



*Reflections
for Lent 2014*

**LOVE
REACHES
OUT**



Presbyterian Church
of Aotearoa New Zealand

Presbyterian Support





Presbyterian Church
of Aotearoa New Zealand



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Welcome

I wish to commend to you the 2014 Reflections for Lent publication prepared by PresCare, a partnership between the Presbyterian Church and Presbyterian Support.

PresCare looks for ways our shared faith and commitment can respond to the needs and nurture the wellbeing of children and families in Aotearoa.

The collection of meditations is suitable for group or individual study, and has been prepared by ministers from throughout the Church. As well as weekly reflections based on the lectionary readings in the period leading up to Easter, it includes family-friendly devotions which are made to be shared.

However you use the Reflections, I hope this resource provides a way to remind your congregation and family of Presbyterian Support and the Church's common calling to extend Christian care to the families within our land whose lives lack the warmth and joy so many of us take for granted.

More free copies of this resource are from the Assembly Office. Please email office@presbyterian.org.nz, or simply download from the "PresCare" section of the Church's website: www.presbyterian.org.nz/prescare

Yours sincerely

Rt Rev Ray Coster
Moderator General Assembly Aotearoa New Zealand

Reflections for Lent 2014

*Developed by the PresCare partnership of
the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand
and Presbyterian Support*



**"Mum helping someone in trouble" Lincoln Kirby,
Nawton Community Church Holiday Programme**



Reflections for Lent 2014

This booklet contains weekly reflections based on the lectionary readings in the weeks leading up to and including Easter Sunday. Each reflection has been contributed by a minister of the Presbyterian Church, and all Presbyterian Support regions have contributed towards a story. There are three parts to each reflection; within your study group, or in your personal devotional time, we suggest you follow this sequence:

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| read | each of the lectionary passages |
| meditate | on the reflection which is based on one or more of the passages |
| consider | the questions they pose |
| turn | to the Presbyterian Support contribution |
| reflect | on how you can put your faith into action this week |
| bring | these reflections, thoughts and intentions to God in prayer |

Kids Friendly family devotions

are made to be shared! Here's how they work:

Lent is a special time of 40 days in the church when we start thinking and getting ready for Easter. We also remember the 40 days Jesus spent in the desert. It was a difficult time for Jesus. He fasted (ate no food) and was tempted by the devil. During Lent some people give up things to remind them how Jesus gave up his life for us. Other people try to do extra kind and generous things to share Jesus' love. This Lent think about how you can make a difference in your world by loving others the way Jesus taught and demonstrated.

Once a week at breakfast, dinner or bedtime, take time to read the Bible together, talk about it and decide how you are going to reach out in love.



Ready, steady, go!

READY

One way we learn about Jesus and how he wants us to live in the world is by reading the Bible. So when you see READY get your Bibles and find out more.

STEADY

Jesus wants us to be STEADY in our faith to him and his way. So when you see STEADY it's time to chat about what you've heard in the Bible reading and how you can apply it in your lives.

GO

Jesus told his disciples to GO out into the world to share the good news of his life on earth and to love each other. So when you see GO, make a plan to reach out in love this week in your homes, schools, churches and communities. You can make a difference!

The contribution of children

The illustrations in this booklet are taken from artwork submitted for the PresCare/Kids Friendly Art Competition in 2013. The theme of the competition was "Love Reaches Out: We Can Make a Difference".

Thank you

This booklet has been made possible through the combined assistance of people in the Presbyterian Church and Presbyterian Support. Thank you to those who so willingly shared their time and thoughts to produce a means of reflecting on God's story and our stories, this Lent.

Lent 1 – March 9

GENESIS 2:15-17; 3:1-7

PSALM 32

ROMANS 5:12-19

MATTHEW 4:1-11

Decisions that count

As we stand at the beginning of Lent 2014, I wonder what decisions are before you? What decisions shape and impact your walk with Jesus? I wonder if such decisions are camouflaged because they come in the form of temptations. And I wonder if the fact they are temptations means they are not easily discerned. Temptations have the habit of presenting themselves in very attractive ways. The example of Christ in Matthew 4 is salutary. Here he personifies what it means to be a faithful servant of God; even when such faithfulness leads to an Easter kind of suffering.

Jesus is confronted by three decisions:

1. Self-sufficiency (Matthew 4:3); will you live as if God is absent?
2. Self-promotion (Matthew 4:5-6); will you live as if God is a genie?
3. Self-aggrandisement (Matthew 4:8-9); will you live as if God is an option?

