



**"We aim to be a reflection of God to the community"**

## Ministers Musings ~ Assisted Suicide, Euthanasia, Right to Die

On the 8th of June Act Party leader David Seymour, private member's bill was pulled from the ballot. This means in the months to come, our parliament will be discussing this piece of legislation.

The legislation would allow mentally competent New Zealand adults who have a terminal illness likely to end their life within six months, or have a grievous and irremediable medical condition, the choice to ask a doctor to help end their life at the time of their choosing. The Director-General of Health would establish a group of medical practitioners who would maintain a register of health professionals willing to participate in assisted dying. A new process would require two medical practitioners to be satisfied a person meets the required criteria. The second would be independent of the patient and initial doctor. The last time this legislation "Death with Dignity" was debated in parliament was 2003.

Significantly many medical professionals are against Euthanasia becoming lawful:

"Voluntary euthanasia would be fraught with problems and New Zealand doesn't need it, doctors have told a select committee." Said the **New Zealand Medical Association**. The association said it backed patient autonomy, but sizeable complexities were involved in determining whether patients had made rational, fully informed decisions of their own free will. It also said diagnoses could be incorrect, but there'd be no scope for a rethink once someone was dead.

**Hospice New Zealand** does not support a change in the law to legalize assisted dying in any form. Nor do they consider that a change in the law would be in the best interests of the people we care for. They believe Government should be investing in palliative care, increasing access to care and support not legalizing euthanasia. Only when all New Zealanders have ready access to expert end-of-life care can a balanced debate begin. We support that all New Zealanders have the right to choose where they die.



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To many of us human life is sacred, that there is a sanctity of human life. That there is a human dignity in our being. This has been considered a settled piece of Christian theology or ethics. This belief has been applied to many human issues: capital punishment, the family, suicide, labour laws, workers' rights, the effects of war, women's' rights, self-esteem and indeed euthanasia. The use of the phrase sanctity of life dramatically increased after world war two, as people reflected upon the effect of the tyrannical regimes of Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. And yet 'the sacredness of human life' Is not to be found in the classic creeds and confessions of the ancient church. It is not a doctrine of the church. Yet much of our scripture points towards the sacredness of each one of us:

- God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. Genesis 1:27
- For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. Ephesians 2:10
- Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, 1 Corinthians 6:19
- For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. Psalm 139:13-14

An understanding of the sacredness of human life may well have been birthed in Christian tradition but as early as 1918 Herbert Stewart noted that "Western Culture's belief in the sanctity of life remains, though it may well be independent of those theological considerations that first gave rise to it, and might even without consequence survive their total abandonment." Whether we come from a theological (God) position or secular there is an inherent belief that human life is special, sacred, and carries with it its own sense of dignity, above other life forms.

**Human life is sacred:** this means that God has consecrated every human being – without exception and in all as a unique, incalculably precious being of elevated status and dignity. Through God's revelation in Scripture and incarnation of Jesus Christ, God has declared and demonstrated the sacred worth of human beings and will hold us accountable for responding appropriately. Such a response begins by adopting a posture of reverence and by accepting responsibility for the sacred gift that is human life. It includes offering due respect and care to each human being that we encounter. It extends to an obligation to protect human life from wanton destruction, desecration, or the violation of human rights. A full embrace of the sacredness of human life leads to a full-hearted commitment to foster human flourishing.

Yet we will all face the challenge of seeing loved ones that are sick, dying or in pain. Generally, we are supportive of aggressive treatment for as long as our loved one, the rest of the family, and the medical team hold out hope for a cure. When such hope is no longer realistic and death is imminent and certain, we try to make our loved one as comfortable as possible. *Cont pg 3.....*

There will be little debate that even if the family ends now-futile medical treatments, all reasonable efforts must be made to alleviate suffering. Beyond hoping for a miracle, all who love the dying person will pray for a peaceful death soon.

