

Spanz

Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand

SPRING 2013, ISSUE 55

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connections

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Have you ever had one of those moments? Some call them "aha" moments...

I had one attending the recent day seminar "Faith Communities Against Violence: Taking a Noble Idea and Turning it into Action". The moment was – this was organised, hosted and run by the Children's Commissioner. It was not run by any of the signatories of the faith communities against family violence national statement. While deeply appreciative of the work of the Commissioner and the desire to draw together faith communities – I was left wondering why those that signed the declaration had not called others together. Maybe that is worth further reflection.

The day itself was well run, covered a number of areas, provided time for interaction, and there were lots of great take home moments and resources.

Commissioner Dr Russell Wills introduced the day by sharing some statistics related to Family Violence. We should all be aware of these. The impact and effect on victims of abuse is profound and can be life-long. It impacts children in early childhood and primary school – they may suffer post-traumatic stress disorder; have low self-esteem or blame themselves. By adolescence, we see early drop out from school, drug and alcohol abuse, and by adulthood, they are often perpetuating the cycle of violence by repeating what happened to them. These are the people that we are called to minister with, and these are people who are already part of the life of our church.

There are many resources available from the office of the Commissioner and these can be obtained by contacting them: 0800 A CHILD (080022453) or go to their website www.occ.org.nz

A couple of things stood out for me.

Firstly, the legal issues around dealing with disclosures. I wondered how well we are equipping volunteers (and if we have them, staff) around their rights and responsibilities when it comes to disclosures. I wondered how well equipped our ministers are, and indeed how well I am for such matters. In seeking to be communities that value and reflect the gospel, and communities that seek the transforming presence of God in all situations, we must also take seriously the responsibility that comes with people trusting us with sensitive information.

For me the most powerful presentation was by Kara Duncan-Hewitt who, having shared her own story of family violence, moved to talk about understanding it. Kara is a trainer/consultant/therapist in the field of stopping family violence. As part of this she invited participants to share in an exercise which moved us from simply listening about this to finding our own words about situations; to writing those words; to reading the words of others; to doing this at a faster and faster pace while the whole time holding an item that would be important to a child in that situation. As we talked and debriefed we discovered we had entered into a world that some had little knowledge or experience of, yet is the world that is a daily reality for too many in our communities. Kara spoke with passion, understanding and also in a way that offered a way forward, so the past did not have to determine either current or future situations.

The day included talking together in groups and discussing the things that need to change; how these things could happen (including what the barriers and the opportunities were) and what resources were required to make them a reality.



Rev Wayne Matheson

The impact and effect on victims of abuse is profound and can be life-long. It impacts children in early childhood and primary school – they may suffer post-traumatic stress disorder; have low self-esteem or blame themselves.

These matters can be addressed in a locally. With a good facilitator, a parish or a presbytery could take up the declaration and turn that dream into reality. In some of our parishes and communities, in partnership with others, this is happening. We have a part to play. Some of what is core to our being; some of Jesus' teaching about compassion and protection of the weak and the vulnerable; about treasuring the value and life of all human beings should ensure that we lead by example in this area. We have diverse skills and talents and we can (and should) be leading change, noting that prevention often starts with attitudinal change.

The Rev Wayne Matheson represented the Church at "Faith Communities Against Violence: Taking a Noble Idea and Turning it into Action" as the Convenor of the Council of Assembly. He is a minister at Knox Presbyterian Church, Lower Hutt, Wellington.

Spanz

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Who we are

Spanz is published quarterly by the
Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa
New Zealand,
PO Box 9049, Wellington, New Zealand

Editor

Angela Singer
angela@presbyterian.org.nz
Ph 04 381-8284

Advertising

Jose Reader
spanzadvertising@presbyterian.org.nz

Subscriptions

Katrina Graham
katrina@presbyterian.org.nz
Ph 04 381-8283

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Presbyterian Youth Ministry

MODERATOR'S MUSINGS

The Right Rev Ray Coster contributes a regular column to *Spanz*



The sixteenth century saw a reformation of belief. I believe that the Church in the West is presently undergoing a reformation of practice. The major change today is in the area of methodology rather than the message, in practice more than theology.