All three decisions subtly present a way of being which acts without reference to God, or reverence of God. All three decisions are advocated by the Tempter (v 3) and to say "yes" to them is to say "no" to God.

Jesus' response to these temptations presents three other decisions:

1. Will you live by depending on God? (Matthew 4:4)
2. Will you live with humility before God? (Matthew 4:7)
3. Will you live with reverence of God? (Matthew 4:10)

In this time of Easter preparation examine your life and the way you are living day-to-day. Consider this question: how do the decisions I make fit with the call of Jesus to take up a cross and follow him? (Mark 9:34)

Rev Dr Geoff New

Kids Friendly family devotions

READY Read Matthew 4:1-11. Jesus is tempted.

STEADY Jesus lived on earth just like us, so he knows what it's like to be tempted to do the wrong thing. Often we are tempted. Sometimes we choose wrong over right. Jesus reminds us "Worship the Lord your God and serve him with all your heart".

GO What are some things you could do and say this week to show you love God and others?



**"Let's reach out in love
with hearts and hands."
Chantaye Pomare, Family
Works, Lincoln Heights
School, Auckland.**

Decisions about ageing – Profile of Enliven Positive Ageing Services

Jim⁽¹⁾ and Margaret have been married for 64 years and for a lot of that time Jim has been the primary caregiver for his wife, who has dementia. They are lucky because their daughter, Joanne, lives nearby and can help out when her job permits.

Over the last year a series of events led them to a point where they had little choice but to make some serious decisions about the future. Although Margaret keeps mobile and in good health, Jim has a history of heart problems and had a number of falls earlier in the year. This knocked his confidence and he began worrying about their future. At the same time Joanne was diagnosed with breast cancer and had a mastectomy. This placed her under further stress; worrying about her own health and children, her work and trying to be a good daughter to her ailing father and mother.

More recently Jim had a fall at home and broke his wrist so he was unable to care for Margaret; they were both admitted to a rest home for respite care. While there they were assessed as requiring rest home level care, but the couple were adamant they wanted to return to their own home and maintain their independence. Joanne voiced her concern about them managing at home, particularly as it related to her on-going ability to provide the support she had done in the past.

⁽¹⁾ To maintain the privacy of the people Presbyterian Support works with, real names have not been used in this booklet. The stories, however, are real and depict the many different ways we are of service in our communities.

Jim and Margaret are now both being supported at home by the multidisciplinary Enliven Home Support Team. The Enliven Social Worker has spent time with both Joanne and Jim looking at the ways they can be supported in caring for Margaret. They have come to terms with accepting help; in Jim's case it is vital to maintain his independence, and for Joanne it eased much of the strain she was under, feeling she had to be there for her parents all the time.

Over the short time Enliven has been involved there have been major changes. Jim is back in his garden and better mobility means he has less chance of a fall, he prepares meals with Margaret, and Joanne is now enjoying family time with her parents.

In the past, rest home care would have been inevitable for Jim and Margaret, but in choosing Enliven Home Support they have made a choice to be supported in their own home, enjoying each other's company and being part of a community they love for as long as possible.

Presbyterian Support East Coast



TEXT 'follow kiwieaster' to 8987

Follow the dramatic last week of Jesus' life, death and resurrection with a series of messages delivered by text, facebook or twitter, free (except your first text).



Lent 2 – March 16

GENESIS 12:1-4A

ROMANS 4:1-5, 13-17

PSALM 121

JOHN 3:1-17

On a journey

You are about to go on a journey. People gather to say goodbye, the dangers of the journey on their minds. Many things can happen on the journey. The travellers of ancient times set off on the road that leads into the hills towards Jerusalem. They look up to the hills and see only the places where the altars of sacrifice are set up for the gods. Gods are territorial; these are unfriendly gods. What defence is there? How will these forces react to a stranger? I lift my eyes unto the hills - where is my help?

And the reply comes from those left behind. Watching, suppressing their own anxiety. Seeing the elderly mother who keeps saying this will be the last trip, the next journey will be to another place. Seeing the son with his first motorbike keen to get on the road, the niece clutching her bags with the OE ticket. So vulnerable, going off to the first job, or a new school or into residential care.

They reply with a statement of faith, reaching out in love. "Your help comes from the Lord." "Who?" You know, they say, "the creator of the universe. This God is with you." Saying that old English word, Goodbye - God be with you.

Just as Abraham was called to journey, and Nicodemus into new life; Jesus called his followers to come on a journey. The call of Jesus was to "follow me". The New Testament calls that discipleship. We are asked to follow Jesus on the way, into our world, into our jobs and our neighbourhoods and trust that God is with us in life and death and life beyond death.