I have sat with many families that faced these questions of life and death, and indeed my own in a similar situation as we as a family watched my 89-year-old Gran face a slow and painful death over the course of ten days. Most thoughtful bioethicists or physicians accept the legitimacy of withholding or withdrawing medical treatments when they are no longer bringing benefit to an irretrievably dying patient. Nor is there any opposition to aggressive use of painkillers and other forms of palliative care. But Euthanasia is different. It means (more than simply withdrawing medical treatment) ordering or implementing some act that kills a dying person: whether it is a lethal injection, an overdose of drugs, intentional starvation, or a gunshot to the head. Morally, it matters little if we do the deed ourselves, give our loved one the means to do the deed, or pay the doctor to do it. In any case, we are involved in an act that directly brings about the death of another human being.

Clearly this is against one of God's ten commandments. "Thou shalt not murder". But it is expressed in several ways.

- The belief that the intentional taking of the life of a person who poses no threat to the community is a form of murder and is thus intrinsically wrong, even if it is done with good motives;
- The fear that the freedom to put to death sick or dying people is a violation of the mandate of the medical profession and would thus deeply corrupt it;
- The fear that base motives such as financial gain will interfere with the family decision-making process and lead to what is essentially sanctioned family murder of the old;
- The fear, based on historical experience, that political leaders will take over the power to kill the infirm and sick and use it to cut the government's
- medical expenses or advance perverse vision of the common good;
- An intuitive sense that a good and loving family, or a good and loving nation, will find some way to show its compassion to the sick and suffering that does not involve directly taking their lives.

Euthanasia is a difficult topic for us to contend with, it is not something that can be expressed fully in the small space I have available, nor can it be told in a two-minute news story at 6pm, often filled with sad anecdotes of people going through suffering. The euthanasia debate is all about what it means to be human, and if we ever cease to be human and therefore dispatched because of illness, disability, decrease in quality of life, cost to others in society. Personally, I find it abhorrent that Hospice NZ needs to fund-raise so that people in their last days and weeks can have the quality of care and support they need to die well, and it is abhorrent that the level of palliative care and support varies widely across New Zealand, it is also abhorrent that those employed to care for members of our community in their last years,

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be they home help, or rest home workers are the lowest paid workers in our country.

If this article has generated any questions or concerns please do get in touch with me. Blessings in the name of Christ, the giver of life.



**Rev Andrew Howley**



**NEWS FROM THE WEE HOUSE ON THE HILL. August 2017**

Over the years I've kept my flight boarding passes. Why? I don't know I have been fortunate to travel and have been to countries I've never dreamt of. I'm not a shopper but love visiting the beautiful old churches, museums and markets, all so different to New Zealand.

Some years ago I received an invitation to a wedding in Sweden. To get an idea of costs I picked up a brochure from a travel agent. I knew only two on staff and was asked if I could do them a favour because of a bereavement. Would I take the place of the Tour Manager who was to tour New Zealand with English tourists for twenty six days, arriving in three days time? Although never having done anything in that line my answer was yes. By the time I arrived home I wondered what I had got myself into.

I was given a work book with a very comprehensive content. Plenty of bed time reading! Being flown to Auckland I met a party of forty six. Introduced myself as their Tour Manager. My legs were like jelly!



From the start I told them I was a fill in, a real green horn but I would do "my best" Luckily I had a very understanding driver. It didn't take long to settle and feel comfortable. It was a British firm called SAGA Tours. There was a joke that originated in England. The meaning of SAGA was "Send a Granny to Aotearoa" or "Sex & Games for the Aged". Our accommodation throughout was good Hotels and their staff were very attentive.

Quite a few of our guests were professionals who had travelled extensively, others had decided to visit our shores having saved for years and were thrilled at long last to realise their ambition.

We, as Tour Managers, were asked many questions. The firm expected staff to know about the education and health systems, and who was in Parliament. Luckily I had always taken an interest in politics. Each evening we were expected to dress for dinner and not the black trousers and white blouse. Everyone was seated at the tables before the driver and I took the spare seats. Nightly we mixed, an excellent way to remember names.

Before the Brits arrived it was my duty, whilst they were in flight, to ring Air New Zealand at 2.30am as to what the arrival time was.

It depended on which way the wind blowing as it would never do to have our visitors waiting on the coach.

Travelling the length and breadth of New Zealand we had a timetable to keep to. Explaining this we gave out a New Zealand itinerary which stressed what was important and drew attention to reading the Fire Regulations, which was on the back of their hotel door, and to walk to the fire door in daylight so that if a call was made in the night they would know where to go. Sometimes we had a musician and many of the hotels had grand pianos. Before dinner in the evenings we would gather together and have a sing along with many other guests joining us.

