



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

JUNE 2023

4 JUNE Café Church!
"Church Life Survey"

11 JUNE Salvation in the Scriptures #1
Salvation as Sacrifice

18 JUNE Communion
With Liane

25 JUNE Salvation in the Scriptures #2
Salvation as Victory



Kia Ora whānau,

Last Sunday we, along with much of the world-wide Church, celebrated Pentecost – the sending of the Spirit. The Spirit came like a rushing wind; creating and empowering the church to give witness to the death & resurrection of Jesus and the goodness of God.

On Sunday I shared that “God coming like a wind is a recurring idea in the Bible. The word for Spirit in the New Testament means wind, or to blow. In the Old Testament Spirit also means wind. In the creation stories we read that “the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.” And so we get this idea that it’s God’s Spirit (named as a feminine word) who blows like a breath that brings life.”

After the service I was helpfully asked a bit more about this, especially the referring to the Spirit as a ‘she.’ It’s common to refer to the Holy Spirit as a she, for in the Old Testament the word for Spirit is a feminine word. Hebrew is a gendered language (like French) where even objects are given a gender. Importantly, the Spirit is a person – part of the Trinity, so it’s more helpful in many ways to refer to the Spirit not as an ‘it’ or ‘thing’ but as a person. This lends to us having to use gender to describe the Spirit (and God) as we don’t have a genderless way of doing this in English – hence the common reference to the Spirit as feminine. In the New Testament the Greek work for Spirit is gender-neutral.

Theologian Grace Ji-Sun Kim laments the lack of focus by the church on Pentecost and the Spirit and imagines instead how things could be. She writes:

“A Spirit-centred Christianity would not have been so male centred. In the Bible, the Spirit is depicted in different ways: as wind, breath, light, and vibration. These non-gendered words are also action words, which are in line with the biblical word for God, YHWH, which means “I Am.” In Exodus 3:14, God says to Moses, “I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: I Am has sent me to you.” This name of God implies that God is moving and active like the wind, breath, light, and vibration. Such an understanding of God helps us focus on the actions of God in the world, rather than on such traditional male images as king, lord, father, and master— all of which are nouns. Understanding a moving, active God emphasizes the mystery of God and encourages us to continuously explore and reimagine a God who is greater than anything we can ever imagine.

A non-gendered Spirit-God would have inspired a more inclusive church, supportive of women as leaders, preachers, teachers, and prophets. And this inclusion of women in the pulpit would have radically changed the early church. There were women teachers and leaders in the early church, and this tradition would have deepened and expanded if the church focused more on Pentecost.

A Spirit-centred Christianity would have taught a non-gendered understanding of God, which would have left the door more open to more feminine understandings of God, not just a masculine image of God as revealed through Jesus. It would have built on the feminine imagery already present in both Hebrew and Christian scriptures. One prominent feminine image from the Bible is the figure of Wisdom. In the Hebrew scriptures, Wisdom is *hokmah*, which is a feminine word, and in the Greek of the Christian scriptures it is *Sophia*, which is also feminine. In the Bible, Wisdom is personified as a woman who builds a house and prepares a life-giving meal, then invites everyone to partake in it.”

How is Jesus like this feminine portrayal of Wisdom!?

I hope this gives us some food for thought, as it has done for me.

Grace’s article these quotes came from can be found at the link below. (It’s only a little longer than what I’ve quoted here)

<https://uscatholic.org/articles/202305/for-a-more-inclusive-vision-of-the-church-look-to-pentecost/>

With love

Andrew 😊

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 are experiencing extremely hot days and nights, and are being reminded to take regular breaks and not expect too much of themselves and others during the heat spells. Charlie is enjoying time teaching some of the local children some cooking skills. The delicious food prepared is an added bonus.

Charlie and Jo are thankful for the changes that ever so gently and slowly are rippling through their communities. They appreciate mango season – the silver lining in the months of hot weather. Please pray for the vocational training block that is starting in June, and for their connections in the community, and that their words and actions would communicate love and commitment they have to the community, and the eternal hope they have.

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 is a supporter of Hospital Chaplaincy. Having Jesus centred people to sit, listen, support and pray with hospital staff, patients and their families is a precious gift we probably all need at some point and time. Part of the funding for this work and ministry needs to be raised locally and an annual Plant Sale is a key feature in the fundraising efforts. This will be on Saturday September 23rd. There was a huge demand for vegetable seedlings and plants last year. We can support our hospital chaplaincy work by growing vegetable seedlings and plants and donating these to the Plant Sale. Contact Louisa at Taranaki Chaplaincy Service on 753 6139, ext.7968 for more information or if you need pots.

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 pre-school children and their parents, grandparents or caregivers. We meet at 10am every Friday 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.

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!

Tēnā koutou e te whānau a West Baptist,

The last couple of months has been an interesting time for our young people. We continue to take an extended break from our Wednesday evening youth group. We've started to get some interest

from some up-and-coming leaders who may be interested in developing some leadership skills. This prospect is very exciting and we hope to grab this excitement and run with it. In order to get things rolling again, we are still looking for 1 or 2 adults who would be available to support this ministry. If this could be you, we would love to have a chat and figure out how we could make this viable and sustainable. While we have run a Wednesday afternoon program in the past, we are flexible around changing the day to make it work for whoever is keen to support.

However, in the meantime, I have enjoyed having more time to catch-up one-on-one with some of the young people in our wider community. It has been such a blessing to connect and get to know some of them a lot better than is often possible through our programs.

Mosaic continues to run well, with a number of new people beginning to connect frequently. It feels like a vastly different group to the one that we had last year, but we love journeying with this group all the same. So, if you have any high school-aged young people or if you know of any, feel free to connect with

me and we can sort out how to make Mosaic possible for them. Kia pai tō koutou wiki, Ethan

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.

Would you be interested in doing a **Carey Baptist College 12 week course** right here in New Plymouth, with other locals in person, and the lecturer via Zoom? Carey has some options for this. I'd love to hear from you if you're interested.

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, and 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 L, David, Erin or Andy G.

west: events

JUNE CALENDAR:

2,9,16,23,30 th	Music & Play at West, 10am	10 th	Parihaka Puanga Kai Rau
8,22 nd	Chocolate Fish Group, at McK's	20 th	Movie Group at venues TBA
9 th	Mosaic Youth Group	23 rd	Mosaic Youth Group

west: people

Welcome Kathryn! It's great having you join us and be part of the West whānau!

Welcome Lisa! It's great having you join us and be a part of the West whānau!

We celebrate with Ruth, Hparat and Claudia in their recent baptisms! It's awesome seeing God at work in your lives! If you'd like to encourage Ruth, Hparat and Claudia along in their life and walk with Jesus, and as a memento of the commitments they've made, please consider writing something on a "Baptism Blessing" form. It could be an encouragement, a piece of scripture or a prayer for them. The forms are on the table at rear of auditorium. You can hand them over directly, or feel free to pass them to a parent or

Andrew who will pass them on. Let's be praying for these fantastic teenagers!

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 June:

15 June	Robyn R
17 June	Lynda L
26 June	Val W
29 June	Andrew S
30 June	Brian W

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. For April offerings were \$10,360.

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 JUNE	10 JUNE	17 JUNE	24 JUNE	1 JULY
Cleaning & Morning Tea	Khon A	Meryl A	James McK	Bedford	Andy G
Lawnmowing	Nang A	Alison D	Carol McK	family	Lou G
		Jacob M		Brian W	

Lord, while you are busy preparing a place for me, prepare me, as well, for that place.