What difference does goodbye being a blessing make to our journeys? (Find out whether that is the case in other languages.)

What journey are you travelling on this Lent? Where is your help?

Rev Margaret Anne Low

Kids Friendly family devotions

READY Read John 3:3-8. Born again.

STEADY In this story Jesus tells Nicodemus that we need to be born again in the spirit of God. Later Jesus tells his disciples that when he has gone from earth God will send a "friend", the Holy Spirit, who will help them keep his commandments. God's Holy Spirit lives in us too and helps us to love others.

GO Ask God's Holy Spirit into your life this week to help you love the way Jesus commanded.



"God's love reaches out to us
and we can reach out in love
to people of all races, abilities
and ages." St John's Kids
Church, Mt Roskill, Auckland

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A new way of thinking – Profile of an Eden Alternative Rest Home

As we journey through life we take different roles – some for a short time and others all through our life. We are a child, a brother or sister, a parent, a friend, a colleague, a mentor ... but we know we are so much more than just the roles we play. We are people, created and chosen by God. In the past, when people moved from home to residential care, the clinicians tended to regard residents as patients – the sum of their ailments, and forgot that they were firstly people, just like them.

Service philosophies that help us value the lives of older people, such as the “Eden Alternative”, challenge this and work to combat loneliness, helplessness and boredom, which are described as plagues of old age. There are 10 Eden Principles and Presbyterian Support South Canterbury has just embarked on the journey to gain accreditation in each of these areas. One of the Principles they have already been accredited for is Principle 2 which is: “Close and continuing contact with plants, animals and children builds a human habit”.

When you walk around their Homes now, you can feel the difference – there is more laughter, residents have more say over how they choose to live. There are vegetable gardens, children visiting and on occasion you might see miniature ponies walking up the corridors of the Croft! The language used by staff is less clinical, more personal, and staff are encouraged to take time to get to know residents.

Where once there was a pre-set menu served in the dining room or in bed, there are now buffet breakfasts and evening meals available when residents want to eat, and to eat what they feel like on the day - it's about choice and empowering people to continue making decisions as they have their whole life. This is genuine interaction and many opportunities for companionship and community have emerged along the pathway. The opportunity to give as well as receive is a reality, and variety and spontaneity are daily events. Staff are similarly excited with the changed way of working. “It's great, we even get a chance to sit down and have a cup of tea with the residents, there seems so much more time!” they say.

To learn more about this philosophy of care, which is available in Presbyterian Support Central and South Canterbury Homes, check out our website: www.ps.org.nz and click on the region you are interested in.

Presbyterian Support South Canterbury

Lent 3 – March 23

EXODUS 17:1-7

ROMANS 5:1-11

PSALM 95

JOHN 4:5-42

What are you looking for?

Desire is a powerful and evocative way to describe what we want. It conjures up notions of primal urges that push us towards actions we aren't completely in control of. Desire can push aside other considerations in a way that leads to regret. That's what happened when Israel mutinied against Moses (and God) at Meribah when they thought the water had run out (Ex 17). That incident becomes an enduring lesson for God's people not to let pressing desires get in the way of the truly important (Ps 95:8-11; Heb 4:7).

But desire isn't simply a given – something to be tamed and kept under control. Some desires are blessed, and ought to be given full expression. Jesus draws the Samaritan woman into a transforming encounter by telling her of mysterious water he gives a person that becomes a "spring of water gushing up to eternal life" (John 4:14). Her desire is activated: "Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water". But then Jesus does something with her mundane – if understandable – desire to avoid the drudgery of going to the well. He reshapes her desire. By the end of their encounter her desire is for the Messiah and Saviour of the world (John 4:29, 42).

We are all so susceptible to being told what we ought to want. Like the woman at the well we need Jesus to help us know what we are really looking for. Augustine put it so well: "For you have made us for yourself and our heart is restless until it rests in you".

Rev Dr Paul Prestidge

Kids Friendly family devotions

READY Read John 4:7-10. Jesus the living water.

STEADY In this story Jesus shocks his disciples because he asks a Samaritan woman for a drink (Jews didn't talk to Samaritans in those days. Remember the story of the Good Samaritan?) Jesus shows us that everyone is worthy of God's love and therefore our love.

GO Are there any people you find hard to love? Remember God loves all of us equally and wants us to love each other in the same way.



