



A New Day Dawning

I am delighted that you are working through this study guide which is part of our theme series for **East Taieri Church in 2021**.

These are challenging times, but also times of great opportunity for the gospel. Jesus called his first disciples “Come, follow me...” He continues to call us today. We want to be ready to follow our Lord in the new steps he is leading us to take, but we also recognise the challenges we face. In 2021 we see a world still struggling through the Covid-19 pandemic. Polarising politics and ideologies have fostered conflict, racism, violence, and terrorism. Climate change and natural disasters damage communities. Social justice issues of poverty, affordable housing, the sanctity of life, employment, law and order, moral and bioethical issues and others cause division and pain.

The Christian Church in the West faces indifference, and even suspicion and denigration from the post-Christian culture around it. Increasing numbers of people have no Christian background and show little interest in Christ. I also talk to mature Christians who have become bored or disillusioned with the institutional church and are exploring a life of faith and mission without attending church.

In his book “*The Agile Church: Spirit-Led Innovation in an Uncertain Age*”, Dwight Zscheile wrote:

“How has the church responded to this sea change in the culture? Largely by trying harder at old patterns. Churches think that if they just get the right leader, she or he will rescue us, bring in new people, or fix the problem of institutional decline and irrelevance. They try to market the church better, spruce up websites, perhaps put out a nice new sign by the road proclaiming “All are welcome.” The church seeks to improve worship and programming a bit. All of this has no material impact on the underlying situation. People aren’t looking to be welcomed into a church like they once were. The church can do worship beautifully and brilliantly, and it isn’t going to be accessible or meaningful to most of its neighbours.” p.30

“It is easy to despair or not know where to turn. We look enviously at churches that seem to be successful and wonder where we went wrong and what they’re doing right. We try to adopt their programs and plans, as if that would solve things for us...”

But it won't address the basic challenges facing us. For that we have to focus elsewhere and embrace a quite different approach. We must turn toward the story of God's engagement with the world." p.33

Thankfully God is still working out his purposes through Jesus Christ. We have the good news of the Saviour of the world. God is active in the world. With the Spirit's leading and discernment we can recognise what God is doing and join in. We can be salt and light in the world, influencing communities and nations for the kingdom of God.

When God was leading the people of Israel out of captivity and exile in Babylon back to the promised land they were called to:

*"Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past.
See, I am doing a new thing!
Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?
I am making a way in the wilderness
and streams in the wasteland."*

Isaiah 43:18,19



Later, Jesus said, *"no one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the new wine will burst the skins; the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, new wine must be poured into new wineskins. And no one after drinking old wine wants the new, for they say, 'The old is better.'"* Luke 5:37-39

This series is partly about me sharing vision for the future of our Christian life together, and partly about inviting discussion and feedback on where you sense God leading us. Feel free to email me – martin@etchurch.co.nz

The challenge we face is to **stay grateful** for the many blessings God has given us at East Taieri Church, while being open to **change and growth**. East Taieri is a vibrant, Spirit led, Christ honouring, caring church which God is leading in mission. *"Forget the former things"* does not mean being ungrateful for all God has done.

Let's be thankful about what we have and not degenerate into grumbling. However, we can't stay here. We need to step into the future God has for us.

Over four weeks, **A NEW DAY DAWNING** will look at the future of **WORSHIP, PASTORAL CARE, MISSION, AND FACILITIES**.

Each of these areas of church life will be explored **biblically** and **theologically**.

In particular, each week we will consider **the impact of the following themes:**

- The ministry of the **whole body of Christ**.
- **Humility** and our dependence on the **Holy Spirit and prayer**.
- **Spaces for conversation:** being present with others - listening, experimenting and learning.
- A sense of urgency for **God's mission** in these last days.
- **Spiritual practices** that shape our character and create spiritual rhythms in tune with what God is doing.
- **Innovation and improvisation** – the same message expressed and experienced in new ways. *“The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news.”*

As you use this study guide can I encourage you about several things?