The model of church that I grew up in, and which many of our churches hold on to, served us well at that time. It also brought many people to a wonderful faith. We honour that model of church. That model will continue to serve many people for whom it is precious. But, its complexity has strangled the ability to grow. Too much energy has gone into maintaining the organisational infrastructure. Life, in general is more complex and busy. The Church needs to simplify how it does mission.

One of the big issues we must face as a denomination is the culture of how we do church today. The church has always undergone change, reformation and revolution. Many growing churches have learnt to adapt their culture. One of our ministers said recently, ‘The crisis we as a church face is a crisis of imagination’.

Bill Johnson says that your dreams are not independent from God but exist because of God. Dreams bring hope, hope brings faith, faith brings trust, and trust taps into God who probably gave us that dream in the first place.

When we talk about change some people see opportunity. Others see the obstacles. Seeing things differently is how we imagine a different culture.

Have you ever heard of “Crabology?” Every crab fisherman knows you don’t need to put a lid on a bucket of crabs. Why? Because when one crab tries to crawl out, the others

will pull the crab back down to the bottom of the bucket. This attitude may stop us imagining a fresh mission as a Church. Sometimes we find it hard to imagine life “outside the bucket”.

I recently spent two fantastic days at our Presbyterian youth Connect event. I saw a wonderful glimpse of “life outside the bucket”. Around 230 of our youth leaders gathered for a two-day training event – the second largest annual national gathering of Presbyterians after our General Assembly! The worship, the culture, the methodology and practice of this part of our Church family was very different from what I experience in many other parts of our Church. It’s not that one is better than the other – they are just different. We need to create a place where different cultures are affirmed and appreciated.

If we as a Church are to step outside the bucket I believe that we need help. It won’t just happen. We need imagination. We need skills. We need knowledge and a theological understanding of the current reformation of practice.

Let me share a dream I have to help our church in its mission. A dream that I believe will give us hope, produce a fresh faith, and create a trust that will tap us even more into the heartbeat of God.

I would love to see a person appointed to a part-time role under the auspices of our Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership (KCML) to help train and inspire our interns, ministers and parishes on how we work with God in the renewal and revitalisation of worship and music in the Presbyterian Church. While many of our churches are doing okay, many others are struggling. Even churches that are thriving can sometimes feel that their worship and music have become stuck in a rut.

Can I encourage you to pray about this dream? Talk to each other about how you feel we could renew and revitalise our Presbyterian worship in ways that will reach out to that generation of people that I met with at Connect. Please write to the Very Rev Dr Graham Redding, the principal of KCML, if you would like to know more of this dream and would like to help make it happen.

Let us be a people of hope for our Church and for the younger generations. Let us look for ways of passing on the baton of faith that has meant so much to us, but that might be expressed in a slightly different way by the generations that follow.



Presbyterian Youth Ministry continues to find ways to Connect

Sustainable youth ministry was the catch-cry for this year's Connect, which saw around 230 youth leaders gather in Wellington in July for a weekend of training, formation and fellowship.

Despite one of the keynote speakers, Mike King, having to pull-out the day before to travel back home due to a family emergency, Connect, the annual Church national youth conference, proceeded without any other major hitches.

Connect attracts a mix of experienced youth leaders and those who are just starting out in youth ministry so the programme is tailored to meet the needs of everyone. This year, there were streams that covered theology, the nuts and bolts of youth ministry (including time management) to leadership, spiritual practices, worship and building missional communities.

Over the two-day conference, more than 25 different speakers delivered 40 individual workshops ensuring that Connect offered a wide variety of perspectives for young leaders to consider; they were as diverse as the people attending and included sessions such as, "Shut up and get lost!",

which discussed the practice of silence and solitude; "Never call them jerks", looking at effective conflict resolution; and "The art of curating worship", examining why worship should be fostered, and what this might look like in practice.

Building on the theme of sustainability in youth ministry, one of the keynote speakers, Sala Tiatia, spoke about how to sustain passion and desire in youth work without getting burnout.

