

Vicar's Letter #21: 3 September, 2021

Ways of being together

Dear Parishioners

I'm sure we are all glad to have moved from Level 4 lockdown to Alert Level 3. At least we are moving in the right direction! As I write, today's news about the number of new Covid-19 cases in New Zealand is encouraging too, with a reduction to 28 new cases and the weekly case average coming down from last week's peak. While we can give thanks for those trends, it is clear that it will be some time before we can get together with others at Alert Level 1.

So I have been thinking about ways we can connect with others while we are out of our church buildings. This coming week we are going to phone through the parish list we have in order to make contact with as many people as possible. We will be checking how people are doing and whether anyone has any particular needs at the moment. Several parishioners have offered to shop for people who need to stay home at the moment, so if you would like some assistance with shopping, feel free to contact me directly on 021 2541354.

Secondly, a number of us gather via Zoom on weekdays for morning prayer. At Level 1 or 2 we usually meet at 7.45am. At Level 3 as we are at the moment (or at Alert Level 4), we meet at the more leisurely hour of 9am. We also have a Saturday morning service at 8.30am. We join in the liturgy on the screen, listen to a Bible reading, and have a time when people can offer their own prayers. This is the rhythm of prayer of the AYM house, but several other parishioners join in with this. By praying and worshipping together in this way, we have developed a sense of closeness in prayer that we all appreciate. I invite you to share in this with us. The Zoom address is: 782 3267 4706 and the password is: Lambchops. We would love others to join us, so please take this opportunity to pray with others in your parish.

Thirdly, you might like to join Derek Lightbourne and others in noticing the bird life that is around us during lockdown. Several people have shared photos of the birds they have seen on their walks. If you want to share in this with others, please email Derek at dereklightbourne@xtra.co.nz and he will add you to his email list. You can send your photos to Derek or post them to our parish Facebook page using this link: <https://www.facebook.com/170688403651812/posts/848153239238655/>. In last week's letter I said "let's notice the evidence of God's love that surrounds us." This seems a good way of doing exactly that.

Finally, parish services are being held every Sunday at 9.30am via Zoom. The Zoom link is in the weekly Newslink, which comes with this Vicar's letter. Last week we had over 50 people together at the service, and it would be great to connect with even more of our parishioners. We continue to tweak our Zoom services and add new elements to them, and this week we will be starting the service in a slightly different way. After this week's service those who wish to can stay to catch up with a small group of people pretty much like we normally do after church. Next week after the Zoom service we will have an update on where things are at with the plans for the Hall Development. So some important information will be shared then.

There is plenty going on in the parish - even in lockdown - and we would love you to find life-giving ways of being together with others.

Blessings to you all.

Peter Bengé

Vicar
(Anglican Parish of Lower Hutt)