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# Greetings

Greetings everyone

As I write, the Advent and Christmas season is upon us - churches around our region are being decorated, with many preparations and practices to celebrate the Christmas story with congregations and the wider community. What GOOD NEWS we have to share!



In fact 66% of our churches said in the recent Children and Families survey that they have a special event Sunday at Christmas time and noted this was a time when more children and families attend. 64% of churches also provide or participate in a community Christmas event, making the most of an open opportunity to share the Christmas story with interested people who have never heard it before (not just children either!)

May God bless you with ideas, energy and generous hospitality as you invite people to hear and participate in your community. I know many churches are giving away the free Bible Society booklets 'The Well Good News of Christmas' or gifting the Advent Tree journey kits to families, performing impromptu or practiced Nativity plays and accessing some of the excellent videos available.

One new video I came across this week explores the theme of the MESS of Christmas. And let's face it there was plenty of risk and mess in the Christmas story. What was God thinking?...an unmarried mother, hurried wedding, unplanned travel, no accommodation booking, unusual birthplace, smelly

shepherds as first witnesses, supernatural phenomena, puzzling prophesy in the temple, strange visit from foreign travellers with precious gifts, volatile political climate, flight as refugees, horrendous crime against children by power-hungry ruler...it was messy!

But that is just the point being made in the video- Jesus didn't come to be remembered in a sanitised, cute nativity scene. Zoom out and recall God's BIG plan and promise, before and after. (Advent helps us do this) Jesus came into the MESS of our world with a message of hope for all humankind. Watch the video – 4min 38sec – find out what the narrator is making as wanders around a Welsh farm, chatting in rhyme – all is revealed at the end with a clever play on the word MESS.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kWmvu3cEBmM&feature=youtu.be>

So God's blessings on you all as you celebrate Jesus entering our messy world – Emmanuel, God with us. That is GOOD NEWS to share this Christmas and keep sharing in the New Year!

As one child said in another video "It's important to worship Jesus even when it's not Christmas"

May you know the Hope, Peace, Joy and Love of God this Christmas and New Year

Cheryl Harray

Kids Friendly Advisor

Southern Presbyterians



# 2019 Key Dates



## Presbytery Gatherings

February 23  
September 21-22



## re:Gen Yth Min Training

March 9  
Calvin Church, Gore



## Synod AGM

April 12-13  
Location to be confirmed



## Dunedin Easter Camp

April 19 - 22  
Mosgiel A&P Showgrounds



## Pukerau Easter Camp

April 18 - 22  
Camp Columba



## South Island Ministry Conference

May 14-15  
East Taieri Church



## Way2Go

May 25  
Details to come



## Continuum

July 12-14  
Invercargill



## Connect

July 19-21  
Ohope

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO SEE MORE EVENTS - CLICK [HERE](#)

# Children's Ministry Advent Resources



## **FREE STUFF!**

Bible Society NZ have 85,000 of this delightful Christmas story to give away. [Click Here](#)

Show the video then give away the books! [Click Here](#)



## **Ideas to inspire!**

**Kids Friendly** has gathered many resources for sharing Advent and Christmas in church and community. [Click Here](#)

If you are looking for a fresh approach for Advent services with intergenerational ideas you may like to look at 'Worship Together Advent' - a stone koru wreath (see top photo), art, drama and body prayers. [Click Here](#)



## **Planning Intergenerational Services?**

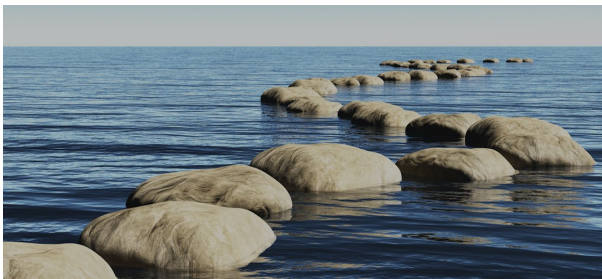
Intergenerational colouring posters, pages, home and church material - Mary's Song [Click Here](#)

FIVE Christmas stories - ideal for community services. New this year 'Jesus was a refugee' [Click Here](#)

Scripture Union has a huge selection of Christmas Resources from the online store [Click Here](#)

# Youth Ministry

Some resources designed to help your ministry to young people flourish in 2019!



## Stepping Stones

Stepping Stones is a long range approach to planning out your youth ministry and making sure your youth ministry provides a holistic approach to discipleship and faith formation.

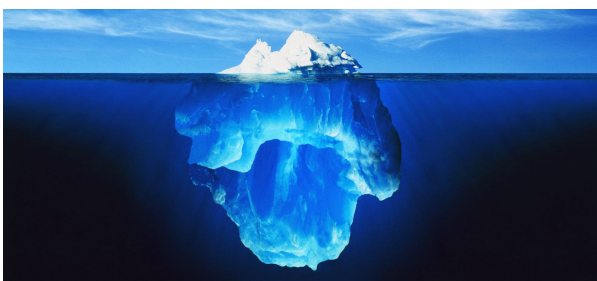
For more information, click [here](#).



## Youth Ministry Consultancy

This service includes reviewing your church's ministry to young people, celebrating what is going well, seeking God's direction for the future, and highlighting some areas to work on.

For more information, click [here](#).



## First Year in Youth Ministry Coaching

Whilst youth ministry can be challenging, if a new youth minister is coached by an experienced youth minister, they are more likely to lead a healthy and effective youth ministry.

For more information, click [here](#).



## Sustainable Practices

Longevity of our youth leaders is crucial if we are to reach this generation. This resource contains seven sustainable practices to help your church make steps towards sustainable youth ministry.

For more information, click [here](#).





# We Are Hiring!

## Kids Friendly Faith Development Project Coordinator for Southern Presbyterians

A 10 hour a week, fixed term of 2 years position has been created to continue the FTE resourcing of children and families ministry in the Southern Presbytery.

Faith Development of 10-13yr olds has been identified as a key area of need across the region. The project is an exciting opportunity for someone with passion and experience in this area of ministry to work alongside the current Kids Friendly and Youth Advisors with tasks of research, resourcing and reporting.

For a full job description [Click Here](#)

Please send your expression of interest and CV to

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**If you have news and stories of great things happening in your parish, don't be shy, others would love to hear and be inspired! Please feel free to send through any photos, videos and text and we will do our best to share it through our website with the rest of our parishes.**

**email to: [office@southernpresbyterians.nz](mailto:office@southernpresbyterians.nz)**



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