

Reformed Congregations of New Zealand in Carterton



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A warm welcome to our time of worship!

"And (the LORD) be gracious unto thee." Numbers 6:25

How sweet the gospel is! But what makes the gospel sweet? That one word which sheds a perfume through the whole – *grace*. Take grace out of the gospel and you destroy the gospel; you nullify and overthrow it; it is the gospel no more. Grace pervades every part and every branch of the blessed gospel; it is the life of the gospel; in a word, it is the gospel itself.

"Be *gracious* unto thee." In what, then, is God gracious? In a broken law? What does that know of grace? In resolutions of amendment, creature performances, and human righteousness? Can the Lord, will the Lord show Himself gracious in these? I have read of a project for extracting sunbeams out of cucumbers. We might as well expect to make sunbeams out of cucumbers as to make grace out of the law; it is cold as cucumbers; there is no sun in it. Grace, to be grace, must come out of the gospel. It is *in* the gospel, and *out* of the gospel must it come; and it does come, excluding all creature righteousness, putting an extinguisher upon all human merit. As the Apostle argues – "And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work." (Rom. 11:6).

"The Lord be gracious unto thee." But *how* is the Lord gracious? Perhaps you have had occasion, at some time of your life, to go into the presence of someone in worldly rank far your superior, and you went timid, nervous, and trembling; but you experienced what is called a "gracious reception." Did not that enable you to speak and open your petition? So it is in the things of God. A sense of our lowliness and unworthiness may and does make us tremble and feel timid before the face of the Most High; but when He draws us into His presence, and receives us graciously, as king Ahasuerus received the trembling

Esther, extending to her the scepter of his grace, it emboldens the soul to lay its petition at His feet. Nothing will do it but this.

But you feel and say often, "I am so unworthy." Will there ever be anything else? When do you hope to be worthy? When do you mean to be worthy? If you could be worthy tomorrow, where is your worthiness today? Is the old score yet paid? If you venture upon the ground of 'worthiness' you must have the old score rubbed off before you come to the new. *Worthiness!* where is it? In man? Never since the day that Adam fell. Righteousness fell in Paradise; when Adam's hand touched the apple, worthiness fell to the ground, and never since has been able to raise its head. I must not, then, go to God upon the ground of worthiness. But may I go on the ground of **unworthiness**? I read of one who did, and met with a very gracious reception. "Lord," said one, "I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof; but speak the word only and my servant shall be healed." What did the Lord say of this man? That He had not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. What, also, was the confession of the returning prodigal? "I am no more worthy to be called thy son." But this brought out the best robe, the ring for the hand, and the shoes for the feet. Why? Faith dwells with a sense of unworthiness; they are bosom companions; it dwells in no other but unworthy breasts. Feel spiritually unworthy and you are spiritually believing, for it is faith that gives a sense of unworthiness. You believe that you are unworthy; by the same faith that you believe your unworthiness you believe God's grace. "Be gracious unto thee." That melts the heart; law and terrors do but harden. It is grace that softens, grace that melts, grace that constrains, and grace that produces godly obedience.

J. C. Philpot

From Your Pastor

Tomorrow I hope to travel to Poland to attend the Board Meeting of *Come Over and Help* where we meet with as many of the representatives of the churches in Eastern Europe we support. The two days are filled with four main lectures by Michael Reeves, a number of workshops all on topics related to the church and its ministry, and time to connect on a personal level with each other. One great benefit of these conferences is also that connections are made between Reformed Churches scattered throughout Eastern Europe. I hope to share a study on Biblical Counselling topic on Dealing with Domestic Abuse.

On Friday May 29 I will return to the Netherlands and have a very full agenda with talks on nearly every night that I am in the Netherlands. I was asked to give some training sessions on grief counselling for caregivers, families who have lost children, and on the soul-care of those who grieve. Besides that I was asked to speak to two gatherings of young adults to think about the

subjects *The Union with Christ by Faith* and *Our interaction with the preaching of God's Word*.

One subject that is stirring much discussion in the Reformed denominations is the subject of Baptism and the covenant theology connected to this. I hope to address this subject in Kapelle-Biezelinge. Upon my return, DV, I hope to lead a study evening on this subject among us as well as it is very important we have a clear understanding of God's covenant and how baptism relates to this. In Rijssen I was asked to participate in a parents-school meeting to reflect on the subject *Citizen in Three Worlds*. I was asked to speak about the aspect of the Kingdom of God, while other speakers deal with living in the earthly realm but now also in a digital world.

My two Sundays will be given to Delft (2x), Slikkeveen, Enter (2x) and Lelystad. My planned return to NZ will be on Wednesday June 10, DV.

Prayer / Thanksgiving / Requests

- for Piet Lanser as he is undergoing treatments in Nelson
- for our overseas members: Roger Visser, Rosanna van der Put
- for Neil Slabbekoorn as he will travel to NL for a few months
- for our pastor's trip to Poland and the Netherlands
- for four brothers who were accepted to be trained for the ministry

Notices

- Psalter for the children: 89:1
- This Sunday:
 - Confession of Faith class
 - Singing in the Rest Homes:
 - 2.30pm at Carter Court
 - 3.15pm at Roseneath
 - Prayer Fellowship before the evening service
 - Book discussion at 8pm
- Wednesday 27 May: prayer meeting at the Little Haven, 7.30pm
- Sunday 31 May: Elder led services

Acknowledgement

Thank you to our church family and friends for your prayers, messages, meals, and support during this difficult time. We really appreciate everyone's kindness and care.

Jonny, Jodi and family



Concert

On the 4th of July we hope to have our annual choir performance. Come along for a relaxed evening of music and singing!