Doing small things with great love – Profile of parenting programmes

Across the country Presbyterian Support Family Works is involved in parenting programmes and support, including the well-known "Incredible Years" parenting programme. This programme is offered in conjunction with the Ministry of Education, and is aimed at parents of children 3 to 8 years of age. In addition, each region develops other parenting programmes tailored to reflect the needs of parents in their communities. Presbyterian Support Southland's general parenting programme is a good example of regional customisation. It focuses on ages and stages of development and throughout the programme parents are asked, "What are you looking for?" Parents' weekly feedback ensures that the focus is on the real issues and difficulties.

Comments from parents highlight aspects of programmes that have been most useful to them and they include such things as: learnt how to deal with anger, learning how to accept advice in a positive way, being able to be open to other people in a confidential environment, understanding the expectations I have of my child's behaviour, showing children how much I love them, taking time to cuddle my kids, learning practical tools to deal with difficult behaviour, gives tools to be a better parent, kids and I laugh more, I am handling things better for myself and my children etc.

Changes parents make, whether big or small, all make a difference to the way they parent and the relationship they have with their children. It's not about being super-parents, no one can do that. It's about doing small things with great love.

Presbyterian Support Southland

Lent 4 – March 30

1 SAMUEL 16:1-13

EPHESIANS 5:8-14

PSALM 23

JOHN 9:1-41

Can you see what I see?

Jesus calls us to wake up and open our eyes to reality. It's not easy to see reality, and it's not easy to know what to do when we see it. In 1 Samuel 16 the Lord told Samuel to get over it and get on with it – get over his grief about Saul, and get on with the new reality and anoint the king of the Lord's choosing. Because of Samuel's fear the Lord provided a safety strategy, and when that ran out he promised to show Samuel what to do. These are the challenges and the promises of our Lenten pilgrimage.

In John 9 there are three levels of reality: the physical reality of the man born blind, the implied reality of spiritual blindness, and the awful reality of those who deep down knew the truth but refused to acknowledge it – they were not blind but guilty of deliberately turning away and pretending they didn't see. Above all, as Lenten pilgrims, we are called out of pretence and into reality. The rallying call to Christian pilgrimage and life in our communities is "Wake up, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you".

When we live as children of the light, reaching out with love and making a difference, we can do so without fear – goodness and mercy will be the victor in our lives, and as we make a difference to others we will never be the same again ourselves!

Rev Helen Martin

Kids Friendly family devotions

READY Read John 9:9-12. Jesus heals a blind man.

STEADY Jesus performed many wonderful miracles while he lived on earth. In today's story he cures a man of his blindness and reminds him that he (Jesus) is the light of the world. When we love others they can see Jesus' light in us.

GO How will you reach out in love this week so others can see and feel Jesus' light in you?



**"Let's reach out with love and good deeds so that
we may be beacons of light and hope in the world."
Auckland Chinese Presbyterian Sunday School.**

Looking at things differently – Profile of counselling services

Braden wanted to be a different kind of dad to his kids. His dad shouted a lot and some days lashed out at whichever child had irritated him the most. Braden didn't want to be that sort of dad. As a result he never got very much involved with his own two boys, he distanced himself, fearful that he would turn into his dad.

Over time this took a toll on his relationship and he and his partner separated. Now he's in a new relationship and his fiancée, Lucy, is learning to cope with step-sons. "They never show me any respect," she said to our counsellor, "and their dad won't back me up. I just want us to be a family and get along together".

Through the Family Works' counselling process we worked with this young family, first of all helping Braden accept the leadership role he needed to take in the family – helping him understand that he could be firm without being violent. Boundaries were set as were clear expectations around roles. Braden agreed to put more effort into the responsibilities of fatherhood. Lucy gained greater confidence in her role of being a mum and she's now expecting her first child with Braden. A blended family can be difficult, but with clear expectations and skills to handle the difficult issues, it can be a great place to grow up.

Both Lucy and Braden benefitted from the way the counsellor helped them think about what sort of parent they wanted to be for their children – looking positively at what they aspired to, rather than focusing on what was negative. "We work from our strengths and look through new eyes at what a great family we have," smiles Lucy.

Presbyterian Support Central

Lent 5 – April 6

EZEKIEL 37:1-14

ROMANS 8:6-11

PSALM 130

JOHN 11:1-45

New life from death

We moderns read the story of Jesus bringing Lazarus to life and we stumble a bit. We live in a season where if dead people coming to life cannot be explained then we feel compelled to explain the incident away. These days I prefer to let my line stay out in the river a bit longer to see if there is something more hopeful to catch. In the quiet contemplation on the side of the bank I think about John and his framing the miracles as 'signs' – signs of what is yet to be – a pointer to Jesus' own being raised to life – a vastly different resurrection to that of what happened to Lazarus, as that poor man will get to die another death one day (imagine going through it twice!). I realise that I don't need to see a Lazarus or two raised in order to believe that what Jesus says is true, that he is the one who raises the dead to life, for I know of this raising to life power in my own life over and over and over.