Many optional tours were offered and the flights to Mount Cook (Aoraki) and helicopters to the Tasman Glacier were popular.



Northland was greatly enjoyed, the uniqueness of Cape Reinga, the lushness of the bush, the huge ferns, the different greens of the trees, the friendliness of the locals. It was a surprise to stand on one spot and be able to view the Pacific Ocean rolling in and just turn the eyes to the left and see the Tasman Sea.

Heading south to Rotorua they loved all the singing and the Poi dances of Māori, the hangi and the boiling mud and geysers.

Coming to the South Island, Christchurch Cathedral, the Christchurch Art Gallery and Museum plus the Antarctic Centre were always popular. Travelling on to Milford Sound, the mountain scenes, the neatness of the farms, the hundreds of sheep, deer and cattle and the visitors all enjoyed their experiences. Milford Sound was, 'The Jewel In The Crown'. Flying around Mount Cook (Aoraki) with the helicopters landing so the visitors could see the glaciers and the ice formations on the Tasman Glacier another wonderful experience. Many said they would like to return. They were very surprised at the sheer size of the mountains, the winding roads and the good condition of them.



My first trip was successful and I loved it. I retired twelve years later. During those years I was chosen to take the British National Trust Tour of New Zealand but that's another story. In my retirement I have the happiest of memories.

*Elma McGregor*

# Upcoming & Past Events



**Presenting ....** An evening with **ADRIAN PRITCHARD**

..a reformed burglar and heroin addict.

Hear how to keep our communities safe How a burglar thinks.

Drugs (including methamphetamine) And much more.....

**ALEXANDRA MEMORIAL THEATRE Skird Street, Alexandra**

**FRIDAY 25th AUGUST at 7.30pm**

(a gold coin donation would be appreciated)

## Presbyterian Support Update:



Presbyterian Support Otago Chief Executive Gillian Bremner has recently announced her intention to retire, with effect from early next year. It has been more than 23 years since Presbyterian Support Otago has farewelled a Chief Executive.

David Richardson, Presbyterian Support Otago board chair said "Gillian has led our organisation with great faith, compassion, respect, integrity, and courage, and I am grateful for her enormous contribution to both PSO, and the greater Otago community. Gillian's reasons for leaving are family and opportunity based, with her husband, Graeme, taking up an academic position in Botswana."

Presbyterian Support Otago will be having a farewell function for Gillian in the new year; more details will be released closer to the date. Gillian's last day of work will be 31 March, 2018. Trust this email finds you well. **Carolyn**

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**Sunday August 27th**

*Following a combined service at St Enoch's*

*A finger food lunch to follow*



Alexandra, Clyde, Lauder

Union Parish



**Parish Councillors nomination forms will be available in church foyers.**

**Our thoughts and prayers to the families and friends of...**

*Raymond Albert Blair 21st April 2017 St Enoch's Church, Alexandra*

*Rev Bob Murphy of Waiknae*

*Alice Isobel (Betty) Whyte 12th July 2017 St Enoch's Church, Alexandra*

*Phyllis Bird 27th July 2017 St Enoch's Church, Alexandra*

*John Hawley 3rd August 2017 St Enoch's Church, Alexandra*

*James Thomas (Jim) Clouston 4th August 2017 St Enoch's Church, Alexandra*

*William Alexander (Bill) Williamson 5th August 2017 St Enoch's Church, Alexandra*



### CONGRATUALATIONS TO:-

**Ms Diana Watt & Mr Stephen Trebilco who were married on Saturday the 13<sup>th</sup> of May 2017**

### Wedding at St Enoch's

## REGULAR MEETINGS AND GROUPS

### Weekly

<b>Sacred Space</b>	Wednesday 5.15pm	St Enoch's Alexandra
<b>St Enoch's Choir</b>	Thursday's 4pm	St Enoch's Lounge/Church
<b>House Group</b>	Fridays 10am	3A Mayfair Grove

