

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.

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.

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!

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

DEC 2022 / JAN 2023

27 NOV Advent # 1
Hope: Green
with Ethan

4 DEC Advent # 2
Peace: Blue
with Andrew

11 DEC Advent # 3
Joy: Yellow
with Andrew

18 DEC Advent # 4
Love: Red
With Ethan

25 DEC Christmas Day
9.30am

1 JAN No Service



Kia Ora whānau,

We have started our four week Advent journey! There's a turning of our hearts towards God becoming human – even if it's just a little bit. I really appreciate the writing of Sarah Bessey. Here are some of her words (very slightly edited by me) on Advent.

“... many of us are wondering: how could we possibly enter into this season of the Church calendar if we are paying attention to this world? How do we celebrate or “get cosy” or turn towards Christmas when our hearts are broken by painful family dynamics, increasing violence on our streets, worry over the future, wars, famine, coronavirus, political divides, conspiracy theories, refugees, broken treaties, by one another?

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

But here's the thing, my friend: we enter into Advent now 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 funeral homes, 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 our 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 summer days: it is because we choose to believe that the love, the peace, the joy, the hope is possible and real, and 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 redress all wrongs. He's on his way! He'll save you!” (Isaiah 35:3-4 MSG)

Advent is the Church's way of observing and remembering, of marking 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 lives' foundation, your fidelity has been the roof over our world.” (Psalm 89: 2-3 MSG)

Advent 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 for hope and for peace and for joy and for love. Every word of God, the Word of God, 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 than faithfulness, when we are fearful and arrogant, when we are lost and broken, when we are sad and alone, when we are traumatized 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 the words of that Psalmist: 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."

With Love

Andrew ☺ (well, mostly Sarah Bessey)

west: making a difference

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

Charlie & Jo (S Asia): have had a very busy few months, and are thankful for quiet times too. We have helped plan and run 2 big Carnival days for the kids in our communities, to give them a day of wonderful fun, and encouraged new local leaders. We have supported local families through their traumas. Charlie & Jo are thankful for their friends around them and the connections they have with them. They are looking forward to the up-coming Festive season and all it means for them and the folks around them.



west: growing

The Movie Group On the first Tuesday of the month members take part in a Quiz night at Westside Grill at 6.30pm. We meet on the third Tuesday night of the month to watch and discuss movies. Phone Megan C for details of venues.

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. If anyone new would like to join us you're welcome to come along.

Our last get-together for the year is on the 15th December, and we restart on 2 February 2023.

Music & Play group is for preschool children and their parents or caregiver. We meet on Friday mornings at 10am during the school term. We begin with fun, interactive songs with lots of musical instruments, parachutes and ribbons and many other props. We follow this up with a yummy morning tea

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, such as sports team coaching. 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 with anybody connected to the school community.

and play time. The group is an open welcoming space for all who would like to be a part of it. For more information feel free to check out the Music and Play Group Facebook page or phone Carol on 027 738 5465. Our last morning for the year is on 9th December, ending our year with a Christmas theme. We will recommence on 10th February 2023.

If you'd like to find out more about **study at Carey Baptist College**, or tapping into their wonderful webinars, hit <https://www.carey.ac.nz/>

board@westbaptist.org.nz This e-mail address can be used to contact our church Leadership Board. We are keen to hear from you. We love serving you.

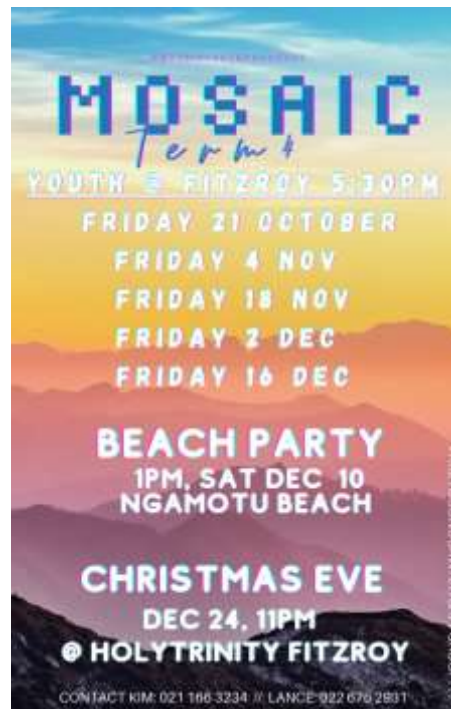
The Music Group meet at 9.15am Sharp on a Sunday Morning before the service to go through the songs for the service.