Sala's engaging style was a hit with Connect-goers, and there was lots of laughter from the crowd as he discussed how youth work has changed over the last 20 years. He covered some practical strategies for building sustainable youth ministry.

"I've learnt to keep the 'you' in youth work," he said referring to the fact that youth leaders can at times neglect their own needs. He encouraged those working with young people to discipline themselves against saying "yes" to all requests, and to be intentional about having downtime and spending time with family and friends.

He also talked about the power of positive affirmation in the face of voices in the



community, in government, and in society that don't always value youth ministry.

"I'm my own worst critic," Sala said of himself. "There are always voices that will seek to bring you down – including your own. So remind yourself that the work you do is important. It is for God. It is for young people."

Rod Baxter, youth worker with Wellington's Boys and Girls Institute and another of Connect's keynote speakers, focussed on providing a series of practical tips for thriving in youth work.

Rod also discussed some underlying characteristics of youth work including the concept of "Ako" – a Maori word which describes a teaching and learning relationship, where the leader is also learning from the student. Ako, he explained, is grounded in the principle of reciprocity, and also recognises that for development to occur the young person must be considered in the context of their family and environment.

Praise for Sala, Rod and other keynote speakers, workshops, learning, fellowship and inspiration provided by Connect was



Impact

widespread, with feedback to PYM, and on social media, speaking volumes about how much the people enjoyed and valued the conference.

The PYM Facebook included just under one hundred photos from PYM and Connect-goers, and Tinae Peilua's post on Facebook echoes the sentiment of many who attended, "On behalf of Grey Lynn PIC Youth, thanks for an awesome conference. Connect 2013 was totally off the hook."

This year was the first time that Connect has had official sponsors. The resources and financial support provided by organisations including Laidlaw College, Bible Society, Presbyterian Support and others helped keep registration costs down and make it easier for more people to attend.

Planning for next year's event is already underway, with Danielle Strickland, an officer with the Salvation Army in Canada, confirmed as the keynote for Connect 2014, which will be held at St Andrew's College, Christchurch from 11 to 13 July.

Jose Reader Spanz



Christchurch churches build support

Two and a half years on from the devastating earthquake that resulted in 185 deaths, Christchurch congregations are facing the future with some weariness, but also a renewed sense of purpose.

The extensive destruction of church property provided an opportunity to examine ministry models and mission frameworks, and while most parishes are still in the formative stages of deciding what the future will look like for them, there is an emerging sense of hope according to co-moderator of the Christchurch Presbytery, the Rev Nancy-Jean Whitehead.

"Some are feeling tired and homesick. They want to get back to their own place. There is a weariness. In saying that, some of those that have moved to temporary facilities are feeling energised by the change. In some cases it has created a positive dynamic. There are definitely pockets of excitement about what the future holds."

Shortly after the February earthquake, the Rev Darryl Tempero was appointed as resource minister. Initially, says Presbytery co-moderator the Rev Dr Alan Missen, his priority was to support ministers, "but his role has now very much evolved to working through how our resources could serve the mission of the Church".

Darryl says his role now is supporting parishes through the process of developing mission action plans to help them understand what God is calling them to be.

"By doing a mission action plan, the parish will better understand its purpose – who they are, who God is calling them to be in this place, and what is required to help them become that community. This way, when they get to the stage of looking at possible buildings, they will be able

to answer the question of what kind of building will serve that purpose."

"The mission action plan is a tool to help parishes through the process of re-imagining their life and mission."

So far, only two parishes have completed a mission action plan, and the process has taken about 18 months explains Darryl. Both are due to be presented to Presbytery in the next month or so.

In order to complete the plan, the template tool developed by Presbytery advocates prayerful reflection, examination of community needs, review of relevant external data like demographic trends, meetings with community organisations, other denominations and agencies and assessment of the parish's own strengths and resources.

In the months following the earthquake more than \$300,000 was raised thanks to the generosity of individuals, congregations and overseas churches, and that money has been put to good use, Alan says.

