

UCANZ 26/01/06

Happy New Year!

I hope it is. Lynne and I didn't quite get the holiday we hoped for. Our campervan required more work to earn a w.o.f than the time before Christmas allowed me – so we had a quite time around home taking care of 'stuff'. While it was fine, I've long noticed that even a few days away in a completely different environment can be more re-energising than a much longer period of doing little at home.

Time marches on - the year has started. And what a year it could be! It's becoming increasingly clear that we face considerable uncertainty – particularly on the international scene. It's impossible not to notice that the USA has shamelessly turned from being self-proclaimed international policeperson, to international bully – taking what it likes simply because it can (actually, it's long been this way – they just pretended in the past that it wasn't – and we looked the other way). We sit waiting to see who/what will be next, and what kind of permission such behaviour gives to China and Russia who also have significant expansionist aspirations.

What will this mean for us, here in Aotearoa? It's hard to know. We'll face our own challenges - with a general election coming up later in the year, it will be interesting to see what effect, if any, the international scene has on our outcomes.

As for UCANZ, we'll continue much as we have been – the 'new' arrangement with Andrew Howley as the Executive Officer, and me continuing as Ministry Facilitator seems to be working particularly well.

I have a couple of whistlestop trips planned for the end of this month, the beginning of the next. I will be at the opening of the refurbished Avondale Union Church on Saturday the 24th and will be available to preach in the Auckland region on the 25th. It's short notice, I know. I'll have a vehicle, am willing to travel, and am not limited to Co-operating Ventures – happy to rock up wherever I'm invited. Email me if you're interested yomyom@xtra.co.nz .

Leadership & Personal Development Resources

I open with a couple of articles that dovetail together – the first is, appropriately about New Year Resolutions, the second about why will power fails.

Most resolutions collapse by February. Here's the system high performers use instead

This article identifies the reality that we start off with the best of intentions to 'do better' as we start the new year. We identify our goals, strategize, fail, and have thrown in the towel within the next 6 weeks. Carey Bently explains why we fail, encourages us to think quite differently about the changes we want to see, and lays out a six step strategy to help us become the person we want to. The article can be accessed here: <https://www.fastcompany.com/91461365/most-resolutions-collapse-by-february-do-this-instead>

Willpower Doesn't Work. This Does.

Angela Duckworth is a professor of psychology at the University of Pennsylvania. Her book 'Grit', having been read by me, graces one of my shelves. She here explains why, on its own, willpower so

often fails – it's just not enough to drive real change. She offers some simple strategies that really do work – I can testify to it enthusiastically on the basis that when I've failed to follow the simple and easily achievable advice, I discover, yet again, that willpower is not enough. The article, this one from New York Times (to which I'm a subscriber), I hope you will be able to access here:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/12/28/opinion/willpower-doesnt-work-this-does.html?smid=nytcore-android-share> If you find yourself unable to access the article and remain keen to read it, drop me an email at yomyom@xtra.co.nz

Homilies and Preaching Resources

My response to the lectionary for the 11th of January is titled '*A Window on Transition*' - reflecting on the baptism of Jesus found in Matthew 3 vs 13-17. The homily can be engaged with here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8p02PJ_uR4

As I indicated in my last news update for 2025, Rev Dr Trevor Hoggard has informed us that with his shifting to a new Parish over the January break, he will not be continuing posting sermons on his YouTube channel into 2026. I'm grateful for the work that Trevor has done over the past couple of years in providing a different voice. We wish him well as he moves on. His new appointment is the Takapuna Methodist Church, on Auckland's North Shore. They live-stream their services, so if you want to continue to tune into Trevor he can be followed here: <https://www.youtube.com/@takapunamethodist>

Gospel Conversations - out of the Dunedin Anglican Diocese. They host a conversation of 4 Theologians / Practitioners around the Gospel lectionary text for the coming Sunday. The site with all its options can be accessed here: <https://www.calledsouth.org.nz/gospel-conversations/>. As of publication of this newsletter, their latest offering has yet to appear. Keep an eye on the Website listed above.

Again, it will help broaden all our reach if you '**subscribe**' and '**like**'.

Once again, use the videos as you will.

Finally.

As always, if you find you'd prefer not to receive this weekly newsletter, please let me know and your address will be removed.

Ngā manaakitanga

Andrew Doubleday

UCANZ Ministry Facilitator



Uniting Congregations
OF AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND