



Nelson Anglican Updates

Staying Connected as a Faith Community



Message from Bishop Steve

Kia Ora Whanau. It's with great thankfulness we approach alert level 3 in a few days due to the decreasing number of active cases of COVID-19. This week I want to encourage you around the theme of 'waiting' on God.

Where were you on Monday at 4pm as our Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern announced whether we would be moving out of this alert level? I imagine many of you were eagerly waiting and hanging on tenterhooks to hear the news. I want to ask you how you find waiting? What other things are you waiting for in this life?

Every day I watch my spinach plant to see how my seeds are growing. Perhaps you are waiting for some results or a situation to be resolved, plans to become clear or for life to just go back to 'normal.' Maybe you are waiting for a hug

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from a friend, a coffee or a meal out, to visit a loved one or for a job to be done. Whatever it may be, I think we could all agree that waiting can be difficult, but it certainly can be an opportunity to grow in patience. It's natural to ask questions like 'how long?' However, as I have been reflecting this past month I have realised that the future is not going to come out of nowhere.

With waiting comes the temptation to become discontent, resentful, apathetic or restless. What we need is to be intentional about the opportunities we have right now within our waiting. Humility is the ability to accept what we cannot currently change, but the willingness to work on who we are becoming in the process. In the absence of clarity around the future we don't have to be inactive, we can still be faithful and fruitful as we wait - which is good news. Take fishermen for example - when the weather isn't right they don't just sit around for some downtime, they mend their nets and prepare for the next trip when the weather will be better to catch fish.

God wants to bless you in your waiting and to continue to grow you, for he is still present in the waiting. You can choose today to continue to wait in hope, to obey, to serve, to worship, to abide and to grow. My challenge is what will you do with your waiting? Who are you willing to become? Isaiah 40:31 in the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) reads 'but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.' My prayer for you is that you find God's grace and strength as you wait this week. Kia Kaha - until next time.



Health Updates

Rachel Boyack, Health & Safety Coordinator

As we head into the final weekend of our Level 4 lockdown, I want to thank everyone in our Diocesan family for doing such a great job of staying home and saving lives. We've stopped the chain of transmission and slowed the spread of Covid-19.

I liken this part of the journey to a Black Caps batting innings. The last thing we need now is a Great New Zealand Batting Collapse, after we've achieved such a high score for the first four weeks! So let's hit it out of the park and stay home this weekend to save lives.

During the week we sent out our Alert Level 3 plan to all parishes. The only changes for the Diocese are that we can now conduct funerals or weddings for up to ten people. Please speak

to the Bishop or myself if you plan to proceed with a ceremony so we can support you to have the right cleaning and planning protocols in place. We have also introduced a policy for 'Pastoral Care Bubbles' so that your parish can safely match people who may be on their own and lonely to an existing small bubble. Talk to me if you want more information.

We are now working through our plan for Alert Level 2. At this Alert Level we will be able to do a lot more, but we do have to put some strict safety measures in place, such as registers for contact tracing, physical distancing measures and thorough cleaning practices. We will be seeking input from our teams as we put this plan together so please send any feedback or ideas to HS@nelsonanglican.nz.

In the meantime, please remember that at Alert Levels 3 and 4, we all need to stay home to save lives. Please only leave your bubble for essential services (like grocery shopping) and keep your exercise safe and local. Please check in on your older and vulnerable parishioners to make sure they have everything they need, or just to have a chat.

Thanks again to all of you for everything you're doing to slow the spread of Covid-19!



Youth

Brad Wood, Youth Enabler

As we look back over the past four weeks it's incredible to see the creativity and energy poured into ministering to our young people throughout the diocese. Our team of youth leaders has done an amazing job and we should be proud of them. In fact we should be proud of all our ministry leaders who have stepped up to the challenges of lockdown and digital ministry. We should also be encouraging our ministry leaders to be kind on themselves as they face the stress, messiness and frustration of learning new patterns of ministry, life and relationships. Many things that worked six weeks ago don't work right now and that's OK. As Bishop Steve mentions in his weekly video blog, this might be a season of waiting for you and your ministry. He says "God wants to bless you in your waiting. His is with you in your waiting". My prayer is that we would continue to be creative in our ministry; that we would be kind to ourselves and one another when things aren't working how we hoped; and that we will be seeking God's voice in this season of waiting.

May you all have a blessed week,
Brad.

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Thinking Intergenerationally

Sue Fallow, Children & Families Enabler

Over the last few years parishes have been thinking through, experimenting with and instituting services that are designed to cater for a variety of generations worshipping together. Most parishes have had mixed results and would acknowledge that this is 'a work in progress.' However during this period of lockdown where services are live streamed into homes, parishes have been given the opportunity of experimenting further with this style of worship. There are some exciting developments throughout the Diocese and while we have the opportunity to attend online services you might like to tune into one. I would recommend Buller, All Saints or St Stephen's. Children and Families Ministry (CFM) workers throughout the Diocese are collaborating with clergy in terms of services as well as often streaming their own sessions for families - which is exciting progress in the right direction. There is also greater collaboration between Elder Care and CFM workers as parishes discuss ways to assist the elderly who are isolated. One idea that Emily Campbell from All Saints had been discussing with the Parish's Elder Care worker was the now almost lost art of letter writing. The idea being that a child would become the buddy of an elder parishioner and write them a letter. Hopefully this would begin an exchange of letters that could grow into a post pandemic relationship and facilitate meaningful community across all ages. Undoubtedly this time in history is giving rise to creative, new ways of ministry. It is exciting whilst also challenging in this time of rapid change.