### Monthly

<b>Afternoon Fellowship</b>	4th Thursday of the month 1.30pm Contact: Evelyn Bensell	St Enoch's Lounge 448 5929
<b>St Mungo's Fellowship</b>	3rd Wednesday of the month 7.30pm Contact: Dawn Becker	St Mungo's Lounge 449 2689
<b>Parish Council</b>	3rd Wednesday of the month Contact: Beryl Dittmer	Margaret Ross Rm 448 8311
<b>Parish Evening Group</b>	4th Wednesday of the month 7.30pm Contact: Linda Armstrong	Various 447 3612

**Bands of Hope. – Suicide Prevention.** For the members of our Church who are wearing the Bands of Hope, the Suicide Prevention team would like to say thank you so much for caring.

If you see someone in the community who seems to be distressed, depressed or lonely; the advice by this team is to first of all say, "Hello", then offer to take them for a quiet cup of tea, so they perhaps may be able to share their problem with you. Listen, do not try to solve their problem but encourage them to first of all go to their Doctor who hopefully will guide them to the appropriate help they may be needing. Alongside this it may be, that you need to support by accompanying them to the doctor.

This band is not for you to be the counsellor, but for you to be a friend who can support and suggest appropriate steps. **Many thanks.**

**Prayer For Hope and Strength** Almighty God, You reach into the darkness with hope, truth and light. Stretch out your strong hand in this situation, hold and rescue those who have suffered. Let your almighty love move mountains, cross seas and breathe life into the darkest places. Light that redeems. Light that restores. Light that heals. Light that protects. Light that saves. There is nothing higher, stronger or greater than your love. **AMEN**  
[www.lords-prayer-words.com](http://www.lords-prayer-words.com)

**EDITORS NOTE:** The next ACLaim will be Oct/Nov please have any articles to me by **Monday 18th September 2017**. Written articles can be dropped off in the box outside the St Enoch's lounge door or my letter box at 38 Aronui Road or sent to me via email :ggordon@actrix.co.nz or Phone 448 8486 **Gay Gordon**. Thanks to Valerie Anderson for helping me with proof reading the ACLaim.

## Upcoming Worship Services

<b>Aug 6th</b> Pentecost 9	Clyde Alexandra	9.00am 10.30am	Communion Communion
<b>Aug 13th</b> Pentecost 10	Clyde Alexandra	9.00am 10.30am	All age service All age service
<b>Aug 20th</b> Pentecost 11	Clyde Alexandra Castlewood	9.00am 10.30am 11.15am	
<b>Aug 27th</b> Pentecost 12	Alexandra	10.30am	Combined service <b>Annual General Meeting after service</b>
<b>Sept 3rd</b> Pentecost 13	Clyde Alexandra	9.00am 10.30am	Communion Fathers Day
<b>Sept 10th</b> Pentecost 14	Clyde Alexandra	9.00am 10.30am	All age service All age service
<b>Sept 17th</b> Pentecost 15	Clyde Alexandra Castlewood	9.00am 10.30am 11.15am	
<b>Sept 24th</b> Pentecost 16	Clyde Alexandra	9.00am 10.30am	
<b>Blossom Festival Service</b>		7.00pm	Elim Church, Tarbert St, Alexandra
<b>Oct 1st</b> Pentecost 17	Clyde Alexandra	9.00am 10.30am	Communion Communion

**If you require transportation to church please ask!**  
**Telephone Jennifer Bowie: 448 7369**

### Your Pastoral Visitor Message:

## Contact Us

### Minister:

**Rev. Andrew Howley**  
99 Ventry Street, Alexandra

**Phone: 03 448 8511**  
**021 518 053**

**Email:**  
Andrew.howley.nz@gmail.com

*Andrew is generally available in The Alexandra Community House Tuesday & Wednesday mornings. Other times by appointment.*

**Parish Clerk:**  
**Beryl Dittmer**

**Phone: 03 448 8311**

**Email:**  
aclunionparish@gmail.com

**Visit us on the web at**  
[www.alexchurch.org.nz](http://www.alexchurch.org.nz)

**Like us on Facebook**

**Facebook.com/alexchurch**

## Worship Times

### Sunday:

**Clyde: 9.00am**

**Alexandra: 10.30am**

### Sacred Space

**Wednesday**  
**Alexandra: 5.15pm**