"Initially every parish was given a grant of \$500 as a gesture of goodwill and to help tide over them. Not long after the earthquake, ministers were also offered an extra week's leave, and a grant was made available to cover cost of supply ministers. Many ministers and parishes took advantage of this. We've also organised a couple of retreats for ministers."

Presbytery has also funded feasibility studies to identify community needs and mission opportunities in particular Christchurch suburbs.

Strengthened ecumenical relationships

More engagement between denominations has been one of the positives to emerge in post-earthquake Christchurch, as parishes reach out to their neighbours to offer support, share worship space and engage in conversation about joint mission opportunities.

St George's Iona Presbyterian Church is one of 16 Presbyterian and Uniting parishes that were directly affected by the earthquakes, and has been strengthening ecumenical ties.

All of St George's Iona buildings were either demolished or deemed unsafe, so they initially worshipped in the manse for several months before acquiring a large marquee which was used during the warmer weather.

Minister, the Rev Sheena Dickson, says the congregation was delighted when the local Anglican church invited them to join in worship.

"Christine [priest at St Ambrose] stretched out her hand in hospitality and love to our congregation and asked if we would like to join them over the cold winter months. Both parishes were delighted to try this out."

Like most churches affected by the earthquakes, St George's Iona is in the process of examining what their ministry will look like going forward. Together with two other nearby parishes – one Methodist and one Anglican – and with Presbytery support, they've commissioned a study that examines the feasibility of a combined church project in east Christchurch.

"We're currently exploring a new way of being church in the 21st century. This is presently at the conceptual stage, but we are hopeful that it will prove viable and eventually evolve into a very exciting community-facing project for the parishes involved. We envisage that in 12 months time, if we can get all the necessary ducks in a row, we'll be well on our way."

St Georges isn't the only parish strengthening ecumenical ties as a result of the earthquake. While it considers its future, St Martin's Presbyterian is worshipping with Beckenham Methodist Community Church. Crossway Community Church, after suffering major damage to their hall and church were initially welcomed by North Avon Baptist, and after moving a number of times have settled with St Alban's Uniting Parish, and are sharing their worship centre.

Despite still worshiping in temporary facilities, Crossways is on the way to

Like most churches affected by the earthquakes, St George's Iona is in the process of examining what their ministry will look like going forward.



re-establishing their ministry in the community of Shirley. While still in the early stages of planning, Crossway hopes to enter a partnership with the Christchurch City Council to build a multi-purpose facility for community and church use on the site of the former Shirley Community Centre.

The project recently got the nod from the Papanui community board, who recommended that the City Council consider the project, and offer Crossway the long-term lease necessary for the project to go ahead.

Such a project offers both challenges and opportunities for mission explains Darryl, because to go ahead it will require examination of the traditional model of Presbyterian building ownership which sees both land and buildings owned by the Church. In this case, the church is seeking to build on land owned by someone else.

"There are a number of issues to consider and conversations to be had before this can go ahead," Darryl says.

Joining together in mission

A partnership between the Methodist Central South Island Synod, Christchurch Presbytery, Presbyterian Support and the Methodist Mission has seen the employment of a community worker to assist parishes in community development. Cassie Welch, who is in the role for 12 months, is working with New Brighton Union Church, Halswell Union Church, St Georges Iona, St Martin's Presbyterian and Rangiora Methodist, and is charged with encouraging existing links between the

churches and their communities as well as facilitating new ones.

St Kentigern's Burwood United Parish was heavily impacted by the red zone, which has left their congregation fragile due to people moving out of the area. They are working with Christchurch North Presbyterian to examine a possible future together. Darryl who is working with St Kentigern's says, "They can see, as one of several options for the future, closing their doors and being part of seeding something new."

Still other congregations have made the choice to pool their collective resources and merge: the Mt Pleasant/Heathcote/Ferrymead Presbyterian Church chose to close and join with the Sumner/Redcliffs/Lyttelton Union Parish to form the new Port Hills Uniting Parish.

St Stephen's Bryndwr and St Giles Papanui have also recognised the power of working together, and are planning for a future together says St Stephen's minister, the Rev Martin Stewart.

