



CHRIST-CENTRED ALL AGES CREATIVITY HOSPITALITY AND CELEBRATION

## Messy Church New Zealand Newsletter November 2020

Kia Ora to all,

2020 is certainly a year for the history books as we have all grappled with a different way of being community and being church.

Some of us have been separated from our family members and others of us have been privileged or challenged by being in the company of those we love for much longer times than we are familiar with. Our work or daily lives or routines look very different to what we had planned for this year. Some of us faced big life decisions even b4 COVID-19 and have been significantly challenged by the unexpected path preventing us from celebrating or grieving as we had imagined, because of the level restrictions we have all been living with.

Some of us have through circumstances beyond our control had to lay down or let go our messy churches. All this brings a mix of emotions from disappointment and grief and sadness for the families and our teams, to finding free moments of time where we might otherwise be planning, organising, creating, cooking, or buying resources.

As we head into a new season of summer and celebration our eyes may well see things from a fresh new or challenging perspective as we find ourselves having been shifted into a very different space to last year.

For me, my life changed in March this year when I resigned from my employed role in church leadership to care fulltime for my husband, putting both of us in a new space. For any of you who have taken this journey ahead of me you will understand the many challenges this brings, both emotionally and in daily practical ways. However, to my surprise I have been able to soak up new opportunities around the house, one of which is a newly acquired passion for growing plants in pots. I've searched the library, read books, watched videos, picked the minds of experienced gardeners and neighbours alike as I sit with God in this new unexpected space. The other day while shifting pots around to get the best environment for their individual needs I realised God had a message for me.

Plants can be put in pots and if they aren't succeeding in that environment they can be moved easily by the gardener, the carer, the one who nourishes and feeds them. The one who is looking out for them.

In this I recognised God saying to me that we too, be it ourselves or Messy Churches, have been placed in the care of 'the gardener, the carer, the one who nourishes us. The one who is looking out for us.

The gardener can move plants around, rearrange their environment for shelter or sun or company they keep, i.e. marigolds beside the tomatoes to protect from pests, or other companion planting ideas, that create the best environment for the plants or bird or insect life around them.

The place we currently find ourselves in might not be where we were or thought we might be but, God is our gardener, and wants us to trust outside of ourselves to the one who cares, feeds and nourishes us, the one who looks out for us! Although unfamiliar, strange and a bit scary at times, let us find life in this new space we find ourselves in.

Nga Mihi,  
Carrole



### St Paul's Messy Church, Putaruru, Waikato

Just like all other Messy Churches worldwide, St Paul's Church, Putaruru was missing having gatherings due to restrictions around COVID-19. Level 2 rules were in place, and a length of time had passed since our last Messy Church.

After seeing a Facebook posting by Chartwell Messy Church in Hamilton, we felt inspired by their Treasure theme session to action a cautious plan, being aware that we were located just down the road from recent

COVID cases in our neighbouring town. Using the theme “You are God’s treasure!” we arranged a Drive through contactless pick up, but with the added fun of a treasure hunt/quiz

Pre-registered families arrived at arranged staggered times to participate in the hunt/quiz. We were grateful to God for favourable weather so families could walk down the street, over the pedestrian crossing, and back up to the church, armed with clipboard and answering quiz questions and finding the hidden treasure (coloured stones) along the way. Questions like What colour is roof on house no:37? How many animals on the signs at the Vet Clinic? On arrival back to the church answers were checked and prizes for all given. Names or a word could be written on some of the coloured stones to place in a treasure chest that served as our Prayer Tree.

Families then drove through a fun drive-thru to uplift a carton of crafts and their take home meal from a contactless table, this being a treat as our town doesn’t have any drive-thru fast food outlets. It was a huge undertaking making and providing lasagne, salad, bread and ice cream for 110 people out of just 3 kitchens. Care was taken to label everything and record so we had traceability.

Special thought was given to crafts to tie in with Treasure. A mother hen with hinged wings hiding chickens beneath, hidden treasures in a canister of rice, sunflowers seeds with a peat pot and seed raising mix, etc.

