



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

MARCH 2023

5 MAR The Kingdom of heaven
with Ethan

12 MAR Surprise

19 MAR Surprise

26 MAR Surprise



Ténā koutou e te whānau a te Karaiti,

February has been quite the month. For us in our local West community, we have had very challenging times facing great sickness, struggles, and loss of loved ones. It has been difficult hearing stories of loss for many of those in our community. On top of this, we've also seen many of our neighbours across Te Ika-a-Māui devastated by cyclone Gabrielle. Furthermore, the world has mourned the huge loss of life at the hands of earthquakes in Tūrkiye. And yet still we watch on as war continues to rage on in Ukraine. It seems that every day has new stories for us to mourn. I find that it can be very hard to find hope and joy in moments such as these.

However I am reminded of some of the insights of Matthew that we have been exploring over the last month or so. I am reminded of the suffering, incarnate God who put on flesh and joined us in our pain. In times such as this I am reminded that God is not distanced from us, but joins us in our world's pain and suffering. When we are faced with challenging and trying times, Jesus is a message of hope for all people. When faced with death, Jesus overcame and brought new life.

As we learned last Sunday, our God is a God that suffers alongside the oppressed and confronts those with the power over others. Through Jesus' upside-down Kingdom, He has a plan to reconcile all things to himself. And so, as we watch on at the great distress in the world we are invited to intercede, to be generous, and compassionate to those that we can reach as we participate in this upside-down Kingdom of love.

The Gospel of Matthew closes itself with this timely reminder for us all – “And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:20b.)

Matthew Series:

It has been such a blessing to have the space to explore the gospel of Matthew together over the past six weeks. I have been grateful for the opportunity that the church has given me to spend time meditating on scripture, and seeking lots of input from others on this gospel. This time has brought many new learnings for me, and often I have ended the week feeling challenged by the new learnings of what it means to participate in Jesus' upside-down Kingdom of grace and compassion.

Jesus has a funny way of seeing through the facades that can sub-consciously be put up, and reach to those niggly areas in life that we don't always want to face or deal with. I have thoroughly enjoyed chatting with various people about their own reflections on the passages, and have often been challenged by your new points-of-view.

However, with hindsight, I think a gospel needs more than six weeks. There is so much I wish I could have shared on Sundays, but it can be tricky to fit everything into a fifteen-minute slot. Thankfully, none of it is wasted learning, and I am sure it will come back in future times.

So, as we wind up this series, I finish feeling very convicted by what the Spirit has been saying throughout these weeks to me and to the West community.

Mauri ora e te iwi!

Ethan 😊

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): We continue to pray for Surjo. He is receiving treatment for Leukaemia. It is very rough on him, as well as those immediately around him. We continue to ask for that miracle!

Ryan and Sophie: Have advised that they have now finished their time with Arotahi (NZBMS) and no longer require financial support. They have had a wonderful summer holiday and are well rested. Ryan and Sophie thank everyone for their support and say

that their supporters have been an important and valued part of their journey. If anyone would like to keep in touch, their email addresses are:

Sophie.g.bond@gmail.com

Ryan.bond3@outlook.com

Ryan and Sophie, Spencer and Emerson send love and a virtual hug goodbye.

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.

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.

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 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.

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

MARCH CALENDAR:

2,16,30th Chocolate Fish Group, at McK's
3,10,17,24,31st Music & Play at West, 10am

21st Movie Group at venues TBA

west: people

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.**

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 March:

5 Mar	Wayne & Liane L	WA
10 Mar	Allan & Val W	WA
24 Mar	Maureen & Jim C	WA
25 March	James P	
30 Mar	Alison D	

Anniversaries:

Two of our couples are this month celebrating their 50th Wedding Anniversaries.

Congratulations on this awesome milestone to Val and Allan W, and Maureen and Jim C.

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.

Each month we will keep the church informed of our progress. We have budgeted for \$10,583 per month in offerings; in January our offerings were \$9,384.

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.

	4 MAR	11 MAR	18 MAR	25 MAR	1 APR
Cleaning & Morning Tea	Brian W	Allan W	Khon A	Meryl A	James M
	Judy W	Val W	Nang A	Alison D	Carol M
Lawnmowing	James M		Brian M		David S

Love knows no limit to its endurance, no end to its trust, no fading of hope: it can outlast anything. It is, in fact, the one thing that still stands when all else has fallen.

1 Corinthians 13:7-8