Reconstructing the 'New Normal'

Rev Dr Graham O'Brien, Ministry Education Coordinator

This week we all watched as our Prime Minister outlined the process we will take back to a resemblance of normal. We are all waiting for the light at the end of the tunnel as we seek to return to the normality of life. But as we think about what it means to be church, through this time we have been experiencing community, worship, daily rhythms in a variety of different ways, which begs the question: what will our new normal be?

For me the worst thing that could happen is that we come out of lockdown and return to our Parish's old way of life as if the last 4 weeks never happened. Instead, we have the opportunity to reflect on what God has been saying to us over this time, to embrace the new opportunities that have been presented to us as the Church, and to reflect on what our new way of being could be. I would like to pose a series of questions to help that reflection and invite you to determine the answers for yourselves. For an example of what such a reflection might look like, I invite you to read my interview with Paul Milson, from Brightwater.

1. What new opportunities has this time provided you and your parish in ministry?

For many parishes, the last four weeks have provided new ways of connecting to the wider community. How are these connections going to be maintained after lockdown? What has God been doing in the community and how are we going to join with God in those places? For example in relation to maintaining an online

presence in the community, linking your new Facebook page to the local community page is a great reminder to the community that the church is alive, active and cares. It might also be the new connections made through pastoral care - how will these be maintained? For many in the community, there will be ongoing issues, especially financial, so how does the Church plan to offer ongoing support.

This time has also raised a lot of questions about meaning, purpose, and fear in people's lives. There is at least one parish (All Saints) that has begun an online version of the bible course Alpha, to invite people to reflect on the questions of life that Covid-19 has stirred up. Others are looking at Alpha, once lockdown has ended. We need to grasp these opportunities to share hope now before they are lost.

2. How do you think Church will be different once we can meet up again?

Many churches have experienced online worship or daily rhythms of prayer for the first time. Once we can meet up again, you might want to consider what aspects of these forms of worship you want to keep using. If your parish has been connecting to more people during this time through online mediums, how do you plant to maintain that connection? It might mean you continue with your online services or daily prayer rhythms so that there can be more regular patterns of worship outside the Sunday service. You might also consider recording or streaming Sunday services so those at home can watch.

3. What questions has this time raised for you in your ministry and in the life of your parish?

This is a question worth reflecting on with your leadership team - it is not necessarily about coming up with answers, but it is about asking the right questions so that we can step into the new spaces that God is inviting us into.

The harvest is plentiful, and God has gotten us out of the pews, so let us listen to what God saying as we step into the new normal.

God Bless, Graham.



Story of Hope

Despite Nelson being one of the more beautiful places in New Zealand to live, there are still plenty of social needs to be aware of beyond the shared struggles of confinement and home-schooling. Many community members had precarious living situations to start with, which this lockdown has had potential to exacerbate. Lee-ann O'Brien who is the manager of Whanake Youth (a youth health and wellbeing provider in the region) and her team have been connecting with vulnerable teenagers in new ways during this lockdown and have seen some hopeful results.

Whanake Youth have been working to drop off care packages that encourage self-care and creativity to youth across the region. Items like butterfly journals which encourage reflection, gratitude and positive thinking as well as recipes, colouring books and other crafts have been distributed. This has been made possible in part by the Anglican Care Charitable Trust and parishes like St Barnabas Stoke who have lent their vans to do deliveries. Some of the deliveries are initially met with suspicion and tense interactions but have soon given way to connection and gratitude as families see that it is truly a gift that is being delivered with no expectations for anything in return.

The deliveries have provided opportunity to connect with families who haven't had tangible human connection in a whole month. Through regular drop-offs and visits vulnerable youth have been given opportunity to connect with

a safe adult, offload to someone other than immediate family and gain a sense of stability. Lee-ann states that the flow-on effects have been remarkable as she has seen young people grow in resilience and discover what they are capable of in what could have been an incredibly stressful time.

The learning points have been that in any community connection, hope and purpose are so important. Although Whanake Youth is a diverse organization with differing beliefs it is wonderful that the Anglican Church gets to be such a crucial part of serving the needs of the others. Through working for Whanake Youth others are able to rub shoulders with people like Lee-ann, as she carries the hope of Jesus with her into every situation and offers a hope of something far, far greater.

Unsung heroes & Stories of Hope

Every week we enjoy collecting stories of hope from across the Diocese to share with you for celebration and encouragement. If you know of someone personally or you have heard of someone who you think is worth celebrating, or if you have heard of a great story of hope then please get in touch with us! Email Brad at youth@nelsonanglican.nz - we would love to hear from you.