Celebration pack with instructions to create atmosphere of sitting together as a family like we do at Messy Church, and to read enclosed words for food blessing in Te Reo, a prayer from our Vicar Jan, and a message about us all being God’s Treasure. We truly felt a good connection, and everyone enjoyed the experience. The treasure hunt quiz really hit the mark at being all age inter-generational. It was undertaken sometimes as a large family group, or even as a mother and child. Many requests made to repeat the activity in the future. What a privilege it was to convey the message that they are God’s treasure, and have the love of Jesus go with each box into their family homes.

Extract from the Celebration message: *There is a verse in the Bible that says “For you are a holy people, who belong to the Lord your God. Of all the people on earth, the Lord your God has chosen you to be His own treasure” (Deuteronomy 7 vs 6) We also have challenges, maybe at school, or in friendships, or money troubles, coping with COVID lockdowns, or just from being tired. God wants us to remember we are His special treasure. We can take comfort in knowing we belong to Him and He cares. He loves us not because of anything we have done, but simply*

*Because he chooses to love us. That’s who He is! God treasures you!*



A collection of pictures from some more Messy church visits:



'All kinds of Prayer' pots from St John's Otumoetai, with Ruru their mascot, Ollie the kiwi and



Maple the bear from Canada. 'Light of the World' and 'Bread of Life' from Holy Trinity Tauranga

### **Messy Church NZ Library**

We are delighted to be able to offer lots of resources (mainly books) in the Messy Church Library. A full list of them is on the Messy Church NZ website.

The arrangement for borrowing is that you send the return postage (\$9) to me and we will send them to you. You may then borrow them for as long as you need them.

It would be helpful for those of you who borrowed resources at the two MC Conferences would return them asap please so they can be lent to others.

Thank you.

Messy Church Librarian 

Diane Stevens ([diane@messychurch.nz](mailto:diane@messychurch.nz))

### **The International Family of Messy Church**

Here are some international links to their Messy Newsletters that are all very encouraging and worth checking out.

<http://messychurchaustralia.com.au/>

<https://messychurch.ca/>

<https://www.messychurch.org.uk/>

[www.messychurch.org.uk](http://www.messychurch.org.uk)

**Christmas ideas**, check out YOUTUBE.COM or the UK/BRF website and Facebook pages Messy Church NZ Facebook page as well.

### **A visit to a Messy Church - Wellington**

A recent visit to a Messy Church made me excited at what I saw! As one of the leaders said it's all about Hospitality!

There were children and teenagers, there were parents (including solo parents), single adults, people from various ethnic backgrounds and people who were a bit 'different'. There were a few churched people but mostly they were unchurched. It was definitely All-age. (In fact looking at the total numbers on this occasion there were more adults than children!)

The big thing about this wonderful mix of people is that each person who came felt welcomed and accepted. There were activities that were inclusive of age, ability and interest! They all enjoyed the evening and it was their church!

This to me is what Messy Church is all about! We are so wanting to reach people for Jesus, no matter who they are and this is happening in this Messy Church.

Thank you for having me and allowing me to see this at work so well.

Diane Stevens Regional Coordinator Wellington

## Prayer requests from Jane Leadbetter, Messy Church Team BRF UK

### Messy Stuff going on so prayers please:

- In the UK the new support Teams are meeting up and planning ahead. The teams are now on line.
- We have sadly said goodbye to some RC's and we pray that they stay Messy in some way.
- Jane Butler will be the new Messy Church Team member and starts in January. Pray for Jane and the new teams.
- Messy Church USA has a super new look to their website. We are in awe!
- Pray for Lucy and Paul as they settle into their new home, in Derbyshire, and Paul begins his ministry there.
- Pray for those in the network who are worried about their jobs as the pandemic has affected so many ministerial and lay roles.
- Please pray for Messy Church Facebook lives! Sessions each Wednesday and the generosity of the presenters who have shared their time and stories with us. We have loved your supportive commitments each week, lovely people.
- Pray for all those in lockdown situations and those suffering from COVID-19 symptoms and those we have lost.