"We are initiating some new mission initiatives involving both parishes. St Stephen's has always had an eye on the future and that we would need to change and adapt. In their own way, the earthquakes have brought the need for these changes to a head, and we are responding."

The decision to rebuild or not

While not a permanent building, what the Rev Mark Gibson calls a "Prayer Pod" is now on the site where New Brighton Union church stood before it was demolished in September 2011. The reinforced cardboard structure is robust and weatherproof, and

is tall enough for an average person to stand up in.

The mini chapel was created by Christian artist Peter Majendie, and is part of a programme to create temporary projects that beautify city spaces.

At the time of writing, Knox Presbyterian is the only parish to have begun the rebuilding process. Work to make the Knox church building safe and usable once again started on 1 August. St Alban's are finalising plans to rebuild on the same site.

Some congregations located within larger communities have chosen not to re-open damaged worship centres and congregation members have relocated to other churches. For example, Prebbleton who were part of the wider Lincoln Union Parish, has closed, and the building been demolished and the site sold.

The decision not to re-open is hard for all involved, says Darryl, and it's not just those immediately affected by the earthquakes that are facing this question. Many church buildings that were not affected have subsequently been deemed unsafe to use because they fall below the required earthquake strength thresholds, placing further pressure on the resources of parishes and Christchurch Presbytery, as is the case in many other parts of the country.

Looking to the future, it will take some time for mission and ministry to evolve to suit the needs of the new Christchurch, but work already underway will ensure the Church continues to hold its place in the spiritual heart of the city.

Jose Reader | Spanz

Carehouse a safe haven for Paeroa's children

Paeroa's Skate and Leisure Centre, also known as the Children's Carehouse, is a hive of activity from morning until night most days of the week.

The bright blue building, one block away from the main street, has been at the heart of its community for the last 13 years, providing a safe haven for children and young people.

School days start with the Breakfast Club, which feeds about 20 children before sending them off to school with a packed lunch. Various community groups use the building during the day, and then about 40 children come back for after school activities. At the end of the week around 60 children and teenagers turn up for a healthy meal, games and activities at Friday Night Friend-zy.

Manager Melanie Budge coordinates all these activities, plus holiday programmes and day camps, with part-time support from her husband John and five other helpers.

It's a 24/7 job but she's motivated by compassion for the young people and their families and the kind of creativity that grabs positive ideas and makes them happen.

"I remember what it was like to be a child myself. It's about creating good memories for the kids, so that in their hard moments they'll remember that someone cares for them, and if they need help, they can reach out. It's about a sense of belonging and worth and creating a non-threatening place for them to be where they know they're loved."

A variety of programmes for young people are available at the Centre including a network for older teenagers which encourages leadership and management skills, and the R.A.P (Respect All People - Whakamana Tangata) programme, a national initiative designed to reduce bullying and increase respect among youth.

Teenagers who've been involved in these and other programmes were able to write and record two songs, produce a short movie and put together a photo book. This has

been a catalyst for other youth-led projects, including painting large public murals, which will continue throughout the year.

The Carehouse really only has one rule, explains John Budge. Their motto is "Be Kind" and their values are CHURR – Cooperation, Honesty, Understanding, Reliability and Respect.

"When we first started out we had a big rules board with lots of do's and don'ts but we found that approach normalises bad behaviour. So instead we just have 'Be Kind' which sums up all the other rules and carries through that idea of respect."

The Centre began when the Revs Pauline and Stan Stewart (now at St Heliers Presbyterian Church, Auckland) were both ministering in the area. The building now used by the Centre was leased to the Paeroa Cooperating Parish, who spent months fundraising and turning it into a drop-in centre.

These days the building also houses a toy library and can be hired for special occasions. The concrete floor downstairs is ideal for skateboarding and sports. There are two kitchens plus a stage area, art room, conference facilities and a computer suite. Colourful artwork covers the walls.

