

# Reformed Congregations of New Zealand in Carterton



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## Bulletin for Sunday 12 April 2026

A warm welcome to our time of worship!

### **Christ Identified With His People**

"Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

Luke 23:34

"Father, forgive them." On no previous occasion did Christ make such a request of the Father. Never before had He invoked the Father's forgiveness of others. Hitherto He forgave Himself. To the man sick of the palsy He had said, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee" (Matthew 9:2). To the woman who washed His feet with her tears in the house of Simon, He said, "Thy sins are forgiven" (Luke 7:48). Why then should He now ask the Father to forgive, instead of directly pronouncing forgiveness Himself?

Forgiveness of sin is a divine prerogative. The Jewish scribes were right when they reasoned "Who can forgive sins but God only?" (Mark 2:7). But you say, Christ was God. Truly; but man also - the God-man. He was the Son of God that had become the Son of Man with the express purpose of offering Himself as a sacrifice for sin. And when the Lord Jesus cried "Father, forgive them" He was on the cross, and there He might not exercise His divine prerogatives. Mark carefully His own words, and then behold the marvellous accuracy of scripture. He had said, "The Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins" (Matthew 9:6). But He was no longer on earth! He had been "lifted up from the earth" (John 12:32)! Moreover, on the cross He was acting as our substitute; the just was about to die for the unjust. Hence it was that hanging there as our representative, He was no longer in the place of authority where He might exercise His own divine prerogatives, therefore takes He the position of a suppliant before the Father. Thus we say that when the blessed Lord Jesus cried, "Father, forgive them", we see Him absolutely identified with His people. No longer was He in the position "on earth" where He had the "power" or "right" to forgive sins; instead, He intercedes for sinners - as we must.

Arthur W. Pink

## From Your Consistory

- This Wednesday the consistory encourages you all to join us for a potluck dinner in the hall. We aim to start sharp at 6:00 PM so please be there a little earlier. It would be nice if we have some volunteers to have set up the hall (as we will need to move the nursery etc.) around 5:00 PM. After dinner (around 7:15-7:30) we like to assemble in the church for a discussion evening on mainly two topics on which we seek your thoughts. Our goal in these evenings is to facilitate better interaction and understanding among each other as we tackle the various aspects of our congregational life together.

The first subject will be on the vision/mission statement which still needs further detailing. The second subject is the recent draft proposal on the dress code for our church services. On the book table you will find a small 'teaser' with some considerations.

It is important that you come with the right mindset. Not to prove *your point* as the only right one. If that is your aim, the evening will *not* be profitable and edifying except to sharpen our differences. If we all come with the aim of learning from each other valuable insights that we may not see, it will be a valuable experience.

The principle which is to guide us in living together in peace as a congregation is: *In essentials unity; in non-essentials liberty; in all things charity.* One church historian called this principle 'the watchword of Christian peacemakers.' We need to learn that unity within a congregation can only flourish in the environment where uniformity is not insisted upon in those matters where God chose to be silent in His Word. Therefore, come with an open mind instead of a closed one. Come realising that you don't have 'all the insights' and that others may have a valid point to enrich your own views.

The format of the evening will be a small group set up, each led by one office bearer and an assigned note-taker. We will split up into 3 or 5 small groups. The final arrangement (of 3 or 5) will be decided on the evening as it depends somewhat on the numbers present.

Group 1: 15-25 years with Willy and Nathan as leaders.

Group 2: 25-45 years (as 1 or 2 groups, either male/female split) with Eric and Johan as leaders.

Group 3: 45-up years (same format as group 2) with Ronald and Andrew as leaders.

We will join together again as a full group around 8:30ish for a combined closing of the evening and hopefully be heading home before 9PM. Please

bring your children if possible but there will be no babysitting provided.

- Consistory has received the request from David and Ruth Marchant to become members of our congregation. Upon discussion with them, we warmly welcome them into the full membership of our church family unless there are any lawful objections to this. If no lawful objections are received by the elders, they will be given the opportunity to make the confession of their faith on May 3 in AM service.

### From Your Pastor

- I was requested to lead a topic on *Covenant Theology* to help us understand better our Reformed view of the Holy Scriptures. The Reformed understanding of Covenant Theology affects our view of God's Church, Holy Baptism, the view of the Old Testament and Israel. This is a hefty topic to cover in one evening, but my intent is to present it as a bare-bone overview which then could be deepened in one or more topic evenings if so desired or needed.
- Last year a small group met for 8 evenings to work through the teachings of the *Peacemaker's Course*. The feedback received was positive and also very useful to incorporate into your own family life as well as your marriage or even business life. I am willing to lead a repeat of this course with a new group. Perhaps someone who did it last year would be willing to join once more in order to be the group leader the year after. It is not necessary for me to lead the sessions. Please let me know how many of you are interested in doing this course so I can order the workbooks that go along with the video course.
- I have received several positive responses to enrol in the Biblical Counselling Introductory Course beginning in September. This is an online course you do in your own time, along with the reading of two books. Each month we need to schedule one evening to come together for further discussion and deepening of the materials. There are no written exams or papers. All you do is enrich yourself with the Biblical principles and teaching, so you are better equipped to provide soul-care to fellow believers and unbelievers in the trials and difficulties of life. As I need to register for the course this month, I request any who have not yet responded but are more or less interested to let me know.
- Coming Friday I hope to travel to the USA and Canada for a two week

ministry work. While stopping over in Artesia, CA for a Friday evening service, I travel on to Waupun for the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday and Markham, Ontario for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday. The weekdays will be filled with a few pastoral counselling topics: *Sexual Abuse Prevention* in Dundas, ON, and two topics on the Go & Teach conference in St. Catharines, *Breaking the Silence on Domestic Abuse* and *Helping the Griever*. Before returning I will attend a training seminar at the PRTS as I have been requested to be a minister-mentor of one of the seminary students. I hope to return to NZ on Friday 1 May.

