



**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

OCTOBER 2019

**6 OCT** Nehemiah # 3  
Chapter 3

**13 OCT** Nehemiah # 4  
Chapter 4 & 6:1-14

**20 OCT** Nehemiah # 5  
Chapter 5

**27 OCT** Nehemiah # 6  
Chapter 6:15-19



We have started a new preaching series through the Old Testament book of Nehemiah.

On the surface Nehemiah is like Bob the Builder - Can we fix it – yes we can! It is a story of something being broken, of someone seeing a need, and of everybody working to get the job done. It's a good story – an interesting story – a helpful story - and it's also a story (like many other parts of the Old Testament) that has bits that are very disturbing.

There are parts in the story of Nehemiah that are in opposition to the ways of Jesus – and even to Jesus himself. And this is a huge challenge to us as Christians today – depending on how we view and interpret the bible.

I am especially grateful to Andrew Callander at St James and the others in our group of learners for their help in articulating some of these thoughts below.

Throughout my sermons in this series I will be highlighting a God–honouring, Bible-respecting way of reading the Old Testament. I plan to take some of the difficult bits of Nehemiah – bits that contradict the ways of Jesus and demonstrate how we can view and handle these texts responsibly. It can be easy to ignore difficult bits, or write them off, or perhaps worst of all – accept them and bolt them onto our understanding of God. Often bolting ideas onto God happens because of a belief that when the bible says something – that we should apply that to our lives and do that thing too. This stems from the belief that each and every part of the Bible is equal – even equal to the person and ways of Jesus Christ.

It is my conviction that if we call ourselves disciples of Jesus – Christians – then this means that we follow Jesus Christ – or at least try to. Therefore, we do our very best to listen to and follow the way Jesus understands all things about God – and therefore the way Jesus understands the Bible – and therefore the way Jesus understands difficult topics.

In John's Gospel, it says about Jesus that:

14 The Word became a human being and lived here with us. We saw his true glory, the glory of the only Son of the Father. From him all the kindness and all the truth of God have come down to us.

15 John spoke about him and shouted, "This is the one I told you would come! He is greater than I am, because he was alive before I was born."

16 Because of all that the Son is, we have been given one blessing after another.[b] 17 The Law was given by Moses, but Jesus Christ brought us undeserved kindness and truth. 18 No one has ever seen God. The only Son, who is truly God and is closest to the Father, has shown us what God is like.

In verse 14 we are told that "the Word became human" - and many Christians take this to mean that Jesus is like God. Of course this is true – however, this is also problematic! The problem is that this is not radical enough for a Christian reading of the Bible – that is, a way of reading and understanding and interpreting the Bible that is genuinely Christian, that is, genuinely faithful to Jesus Christ. If we solely take the view that Jesus is like God, sincere believers read the Old Testament, learn things about God, and then when they get to the New Testament – because Jesus is like God – they bolt onto Jesus all that they have learned about God without Jesus.

The Old Testament is pre-Jesus - it is pre-Christian – and parts of the Old Testament, including parts of Nehemiah are sub-Christian. The danger is that if we take a flat or surface view of the Old Testament that believes all parts are equal – then it's too easy to bolt onto Jesus things that Jesus himself rejects – of course all the while sincerely believing that because these things are "biblical" they must also be Christian.

When the gospel of John says "the Word became flesh" meaning that Jesus is like God – much more radically and importantly, it means that God is like Jesus! It means – as John goes on to say in verse 18 that "no one has ever seen God. The only Son, who is truly God and is closest to the Father, has shown us what God is like."

If it's Jesus who shows us what God is like – then it is Jesus who takes precedence over any other way of showing what God is like – even the Old Testament. And so, rather than bolting ideas about life and God from the Old Testament onto Jesus – what "the Word became human" means is that we must now radically re-read and re-think the entire Old Testament – in light of Jesus Christ.