### Save the Date:

### Refresh the Mess

### Australia National Messy Church Conference online.

### We are Invited!

### Save the Date: Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2021 5.30-9.30pm (NZ time)

NZ Messy Churches have been invited to join the Australian Messy Church Conference as they explore how to 'Refresh the Mess'. This will be an encouragement to us all as we find ways to move forward with Messy Church after the knockbacks of 2020. Cost is only \$15 (Aus) and you can do this from the comfort of your living room, or better still gather your team together to join in with you online.

Register at: <https://events.sa.uca.org.au/mission-resourcing/refreshthemess>

For more information keep up to date with our NZ Messy Church Facebook page or contact your Messy Church Coordinator for your region.



### Another Frond Unfurls. Jocelyn Czerwonka, Waiapu Messy Church Coordinator

Do you ever feel like it's time to re-evaluate things but never have the time to do it? After 14 years of being in a fulltime role, firstly as Diocesan Youth Ministry Coordinator, and more recent years as Koru Ministry Leader in the Diocese of Waiapu I was feeling it was time to do just that. Lockdown and husband Alex's retirement as Vicar of St Luke's Rotorua created time to pray, think, cry, grieve and re-evaluate the way ahead. It was time to sign off as Koru Ministry Leader but what about MessyChurch?

I'm grateful to have been commissioned as Messy Church Leader for Waiapu at Synod. My new part-time role will create an opportunity to further resource and support the Messy Churches in Waiapu and to hopefully see new Messy Churches emerge. Being part time, it will also give me more time for our own family and grandchildren. In my 'free time' I will continue to be on the National Messy Church Team.

At Messy Church we are used to things being 'messy' so we are learning to adapt and change to what COVID-19 has thrown our way and to recognise that there are a lot of people in our communities who can find a place of belonging and spiritual nurture in a place based on 5 values:

Hospitality, Creativity, All Ages, Celebration and is Christ Centred.

Having visited Messy Churches recently I have heard first-hand how people of all ages have

missed Messy Church – how for them it is their church, and it is where they can grow in God's strength. When lockdown happened they have been grateful for ways that Messy Churches have kept in touch through new initiatives such as 'Messy Church in a Bag', 'Messy Church Drive Throughs', 'Messy Church on Zoom' and 'Messy Church at Home'. I am grateful for the stubborn determination and deep faith of so many of our Waiapu Messy Church leaders to ensure Messy Church continues – no matter what!

So as the Messy Church 'frond' continues to unfurl, I feel a sense of sadness leaving behind the Koru Ministry position in Waiapu, but also extremely excited about how God is reaching people through Messy Church in our communities.

**For Further Support** your Regional Coordinators are always available:

Claire Wyeth- Auckland and Nth Auckland

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Mary Addison- Waikato

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Angela Brown- Canterbury, West Coast

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Mandi Geustyn- Otago, Southland.

[mandi@messychurch.nz](mailto:mandi@messychurch.nz)

Or Messy Church NZ website

[messychurch.nz](http://messychurch.nz)

Just over 2000 years ago plans for the familiar were unexpectedly interrupted. Mary as a young unmarried teenage woman was not expecting to be pregnant, yet it has been through this unexpected path that the world has so much to celebrate today. No doubt Mary felt very confused, anxious, fearful and uncertain of her future at times. For us in 2020 the confusion, anxiety, fear and uncertainty we have faced this year, has been an unexpected path, but like Mary, we can take comfort in the knowledge that we can look forward to the celebration of Christ's birth and hope for our families future.

May you all know Christ's blessings this Christmas in unexpected ways.

Carrole Lewis



**Training Days for 2021. Save the Date**

20<sup>th</sup> February 2021 in Cromwell

27<sup>th</sup> February in Christchurch

North Island one Still being planned