### Prayer / Thanksgiving / Requests

- Thanksgiving for Abbey's safe return from NL. Also Dick Lankamp from NL arrived to join our church family for some months.
- Bea's brother in law in NL, Kajo Korenhof (72) suddenly passed away on Thursday.
- Lift up our country as we will experience the effects of the cyclone hitting the north island today. Let's supplicate that God awakens a soul-storm of alarm leading to heart repentance and return to Him.

### Notices

- This Sunday:
  - Special collection for the Seafarer's Mission
  - Prayer Fellowship at 530pm
  - Book discussion at 8pm.
- Tuesday 14 April: Catechism Year 11-13.
- Wednesday 15 April: Congregational Potluck and Discussion
- Saturday 18 April:
  - Annual Church Cleaning Bee between 8am-12midday. Please bring your own buckets and cleaning cloths.
  - Youth Group. Meet at church at 2pm for an afternoon of friendships, fun, and food!

### Future Dates, Lord willing

Sunday 10 May	Preparatory Sunday (AM)
Thursday 14 May	Ascension Day service
Sunday 17 May	Lord's Supper Sunday
20 May, 17 June, 1 July	Leadership Course
Wednesday 24 June	Topic on Covenant Theology

## Children's Corner

### Who am I? (part 4)

Have you ever lost anything? Something that you really needed, but could not find? What did you do so you could find it? Did you just sit in your chair? Of course not. You were seeking, weren't you, looking everywhere till you found it. Maybe you asked others to help you to find that certain thing that you lost!

Listen, I have not lost something; I have lost someone. That is worse. That is why I am sad. So much has happened in the last few days. My dear Master has died. How can I live without Him? I need Him. He healed me. I was full of sin. I had devils living in me. Nobody wanted to have anything to do with me. But then Jesus came. He cared for me. For Him, I was not too bad, not too sinful, no He healed me. He sent those devils out of me. He saved me.

Nobody is too sinful for Jesus. Do you see your sin? Remember, we are born to live for God. To glorify God. But we don't, we sin. Do you know when you are naughty? When you don't listen to your parents, or when you are disrespectful. Confess your sin to Him. He is able to save!

And now I am sad, very sad. Now Jesus, my Master, has died on the cross and Joseph and Nicodemus have buried Him in a grave in the garden of Joseph. I went to the grave. And what did I see? The stone was rolled away from the grave. And the grave was empty. I went and told Peter and John. And now I have come back. I don't know what happened. Where is my Master? Where can I find Him?

There are two angels in the tomb. You might think that I am happy now but no, I want Jesus and not angels. I tell them that. I also saw the linen laying nicely folded. But Him I did not see.

Then I turned around and I went outside. There is a man, He must be the gardener. He talks to me and asks me why I am crying and who I am seeking for. I can tell Him that straightaway. I said, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him."

"Have you taken Him away? Please tell me where you have laid Him! Then I shall take Him." I didn't even think how I was going to do that. I just wanted Jesus so badly. Because I love Him so much.

Then, unexpectedly, I heard His voice saying my name! Through my tears I looked to Him and then I saw: this is not the gardener; this is My Master! My Master is alive!

He knows me and my needs. He knows also what you need. No, He is not on the earth anymore, He is in heaven. We must believe in Him without seeing Him. He cares for His children.

I fell down and wanted to hold Him, but He said: "Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father: but go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God."

And that is what I did. I went to the disciples and told them: "I have seen the Lord." I was so happy!

Seek Him, without Him you will never be happy even if you have all the toys of the world. He only can make us sinners happy because He is the Saviour.

*Who am I?*

5 words you have read in the story. Each number stands for a letter of the alphabet. Write the correct letter above the number to find the coded word and what I said. You find the code at the bottom.

I said: " \_      \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_  
          9    8 1 22 5    19 5 5 14

\_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_  
20 8 5      12 15 18 4 !" "

The 5 words are:

\_\_\_\_\_  
20    15    13    2

\_\_\_\_\_  
19 20 15 14 5

\_\_\_\_\_  
16 5 20 5 18

\_\_\_\_\_  
12 9 14 5 14

\_\_\_\_\_  
1 12 9 22 5

Code keys: 1=a, 2=b, 3=c, 4=d, 5=e, 6=f, 7=g, 8=h, 9=i, 10-j, 11=k, 12=l, 13=m, 14=n, 14=o, 16=p, 17=q, 18=r, 19=s, 20=t, 21=u, 22=v, 23=w, 24=x, 25=y, 26=z