- If you missed Sunday's service **watch it online** on our East Taieri Church YouTube Channel.
- **Study this with others** if at all possible.
- **Pray as you begin**, expecting God to speak to you through the Bible passage, your experiences and the others you are studying this with.
- Our **model of group bible study** is **“mutual discovery together”**. The leader isn't the teacher – the Word of God is the teacher, and we all discover things together. **Leaders:** Please ask the questions, and then let others speak.
- Some questions are **Observation** (*what does the Bible say*) or **Explanation** (*what does it mean*), and we need those things, but make sure each week you get on to **Application** questions (*how the Bible applies to our lives today*). Most of the questions in this guide are application. Make it personal!
- I have included some **practical challenges**, or **spiritual practices**, you might try. Please don't make these rules we must follow. We aren't trying to become Pharisees. But I offer them as **training exercises for serious disciples**. They can put us in a place where God can do what we cannot. They help us notice what God is doing and join in. This means we are becoming more “missional” in our thoughts and actions.



WEEK ONE – A NEW DAY DAWNING

NEW EXPERIENCES OF WORSHIP



What can we learn from the early church about gathering to worship God?

We don't want to idealise the early church (Acts 5 and 6 shows they had problems), but it is instructive to remember the early church met most commonly in people's homes. **1 Cor 12-14** is a picture of each member of the body of Christ contributing to worship together using their spiritual gifts in a loving way to serve others.

There was still value in preaching to large crowds (Peter's sermon in Acts 2, and elsewhere) but they often met in **smaller groups**.

Read Acts 2:42-47

⁴² They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³ Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. ⁴⁴ All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵ They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. ⁴⁶ Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

1. What do you notice about their gatherings? What challenges you?
2. Why did they gather in the temple courts?
3. We can worship God on our own. What does **Romans 12:1** describe as our "true and proper worship"? Worship is clearly more than singing and more than a Sunday service. How has meeting with other Christians helped you offer your whole life in God's service?
4. Some of the **Psalms** are individual praise and worship, but most of the Psalms are corporate, congregational worship. What parts of worship gatherings do you find most helpful in growing your relationship with God and others? What parts are most frustrating? What is God calling you to do to be part of the solution?

5. During Lockdown many different people contributed to our online worship services, and online resources in all kinds of ways. We also sent out reflection questions after the service to help us learn and grow from the Bible readings and teaching. How might we apply those things to our worship gatherings now? How is the online service for you? When have you watched it?
6. How might our worship services be more participatory, interactive, relational, attractive, inspiring, learning environments? How might God be calling you to contribute to developing this?

Martin spoke about creating **time and spaces for conversation** as part of our worship: listening, experimenting and learning.



This would mean **worship spaces** where we are not restricted to pews, sitting as a passive audience listening and watching those who are up-front leading the service. How do you feel about that?

A VERSE TO REMEMBER:

Hebrews 10:24-25

²⁴ And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, ²⁵ not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

SOME PRACTICAL CHALLENGES AND SPIRITUAL PRACTICES:

- Read through a **favourite worship song or hymn** as a prayer.
- Write down **five things you are grateful for** in our worship gatherings. Give thanks to God in prayer and praise.
- **Worship and Celebration:**
 - ◇ **Prepare** for coming to a worship gathering by bringing to mind **five things** about the **greatness of God** and **God's character**.
 - ◇ Let these things fill your mind with God and give you hope. **Rom 15:13**
 - ◇ Come to a worship gathering with **five things to celebrate** about what God has done for you.
 - ◇ Read **Deuteronomy 14:22-27**. What did God call the people of Israel to set aside for celebrating his goodness? What resources do we bring to our gatherings for celebrating God's goodness?

There were many miracles in Acts, but the one that seems to have been the greatest witness to Christ was using their physical resources so that everyone was cared for. See **Acts 2:44,45** and **Acts 4:32-35**.

Sharing their resources was the thing that broke down their self-centredness and created real Christian community.

3. Have you or others in your group benefitted from meals, or transport or firewood, or other care that has been provided by the generosity of Christians? Pause to give thanks.
4. What has been **your understanding of pastoral care**? Has it been at the “care shown by the pastor” end of the spectrum, or more towards “everyone can offer care”?

