

Wellington Methodist Parish

Welcome to our 10am Congregation Service

22 August 2021 – Pentecost 13



**Kia ora koutou katoa – Talofa Lava – Malo e lelei
– Bula Vinaka – Greetings to you all!**

We are a multi-cultural Christian community:

Methodist in affiliation – Ecumenical in intention

Diverse in theology – Inclusive in Outreach

Click the link to join our service
which is being held as a Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83705516367?pwd=NXc3RitZQU5hWUxONjhDbmRWeGkwZz09>

Meeting ID: **837 0551 6367** Passcode: **315846**

You can log into the meeting from 9:45am.
Worship will start at 10:00am.

Order of Service

Wesley Methodist Church, 75 Taranaki Street
10am Congregation — Meeting online using Zoom
22 August 2021 Pentecost 13
Leader: Philip Garside, helped by Heather Garside.

Welcome & Introduction

Good morning everyone. Thank you for joining us for worship.

(Mention visitors)

Running a service with Zoom is tricky. Please be patient if there are technical problems. Please mute your sound unless you are speaking.

There will be a time to share what is happening for you in your bubble after the opening prayer.

We will try to put the words of the Order of Service on the screen so you can respond.

There will be no music or singing. It is hard to do this well using Zoom.

Remember this is still church. The church is not a building; it is the people who gather to worship, wherever we are.

Call to Worship

Jesus became the talk of the town and was highly criticized
when he ate with those considered unclean and unacceptable.

The apostle Paul was challenged and criticized
when he visited those considered unclean and unacceptable.

Acceptance, generosity, healing, forgiveness:
those are the words that defined what Jesus was all about.

Acceptance, generosity, healing, forgiveness:
the early church shaped their life together around those spiritual practices as well.

Acceptance, generosity, healing, forgiveness:
may these words define our life together as a congregation and the way that each of us lives and works in this world.

Come, let us worship God, who strengthens these gifts within us!

Opening Prayer [Said together]

Spirit of Life, Breath of God,
wind that moves over the earth, we are humbled by
your presence and power. We are here this morning
to take you in and experience the transforming
ways of your love, to rest a little while and sing and
pray and be in sacred fellowship with one another.
If we arrive here empty, may we leave filled.
If we arrive here lonely, may we leave uplifted.
If we arrive here anxious, may we leave knowing
peace.
May we be a blessed and blessing people today and
every day. Amen.

Time for Sharing

We will take turns to share briefly what is happening for us in our bubbles at home. *[This took about 20 minutes]*

Time with children / Introducing the Theme

[Children, please have a pen or pencil, some paper to write on and a favourite story book with you.]

A special hello to the children with us this morning. If you haven't got a pen or pencil, some paper to write on and a favourite story book to show us, please get them now. We will wait for you.

Do you have a favourite story book to show us? Good, please hold them up to the camera so we can all see them. [Mention the books they are showing and ask them to say what they like about their book.]

Please now take your pen or pencil and write on your paper these four things:

The first thing to write is "**Words matter**" – Ask an adult to help you write if you need to.

The next thing to write is "**Stories matter**"

Now please write "**Words help us**"

And last, please write "**Stories help us**"

The Bible is a collection of 66 stories gathered together to make one big book.

The words in the Bible matter. The stories in the Bible matter. The words in Bible help us. And the stories in the Bible help us.

We are going to listen to some words from the Bible now.

Reading: Ephesians 6:10-20

The Message translation: Eugene H Peterson

10-12

And that about wraps it up. God is strong, and he wants you strong. So take everything the Master has set out for you, well-made weapons of the best materials. And put them to use so you will be able to stand up to everything the Devil throws your way. This is no afternoon athletic contest that we'll walk away from and forget about in a couple of hours. This is for keeps, a life-or-death fight to the finish against the Devil and all his angels.

13-18

Be prepared. You're up against far more than you can handle on your own. Take all the help you can get, every weapon God has issued, so that when it's all over but the shouting you'll still be on your feet. Truth, righteousness, peace, faith, and salvation are more than words. Learn how to apply them. You'll need them throughout your life. God's Word is an indispensable weapon. In the same way, prayer is essential in this ongoing warfare. Pray hard and long. Pray for your brothers and sisters. Keep your eyes open. Keep each other's spirits up so that no one falls behind or drops out.

19-20

And don't forget to pray for me. Pray that I'll know what to say and have the courage to say it at the right time, telling the mystery to one and all, the Message that I, jailbird preacher that I am, am responsible for getting out.

Brief Reflection: *Take all the help you can get*

For every Sunday, four Bible readings are given in the Revised Common Lectionary plan. There is an Old Testament reading, a Psalm, a reading from the Gospels of Mark, Matthew, Luke and John, and a reading from one of the letters written by Paul, and other people, to the early Christian communities.

