Sermon:
**“Come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest”** (Matthew 11.28)

Stress is common – Covid-19, coming election, will Southland Stags ever win (!), health scares.

Can be hard to deal with both present conditions, and future prospects.

Symptoms of stress – headaches, dizziness, muscle & chest pain, stomach problems, faster heartbeat, sexual problems. Sounds scary. It is not a new phenomenon – TEXT.

Tension in a church – competing ‘pulls’ & you can’t please everyone (see Matthew 11.16-19).
But Ministry Of Health says: *We all need a level of stress in order to be healthy.*

The problem is not stress or tension (OK - some are too extreme and too damaging) but our response to it.

Stresses can be a good thing, in life, in a church. They might be useful in letting us know what God wants – which is surely part of our goal as a church. Our passage calls us to do three things:

* Lay down our burdens (v28)
* Take up a different burden/yoke (v29) – one of God’s choosing
* Rely on God’s strength (v30) – ie the yoke he gives is one we can cope with.

This all presupposes we know what God wants. Hymn - *We don’t know what God looks like.*

I am going to suggest to the Parish Council an open meeting to agree a Mission Statement and look at how our present activities fits into it, and where there might be burdens or deficiencies, through which God will speak to us.

If Christ came to our church he would challenge us about our burdens, presumptions and deficiencies – see Matthew 19.21, Mark 2.11 and Matthew 20.22 where Jesus challenges his hearers.

Without the stress of Black Lives Matter protests would anything ever get done? No-one is saying the past was bad, but today’s needs and today’s responses are different.

NB. God wants to help us! We need to not let our presumptions get in the way (Matthew 11.16-19).

TEXT – let us take Christ at his word, and see where he leads us!