Kia ora,

My name is Dr. Ashley Shepard, and I work with kidney and dialysis patients in the Wellington/Wairarapa region. I am reaching out because we are seeing a growing need among patients who must regularly travel from the Wairarapa to Lower Hutt or Wellington for life-sustaining dialysis treatment.

For many patients, this journey involves driving long distances over the Remutaka Hills multiple times each week while coping with serious medical conditions and significant fatigue after treatment. Some patients are elderly, medically fragile, financially strained, or do not have reliable family support available to assist with transportation.

We are exploring whether local faith communities may have congregation members who would be interested in volunteering as drivers for patients attending dialysis appointments. Even occasional assistance could make a meaningful difference in helping someone safely access treatment, reduce stress, and remain connected to their community and home.

At this stage, we are simply trying to gauge community interest and identify individuals who may wish to learn more about volunteering opportunities. We would greatly appreciate it if you would be willing to share this request with your congregation through announcements, newsletters, email lists, or community outreach channels.

Potential volunteers would ideally:

- *Have a valid driver's license and reliable vehicle*
- *Be comfortable driving between the Wairarapa and Lower Hutt/Wellington regions*
- *Be compassionate, dependable, and respectful of patient privacy*
- *Be available occasionally or regularly, depending on their availability*

- *We are still developing the structure of this initiative and would welcome conversations with anyone interested in helping support this effort.*

If your congregation has members who may be interested in volunteering or learning more, please feel free to contact me at.

Thank you for considering this opportunity to support some of the most medically vulnerable members of our community. Your kindness and willingness to help could make a tremendous difference in a patient's quality of life and ability to access essential medical care.

*Warm regards,
Ashley Shepard,*

*Renal Social Worker,
Kaimahi toko i te Ora,
Allied Health,
Capital, Coast and Hutt Valley
mobile 021 190 6135
email ashley.shepard@ccdhb.org.nz
hours Monday - Wednesday & Friday, 8:00am - 4:30pm*

Future Dates, Lord willing

Tuesday 2 June:	Catechism Class Year 11-13
Sunday 7 June	Elder led services
17 June, 1 July	Leadership Course
Wednesday 24 June	Topic on Covenant Theology

Children's Corner

Who am I? (part 7)

Many boys dream of being King and their sisters play being Queen, don't they? Suddenly one day I was a King. I was only eight years old: yes, that's right - eight! It was all very horrible. My father was a very wicked man. He used to be King but one terrible day he was killed by some of his servants. I was very frightened that we would all be put to death but some of the servants were kind and told me that the people wished me to be King. It was hard but looking back I can see how the Lord helped me. I knew right from the beginning that I needed His help. I prayed to Him every day and, you know, He has never let me down. The Lord is still the same. You can pray to Him wherever you are, at

home, in church and even in the classroom. He has said: "Open thy mouth wide".

Jerusalem was full of idols in those days and when I was about sixteen, I began to get rid of them. Some people were not very pleased when the altars of Baal were destroyed but I kept destroying them. These idols are no gods; they are just wood or stone. I knew that we would never have the Lord's blessing and protection if we kept on worshipping these false gods. My grandfather Manasseh also tried to remove these idols, and I believe things would have worked out better for my father if he had done the same.

The temple was in a terrible state and as soon as I could I gave an order to begin work on it. We began the repairs and one day amongst the rubbish Hilkiah, who was High Priest, found a scroll on which the law was written that Lord had given to Moses. And more things were written on it. Shaphan read to me from it and I believed the words. I saw at once that we had to turn to the Lord and repent of all our sins. There was so much in God's law which we had done wrong, and old Huldah, who knew about these things, told us that God's judgement was coming upon us. I rent my clothes, so sad was I. I said: "Go and ask the Lord for me and for all the people for God's anger is very great towards us."

I called all the elders and all the people to Jerusalem together. Even the children came. I read the words of the book out loud. Then I made a covenant before the Lord and promised that we all were going to follow the Lord and to keep His commandments, not only with words but with our hearts. Do you that? Do you listen when you hear God's commandments being read out loud in church? Do you repent from your sin? And flee to Jesus. He is the only one who can save!

The people listened while I spoke; you could have heard a pin drop, and they agreed to keep God's commandments. After that the priests and other men took all that belonged to Baal out of the temple. The temple is God's house not Baal's. They went outside of Jerusalem and burned everything.

Do you want to know what I think was one of the best days of my life? In the book of the law there was more than only the 10 commandments, we also read about the Passover. We didn't really know what it was because we hadn't had one of them for many years. We finally had sorted what we needed and when we got everything ready, then on the fourteenth day of the first month we celebrated the Passover again. I was so happy, I gave lambs and kids for the Passover offerings. And I made sure that the ark was going back to its own place in the Holy of Holiest. That made me happy. That all God's things were restored.

There was war. King Necho of Egypt supported the Assyrians, and they were our old enemy. I was going to try and stop King Necho. But you know, something strange happened the other day. Necho sent me a message. He

told me not to get involved in this war. He said God was using him to destroy the Assyrians. What did he know about God? I was going to ignore his words. We went to fight the Egyptians at Megiddo (2 Chronicles 34-35, 2 Kings 21-23). I made sure that nobody recognised me, I put different clothes on because I really wanted to fight. The archers in the army shot with their bows and arrows. Sadly, I was wounded. My servants were very good for me; they brought me back to Jerusalem. There I died. All Judah and Jerusalem mourned when they heard this.

Which King am I?

I was only 8 years when I became king. Sometimes you might think: 'I am too young' or 'what can I do.' But there is a reminder in 1 Timothy 4:12: Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

