share table with whoever is there. It is one of the joyous highlights of my week.

Matthew's gospel presents the invitation to hospitality from both sides of the table. In chapter 25, there is the story of the king who separates the sheep from the goats. The criteria: you fed me, you clothed me, you visited me, you welcomed me. The reward comes to "you" when you take care of those in need.

In Matthew 10, the shoe is on the other foot. Jesus has called disciples and given them authority over unclean spirits and to heal the sick. Jesus warns them to be prepared not to be welcomed by everyone. They are being sent out "like sheep in the midst of wolves" (Matthew 10:16). They will face rejection and persecution. But Jesus says, "whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me" (Matthew 10:40). Here, the reward is to "them" for welcoming "you," for giving "a cup of cold water to one of these little ones."

In Matthew's world as in ours, welcoming strangers and sharing table is risky business. You can't trust "them," can you? What if "they" take advantage? Reasonable prudence teaches us to be cautious and even suspicious of people we don't know. We surround ourselves with fences and gates and borders to keep clear lines between "us" and "them." It only "makes sense," after all.

But the love Jesus proclaims and embodies has never "made sense." It has always sought to break down our "defenses" and open our hearts and lives so that God's grace can pour in and fill us with the joy the world cannot give or take away. That grace often comes in the form of the sister or brother in need of a meal, a warm coat, or just an authentic smile. Ryan was right. Jesus was there, sitting at the table and serving the sandwiches.

Wes Howard-Brook teaches theology and biblical studies at Seattle University, and is the author of several books. He also shares the ministry, Abide in Me, with his wife, Sue Ferguson Johnson (www.abideinme.net).

Sing... WOV 514 'O Jesus I have promised...'

Reading... Acts 2 v14 & 32-41

Reflection....John Hore

I've had a struggle since Andrew texted to ask, 'Could you take the service on July the 2nd?' I looked up the Lectionary, as you do to see what the readings for the day were. But they didn't give me a clue what I was supposed to say.

I kept thinking of Peter, so I went to our Acts reading and read again about this man Peter who Jesus called the rock, 'The rock on which I will build my church,' he said. Peter who promised so much to Jesus. That he would follow Him wherever Jesus would go. But Jesus knew how fickle men's hearts were' and prophesied that Peter would deny Him not once but three times before morning, before the rooster did the wake-up calls. 'I don't know that man', he said, three times.

This was Peter who fifty days later on the day of Pentecost, when the sounds of a violent wind had descended on the room where they were meeting, and there appeared to be fire descending on each of them. How astonishing and bewildering, and to top it all off they found they could speak in other languages and as they rushed out the crowded streets of Jerusalem, the people from all over found they could understand their message of the risen Christ's forgiveness.

Did you notice in the reading, Peter didn't stand up alone. Not only was he filled with the HS, but the other disciples were at his side. First he eleven, then the 72, then the three thousand, then.... the world. Their message has come through to us here in Oamaru.... at what would have seemed to them to be 'the ends of the earth.'

But where to from here? Where to in the future? That is the question. We have been losing numbers for years. Not growing as in Peter's time. When I became an Elder back in 1980 we, as a Parish in Duntroon were looking at Church Union with the Anglicans. There was a willingness locally, but it didn't happen. Later, after much discussion, town/country Parishes were formed, Waitaki being one of them. But numbers kept dwindling and churches kept closing. Now we have only one place of worship with its doors open; here at Eveline, and that's in a Parish that once had nine worship centres.

In my early days at Duntroon we had a Newsletter which told us not only when the church activities were on, how finances were going, but also who needed a visit either in Hospital or at home. That all changed when the privacy act came

in and we didn't know which of the 'others' who needed a visit or to be prayed for.

The Newsletter went to all who professed to be Presbyterian (& a few others as well) with the Ministers Notes being appreciated by many 'others', that being the non-regular worshipers. It was good to hear they were being read and not consigned to the waste bin.

When Waitaki Parish was formed there were over 300 newsletters going out in the Duntroon – Papakaio and Oamaru areas, a practice we agreed to reduce later, because of cost, so we were eventually sending them only to the 'converted'. I was sad to see that happen as the Newsletter was an excuse to go visit. Just to get them out was quite a mission as our patch involved driving over 50 km. Now its mostly electronic.

As the country churches closed our people didn't move down the road to the next one of a Sunday. There was a lot of hurt at OUR church closing and 'I'm not going down the road to join those 'others''. It's amazing the 'boundaries' we had in the country, that don't seem to be in town the same. Look about, there's people from Weston, the South Hill, Waiareka, North Oamaru and who have I missed?