The much-quoted work of **Rodney Stark** describes the Christian response to the plagues as a **triumph of every Christian showing Christ’s compassion** and care to those who were ill. There were no pastors rushing around trying to visit the sick. Christians cared for their families and neighbours demonstrating the love of God, and a freedom from fear of death. This was in dramatic contrast to their pagan neighbours who might abandon their sick in the street.³

During lockdown, a wide range of people carried out pastoral care through phoning, messaging or emailing other people in the church.

New **“care-clusters”** were formed for people not in a small group. The idea was that everyone would be connected with others by phone or internet so they could encourage each other in following Christ during the lockdown.



Not everyone felt the need for this, but 31 clusters were formed, ranging from 2 to 16 people each, plus 21 existing small groups and the various clusters at FUEL, a daughter congregation.

Some church members were essential workers continuing to serve their communities.

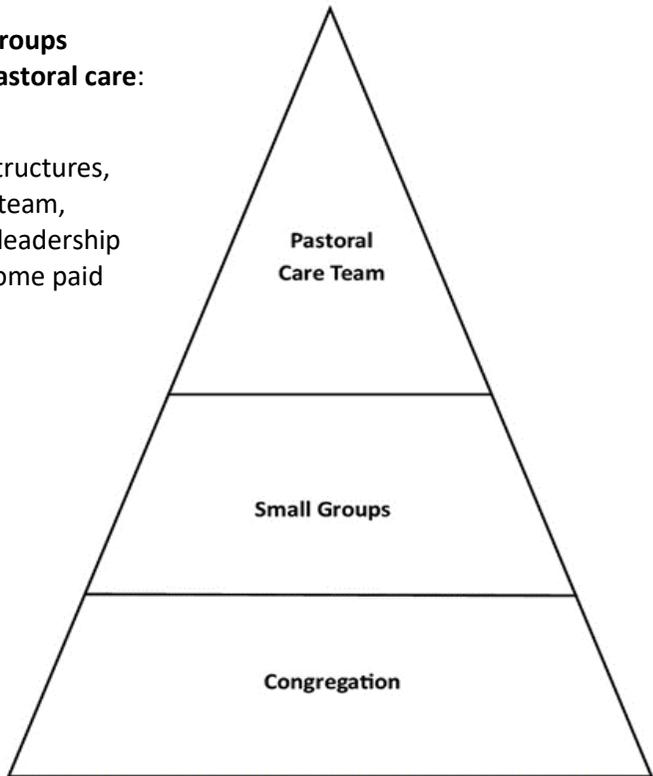
One of our staff, in partnership with Neighbourhood Support, Police and a local supermarket, led a team who delivered groceries to vulnerable people.

5. How does that lockdown experience of pastoral care fit East Taieri Church’s team-approach to pastoral care?

Pastoral Care at ET

We have **four key groups** involved in giving **pastoral care**:

- * the congregation,
- * our small group structures,
- * the pastoral care team,
- * the pastoral care leadership team (including some paid staff).



6. What could *“loving one another as Jesus loved us”* look like?
7. When people are in difficulty, it is natural to want to *“fix”* things. What helps you hold back from offering advice, so you can listen properly?
8. How do you feel when you don't know what people should do? What do you do then?

A VERSE TO REMEMBER:

John 10:14

“I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me.”

SOME PRACTICAL CHALLENGES AND SPIRITUAL PRACTICES:

- Listen to (or sing) **The Blessing** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eZQPifs2kjo>
In what areas of your life do you especially need God's blessing right now?
How could you be a part of taking God's blessing to others?
- Spend some time in **silence**, to allow the Holy Spirit to better prepare you to listen next time you are seeking to care for someone.

Silence – as a Spiritual Practice

Noise is inherently exhausting. It agitates us. Silence is associated with being able to rest, listen and trust God.



Two kinds of silence

A) To be in a quiet place:

- Try to get away from all unnatural, artificial sounds (traffic, electronic beeping, telephone...)
- If you have a quiet room in your house, go there and spend half an hour in silence. Don't worry if you fall asleep.
- You may be able to walk by the river in the quiet, or visit one of our lovely beaches.
- Your communication with God will be richer. Your prayers centred on God.
- Families will need to negotiate these times so each family member has opportunity for times of silence.

