



A special welcome to visitors to West, a place of shelter, faith and laughter. We are an all-age, all-stage community where everyone is included.

We especially love having kids involved in the service on Sundays. So please don't worry if anyone with you makes a little bit of noise – we're glad to have you with us!

Morning tea is part of our time together, so you're warmly invited to stick around for a fairtrade tea or coffee after the sitting-down part of the service.

Look out for people assembled in the area near the side exit door – they will be happy to pray with you after the service.

See inside for more....

A MONTH OF SUNDAYS

APRIL 2019

7 APR Prayer and Self Denial 3
Does God Care for these People?
Isaiah 65:1

14 APR Prayer and Self Denial 4

18 APR Service of the Shadows
7pm Tenebrae Service

19 APR No Good Friday service this year

21 APR RESURRECTION SUNDAY !
10am Jesus has Risen !

28 APR More than a Father #1



The last few days will be forever etched in New Zealand's memory and history. May the incredible acts of compassion, kindness and solidarity continue to weave their beauty into the fabric of who we are as a nation.

One of the fascinating things for me has been the masses of content being communicated and 'discussed' on facebook. There have been lots of life-giving posts, as well as a whole lot of uninformed, fear based thinking, especially from parts of the Christian community. No doubt many of us have come across such views, and my hope is that what follows might be helpful in forming more of a God honouring view of events, a view which is based on and filled with love, power and a sound mind. Rob is a friend and fellow

Baptist Pastor I met whilst on the Arrow Leadership course I did in 2017 and 2018. He writes:

Allah, Facebook and the Christian Response Last Friday our country observed the Muslim call to prayer and two minutes of silence, one week after terror attacks that killed 50 people at two mosques in Christchurch. And the Christian world **broke**.

It actually began early Friday morning with a text from a Baptist pastor I know in Christchurch who asked me if I would pray against the evil that was being unleashed with the Muslim call to prayer ringing around our nation.

I then made the mistake of looking at Facebook, and found a sharp migraine rising from my iPad and imbedding itself in my temples. I could not believe both the hysteria and ignorance that many of my fellow Christian brothers and sisters were espousing. The hysterics went from us needing to forgive our Prime Minister for converting our nation to Islam to prophecies of New Zealand ushering in Armageddon. All because the Muslim call to prayer hit our airwaves.

What's in a Word?

Brian Tamaki commented: "Two minutes of silence is okay but the Islamic prayer will sound? It contains this line 'there is no God but Allah', well I disagree, Jesus Christ is the only true God ... this is not us!"

It's a pity that Brian doesn't know his Bible. The Muslim call to prayer ends with that last line, which is straight from Deuteronomy 6:4. Our NIV bibles state Deuteronomy 6:4 as:

The Lord our God, the Lord is one

We translate that last word as "one", but the more appropriate translation would be "alone."

There is a problem, and inconsistency, with Brian Tamaki and the many Christians (including some in our church community) who voiced their disapproval. Would their reaction have been different if our Prime Minister allowed a Jewish Rabbi to pray over our airwaves? I would say Brian and many of them would not have a problem with that. And therein lies the problem, and inconsistency. The Jewish Rabbi, like the Islamic Imam, does not believe in the Trinity or in Jesus Christ. Is the Yahweh whom the Rabbi prays to, the same Yahweh that we pray to? I would say yes. Yet Judaism sees God differently from Christianity. I would say that Islam is the same. We pray to the same God, but Islam sees God differently from Christianity.

The problem that most of us seem to have is with the word, Allah. **Allah is the Arabic word for God**. Just like "Dio" is the Italian word for God and "deus" is the Latin word for God. Arabic Christians, when praying, will address their prayers to Allah, just as Muslims will do the same.

In Hebrew the word for God is **EI**

In Aramaic (the language Jesus spoke) the word for God is **Elah**

In Arabic the word for God is **Allah**. And it was used well before Islam came into being.

And Arabic is not the only language that uses Allah for God. Bábists, Bahá'ís, Mandaean, Indonesian and Maltese Christians, and Mizrahi Jews - in their language use Allah. Also, Christians and Sikhs in West Malaysia.

Sure, God is seen differently between Jews, Muslims and Christians. Jesus is missing. The Holy Spirit is missing. Those are big differences. But the underlining character of God the Father is actually the same.

