

Greymouth & Kumara Anglican Parish
Lockdown Newsletter 5
25/26 April 2020 - Lockdown Day 32

MARGE WRITES

As we move to Level 3 on 28 April please note that parish life will not change from how it has been at Level 4—

- Weekend services will continue via ZOOM for the foreseeable future
- Home groups will still not be able to meet in person, but, where possible, continue via ZOOM or other video conferencing facility
- The Parish Office will remain closed
- The Church building will remain closed
- Marge, Robin and Nicky will continue to work from home
- Care Cluster Leaders will continue to contact their members via phone or other means
- All rosters (e.g. services, church cleaning, lawn mowing, etc.) are on hold until Level 2
- Robin and I will continue to invite people to assist with intercessions, reading, etc.

Our weekend services via ZOOM continue to be well attended (34 Saturday; 94 Sunday) .

Please keep sending in your testimonies so we can share how God is blessing and teaching you.

With love and blessings, *Marge*

NEXT WEEKEND'S SERVICES

Our services this next weekend (2/3 May) will again be via ZOOM—6pm Saturday and 11am Sunday. A link will be sent out by email on Friday. To prepare for this coming weekend, you may like to ponder the theme and readings ahead of time--

Our Theme for this coming weekend is— The Good Shepherd

Our Readings for this coming weekend are— Ezekiel 34:11-16; John 9:35-10:21

Also we have noticed some people entering into ZOOM and then dropping out. If you are having difficulty staying connected, please ring Marge this week and she may be able to help. She has helped several this past week who were then able to join for the first time last weekend.

THANK YOU'S

Again, we want to say thank you to everyone who is helping and encouraging others during this time. Thank you to Tricia Hird and David Stapleton, Adele Wilkins, and Gavin Riley for prayers and readings during services.

END OF FINANCIAL YEAR GIVING RECEIPTS

If you have not received your end of year giving receipt, please contact Robin or Marge this week at one of the phone numbers or email addresses at the end of this newsletter.

VESTRY SNIPPETS

Vestry met via ZOOM last Thursday. Below is a summary of the discussions-

- *Finances*
 - The diocese is the employer for all paid staff in the diocese for the purposes of the Charities Commission and Inland Revenue. Therefore, it is up to the diocese to apply for the wage subsidy which it did so and we wait to hear the outcome.
 - All employees are currently receiving their full wages.
 - Envelope and plate giving is down because we are not able to physically gather. Vestry is grateful for those who are able to save up their envelopes to bring to church when we are able to physically gather again.
 - 10 people were able to shift from the envelope scheme to the automatic payment scheme before lockdown. Vestry hopes more will be able to when we are at Level 2.
 - Vestry discussed how we might be able to help other parishes that may struggle more than we will. No decisions were taken as it is too soon to know what the circumstances will be, but it was a good discussion to be returned to in the future.
- *Pastoral Care and Morale of the Parish*
 - Vestry acknowledged the positive effect that our Care Cluster leaders were having by touching base with their group every week. Many of the leaders have commented on how they are getting to know the people in their group so much better. Everyone felt that overall the morale of the parish was good.

- **ZOOM**
 - For all of the technical challenges of running a service via ZOOM, everyone agreed that the technology was brilliant during this time and grateful to the national Anglican Church for making this available to churches and individuals at such a reasonable cost.
 - There was some discussion on how church might look in the future when we are able to physically gather, but many will still be house bound.
- **Health and Safety**
 - Vestry discussed the Health and Safety Policy that the diocese had laid out for each alert level.

TESTIMONY FROM JOANNA LORIMER – WEEK 5 OF LOCKDOWN

I would like to encourage those of you who are facing financial uncertainty at the moment. Our family started down this track before the pandemic. A few weeks before Christmas, I lost my job, due to a head injury that has taken longer than expected to recover from. Our family income dropped dramatically. We spent some time in shock. We prayed. We worried. We prayed some more. We asked God to provide and asked for his leading. We did the practical things like streamlining our budget and setting up automatic payments. Now we are several months down the track. Technically we don't have enough money coming in, however we still have a house to live in, food to eat and our bills are being paid.

During this time the Lord has continued to speak to us from his word, encouraging, teaching, leading and strengthening us. In Philippians 4:4-9 we read the exhortations of Paul and Timothy:

“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy - think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me — put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.”

We have tried to put this into practice by rejoicing in the Lord and giving Him thanks in all circumstances. We didn't tell a lot of people about our circumstance but brought our needs to the Lord trusting him to provide. Rather than focusing on what we don't have, which leads to discouragement, we have tried to focus on positive things. On the days when this is difficult I find it helpful to pray read a Psalm. Psalm 136 reminds us of who God is and starts with the words, *“Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. His love endures forever.”*

One morning I woke with the words of a hymn by Edward Mote on my mind. On my walk I meditated on the words, *“On Christ the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand.”* These words have continued to sustain me. There are so many uncertainties in life. We never know what will come next. One thing we can be sure of, is the Lord our God, our rock, who is the same yesterday, today and forever.

The Bible is full of God's promises to His people and He always keeps His promises. We have experienced His faithful provision. It's been exciting to see the creative ways in which he provides. When out walking, a man called over his fence and gave us vegetables from his garden. One week I wanted to cook with zucchini but they were too expensive. That week a friend visited and brought zucchini from her garden. We were given a supermarket gift card. We were blessed with our first holiday in several years. There are many other ways in which the Lord has met our needs.

Financial uncertainty is challenging. It also has a silver lining. Our faith is being stretched and grown. As someone who likes to give, I'm learning to humbly receive. I'm learning to not trust in myself and my independence, but to trust in the one who created me, and depend on Him. If you are facing challenging times can I encourage to delve into the scriptures and see what the Lord is saying to you. And may the Lord richly bless you in this season when He seems to be drawing His people closer.

CHURCH HELPS WITH HYGIENE PACKS

You may have noticed the photo on front page of Greymouth Star last Saturday or article in The Press on Monday talking about hygiene packs being prepared and delivered to local Maori. The project coordinator for the West Coast was Poutini Waioara and they asked if The Trinity Centre could be used for the assembly. We agreed and 1,000 boxes were formed and filled with 9 different items including toilet paper and washing powder. We are delighted that the church could help out during this time.

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