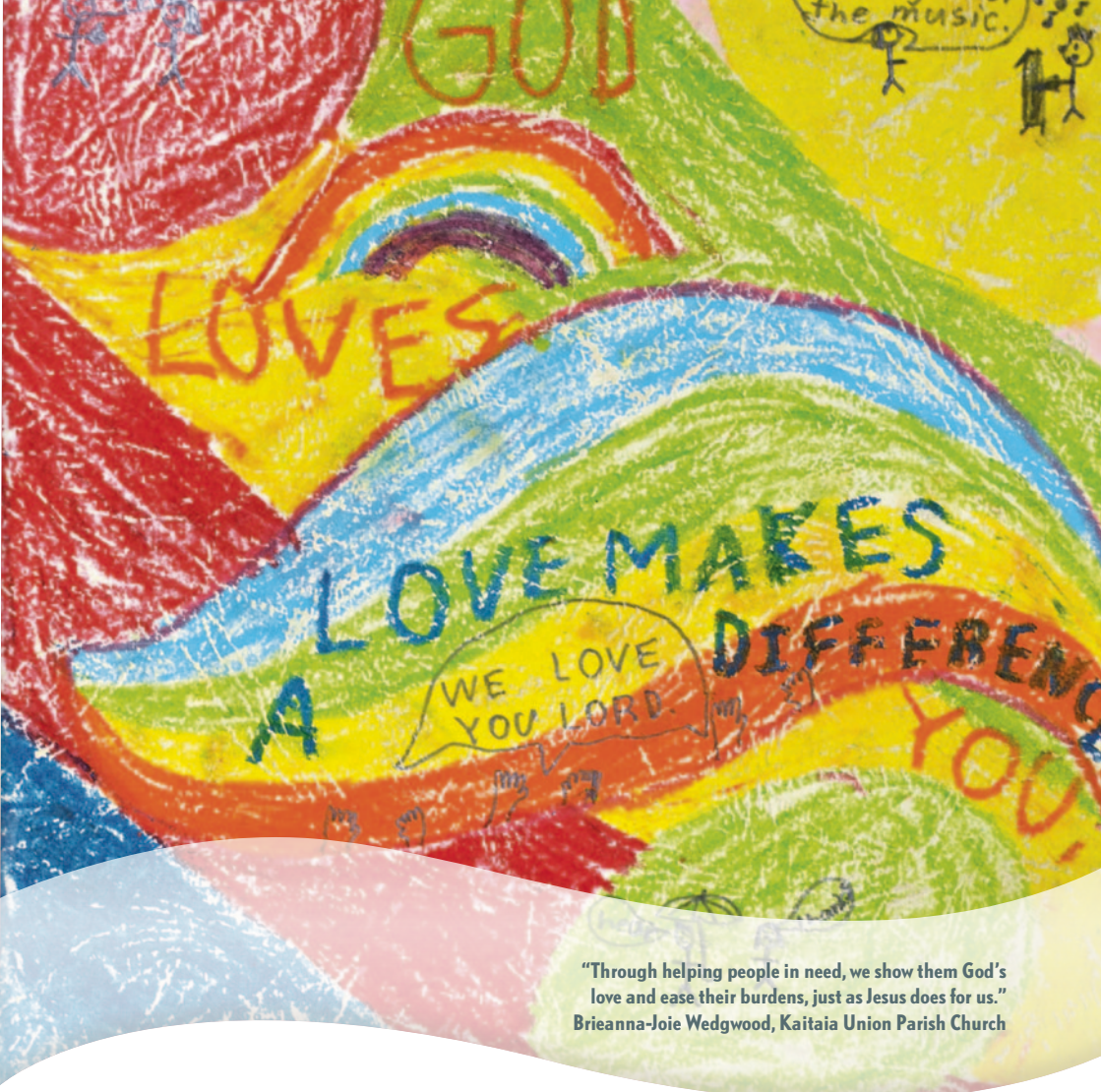
I wake up in the morning and the light has come – a daily death to life miracle and an invitation to wonder! I bump up against an obstacle so big that I cannot see past it, and God shines a light on the path less travelled that opens a whole new vista of possibility. A struggling church dies to its once fiercely clung onto past and into that space a reimagined future begins to unfold. "Didn't I tell you," says Jesus, "that if you had faith, you would see the glory of God?" (John 11:40 CEV).