B) To refrain from speaking:

- Talk can be necessary, but it can also be controlling, manipulative and even brutal.
- Arrange to have an hour or more when you will not talk. This can even be achieved in families by negotiation.
- Don't be legalistic about it. You may *have* to say something.
- You will begin to come to a place where you are at peace and your tongue is not running out of control
- How did you feel while not talking? Were there any arguments during the time?

¹ Greg Ogden, *The New Reformation* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 1990), 11.

² Martin Luther, "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church," *Works of Martin Luther* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1943), 282-283.

³ Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity* (Princeton NJ.: Princeton University Press, 1996) Chap 3 Epidemics, Networks and Conversion.

WEEK THREE - A NEW DAY DAWNING

NEW MODES OF MISSION



Let's be clear about our mission. It is not just missionaries who are "on mission", just like it's not just ministers who "do ministry."

We are a church who support the crucial work of global mission and pray for God to raise up the next generation of overseas missionaries from among us. But we are also all missionaries, commissioned to make disciples wherever we are.

Our **church mission statement** says we are:

*One people in mission for God's glory...
...growing in Christ
and making Him known in love
through word, sign and deed...
...because all people matter to God*

How do we make Christ known so people can become disciples?

In the past, our mission and outreach has often been about inviting people to come to church or a church event or programme like the Alpha course. This **invitational culture** is still important. Keep at it! Our Christmas Eve services, for example, still connect with hundreds of people who don't usually come to church. However, most people who come on Christmas Eve are invited by an ET person who they know and trust.

More and more people these days regard church as **foreign and irrelevant** territory, and may view Christians with suspicion and even hostility or disdain. They will not come to us. We need to go to them. Mission has this "sent out" nature. This is what we mean by a "missional mindset".

We are thinking about **how we go out to others with the love of God**.

Your relationships and conversations with people are crucial if they are to get over their suspicion and open up to the claims of Christ on their lives. We need to be able to show them God's love through our **words**, God's grace and power (**signs**), and our **loving deeds**. There is a sense of urgency in these troubled times. We don't know how long we have.



Imagine if we were all growing as disciples ourselves and helping others become disciples too.

I describe this multiplying movement as $1 \times 1 = 1000$.

Imagine 1000 people in our region becoming Christians!

In week one we saw in **Acts 2:42-47** that there was something so attractive about the Christians that people noticed and wanted to be a part of it.

What do you think could make our Christian lives more attractive to other people?

We want to be **confident in Jesus** and the good news about Jesus, but **genuinely humble** enough to take an interest in people and listen to them. Avoiding arrogance and showing genuine caring love. Sometimes this will mean learning from others. Instead of us being the hosts with all the power and all the answers, **we become the guests** who are asking questions and receiving from others.

We also need to get better at **noticing what God is doing** so that we can join in. Only the Holy Spirit working in people's lives brings an openness to Christ. So we need to humbly and patiently pray and look for what God will do through our ordinary conversations and actions.

This organic, spontaneous kind of mission activity might be having a cup of coffee with a neighbour or going to each other's homes for a BBQ. We look for God to be at work through this ordinary activity, which can become mission in its own right and is certainly an essential precursor to most people agreeing to come to any kind of organised church event or programme.



If we are to be led by God in **everyday situations** like these, we need to cultivate an awareness of God through the day.

This happens through **regular spiritual rhythms of prayer** at certain times through the day, bible study, noticing, listening etc.