We lived on the Duntroon side of the 'Boundary' but Tokarahi was our 'home' church and Duntroon our second 'home'. Donald and Heather were two k's closer to Tokarahi but Duntroon was their 'Home' church. When Otekaieke closed only one person from up there was a regular worshiper at Duntroon. When Duntroon closed very few came to Tokarahi. Maybe we closed the wrong church as most Tokarahi people travelled to Duntroon.

A lot of country worshipers have been moving to Oamaru over the years as they retired from farming, feeding the town parishes with the Eveline Congregation getting its fair share, even some from outside the Waitaki boundaries.

By the way how many know where the Waitaki Parish boundaries are?

(Describe or ask someone.) (Tell story of Doug Grierson on Grayson Pk.)

This vast area is 'our patch', we are part of the Waitaki Parish and not just the Eveline Congregation.

This vast patch has many, many 'others' we need to 'pray for and pray in'. People who need our prayers or indeed a visit. Think of someone who may need your prayers or a visit be it in town or out in the country. Some I know have found the Covid shut down very hard and have almost become hermits, as I believe many round NZ have. One of 'my people' that has shared with me how

lonely it was, and how frightened they were of catching it at their age, & admitting even having had counselling to help to Try to 'get back to normal.'

Getting back to normal, whatever normal is? Will we ever be the same. Probable no. But there's no going back. Will we ever feel really comfortable in a crowd again? It used to be who is passing the buck.

Now we look about and wonder whose passing the bug.

Flying used to be a good place to catch airline flue, now there's one more than one bug to catch.

Now lets turn our thoughts to the future. We have been meeting to discuss the possibilities with Andrews help. Which road are we going to take.

But even more pressing we need to pray that God will provide us with the means, being it people or financial to carry on the ministry Andrew has begun, here in the Waitaki Parish. His contract finishes in February which is not far away.

I have enjoyed Andrew as a person and as a Minister and would like to see his ministry continue here whether with us at Waitaki or in the greater North Otago area.

Let's take a couple of minutes to listen to what God wants us to do or be in the future, and who of the 'others' in His family He wants us to get beside in the coming months.

(Hand out cards and writing sticks.)

Pray:- Lord in your wisdom guide us to someone who needs Your help, through us, Your people here at Eveline, and speak to us about our future. (2 min quiet)

Sing..

'Brother sister let me serve you.	2 We are pilgrims on a journey
Let me be as Christ to you	We are brothers on the road
Pray that I may have the Grace	We are here to help each other
To let me be your servant to	Walk a mile & bear the load

I will weep when you are weeping 4 When we sing to God in Heaven
When you laugh I'll laugh with you We shall find such harmony.

I will share your joy & sorrow Born of all we've known together
Till we've seen this journey through Of Christs love and agony. (1st.again)

Prayer for Ourselves and Others.... (from Helen Steiner Rice)

Father in Heaven, hear our prayer.
May the people of all nations be united in your care.
For earth's peace and our salvation can come only by your grace,
and not through bombs and missiles, and our quest for outer space...
For until we all recognise that 'the battle is the Lords'
and peace on earth cannot be won by strategy and swords.
Will we go on vainly fighting as we have done in the past'
Finding only empty victories, and peace that cannot last...
We've grown so rich and mighty and so arrogantly strong,
We can no longer ask in humbleness...'God show us where we are wrong.'
We've come to trust completely in the power of man made things,
Unmindful of God's mighty power, and that He is 'King of Kings.'
We have turned our eyes away from Him to go our selfish ways,
Money power and pleasure are the gods we serve today...
The good green earth You gave us to enjoy,
through greed & fear & hatred, we are seeking to destroy.....
O Father we do ask You to stir and wake our sleeping souls,
Renew our faith and lift us us and give us higher goals.
Grant us Heavenly guidance as war threatens us again.
For, more than guided missiles the world needs guided men. Amen.

Offering and Prayer...

God we bring to you our offering, and in doing so we reach out to you as a child reaches out to its mother, and like a child we offer you a special gift of love. It is something of great beauty, small & fragile, yet amazingly strong. We offer our gift as it is, without any fancy wrapping, for you already know what we bring better than we do.

So here it is, Lord, with all our love and gratitude, the gift you made, the gift you cherish, the gift of ourselves. And we pray the prayer You taught us....

Our Father in Heaven, Holy be Your name,
Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from a time of trial and deliver us from evil.
For the Kingdom the Power and the Glory are Yours forever.
Amen

Blessing...

We no longer see Jesus as Peter did but we are the Body of Christ. Spirited and alive, moving in our time. God is always with us for where there is love, there is God. Go and be the Body of Christ, Full of love for the 'others' around you. And...

May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the Love of God, and the Fellowship
of the Holy Spirit be with us all, now
and forevermore.

Amen.

Bank details:- Waitaki Presbyterian Parish 02-0940-0018657-00