I am reminded of the Salvadoran Archbishop Oscar Romero who was assassinated while presiding at the Eucharist on 24 March 1980. In an interview just a few weeks before his death he made the following statement of faith: "I don't believe in death without resurrection. If they kill me, I will rise again in the Salvadoran people". (Quoted in John Dear's book *Jesus the Rebel* p67.)

While I might not be able to explain resurrection, I can no longer justify my attempts to explain it away – there is far too much death to life going on around me for that. I guess I have come to see that Jesus has a dance of life going on and he is constantly calling me to step out onto the floor and move in, and with, him.

"They cut me down and I leap up high, I am the life that'll never, never die,"
(from Sydney Carter's *Lord of the Dance*).

Rev Martin Stewart



"Through helping people in need, we show them God's love and ease their burdens, just as Jesus does for us."
Brianna-Joie Wedgwood, Kaitaia Union Parish Church

Out of the ashes – Profile of new life in Christchurch

A child psychologist at Presbyterian Support Upper South Island (encompassing Canterbury, Nelson, Marlborough and the West Coast) reflects on life since "The Earthquake". "Three years out from the September 2010 earthquake, we are beginning to see some signs of new life in Christchurch. Progress can be easily seen in our city centre as restaurants and cafes spring up, and creative thinking is displayed in our 'gap-filler' spaces. It is great to hear children speaking excitedly about buildings being built rather than knocked down (as progress is now more commonly about construction than destruction!)

"Alongside the positive moves, our families are still struggling hard, with the expected post-disaster fatigue and stress in the wake of the earthquake. Many families who were 'just managing' prior to the quake have come through our doors seeking support. Parenting in post-quake Christchurch is a more difficult task as parents face added stressors like home repairs and insurance difficulties. Professionals in Christchurch are often dealing with these stressors as well, so we have been offering support to people right across the community.

"Communities have drawn closer together and lots of community initiatives have sprung up; Family Works is supporting some of these. Schools are a place of refuge and structure for many children. Services like ours are getting involved in schools and assisting with meeting the needs of children and teachers (as lots of the children's difficulties come out as difficult behaviour). It is important for us to keep getting alongside families through our work with Social Workers in Schools, individual counselling, parenting support, family work and group work; continuing to support families in their post-quake lives.

"While we move toward the new Christchurch it is great to look around schools or playgrounds and see children just being children. I made a 6-year-old's day the other day by helping her fix a flower into her hair. As a community and an agency we are moving forward."

We celebrate new life from the old.

Presbyterian Support Upper South Island

Kids Friendly family devotions

READY Read John 11:38-43. Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead.

STEADY In today's story Jesus hears his good friend Lazarus has died. When he meets Mary and Martha, he cries and offers words of comfort and hope before showing God's great power by raising Lazarus to life. When people are sad, we can show we care by being with them and offering words of comfort.

GO Is there someone you know who is going through a sad time, who you could visit or send a card to this week?



"Through the darkness and confusion of sorrow and pain, Christ helps us to reach out in love and show his love and hope to others."

Genevieve Wedgwood, Kaitiaki Union Parish

Lent 6 – April 13

ISAIAH 50:4-9A

PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11

PSALM 31:9-16

MATTHEW 26:14- 27:66

Despair and betrayal

"You will all become deserters because of me this night" (Matt 26:31, NRSV). It's a statement the disciples cannot comprehend, having only just shared an intimate meal with Jesus. With bravado, Peter rebuffs Jesus – "Even though I must die with you, I will not deny you" (Matt 26:35). The other disciples second the motion. Yet as Jesus is later raised onto the Golgotha cross, they are nowhere to be seen.

When Good Friday approaches, I am often stirred by the poignant spiritual, "Were you there when they crucified my Lord?" This question prompts me to confess, as surely Peter must have also, that no, I am not present at this place of the cross; I too have become a deserter. For all our impressive displays of faith and discipleship, here we are confronted with our failures, and must confess that Jesus has done for us what we could not, through loving obedience to the Father, even to the point of death on a cross (Phil 2:8).

And yet, the question addresses me in a different voice also. I recall the courageous women who were, in fact, there when they crucified my Lord (Matt 27:55). Here, the question comes as invitation, a call to stand with the suffering Christ, not out of bravado but devotion. Perhaps the crucified one also invites us to overcome our fears, and to be present with him as humble witnesses in the places of despair and abandonment in our communities.

