

Onehunga Co-operating Parish

NEWSLETTER

29 March 2020 (*Lent 5*)

Parish Minister: Rt Rev Fakaofu Kaio - Phone 634.5431 *Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa NZ 2018-2020*

Parish Minister: Rev Kaurasi Lagi - Phone 834.5222

Associate Minister: Rev Murray McMeikan - Phone 636.0230 *Associate Minister: Rev Peter Wedde* - Phone 636.0673

Parish Secretary: Lepaimasina Warren - Phone 256.1987 *Parish Elder & Administrator: Keith Guyan* - Phone 524.2590

Parish Office: Phone 636.4587 Email: ocp@xtra.co.nz Website: www.onehungaparish.org

Welcome to our first email Newsletter. Since last Sunday, all our OCP worship services, activities and meetings have been postponed or cancelled until further notice. With Alert Level 4 for COVID-19 pandemic from last Wednesday night, we all now need to STAY AT HOME for at least a month. Church services, activities and meetings will resume only when we get the “all clear” from the NZ Government and are authorised by our national church bodies and confirmed by our local church ministers.

For those for whom we have email addresses, we will try to send an email Newsletter.

For those who can, please forward this to your church groups or friends. Many thanks!

We are all encouraged to read the Scripture passages set down for Sunday Worship and continue to pray for all those affected by the COVID-19 coronavirus in NZ and around the world.

Sunday 29 April Readings Psalm 130 Ezekiel 37: 1-14 Romans 8: 6-11 Gospel of John 11: 1-45

A reflection from Rev Peter Wedde for Sunday 29th and for the two weeks leading up to Easter –

John Chapter 11, verses 1 to 45 is the Gospel reading for Sunday 29 March, the Fifth Sunday in Lent.

It is a longer reading than usual, but that is so we can read the whole story of the raising of Lazarus. Have you noticed how people quite often refer this miracle of Jesus? I have heard rugby commentators refer to a surprising turn-around in a match as “the greatest comeback since Lazarus”. It takes some Bible story to impress football followers! What do you think about it?

John makes it a straightforward story. The gospel doesn't say all that much about how Jesus could do such a thing but John shows it is a great sign, in fact, the last of the seven signs of John's gospel. These signs show Jesus' goodness and love for the world. We all know the seven signs of John's Gospel although it might take us a bit of time to remember them. The first was the sign of new hope and promise when Jesus changed water to wine at the marriage at Cana. He healed the official's son in Capernaum and the paralysed man by the pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem. He fed the 5000 in the wilderness, came walking on the sea to his disciples in their boat, and gave sight to a man born blind. All these sign come in the first half of John's Gospel to show what Jesus was bringing to the world.

The raising of Lazarus showed that Jesus meant what he promised when he said he came to bring life. John's gospel shows that the raising of Lazarus was the last sign that led directly to Jesus' death on the cross. The leaders at Jerusalem wanted above all to stop the people believing and following him. So it is fitting that we read again about new life for Lazarus as we come near to Easter – only one more Sunday, Palm Sunday, and we are in Holy Week and then Easter.

Let's remember the story of Lazarus and let's read it and on to the next chapters in John so that we can all be a part of the Easter story. Even if we are staying in our own home, we are all part of the one church as we read and pray “together in a special way” even for those who might feel all alone. Jesus tells us clearly the meaning of the sign of the raising of Lazarus in his words to Lazarus' sister Martha – “I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me will live, even though they die; and those who live and believe in me will never die.” And as he asked Martha, so he asks us, “Do you believe this?”

CHURCH NEWS

Warmest congratulations to **Christine Pili** who has recently been awarded the Postgraduate Certificate in Digital and Collaborative Learning.

Sincere condolences and loving prayers for the family and friends of **Papa Lewutope Katoa** whose funeral service was held last Tuesday. And we acknowledge *in memoriam* the recent passing away of **Mama Tangi Aumatangi**, in Australia.

“To all our dear folks at Onehunga Co-operating Parish, please look after yourselves, and also take care of your loved ones. These are strange and difficult times. It is something that we have never experienced before in our lifetimes” Rt Rev Fakaofu Kaio