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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

DECEMBER 2019 / JANUARY 2020

1 DEC **Advent # 1. Hope**
Hikoi to Parihaka

8 DEC **Advent # 2. Peace**

15 DEC **Advent # 3. Joy**

22 DEC **Advent # 4. Love**

25 DEC **Christmas Day**
9.30am Service

29 DEC **10am at West**
Combined service with St James



“Does Advent even matter when the world is on fire?”

I'd like to share a piece of writing from Sarah Bessey. Enjoy :-)

https://sarahbessey.substack.com/p/does-advent-even-matter-when-the?fbclid=IwAR2_IQWMgNOQ2UkUunCVwgDkfHG6l_YlKUrC4OVnASWpglBx016pPY2dASg

Advent is about to begin. Many of us are already preparing our homes and families to observe this season of the Church calendar.

But many of us are wondering: how could we possibly enter into Advent if we are paying attention to the world?

How do we celebrate or 'get cozy' or turn towards Christmas when our hearts are broken by Syria's refugees, by Hong Kong's protests, by Brexit, by the USA impeachment proceedings and detention camps, by broken treaties, by one another? When, in response to every crisis, our communities seem splintered and divided even in how to bind up each other's wounds and careless words are flung like rocks at our own glass houses? When perhaps we are lonely or bored or tired or sick or broke or afraid? When we are grieving and sad?

In these days, celebrations can seem callous and uncaring, if not outright impossible.

But here's the thing: we enter into Advent precisely because we are paying attention.

It's because everything hurts that we prepare for Advent. It's because we have stood in hospital rooms and gravesides, empty churches and quiet bedrooms that we resolutely lay out candles and matches.

We don't get to have hope without having grief. Hope dares to admit that not everything is as it should be, and so if we want to be hopeful, first we have to grieve. First we have to see that something is broken and there is a reason for why we need hope to begin with.

Advent matters, because it's a way of keeping our eyes and our hearts and our arms all wide open even in the midst of our grief and longing.

The weary world is still waiting in so many ways, in so many hearts, in so many places, for the fullness of the Kingdom of God to come. Advent is for the ones who know longing.

So here is what we listen for and what we mark and why we wait and light candles and read Scripture in preparation over these long winter nights [or long summer nights!]: that the love, the peace, the joy, the hope is possible and it's real and it's breaking in among us already.

God is with us. The prophet Isaiah called out into the wilderness: Energize the limp hands, strengthen the rubbery knees. Tell fearful souls, "Courage! Take heart! God is here, right here, on his way to put things right and re-dress all wrongs. He's on his way! He'll save you!" From Isaiah 35:3-4

Advent is the Church's way of observing and remembering, of making the truth we believe that God came to be with us once, and God is still with us, and God is coming again to set all things right.

Advent holds the truth of what is right now up to the truth of what was and what will be and then responds like the Psalmist, I'll never quit telling the story of your love – how you built the cosmos and guaranteed everything in it. Your love has always been our life's foundation, your fidelity has been the roof over our world. (Psalm 89:2-3MSG)

It is declaring that we believe it still: God is redeeming all that is broken in us and curing all that is sick in us and bringing all that is dead in us to life.

It's because of this promise that we can light candles in the pressing and cold darkness, blazing up the warmth and light for peace and for hope and for joy and for love.

Every word of God, the Word of God Themselves, is true and also it is still coming true.

And Advent reminds us that God seeks us out where we are right now. Not where we should be by our own or anyone else's estimation.

God seeks us out when we are in exile and when we are suffering, when we are callous and cowardly, when we are more concerned with common sense and faithfulness, when we are fearful and arrogant, when we are lost and broken, when we are sad and alone, when we are traumatised and wondering when the light will start to win, when we feel forgotten and bored and insignificant and tired, when we are wounded and when we are the ones who are wounding.

Oh, yes, in these days, God is seeking us out on that path and in that wilderness.

And the voice of the prophets of Advent cry out in that very place:

Courage! Take heart! God is here, right here! Your love has always been our lives' foundation, your fidelity has been the roof over our world.

Immanuel, God with us. Incarnate and alive and now.

Don't be afraid. Prepare your hearts.

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/ NZ)
Pray for Paul, Sarah and family as they continue to rest in New Zealand. May they enjoy time with family and friends over this festive season.

Carley (S Asia): Continue to pray for our parents and guardians at the school. Pray that they will choose us as their only schooling option and be open to listening to advice.