Rev Jono Ryan

Kids Friendly family devotions

READY Read Matthew 26:14-30. The Last Supper.

STEADY Have a special meal together this week and spend time reading the story of Jesus' last night with his disciples before he was betrayed. Jesus reminds us to remember him whenever we eat and drink, which is every day.

GO Think of all Jesus did for you this week. Remember, we can make such a difference when we love like Jesus.



"Grace is my big sister. I love her. She helps me heaps. I also love my big brother Noah. He loves me too."
Greta Hunt, Small Miracles, St Heliers Presbyterian Church.

"Whatever you do for the least of these, you do for me" – Profile of children in crisis

Too many children experience despair and betrayal in the very place they should feel safest – at home. Figures show that 60 New Zealand children a day are physically abused, while others suffer emotional abuse or neglect.

Family Works provides services in schools that support these children and their families, working alongside them to overcome the effects of abuse.

One school social worker (SWiS) identified a culture of violence among some of her students. She suggested running a Restore programme, facilitated by a Family Works' social worker. Twelve students attended the eight week course. All had experienced or witnessed abuse, while many suffered grief and loss through separated parents, the death of close whanau members, or family dysfunction.

The programme gave students a safe place to talk about their experiences. They were taught how to develop safety plans and how to manage emotions like anger, fear and anxiety positively. Issues of identity and relationships were explored.

As a result, students are now talking openly about abuse within their families and among their peers. One intervened when she saw her brother being bullied and said, "Before, I would have been the bully or ignored what was going on, but now I can stop it".

The story of the disciples' response to the trial and crucifixion of Jesus challenges us not to ignore what is going on around us. Like the women at the cross, we are called to bear witness to injustice and suffering.

How can I "be there" for the neglected and abused children in my community?

Presbyterian Support Northern

Easter Sunday – April 20

JEREMIAH 31:1-6

ACTS 10:43-43

PSALM 118:1-2, 14-34

JOHN 20:1-18

I don't know where he is

After the anxiety, despair and desolation of the events that led to the crushing death of Jesus, the astonishing appearances of resurrection elicit responses of wonder. In John's Gospel, Mary is searching; she does not know where Jesus is. And when Jesus appears in the garden her response is one of wonder as she reaches out to touch him.

This painting by Giotto Noli Me Tangere (Touch Me Not), is one of hundreds of paintings with the same title capturing this moment of resurrection wonder. Jesus' words may indicate that his "availability" to Mary has changed – indeed, the risen and ascended Jesus is available to humanity eternally and universally.

Do we ever find ourselves filled with wonder? To "reach out" is to imagine the possibility of grasping something beyond ourselves. What did Mary imagine herself grasping when Jesus appeared to her alive? Does the resurrection fill us with wonder? Do we imagine something about the resurrection event that stirs in us a yearning; a yearning to reach out for something more?

Or maybe we just go through the annual Easter rituals, with vague feelings of smugness that there are no ads on TV due to the lingering vestiges of a cultural Christianity.

How might our wonder of the resurrection help us imagine our world differently? Glimpses of grace, visions of beauty, signs of hope, foretastes of new life.

Rev Allister Lane

Kids Friendly family devotions

READY Read John 20: 1 – 18. Jesus appears to Mary.

STEADY In our story today we hear how Jesus was standing in front of Mary but she didn't realise it was him. How and where do you see Jesus? Do people see Jesus in you?

GO This week what or who will we encounter that will elicit wonder? Ask the risen Jesus to open you up to wonderful around you.



Giotto, Noli Me Tangere, 1320

Looking beyond the individual – Profile of community development

All of us are members of a community, it's often the way we identify ourselves: "I'm from Mosgiel", or Winton or Grey Lynn or Hawera ... or whatever. In the past it was taken for granted that members of a community would be there for, and to support, one another. That's not always the case today and many of us don't even know who our neighbours are, let alone understand their needs and concerns. When help is needed many people turn first to formal supports – GPs and social service agencies like Presbyterian Support for example.

Within Presbyterian Support Otago we have been working to put a "community development" philosophy into practice across all of our Family Works services. We believe that strong community connections can help individuals and families deal with difficult issues. The role we have taken is working with the community and in the community. We help identify the community leaders, the hopes and dreams, the common threads of belonging. Our role is not to come in as the "experts" and do

things for the community or even based on our experience in other communities – they lead and we help put plans into action. Often churches can become involved in this development of community and the most remarkable mission activities result from this working together.

