

# Onehunga Co-operating Parish

# NEWSLETTER

31 May 2020 (*Pentecost*)

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**Church Council** will meet this *coming* Tuesday 2 June 7pm in the Lounge to plan for a return to worship services at Grey Street and St Stephen's Churches, starting 10am **NEXT Sunday 7 June**. We will follow current Alert Level 2 safety guidelines. This includes a contact-tracing register at the door, a limit of 100 people in each area of the church complex, and greeting one another without touching. Hugs and morning teas can resume when we get to Alert Level 1!

**Please continue to pray for all affected around the world by the Covid-19 pandemic.**

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

**Sunday 31 May Bible Readings** Psalm 104: 24-34, 35b, Acts 2: 1-21

1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12: 3b-13, Gospel of John 20: 19-23

### *A reflection from Rev Peter Wedde*

We are given a choice of readings for this special Sunday in the year. Pentecost is like a confirmation of the Good News of God's love which Jesus brought through his life, death and resurrection, confirmed or guaranteed by God's gift of his Holy Spirit. We remember and share in this Good News story every year, beginning with Advent in December, then Christmas, followed by Lent, which is a preparation for Easter. We celebrate the great time of Easter for seven weeks, leading to Pentecost. The name comes from the Greek word for "fifty" because seven weeks gives us fifty days from Easter. Pentecost "rounds-off" the story for another year. For the next 6 months we live through what is still called in the Roman Catholic Church, "Ordinary Time", which actually refers to the "order" or number of the Sundays "after Pentecost". During these months, when there are no special times for remembering the beginning and completion of Jesus' life on earth, all churches follow through the story of Jesus' life as told in one of the Gospels – this year the first Gospel: Matthew.

We are given a choice of readings for Pentecost. Here is a brief introduction to each suggested reading.

**Acts 2: 1-21** The Story of the first day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came to the followers of Jesus after he had been crucified and had risen again, and ascended back to God.

**Numbers 11: 24-30** Here is a strange story of the coming of the Holy Spirit to leaders of the people of Israel in the time of Moses, a story we often overlook or forget. It reminds us that God was at work through his Holy Spirit all through the story of God's people in the Bible. What happened at Pentecost was a renewed coming of the Spirit to confirm why Jesus had come to earth, to bring God's salvation and to spread the Good News through all the earth.

**Psalms 104: 24-34, 35b** This is one of the great psalms of praise and thanksgiving for all the wonders of God's creation. Notice how the psalm says "all living things have come from the Spirit of God". Remember that in both Hebrew and Greek, the word for "spirit" is also the word for "breath". Notice also that the reading suggests we leave out the first part of verse 35, not because it is a wrong idea, but because it does not fit in with the main theme of thanksgiving and praise to God for creating the world.

**1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12: 3b-13** In this chapter Paul sets out many of the good gifts of the Spirit to the church, and in these verses he stresses that people in the church should not get carried away with emotional or exaggerated behaviour, but should always be trying to understand better the way God wants us to live. Why not carry on and read the whole of 1st Corinthians 12 and then the next chapter as well? That would be a great way to celebrate Pentecost!

**John 20: 19-23 or John 7: 37-39** John 7 tells us that Jesus promised God's Spirit would come upon his people, and then in John 20, we read how after he had risen again, he came to his disciples and "breathed" on them. The Spirit is the "breath of God" amongst his people, shared by all in God's church. *Enjoy the message of this special Sunday – Pentecost.*