Finding Common Ground

I've come to the conclusion that any Christian brother or sister who propagates fear is not working in the Spirit of God, but in a spirit of fear. When Paul was encouraging Timothy, he said this to him:

"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." (2 Tim 1:7)

Fear tends to have a detrimental effect on a sound mind! It distorts our understanding. Makes us react irrationally. And Facebook catalogues all our fears. One post or comment sparks the fear reaction. Whether it's directed to immigrants, or political parties, or Islam.

Our Prime Minister did something last week that should make us proud. She sought to humanise people, and regardless of belief, find common ground. Just like a number of Muslim scholars and religious leaders did in 2007 when they drafted and signed the "[Common Word](#)" document to the Christian leaders of the Catholic, Anglican and Baptist Churches.

Common ground.

Something that comes from a spirit of power and love and of a sound mind. Why do we Christians leave this to our Prime Minister, or to other religious leaders?

Why aren't we leading in finding common ground?

When common ground is found, dialogue can be made.

When common ground is found, polemic is set aside.

Are we so entitled that it can only be Christianity that has the freedom to pray over the airwaves? Are we so driven by fear that we feel the need to demonise anything that is not within our sense of righteousness?

The modern Evangelical Christian victim narrative needs to be addressed and rebuked. For a faith that is based on hope and salvation, we sure love to revel in condemnation, polemic and fear. **Love is what drives us, as it was because of love that God the Father sent his only Son to die for us. Not fear.**

Do we not trust in the **power** of God?

Do we not know how to follow the one commandment given to us (Christians, Jews and Muslims alike - common ground!!) to **love** one another?

Are we truly of **sound mind**?

"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."

Andrew 😊

west: making a difference

We have a portfolio of people and communities we support around New Plymouth and the world. The basics:

Paul and Sarah, Mikayla and Malachi (S Asia): We give thanks for this incredibly rich time of rest. Please pray that God would continue to use this opportunity to heal, restore and rest us, in his own beautiful and wise ways.

Carley (S Asia): We definitely still need your prayers as we are struggling to retain teachers in the

High school, especially for O levels. I know our Father will supply these, our job is to keep lifting this issue to Him. Pray for energy and strength for all the Staff here as the hotter months will soon be upon us.

Jo and Charlie (N.Z. and S. Asia.): We return to K-town on May 2nd, and are looking forward to returning "Home". Please pray for our travel, for

smooth and stress-free immigration, and settling into a life we are excited to get to, but haven't been in, for what seems like ages! Pray for our interaction with the community on our return, and all the anticipation and nervous excitement that comes with that.

Closer to home:

We love and partner with **Spotswood Primary School**, across the road. We're involved with HPP Reading, KickStart Breakfast Club, Pastoral Care, Mother's Day Brunch, Morning Tea for staff at the start of each term, Citizenship Award, and other areas individuals volunteer in. There are many ways you can serve our school community if you're interested.

Spotswood Primary Chaplaincy. Andrew spends Wednesday mornings at the school. He is a part of regular pastoral care team meetings which seek to collaboratively support children and families, and he

spends time listening to and supporting children. Andrew is also working on developing a partnership between West, School and Big Brothers Big Sisters mentoring.

A new group for boys started this week, focused on healthy anger. This is being co-led with Niki (Social Worker in Schools.)

Hospital Chapel Service support. Hospital Chapel Service Support: West helps with the hospital chapel service occasionally. If you'd like to find out more, please contact Ian & Jill M.

Mission Exposure Trip to Bangladesh and India. After our Sunday service with Rachel from NZBMS, a group of us had our socks excitedly blown off about what a West trip to Bangladesh and India might look like! Look out for more information coming soon!

west: growing

All men are welcome to share a drink and good conversation every fourth Monday at **Blokes and Cokes**, 7.30pm at Westside Grill (formerly known as WestBar.) See Brian M and the events section over the page for dates.

Lasses & Lattés. A chance for the women of our church (and friends) to get together, every second Monday, at 7.30pm at the Treehouse on Devon St West. All women welcome.

The **Ladies Tuesday Group** (formerly **Rainbow group**) meets fortnightly on Tuesday afternoons, at 1pm at Heather H's home. See events section for dates.