Remember the story about Jesus up on a mountain top with his apostles – and Moses was there representing the law – and Elijah was there representing the prophets – and remember what God says "This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him." (And therefore, not any other.) [Luke 9:35]

As we saw in our drama last Sunday with Judy, Jezmah, Caitlyn, Claudia and Naomi, Jesus was always challenging people – challenging them to respond freshly to God and not be stuck in their thinking and traditions, which had too often ended up as stifling, legalistic and not true. Where did this sometimes stifling, legalistic and false way of viewing God come from... well, the Bible of course – and Nehemiah plays a significant part in this! And so as we dive into Nehemiah – we'll be keeping one eye on how we read the book Christianly – with a Jesus lens – and another eye on the beautiful story of an influential man who sees a need, has compassion, and does everything he can to restore what was broken.

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 give thanks for this incredibly rich time of rest. Please pray that God would continue to use, heal, restore and rest them in his own beautiful way.

**Carley (S Asia).** Pray for our O'level and A'level students who are starting exams this month. Pray for their health, strength (they have to travel a lot to and from their exams!) and just general emotional health so they can manage the stress. Also pray for my health- it hasn't been great and this is a busy time of year! I seem to have taken on the organisation of a lot of extra events and activities in October and November so need health and also a lot of patience!

**Jo and Charlie (N.Z. and S. Asia.)** We give thanks for people here in South Asia, and the different capacities they have in our lives. Please pray for the leadership at Freeset as they continue to navigate with, and for, our different communities

**Conversations** are continuing with NBMS about a West trip to see their work in South Asia.

**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 has started, 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 **The Treehouse** Please note the change of venue. 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** 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. Term 3 got off to a great start for Music & Play. We have a great team working well together with lots of families participating in the program, and more importantly participating in community and friendships. We meet every Friday at 10am.

**Family Faith Night** Sunday October 6th **For Families, Food, Fun, Faith.** 5 – 6.30pm on the first Sunday of each month. We start with shared kai.

**Impact Youth - for years 7 to 13:** Impact Youth for years 7-13: With school holidays the next event will be a “Café and quiz night” at St James on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> of October. See James M for more details.

**Impact Senior Youth - for years 10 to 13:** Impact Youth for years 10-13: On Sunday October 13<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>, meeting at the Fawkner’s house.

Contact James M if you want 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 practices will be on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> October at 69 Barrett Road, starting at 7pm.

## west: in our community

“Community Conversations” (Conversations that matter to the well-being of Taranaki.) Thursday 10 October. 9.30 – 12.30pm. Hosted by Tu Tama Wahine o Taranaki (62 Powderham St) and Community Taranaki. Ph 758 5795 to RSVP. See poster on noticeboard for more information.

## west: people

**Breakfast in Schools** It only takes 1.5 hours of a morning once or twice (or more?) a term to help feed kid’s breakfast at Spotswood Primary School. We are short of volunteers for Mondays and Fridays this term and welcome anyone who can assist – or be available for the odd slot as a back-up. Please contact Erin – 021 189 9373. **THANKS** for considering – on behalf of the kids.

Great work **Jill McK** and helpers on making bags to support NZBMS! The opportunity to buy these has now ended.

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

### OCTOBER CALENDAR:

6 <sup>th</sup>	Family Faith Night, 5pm	10,24 <sup>th</sup>	Chocolate Fish Group, at McK’s
7 <sup>th</sup>	Blokes & Cokes at <b>The Treehouse</b> 7.30pm	13,27 <sup>th</sup>	Impact Senior Youth, 7-9pm
8,22 <sup>nd</sup>	Ladies Tuesday Group at Heather H’s, 1pm	14,28 <sup>th</sup>	Lasses & Lattés, 7.30pm
8,15,22,29 <sup>th</sup>	Movie Group at Grant & Megan	17, 31 <sup>st</sup>	Music Practice
		18,25 <sup>th</sup>	Music & Play, at West, 10am
		25 <sup>th</sup>	Impact Group 7–9 pm

## 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 August our offerings were \$10,222.

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.

<b>Cleaning &amp; Morning Tea Lawnmowing</b>	<b>5 OCT</b> Val W Allan W	<b>12 OCT</b> Lynda L Andy L Syd Beale	<b>19 OCT</b> James McK Carol McK	<b>26 OCT</b> Michael P Elizabeth P Brian Wood	<b>2 NOV</b> Roi S-M Jude S-M
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