Alan Roxburgh and Martin Robinson write about the practices we need to be led by God in mission in everyday activities:

“The practices proposed here are intended to be simple, ordinary activities that reconnect us to the everyday rhythms of our neighbourhood and community. At the same time, it would be wrong not to recognize they are demanding and counterintuitive. They represent a way of life largely lost to Christians in the modern West. The re-founding is about ordinary life rerooted in the local. It’s not about heroics or extraordinary people who single-handedly save the world. These practices are not about some Star Trek-like journey of “going where none have gone before.” Such romantic ideals are for the movies, but not for re-founding of the church. The practices we are proposing go in the opposite direction: investing in the local, shaped by the ordinary, and formed in neighbourhoods.” [p.151,152 *Practices for the Re-founding of God’s People: The Missional Challenge of the West*, Alan J Roxburgh and Martin Robinson (New York: Church Publishing, 2018)]

READ of the way God used **Philip** (one of the early disciples) to help a man come to faith in Jesus: **Acts 8:26-40**

1. Who was Philip? (see Acts 6:1-6) What was Philip’s mission in Acts 6?
2. What did Philip have to do at the beginning? 8:29 What was ordinary about what Philip did? What was extraordinary or amazing about what happened?
3. Where do you go where you meet people who don’t yet know Jesus?
4. How did Philip start the conversation?
5. What are some of the questions you ask (or could ask) that might start spiritual conversations?
6. What are some of the ways you have seen God open up conversations and relationships with people in your neighbourhood?

A VERSE TO REMEMBER:

*“But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord.
Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you
to give the reason for the hope that you have.
But do this with gentleness and respect,”*

1 Peter 3:15

SOME PRACTICAL CHALLENGES AND SPIRITUAL PRACTICES:

- Make a **list of your friends**. Pray through the list and write down the issues your friends are dealing with or interested in. What difference does the good news of Jesus make to those issues? For example:
 - ◇ If they are in a **family quarrel** with strained or broken relationships, Jesus brings a message of forgiveness and reconciliation. You could ask them what it would feel like for them to forgive others, and for others to forgive them.
 - ◇ If they are interested in **conservation and the environment**, Jesus as creator of all things calls us to be good stewards of creation. See <https://www.arocha.org.nz/about-us/> for resources and ideas.
 - ◇ If they are **sick**, you could tell them of the way Jesus healed people and offer to pray for them.
 - ◇ If they are **feeling lonely**, you could invite them into Christian community in some kind of fellowship activity.
 - ◇ If they are **anxious about the future** and feel like there is no hope, you could speak about your hope in Christ and give them a **Hope Booklet** to read.
- What **other spiritual practices or rhythms** might be helpful for you in taking part in God's mission?
 - ◇ You could experiment with keeping the **daily times of prayer** (morning, lunchtime and evening).
 - ◇ You could **keep a journal** of the things you have noticed God doing.
 - ◇ **Staying and living and praying local** – in the local community.
- Do you feel prepared to **share your faith with others** in a natural way?

If you haven't ever been in our **"What's the Story?"** course, contact the church office and ask to go on the next one.

If you have already, practice

- ◇ listening to Their Story,
- ◇ telling Your Story,
- ◇ and telling The Story!



Can you see any of these three stories in the **Acts 8** passage about Philip and the Ethiopian?

WEEK FOUR - A NEW DAY DAWNING

NEW MISSION FACILITIES

East Taieri Church is blessed with facilities and land over three sites (East Taieri, FUEL and Ocean View). We are grateful for what we have. And yet we know that there are limitations with our facilities, which are not entirely fit for purpose. They weren't designed for the kind of church gatherings we have today. FUEL and East Taieri sometimes have capacity limitations. Amenities like kitchens and toilets don't meet modern requirements.



A **future mission facilities concept plan** has been developed for the East Taieri site and FUEL are reviewing their needs. However, the pandemic has caused us to **review our concept plan**. We are in the unusual situation of attendance at worship being slightly lower, while giving of money is slightly higher. Internet streaming and internet banking are both in play. We continue to stream our morning church service on the internet and we have around 80 computers log in to watch the stream each week.

This review is also an opportunity to **seek God about what is important in a church building**. The Old Testament temple and its priests and sacrificial system has been fulfilled in Jesus Christ. We no longer need a temple.

Do you think a church building as we know it today is even supported by the New Testament?

1 Peter 2:4,5

1. What is the "spiritual house" in **1 Peter 2** built out of? Who are the holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices?
2. What makes a building "holy" (set apart or sacred) for you?
3. How do you feel walking into a cathedral, historic chapel, or even the stained glass East Taieri Church? What is helpful for your worship of God and what is unhelpful?