The **Movie Group** will meet weekly at Grant & Megan's home on Tuesday nights to watch and discuss movies on the themes of our sermon series. On the first Tuesday of the month members take part in a Quiz night at Westside Grill at 6.30pm.

Carol and James McK host a fortnightly 'Chocolate Fish' Bible study at their home. See 'events' section for dates. Anyone looking for a fortnightly home group is welcome to check us out.

Music & Play For parents and children under 5 years. Music & Play has started 2019 really well! We have a great team working well together and lots of families participating in a programme, and

more importantly participating in community and friendships. We meet every Friday at 10am.

Family Faith night To help our children grow in the ways of God's Kingdom, young families are getting together on the first Sunday of each month to eat and learn together. Michael and Elizabeth are leading this. 5pm Sunday 7 April, with shared kai to start.

E-camp: On the morning of Good Friday, Jude S-M, Andrew, and eight year 7 – 8 students will be heading to Lake Karapiro near Cambridge for E-Camp! Please pray for us all! Most of the group have connected with our youth group (Impact Youth) through our School connections which is super exciting!

Easter Camp On Maundy Thursday James, Carol and five young people who are school aged year 9 – 13 will be heading to Feilding for Easter Camp! Pray for them all too!

Impact Youth (West Baptist and St James combined youth group for students in years 7 to 13) are meeting every second Friday for mainly social activities. This month's event will be on April 12th (it's the last Friday of the school term.)

Also on the Sunday night of the same weekend (April 14th) the senior high school group (years 10-13) are meeting with a greater focus on bible study (as well as lots of fun).

Contact James M to be put on the text message group and/or find the facebook page for **Impact Youth New Plymouth** (Andrew will give you access to the closed group.)

The Music Group This month's practice will be on Thursday 11th April at 69 Barrett Road, starting at 7pm.

THE MUSIC GROUP: We would really love to have some more singers as part of the music group. If you can sing and would like to join us we would love to have you come on board with us.

We practice, usually fortnightly, on a Thursday from 7-8.30pm at 69 Barrett Road.

If you would like to know more please talk to one of the singers or talk to Gary B.

west: people

Please continue to **pray for and support** those who are struggling with ongoing health difficulties, and

those unable to meet on Sundays **Eric P, Ruth S, Lyn S, Marlinka R, Jocelyn D.**

west: events

OVER 60'S GROUP: Our next get-together will be on the 14th April. Time and venue to be advised.

CALENDAR:

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|----------------|---|----------|----------------------------------|
| 1,15,29 April | Lasses & Lattés, 7.30pm at Treehouse, Spotswood | 12 April | Impact Group 7 – 9 pm |
| 5,12 April | Music & Play, at West, 10am | 14 April | Over 60's Group |
| 7 April | Family Faith Night, 5pm | 14 April | Impact Youth Seniors |
| 9,23 April | Ladies Tuesday Group at Heather' H's, 1pm | 18 April | Easter Campers head to Feilding |
| 9,16,23,30 Apr | Movie Group at Grant & Megan's | 18 April | Service of the Shadows, 7pm |
| 11,25 April | Chocolate Fish Group, at McK's. | 19 April | E-Campers head to Lake Karapiro |
| 11 April | Music Practice | 21 April | Resurrection Sunday service 10am |
| | | 22 April | Blokes & Cokes at Westbar 7.30pm |

west: pitching in

Prayer: If you have a prayer request, please contact Andrew who would be delighted to pray with you and/or put your request on the prayer chain.

We have an e-mail prayer chain where a dozen people are committed to praying for any request, as they are able. All West people are encouraged to be a part of this. If you'd like to join the prayer chain as a pray-er, please contact Andrew.

Each month we will keep the church informed of our progress. We have budgeted for \$9,500 per month in offerings; in February our offerings were \$8,473.

If you'd like to set up an **automatic payment** or use envelopes to contribute financially to the work of the church please see our treasurer, Brent G. (751 0010) The government will rebate a full third of what you give.

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| Cleaning & Morning Tea Lawnmowing | 6 APR | 13 APR | 20 APR | 27 APR | 4 MAY |
| | Elizabeth P | Sangsters | Sue J | Alison D | Brent G |
| | Michael P | Erin R | Steve J | Lisa W | Murray L |
| | | Allan W | | Wayne L | |