The Centre comes under the umbrella of the Paeroa Community Support Trust, the outreach arm of the Paeroa Cooperating Parish. Most of its income comes from sponsorship, grants or government funding, but its mission is unashamedly Christian, says the church minister and chair of the trust, the Rev Heather Simpson.

"Our ethos is that we are a mission outreach which builds bridges in the community. Our vision is to be a regional resource centre serving children, youth, families and seniors and impacting our community of Hauraki and the Coromandel."

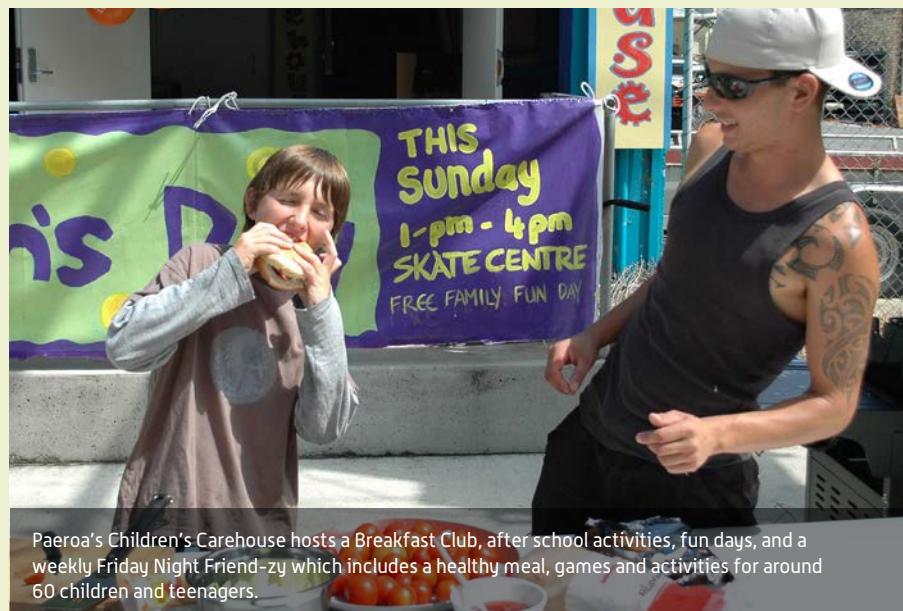
The parish itself is small and ageing – many of the 50 to 55 people who attend on Sunday morning are elderly. (Messy Church once a month involves people of all ages.) The lifeblood of the trust is its volunteers who serve about 500 people a week through 22 different activities and programmes.

"Quite frankly there is no way we could do what we do without them, so we're very grateful for our volunteers and the time, passion and energy they are willing to contribute. But a lot of them are getting older so it's a constant challenge to encourage others to be involved," Heather says.

The Skate and Leisure Centre has gained local and national recognition for the services it provides including "Outstanding OSCAR" awards in 2010 and 2012 for its before and after school programmes.

Perhaps its greatest sign of success, though, is in what the young people themselves named the centre...the Children's Carehouse.

Andrea Candy Spanz



Paeroa's Children's Carehouse hosts a Breakfast Club, after school activities, fun days, and a weekly Friday Night Friend-zy which includes a healthy meal, games and activities for around 60 children and teenagers.

A decade of Kids Friendly

The network of people passionate about and equipped to effectively minister with children and families has grown over the last decade thanks to Kids Friendly.

Jill Kayser, Kids Friendly national coach and driving force behind the ministry, has had many highlights since starting 10 years ago out of an office in St Heliers Presbyterian Church in Auckland.

"I've been inspired by the way many of our churches have caught the Kids Friendly vision and have worked hard to review and to 'raise the bar' on their ministry with children and families.

"The highs have most definitely been the stories of effective ministry and mission with children and families from our churches that I am privileged to hear and share with others.

"I have such a rich bank of stories now that are so pivotal in my role of encouraging and resourcing our churches in their ministry to and with children."

Jill says there's always the flip-side too. "I do get discouraged when encountering those churches who have given up on children, or who seem to think that mission and ministry with children is an optional extra".

"I don't generally get invited to churches that have no kids, although I truly believe that it's never too late to start ministering with children.