"Strikingly, nowhere in the New Testament do we find the terms church (ekklesia), temple, or house of God used to refer to a building. To the ears of a first-century Christian, calling an ekklesia (church) a building would have been like calling your wife a condominium or your mother a skyscraper!"

[Frank Viola and George Barna, *Pagan Christianity: Exploring the Roots of our Church Practices* (Carol Stream Ill: Tyndale, 2012), 11.]

In week one of this series, we recognised that the early church did gather in large groups (in the temple courts) but also in people's homes (Acts 2:46). Smaller, interactive gatherings in homes were by far the most common way of worshipping and growing together.

We need to ask how our future facilities might reflect this. We need to be able to create spaces that are interactive and not like lecture rooms where people sit passively in pews, listening to those up front.



“The pew is perhaps the greatest inhibitor of face-to-face fellowship. It is a symbol of lethargy and passivity in the contemporary church and has made corporate worship a spectator sport.” [James F White, *The Worldliness of Worship* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), 43. cited in Viola, 34.]

- What kind of facilities best facilitate true, God honouring worship?
- How would you describe the worship in **1 Cor 14**?
- Consider verse 26 *“When you come together, each of you has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation...”*

What facilities facilitate worship like that?

- What are the open “third” spaces where you could meet with friends or neighbours who don't come to church?

“Many churches still assume that non-Christian neighbours must meet them on the church's turf, within organized activities sponsored by the church. Yet this simply will not work for many neighbours who find the church's programs and activities (including worship) intimidating, inhospitable, or irrelevant.” [Dwight J. Zscheile, *The Agile Church: Spirit-Led Innovation in an Uncertain Age* (New York: Morehouse Publishing, 2014), 98.]

Read Isaiah 1:10-17

1. What cities does this word of the LORD compare Israel to? (v10) What were they like?
2. What did God think of their worship gatherings?
3. What did God want them to do instead? (v 16 - 17)
4. How do you feel about investing some of our church assets into affordable housing to help those who cannot afford good accommodation? What safeguards would you want to see in place?

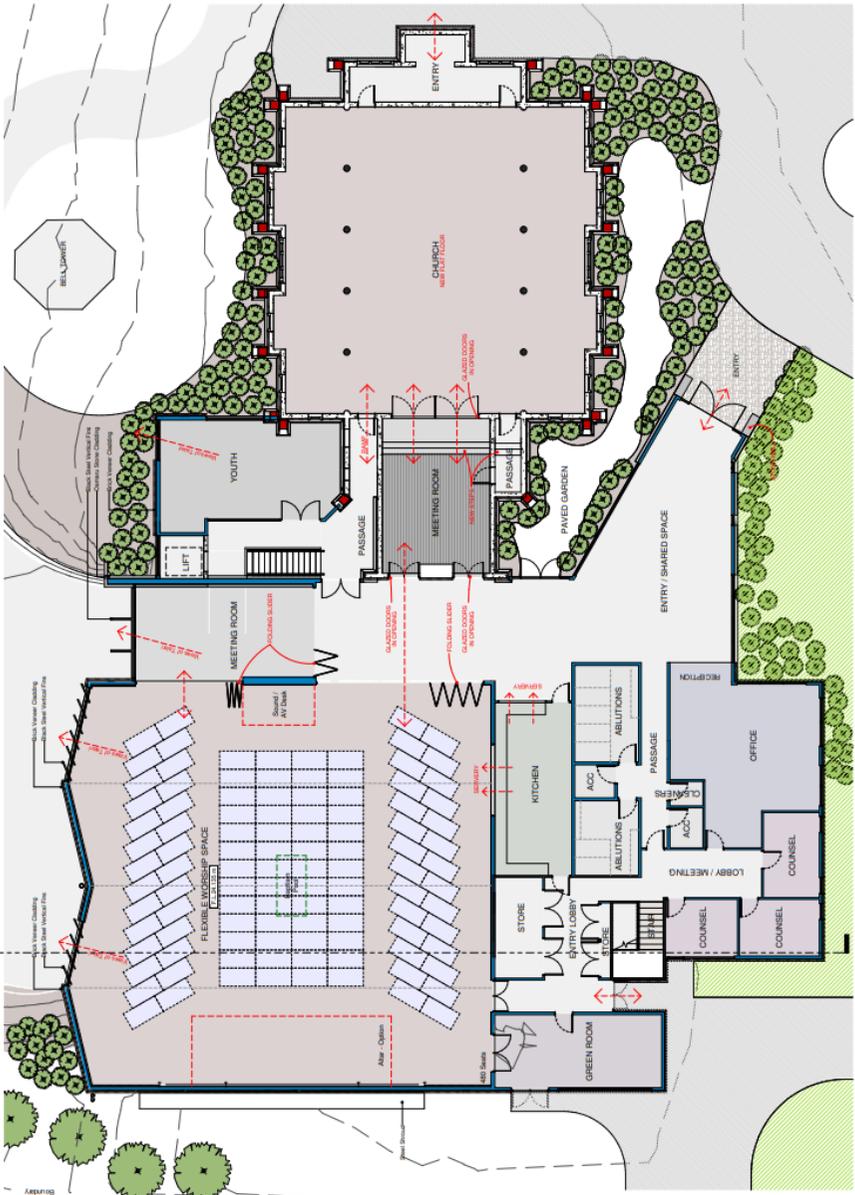
A VERSE TO REMEMBER:

