



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

JUNE 2019

2 JUNE Psalm 46
Be Still and Know that God is God

9 JUNE Acts 2
Unexpected

16 JUNE New Series starting!
#1: Covered in Dust

23 JUNE #2: The main thing

30 JUNE #3: Learner or other

7 JULY "Mirrors and Meeting"



Recently we have spent three Sunday mornings learning and thinking together about how God is “More than a Father.” I’m keen to summarise this – both for my own benefit and, in case it may help you too 😊

Throughout this series I have drawn extensively on the work of Biblical scholar Dr Tim Bulkeley in his book “Not Only a Father” (available on Amazon). Tim has taught Old Testament at Carey Baptist College and the University of Auckland since 1993. Before this he was a missionary in Africa and a Baptist pastor in England.

Week One: To set the scene Judy acknowledged we have limited or finite understanding of God and life, and so we use metaphors to help us understand more about God and relate better to God. Bible

writers and we today use many different metaphors for God. We considered many Old Testament passages showing God being described in motherly ways. In the Old Testament there are nearly as many ways God is described as a mother, as there are ways God is described as a father. We need both images to give us a better view of God, and in fact we need even more images than these to help us understand and relate to God more accurately.

Week Two: When we come to the New Testament the language around how God is described changes significantly. The language shifts from metaphors for God that don’t require God to have an equal – such as rock, provider, King, Shepherd, and this language shifts towards using Father language – where “Father” becomes a name for God, while Mother language seems almost absent. Use of Father language to speak of God was becoming more common in Jesus’ time – so it wasn’t a totally new thing Jesus was doing. When we examined Jesus’ story of the Loving Father/Prodigal Son, we noticed how Jesus uses ‘Father’ as a name, but we see that Jesus minimises the gender specific features of the image of Father. Jesus’ father acts in very motherly ways! Jesus’ father is a motherly father.

Week Three: Again we saw Jesus in his Sermon on the Mount describe his Father in Heaven in typically mother ways. Jesus’ apostles, the Early Church leaders, and the leading Theologians through church history right up to the Reformation have consistently spoken of each person of the Trinity in both feminine and masculine ways. We know that both men and women are made in God’s image. God is not male. God is not female. God is not only a father – God is more than a Father. We are given multiple images/metaphors to help us grasp a bigger, broader understanding of who God is. Having more than one image of God is healthy and desirable. This is why it’s important we can think of and speak of God in more ways than just a father – even though God is like a Father. Being able to speak of God as being like a mother also helps people for whom a fatherly image of God is unhelpful. I also spoke about how we can celebrate and get on board with how our culture is leading us in being more careful about gendered language. Churches have the opportunity to adapt their language to more closely reflect the awesome God who loves us and whom we live for. And so, let’s be people who continue to think about the prayers we pray, the lyrics we sing, and the words we read.

And so, let’s be people who continue to think about the prayers we pray, the lyrics we sing, and the words we read – so that we don’t use ‘he’ and ‘father’ all the time. God is more than a Father. Let’s be people who when we read the bible – notice the motherly attributes of God. Let’s be people whose language reflects the beauty of God also being like a mother.

I appreciate this can be empowering, liberating and worshipful for some, whilst at the same time new, difficult, and challenging for others. I’m happy to loan Tim’s book to you. Additionally, you can see previous West pastor Thalia’s blog where this topic is engaged with. Scroll down to the first post, and work your way towards the last post. <http://sacraparental.com/?s=Bulkeley&submit=Search>

With love as always,

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 continue to be thankful for this time of rest. Please pray that God would continue to use this opportunity to heal, restore and rest us.

Carley (S Asia): Please continue to pray for wisdom for GEMS. We are still struggling to retain students and our guardians believe a lot of false information is fed to them. Pray that our Guardians can hear the truth and trust that what the school is doing is right.

Jo and Charlie (N.Z. and S. Asia.): We need continued prayer for our on-going language study. Pray also for protection against sickness and ill health – especially in this hot climate.

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.

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 Sunday 2 June. Families, Food, Fun, Faith. 5 – 6.30pm on the first Sunday of each month. We start with shared kai.

Impact Youth Impact Youth (combined youth group with St James and West Baptist youth for years 7 to 13), meet every second Friday from 7-9pm, meeting either at West or at St James.

On Saturday 8th June we'll be having a sleepover in a cardboard city at St James (instead of the normal Friday night activity.)

Then on Friday 21st we're looking to have a winter Christmas party. See James M for more details on each of these.

Also for **senior youth** (years 10 to 13) there is an additional bible study on every second Sunday evening 7-9pm (9th and 23rd June) meeting at 63a Ngamotu Rd.

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 27th June at 69 Barrett Road, starting at 7pm.

west: people

Lynda and Andy L have their house on the market. They will be looking for a cheap rental or house-sitting opportunity for the next 10 months after it sells. Please contact Lynda or Andy if you can help.

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

Mothers' Day Brunch BBQ Thanks to all who were able to help out/attend this annual event. Once again a great team effort! We've received lots of lovely feedback from attendees 😊

JUNE CALENDAR:

2 nd	Family Faith Night, 5pm	10,24 th	Lasses & Lattés, 7.30pm at Treehouse, Spotswood
4,18 th	Ladies Tuesday Group at Heather's, 1pm	11,18,25 th	Movie Group at Grant & Megan's
6,20 th	Chocolate Fish Group, at McK's.	17 th	Blokes & Cokes at Westbar 7.30pm
7,14,21,28 th	Music & Play, at West, 10am	27 th	Music Practice
8, 21 st	Impact Group 7 – 9 pm	7 th July	Church Meeting
9 th , 23 rd	Impact Youth Seniors		

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 April our offerings were \$9,573.47.

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.

Cleaning & Morning Tea Lawnmowing	1 JUN	8 JUN	15 JUNE	22 JUNE	29 JUNE
	Andrea M Tracey W	Judy W Brian W Brian W	Val W Allan W	Lynda L Andy L Stuart W	James McK Carol McK