Charlie & Jo (S Asia): As the nights get cooler it would be good to think about the folk living on the street. We are planning some larger activities with our community who live near to us. Pray for fun and safety. Continue to pray for the set up of The Banyan Tree. Pray that all systems and processes will be established without any issues. Please think about those in leadership as they take steps to begin this work.

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: We are gradually having people pull out of the team, because of other changing commitments, and we are now down to only one additional helper, so Ian and Jill would really appreciate having a couple more team members for 2020. It's not an arduous task at all, it is greatly appreciated by patients who desire to attend the services, and we only do it 4 times per year (and you'd not have to help every time.) Please talk to Ian or Jill if you can help, or if you wish to find out more about the role.

west: growing

All men are welcome to share a drink and good conversation at **Blokes and Cokes**, 7.30pm at Westside Grill (formerly known as WestBar.) Our

gatherings are held once every four weeks. See Brian M and the events section over the page for

dates. The final gathering for 2019 will be on the 9th December, restarting in February.

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. Our last meeting for the year will be on the 9th December, and we will re-start on 20 January 2020.

The **Ladies Tuesday Group** (formerly **Rainbow group**) meets fortnightly on Tuesday afternoons, at 1pm at Heather H's home. See events section for dates. We have held our last meeting for the year, and will re-start on Tuesday 11 February.

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. 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. Our last meeting will be on December 13th ending the year with a Christmas Theme.

Family Faith Night: Families, Food, Fun, Faith. 5 – 6.30pm on the first Sunday of each month. We start with shared kai. On December 1st we're meeting with takeaways at Ngamotu Beach. Family Faith night will take a break in January and start again in February.

west: in our community

Christmas Hampers. Each year we contribute edible Christmas goodies and cash so that Carolyn & John can create around a dozen Christmas Hampers. These are delivered on December 24. They are a real blessing to people. If you'd like to contribute, please place items into the basket in foyer, or pass cash to Carolyn, John or put it in a labelled envelope for an offering bag.

west: people

Jocelyn D has been moved to a room upstairs (Room 73) in Jean Sandel Rest Home and would still

love a visit. If she is not in her lovely corner room, she'll be in the lounge (next to the main desk.)

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. We will be holding our final event for 2019 on Friday 6th December. Details will be sent out by James M. Similarly details for youth in 2020 will be communicated in January.

Also for **senior youth** (years 10 to 13) there is an additional bible study on every second Sunday evening 7-9pm 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 5th December at 69 Barrett Road, starting at 7pm.

In the lead up to Christmas this year we are focusing on **Tranzsend's Christmas Angel Appeal** with its emphasis on the story Jesus told (in Luke 14) about a great feast that ended up being for everybody. Our advent curators and I invite you to consider hosting a Christmas party (like in Jesus' story) during December for people; West people, neighbours, workmates, sports mates, Spotswood people you've met through various ministries. If this is for you, you may like to write your name, a date and the number of people you can host on one of the green pieces of paper at rear of church building, so that some West people can sign up to come along. We'd love to hear stories of how this goes! If hosting isn't for you, how about supporting somebody else to?

Welcome Jacob! It's great to have you back with us!

Khon, Nang, Ruth and Hparat – we hope you have an awesome holiday!

Congratulations Regan! Regan has just finished 13 years of school!

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 We will be meeting at Ratapihi Reserve which is located at the end of Cowling Road on Sunday the 8th December after Church. Please bring a picnic lunch and any seating if required. Any queries, phone Carolyn 751-1305.

DECEMBER CALENDAR:

1 st	Family Faith Night, 5pm	8 th	Over 60's Picnic after Church
5 th	Music Practice	9 th	Lasses & Lattés, 7.30pm at Treehouse, Spotswood
5,19 th	Chocolate Fish Group, at McK's.	9 th	Blokes & Cokes at Westbar 7.30pm
6,13 th	Music & Play, at West, 10am	10,17 th	Movie Group at Grant & Megan's
6 th	Impact Group 7 – 9 pm		

JANUARY 2020 SERVICES:

- 5 January** Combined service with St James, 10am at St James, Lawry St
- 12 January** 10am Service at West
- 19 January** 10am Service at West
- 26 January** 10am Service at West

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 October our offerings were \$9,895.00.

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	7 DEC	14 DEC	21 DEC	28 DEC	4 JAN
	Brent G	Liane L	Corey and	Brian M	Khon A
	Murray L	Wayne L	family	Kathy M	Nang A
	Murray L	Roi S-M	Allan W	Wayne L	Andy L

*Christ was born here below
that we might be born from
above.*