We would love to have more singers join us. If you feel this is something you could do on a Sunday please talk to Gary, Heather or one of the team.

Mosaic Youth is for school year 9 – 13. This is our collaborating youth group with a variety of other churches. We meet fortnightly during term time for fun, food, and faith discussions. It's a great place to make friends!

Pre-teen Ministry We have an amazing group of school year 6, 7 and 8's (10 – 12 year olds.) We'd love a couple more adults to come along to love these kids. Please contact Ethan or Andrew if you are interested in finding out more.

Please remember that if you have a concern – 'go to the source. That means, go and speak to the person you have a concern with Lovingly. Gently. With an open mind and heart. Ask questions to understand. If your concern still isn't resolved, or you'd like support to 'go to the source', contact me or your favourite Leadership Board member; Andy, Carol, Lyn, David.



west: events

DECEMBER CALENDAR:

2 nd	Mosaic Youth
9 th	Music & Play at West, 10am
10 th	Beach Party, 1pm Ngamotu Bch
14 th Dec	West Youth Christmas Feast (helpers needed!)
15 th	Chocolate Fish Group, at McK's
16 th	West Youth
20 th	Movie Group at venues TBA

JANUARY CALENDAR:

1 Jan	No Service
8 Jan	Combined with St James, at West Baptist
15 Jan	Combined with St James, at St James Presbyterian
22 Jan	Surprise
29 Jan	Matthew series begins

west: people

Being family, we want to celebrate things in each other's lives. Each month, we'll acknowledge Birthdays and Anniversaries in the newsletter, with special birthdays acknowledged on Sundays.

Here are dates for December/January

14 December	Judy & Brian's WA
20 December	Roi & Jude's WA
27 December	Maureen C
27 December	Lynda & Andy's WA
30 December	David S
4 January	Lou G
5 January	Erin R

14 January	Cela B
24 January	Lyn S
24 January	Gary & Heather's WA

The Church is people... if you are thinking of somebody or praying for somebody, how about letting them know. Make contact. Ask how they are. Perhaps offer to share a coffee at your home/their home/café.

I'm sure it would be a huge encouragement. Is there somebody you're thinking of right now that might like a phone call or coffee visit? An older person? Somebody less able to get out?

West has a private Facebook page for connecting with each other. **“West Baptist New Plymouth Connection.”**

Please continue to **pray for and support** those who are struggling with ongoing health difficulties, and those unable to meet on Sundays – **Margaret S, Heather H, Ruth S, Lyn S, Marlinka R.**

west: pitching in

West Baptist Youth are planning a Christmas Feast! On Wednesday December 14th, we are celebrating the year by serving our young people with a Christmas feast! But we are needing a bit of support from the West church community! We are looking for people who may be able to donate their time on that evening. We'll purchase the kai, but we would love a bit of help in the kitchen preparing and serving for our young people. If you can help with either prep or serving, you can contact me on 022 407 3485.

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.

Each month we will keep the church informed of our progress. We have budgeted for \$10,833 per month in offerings; in October our offerings were \$10,177, in November our offerings were \$9,373.

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.

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.

	3 DEC	10 DEC	17 DEC	24 DEC	31 DEC
Cleaning & Morning Tea	Liane L	Brian M	Lynda L	Judy W	Val W
	Wayne L	Cathy M	Andy L	Brian W	Allan W
Lawnmowing		Allan W		Wayne L	

	7 JAN	14 JAN	21 JAN	28 JAN	4 FEB
Cleaning & Morning Tea	Khon A	Bedford	James McK	Meryl A	
	Nang A	family	Carol McK	Alison D	
Lawnmowing	Andy L		Jacob M		



*Great little One! Whose all-embracing birth
Lifts Earth to Heaven, stoops Heaven to Earth.*