When I'm going to preach, I look up all four of these readings for the next Sunday. Then I stop and think about them and jot down any ideas that come to mind. I then decide which of these readings I'm going to base my sermon and the theme of the service on.

The reading that I felt called on to use this Sunday is from Ephesians 6:10-20. I looked up the reading in New Revised Standard Version translation, but it was a bit stodgy. So I looked for help, by looking at the same reading in Eugene Peterson's *The Message* translation, that we have just heard. Bingo! Here is a simple, direct, exciting translation that I can use. My eye was drawn to the words: "Take all the help you can get..." and that is our theme.

But, there are a lot of words about fighting in this reading: "weapon" or "weapons" appears three times. Other phrases are: "life-or-death fight," and, "essential in this ongoing warfare."

I can see how this sort of language would have appealed to early Christian people in the second half of the first century, who were subject to military rule by Rome. A minister praying during a lay preachers' training session a few years ago, described us as "warriors for Christ." These ideas, which evoke violence and military power, don't work for me. We can interpret the letter-writer's message another way.

The reading also says: "Truth, righteousness, peace, faith, and salvation are more than words. Learn how to apply them. You'll need them throughout your life." Now we are on track.

We are in a Lockdown. The Government has instructed us to stay in our homes, and have as little contact as we can with other people outside our household or bubble.

We might ask:

- ~~Why should we in Wellington and the South Island have to do this, when only a few people in Auckland have been infected with the Delta version of the Covid virus?~~ *[When I wrote this sermon on Thursday night the infections were limited to Auckland. By Sunday morning people were infected in Wellington so I didn't use this bullet point.]*
- Why should we have to wear masks on buses and in shops?
- Why should we get two doses of a vaccine, that might not completely stop us getting Covid.
- Why can't we worship in church this morning instead of having a Zoom meeting?

And we answer... because wearing masks, getting vaccinated and worshipping from our homes by Zoom, are just and compassionate actions to take, in good faith, to help protect our community. To help protect us, our families, and our neighbours.

The readings also say: “Pray for your brothers and sisters... Keep each other’s spirits up so that no one falls behind or drops out.”

We are just a few days into our Lockdown at present. Can you remember what it was like in March and April last year when we were locked down for weeks? That was much harder. We looked forward to our Zoom worship services then. Seeing each other’s faces and hearing each other’s voices helped us to stay positive, and reminded us that we are a strong faith community who worships together.

Running a service or a choir rehearsal on Zoom is quite demanding. A lesson I learned last year was to share out the tasks involved. Thank you to Heather who is sitting beside me helping to manage this Zoom session. She also helped by reminding me to keep this service short.

Stay alert for ways you can help other people during this lockdown. And be humble enough to call for and accept help if you need it.

Lastly the reading says: “Pray that I’ll know what to say and have the courage to say it at the right time...” This applies to all of us all the time, not just the preacher.

Words matter. Stories matter. Words help us. Stories help us.

Words and stories are powerful.

Loving, creator God, help us to use our words wisely and compassionately.

Amen.

Community Time

Sharing the Peace

Let's greet each other by waving and saying: **"Peace be with you."**

Notices

Sharing Joys and Concerns

Prayers of Intercession for ourselves and others

To the bidding: "...Living God," please respond with: **"hear our prayer."**

Lord's Prayer [Said together]

**Our Father in heaven
holy be your Name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Do not put us to the test,
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.**

Benediction

Go forth today bathed in the warmth of the love of God
and aware of the relationship God wants to have with us.
In the days ahead, may we be blessed with worship, joy, and connection,
and find time each day to rest at the feet of Jesus.

The Grace [Said together]

**The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all. Amen**

**Links to 10am Congregation recordings and news
can be found on our Facebook page here:**

<https://www.facebook.com/wesleywellington.methodistchurch.10am>

**22 August 2021: Bible reading and sermon
— audio recording of our Zoom service**

<https://tinyurl.com/akji8pfh>

Links mentioned by participants during the service:

Winter @ Wesley lunchtime concerts - article on Stuff website:

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/entertainment/300378327/vivaldi-and-pals-for-lunch-tuning-in-to-the-citys-free-classical-music-concerts-to-the-citys-free-classical-music-concerts>

Playcentre play ideas and resources for Lockdown:

<https://www.playcentre.org.nz/virtual-village/>

Dogman cartoon book:

<https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/movies/movie-news/dog-man-movie-in-the-works-from-dreamworks-animation-exclusive-4102536/>

League of Lilith – Novel by Rosalie and Troy Sugrue

eBook from PGPL: <https://payhip.com/b/F3Jg>

eBook from Amazon.com

<https://www.amazon.com/League-Lilith-thriller-mother-Rosalie-ebook/dp/B00H8I6YXE>