"St Andrew's Invercargill and St Columba Oamaru are two churches who had no children and are both ministering in wonderful ways with large numbers of children now!"

Jill believes that parishes that don't intentionally minister to children are



Kids Friendly national coach Jill Kayser, left, believes that parishes that don't intentionally minister to children are missing out on the vibrancy and life that children bring.

missing out on the vibrancy and life that children bring to congregations.

"They are missing out on being ministered to by children and encountering the 'Kingdom of heaven' in children that Jesus alluded to.

"I urge leaders when trying to find volunteers to minister with children, not to plead with them to put their name on a roster, but to paint of picture of what it's like to minister with children and the immense blessings one receives, when exploring with children the great stories of our faith."

Ten years on, Jill believes that Kids Friendly has earned credibility and respect within the Church.

"Last year for the first time I was able to share Kids Friendly stories and vision at General Assembly which I felt was an important breakthrough and validation of our ministry. This year PYM and Kids Friendly were invited to explore and share our ministries with interns at KCML and I hope that this will be a regular opportunity."

Jill believes that creating opportunities for leadership and faith development in young people is crucial for the Church's future. Accordingly, initiatives like Transformers – Raising Up Young Leaders camps and mentoring programmes that target intermediate age children are an important part of Kids Friendly.

Ten years ago there was just Jill, now she works with two Kids Friendly advisers – the Rev Nikki Watkin (Auckland) and Cheryl Harray (Synod of Otago and

Southland) who spend their time meeting with parishes, advising and coaching, resourcing and equipping leaders to minister with children and families.

"I'm pleased that we are further down the road than we were 10 years ago and that we have a vibrant and effective children's ministry department.

"I'm thrilled with the way we have built a network of over 600 people who are committed to ministering with children.

"I love the way we can support them through our Kids Friendly website, stories, many home-grown resources, training and coaching."

Despite these successes, Jill says the team does still encounter people who see the Kids Friendly team "as those who help with Sunday School", rather than a team of passionate and skilled coaches who can help them strategically plan mission and ministry that is inclusive of children and families, but she doesn't let this get her down.

"Years ago, I received some sound advice from my friend and an amazing presenter Rich Melheim [Faith Inkubators]. He told me to ignore the grumpy, discouraging faces in the audience and focus on the positive.

"This approach of giving my energy to those who positively strive to make a difference in the lives of children, and my God-given sense of humour, have sustained me and my ministry for 10 years and I hope well into the future."

Jose Reader | Spanz



Rusty Lemon, Leigh Richards-Ward and Anna White with a refurbished bike ready to be gifted to a child. The Rotorua District Presbyterian Church's We-Cycle programme supports 'Bottoms on Bikes'. It gave reconditioned bikes and new helmets to more than 80 children in August. Image: Rotorua Daily Post.

Rotorua's five churches: stronger together than apart

Five Presbyterian churches now make up the Rotorua District Presbyterian Church [RDPC] – a new structure with a united sense of mission for the city and nearby districts.

The ultimate goal is growth, but not necessarily in terms of numbers at church on Sunday, says the Rev Lance Thomas, the senior minister for the RDPC.

"We believe God is calling us to share our strengths and support each other in our weaknesses. But this call is not about some survival strategy for struggling congregations. How will we measure growth? The best answer at this stage is by the stories of new ministries, and lives transformed."

Lance explains that the churches were already working together before he was called to St John's in Rotorua 10 years ago. Before that, he'd spent nearly 19 years in a small church, which gave him a deep respect for their value and mission potential. Early in his ministry at St John's, the church restructured its worship services and with a new session in place, spent time discerning God's direction. The outcome was a renewed emphasis on a Rotorua-wide vision of mission and a commitment to work with other Presbyterian churches in the area.

Then, in 2010, St David's approached the Kaimai Presbytery and Press Go with a plan to develop new work on the eastside

of Rotorua. The response was – go back and talk to all the other churches to clarify the wider mission. They did:

"We believe that the future of ministry and mission for the Presbyterian Church in Rotorua city and its environs will best be served with one governance structure and administrative centre holding a common vision for this city. That common vision will be worked out differently in each mission locality."

