

28 March 2020
Day 3 of NZ Lockdown

Dear Precious Parish Family,

What a week this has been.

What a different landscape we all now find ourselves.

What gratitude is in our hearts for—

- the way in which the government is dealing with this situation
- the medical personnel who are working so hard
- the researchers who are working tirelessly to find and produce a vaccine
- the supermarket workers, postal workers, service station attendants, pharmacy staff, rest home staff, social services staff (e.g. Oranga Tamariki, WINZ, etc), firewood deliverers, emergency services and many others who are keeping the essential services going
- the gift of tv news and newspapers to keep us informed
- technology that lets us stay connected
- the family and friends who are helping those most vulnerable to obtain groceries and medicines
- everyone who is making connections with others to check in, listen, and encourage
- the presence of the Holy Spirit within us to comfort and guide—one of the names for the Holy Spirit that Jesus used was *Paraclete* which most English Bibles translate as Comforter. Literally, *Paraclete* means “one called alongside to help”.

Let us keep the government and all those who are working in essential services (many of whom are members of our parish) in our prayers for wisdom, strength, rest, peace, protection and, yes, joy.

CONTACTING US

After the government’s announcement on Monday, we had a mad scramble over the next 48 hours to shift the Parish Centre (computers, printers, and necessary files and supplies) to our home and deliver Hope Project booklets. Our thanks to Tracey Hall, Kate and Keith Honey, Joanna and Joshua Lorimer, Mark Ross, and Mandy Steele for helping us deliver approximately 1,200 booklets.

The Parish Centre is now based in Robin’s and our dining room and lounge. Nicky Hawes will do her work from her laptop at her home including sending out the end of year receipts next month.

Contacting the Parish Office is the same as before either by ringing 03 768 7508 or emailing office@greymouthanglican.co.nz. Robin can also be contacted on 0210 228 7926 or robin@greymouthanglican.co.nz and Marge on 0210 233 2189 or margetefft@xtra.co.nz.

PASTORAL CARE

Once the lockdown was in place Robin and I began working on a number of things to keep us connected and to make sure everyone is being appropriately looked after. I am working my way slowly through the parish phone directory to make sure that I personally touch base with every household. These are not rushed conversations so they are taking time and if you haven’t heard from me since Monday, I promise that you will. In addition, Robin and I

have been making sure our parish email list is up to date so we can send out regular messages to hopefully encourage you. So do check your emails from time to time.

Robin and I have also put every parishioner into a Care Cluster with someone designated as the “leader” who will be keeping in regular phone contact with their cluster. Robin and I will keep in touch with the “leaders”. Hopefully, everyone in a cluster will already know the person who will be making contact with them. We will send out a list of the cluster groups in a separate email. Our purpose in this is to ensure we are able to offer pastoral care to everyone in these unusual times.

I hasten to add that the Care Cluster mechanism is NOT an attempt to control who contacts whom. Anyone, of course, can ring anyone. Also, anyone is welcome to contact either Robin or me directly by phone or by email either for a chat or if your current support network breaks down and you need someone to assist with getting groceries or medicines for you. We have a number of people in the parish who are available to help if needed.

WORSHIP EXPERIENCES

Some of you may be wondering why last weekend’s newsletter and sermon was not posted on the website on Tuesday as per normal. The government’s announcement at 1:30pm on Monday made almost everything I had written and said about how we would be functioning as a parish at Level 2 obsolete and I didn’t want to cause any confusion.

If you have visited the website this week, you may have noticed that a banner is going across the top that gave the status as we knew it last weekend. Unfortunately, we have not been able to contact our website administrator to change the banner to reflect the current status. This will be altered in due course. To be clear—

- There are **NO** public worship services until further notice
- The church is **NOT** open for prayer and **ALL** of our groups are in **RECESS** until further notice so we can all **STAY** in our particular bubble

So, how do we “gather” for worship in this time of scattered lockdown? Sometime on Sunday (March 29) we will post on the website (www.greymouthanglican.co.nz) an audio worship experience. You will be able to find it by clicking on “Church Life” and then “View Sermons”. This will be a very basic experience as our techie know-how at present is limited.

For the future we are working hard at upscaling our technical knowledge and hope to find a way to bring video worship experiences to you. We are also looking at possibilities of streaming live, using video conferencing, Holy Week meditations, and even a way of sharing communion. Please pray for us as we seek ways to effectively join with you in worship. Also, pray that we find ways to effectively engage with our folk who are not connected to the internet. And do not forget, that you have a Bible and the Holy Spirit within you. Make use of this gift of time to go deeper into your relationship with Jesus.

With love and blessings,

Marge

P.S. Please send through testimonies that we can share with the rest of the parish. For example, insights the Lord is giving you, kindnesses shown to you, answers to prayer, etc.