Community development is as unique as each community is, but often key activities involve sharing food or growing a garden together. Something as simple as a “Coffee and Chat” group in a hill suburb brings together people from different ethnic groups, learning more about one other and appreciating their diversity; inviting elderly neighbours to come along, finding in them wisdom and skills, leading on to a sewing circle. Together they plan trips into the city, sharing rides and saving money. From this simple group the ripples spread. Together they share their concerns for young people who are at the school playground at all times of the day and night and in all weathers. Together with these same young people, they plan activities that give safety and purpose. The young people elicit assistance from the local body and design a skate park; they start fundraising for the materials. This community is taking ownership of its own. Neighbours look out for one another.

Presbyterian Support will always be there for the lost and the lonely – for struggling families, for young people who have lost hope, and older people who are frightened and vulnerable. But if we look beyond the individual and work with whole communities we can strengthen the supports for each individual and maybe there will come a time when we are not needed because when people fall between the gaps a caring community is there to pick them up and help them stand again.

Maybe this sounds more like something a missional church would be involved in, but the fact that Presbyterian Support is increasingly involved in this work illustrates how closely aligned our heritage and values are. Easter is the time for new life and new hope – a time to reach out and embrace a new way of interacting with the world. Is there a challenge there for you?

Presbyterian Support Otago

“You can make a difference even if you’re small.

You can make a difference if you’re not too tall.

Even the smallest gift can mean so much.

Even just a smile or the slightest touch.

You’ll be surprised at what you can do

and with God’s help it will be fun too.

Trust in the lord.”

Vivian Pettigrove, Somervell Presbyterian, Auckland.



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♥ TRUST
IN THE ♥
LORD!!

Through the PresCare partnership the Presbyterian Church and Presbyterian Support have committed to working together on using our shared faith and commitment to nurture the wellbeing of children and families in New Zealand. Together we acknowledge the 200,000 children who live in poverty in New Zealand. All children have a right to develop spiritually, have an adequate standard of living, access to health care, education and a balanced diet. Each one has the right to be protected from abuse, neglect and discrimination. As a Church, we want to do more. The mission of the Presbyterian Church speaks of "responding to human need" and committing to the "transformation of society". Our support for the work of Presbyterian Support is a vital part of this advocacy and practical help. By supporting Presbyterian Support in your region, you can do more!

Presbyterian Support

Presbyterian Support regions offer a range of services relevant to their community's needs. Central, South Canterbury, Otago and Southland maintain a continuum of care for older people through their residential homes, hospitals, dementia services and independent living options. To find out more about what is available in your region, visit

www.ps.org.nz

Enliven Positive Ageing Services

Enliven Positive Ageing Services are offered in Northern, East Coast, Central, Upper South Island, South Canterbury and Otago regions. All services are client-centered, working with the older person and their family in their own home to come to decisions about issues affecting their lives. The emphasis on wellness means goals relate to "being able to do the things I want to do". Services are unique to the individual and, where possible, aim to identify opportunities for improving, or at least maintaining, physical and social activity and function, so life can be lived as fully as possible. More information is available at

www.enliven.org.nz

Family Works

Family Works provides services to children and families in need, helping them build on their strengths, and develop the skills which lead to lasting change, because we believe that the best way to help children is to help their families. You can find out more about Family Works in your region by visiting www.familyworks.org.nz. One of the ways that people support this work is through becoming a Family Works Guardian Angel. There is more information at

www.angel.org.nz

If you would like to take this opportunity to support the work of Presbyterian Support you can make an online donation by visiting any one of the websites mentioned above, or complete the following form:

Name:

Postal Address:

Contact Phone:

Email:

Yes, I would like to help by: (please tick your choices)

☐

Making a one off donation (enclosed)

☐

Doing some volunteer work

☐

Becoming a Guardian Angel donor

☐

Receiving more information about Family Works

☐

Receiving your newsletters

☐

Other (Please state) _____

☐

I have left a gift in my Will to Presbyterian Support

Send to

PRESCARE LENT APPEAL

Presbyterian Support
PO Box 19222
Wellington 6149

(All donations over \$5 are tax deductible and will be used in the region where you live.)

Thank you!



Presbyterian Support



This booklet is produced in partnership between the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand and Presbyterian Support.

Further copies can be downloaded from the PCANZ and Presbyterian Support websites:

www.presbyterian.org.nz/prescare and
www.ps.org.nz

For more printed copies please contact the Presbyterian Church at:

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or

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