



Covid-19 FBC ANNOUNCEMENT 12.0

27th May 2020

Greetings FBC church family, we're glad to be joining you today, and trust all is well with you. In a moment we'll share a few notices with you, including our plans for resuming ministry and services, but first, this week we want to kick off one of our key Mission focus and fundraising initiatives for the year with NZBMS Prayer and Self-Denial.

For the past number of years FBC have been just amazing with what we've raised toward this great work our missionaries do overseas, serving us. I don't see any reason why this year will be any different. In fact, this year has even greater importance. For them and can I say even for us in local mission, COVID-19, I believe has and will open doors of opportunity for the gospel and for those who are seeking, out of all this.

As you've just seen this year's theme is AHO TAHUHU = *The Masters Piece*, taken from the scriptural reference in Col. 2:2: "I want you woven into a tapestry of love, in touch with everything there is to know of God" (Mess. Ver)

"I want them to be encouraged and knit together by strong ties of love (NLT)

What is Paul saying here and how does it relate to P and SD?

The letter was addressed to Colossae but was also intended for the church at Laodicea. So Paul includes them. And he wants them to be encouraged in heart and united in love. Why, that they might know Christ. That's always the goal. Always the goal of mission. And mission, needs for the body to be encouraged and united, and knitted together.

He does not call us to live in isolation, instead weaving us into the fabric of our society; gifting us with the skills and strengths needed to care for one another. A desire for fellowship and relationship, compassion for the down-trodden, a call to show the love of Jesus, and share the Good News.

So we need to be woven together joined together in order to be spiritually strong and to be able to share the gospel with our community.

Tapestries typically have two very different sides. The top side is the beautiful artwork. This is the side that is so proudly displayed and highly sought after. The bottom side is not so pretty to look at. It's full of knots, loose threads and has no obvious pattern. It's a mess.

In this year's theme for Prayer and Self-denial, we have likened the top side of the tapestry to the kingdom of God. God is the master Weaver and only he knows what the completed image looks like. We are simply the thread called to follow his guiding hand.

The bottom side of the tapestry symbolises that life is messy. The image is blurred and unclear. It is difficult to see beyond our own world, causing our understanding of God's ultimate plan to be out of focus. We make mistakes, hurt others, and disobey God's instructions. Yet, God uses our mistakes to weave his picture.

Our people overseas are serving in some messy places. With God's guidance, we are helping him tidy up the mess as best we can. Over the next three weeks we will have three subthemes to reflect on: woven together, mending the mess and the perfect picture. We hope you enjoy engaging with this theme over the next few weeks as you participate in prayer and self-denial.

As Ross mentioned the scripture we are reflecting on is Col 2:2. Translations use the words woven, knit, joined together in love.

Many of you will know Corrie Ten Boom's story and I encourage you to read her book "The Hiding Place". Corrie Ten Boom born in 1892 and was in concentration camps in the second world war, being subject to torture, starvation and watching her family members murdered. Her life could be seen as a mess. During Corrie's presentations to audiences, she would often hold up the back side of a blue cloth of embroidery with hundreds of tangled threads hanging down from it. Many wondered if she was holding up the wrong side by mistake.

As she held up the messy side of the embroidery, she would ask, "Does God always grant us what we ask for in prayers? Not always. Sometimes He says, 'No.' That is because God knows what we do not know. Look at this piece of embroidery. The wrong side is chaos. But look at the beautiful picture on the other side – the right side."

Triumphantly, she flipped the cloth over and revealed an extravagantly embroidered crown – symbolizing our crown of eternal life. The crown was beautifully stitched with threads of many colors but also gold, silver, and pearls. "[In our lives] we see the wrong side, but God sees His side all the time. One day we shall see the embroidery from His side and thank Him for every answered and unanswered prayer."

"Although the threads of my life have often seemed knotted, I know, by faith, that on the other side of the embroidery there is a crown." ~Corrie Ten Boom, *My Heart Sings*

Life is But the Weaving | the Tapestry Poem | Florence May Alt 1892

My life is but a weaving, Between my God and me.

I cannot choose the colors, He weaveth steadily.

Off' times He weaveth sorrow; And I in foolish pride

Forget He sees the upper, And I the underside.

Not 'til the loom is silent, And the shuttles cease to fly

Will God unroll the canvas, And reveal the reason why.

The dark threads are as needful, In the weaver's skilful hand

As the threads of gold and silver, In the pattern He has planned

He knows, He loves, He cares; Nothing this truth can dim.

He gives the very best to those, Who leave the choice to Him.

Corrie Ten Boom video <https://youtu.be/2rXLmlx0Ssl>

ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. The elders met earlier this afternoon and have made the decision that **Home/Small Groups and Café Connect can resume as of next Wednesday 3rd June**. For now, these are the only ministries that will resume.
2. For those Groups that wish to resume – and not all will, that's ok – Derek Greenfield our Home Group Coordinator will be in touch with our leaders, then your Home Group leader will likely be in touch with you to communicate details around your gathering.
3. The most important things will be: please stay home if you're unwell; social distancing will apply, so do bear this in mind when meeting in homes; hand sanitiser or hand washing facilities; contact tracing will also apply...
4. And all of that will be the same for our first **Café Connect back next Wednesday 3rd June from 10-11am**. That space will have been freshly cleaned; you will be registered when you are welcomed at the door; and we'll have the room set up a little differently, but it will be great for a few of us to be together, won't it! Do note this is just for Café, we'll let you know when normal office hours' resume.
5. Lastly, we're well aware that many of you are finding this very challenging. Communication is so important. If you need to talk or need assistance/encouragement in any way, please contact your pastoral carer. Please take the initiative to reach out if you require the help or just to let us know all is well with you.

Blessings on all
Ross and Karyn

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