John 4:23

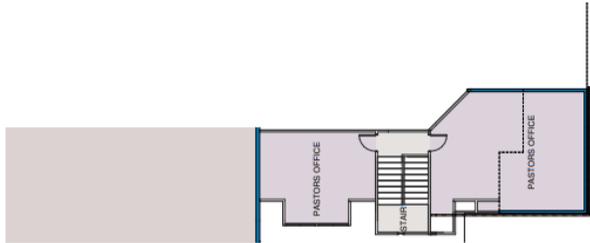
*Yet a time is coming and has now come
when the true worshipers will worship the Father
in the Spirit and in truth,
for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.*

SOME PRACTICAL CHALLENGES AND SPIRITUAL PRACTICES:

- We want to be **hospitable** to people – especially those exploring Christianity. What facilities at church do you think are important to create that hospitality? Invite a non-church friend for coffee / tea /catch up somewhere and reflect afterwards about what hospitality was like in that setting, compared to at church or an organised church activity.
- What **settings** have helped you **grow** most spiritually? How could our facilities be better suited to that? If you haven't already, please **fill out the survey** to give feedback for helping refine the concept plan for future facilities at East Taieri Church.
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/C6DLC3K> or the church website.
- Go to a **public space** (a café or shopping mall). Consciously direct your thoughts and heart to God in worship. How does that experience differ from worshipping God in a church building?
- Does a sense of **sacred space** help you worship God?
Watch the YouTube clip of **Kings College Cambridge**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z9K4rci4Bd4> ,
or is it a more contemporary sacred space that is helpful for your worship?
See this **Hillsong Worship** video:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s7jXASBWwwl>



Ground Floor - Proposed
Scale: 1:100 @ A1



First Floor - Proposed
Scale: 1:100 @ A1

A NEW DAY DAWNING: THEME SERIES FOR 2021

What does the Christian life together as the body of Christ look like in a pandemic world?

New modes of mission; new kinds of worship gatherings; new facilities; new engagement with the neighbourhood and community, new experiences of God's transformative kingdom.

This theme series includes a **study guide** for individuals or small groups to supplement and deepen engagement with each week's topic.

SUN 21 FEB **NEW EXPERIENCES OF WORSHIP**

SUN 28 FEB **NEW STYLES OF PASTORAL CARE**

SUN 7 MAR **NEW MODES OF MISSION**

SUN 14 MAR **NEW KINDS OF FACILITIES**

SUN 21 MAR Otago Anniversary Weekend: **RECAP & FEEDBACK**



12a Cemetery Road, East Taieri,
MOSGIEL

Phone: 489 6308, E-mail: office@etchurch.co.nz

Website: www.etchurch.co.nz