Other developments over a period of time contributed to the sense that something unique was emerging – a structure grounded in theological reflection as well as the specific context of Rotorua itself. An interim council worked out the details and the RDPC was formally constituted in December 2012.

Cathy Cooney was part of the process from the beginning, as both a longstanding elder at St John's and a member of the interim council and the new RDPC council. She says it was a "remarkable" journey of transformation.

"It was a big exercise and lots of work but we've seen God's hand all the way through. Many years of thinking and planning went into it and even seven or eight years ago, people had visions of what could be."

Discussion was sometimes "robust", but she was impressed by the "level of unity and willingness to give it a go". With feedback from

each church's leadership team, the interim council worked through seven versions of the proposed structure, each with significant changes. When the congregations finally voted on the proposal, all but three out of 400 people were in favour.

The closure of St Andrew's at about this time was largely coincidental, says Lance. He was asked by the Kaimai Presbytery to facilitate the process but it was St Andrew's decision. The buildings are still managed by the RDPC and could be used for future ministries.

The new structure maintains the identity of each of the churches: St John's in the city; St David's in east Rotorua; Trinity Mamaku in a village about 20 km west of Rotorua; Trinity Ngongotaha in a satellite town; and Ngakuru Community Church in a rural area about 30 km south of the city.

The day-to-day concerns of each church remain the responsibility of its local leadership team while the combined council supports and resources the mission and ministry of all five.

The council is currently in the process of centralising administration, finances and communications. A team for community-facing ministries maintains the momentum of projects that were already underway before the RDPC came into being.

Two new clergy will be appointed before the end of the year, with Lance retaining the role of senior minister. This will allow the Rev Bob Te Whaiti, part-time minister at St David's, to retire (for the second time). The ordained ministers will share responsibility for all the congregations, but focus on one or two, depending on their particular skills.

The new structure will not make much difference to the daily life of most parish members, but it will secure the future of smaller congregations like Trinity Mamaku and Trinity Ngongotaha.

Sustainability is also important in Ngakuru, where the church is the only centre shared by the residents of three surrounding valleys. Ngakuru Community Church (previously St Paul's) decided 16 years ago not to employ a minister; they sold the manse and invested the money instead.

This freed the church to become a "giving church" and allowed other ministries to flourish, says Chris Whyte, a member for 45 years. But with a dwindling group of ageing elders, the longterm viability of the leadership was in doubt so they approached St John's for support. The city church helped with worship, and boosted the leadership team, while Ngakuru contributed financially to some of St John's ministries.

Chris is proud of the special brand of rural ministry offered by the 20 to 30 who make up the congregation. Café Church replaces the more traditional services four times a year. Mainly Music, an Alpha parenting course, movie nights and garden tours support the church's intentional mission of "making friends in the community".

"The old way served us well in the past but we believe that the RDPC is the best way for the future. The answer is not to close down small churches but to look at different, better ways of doing it. The new structure hasn't given us a new lease of life – it's given us the opportunity to continue our life here. It's quite exciting," he said.

At St David's in the suburb of Owhata, there are hopes that community ministries can be revived with greater resourcing from the RDPC. The congregation numbers about 65 mostly older people, with fewer families since the children's work ceased at the end of last year. The church hosts an Enliven day programme in partnership with Presbyterian Support, and runs Mainly Music, but parenting programmes and a homework centre in the refurbished

We believe God is calling us to share our strengths and support each other in our weaknesses.

cottage behind the church have fallen away through lack of funding and leadership.

Perry Stevens is St David's representative on the RDPC council as well as the Kaimai Presbytery. Like others, he has a heart for the local community, especially for children and young people:

"Our vision is to start another congregation to cater for young families in East Rotorua, but we've lacked the resources to get it going. There were some good things happening locally and we could have started more. It's an exciting prospect that ideas that have been floating around for a while can be put into practice now."

Another member of St David's, Uria Jenkins, is a family worker with Family Works three days a week, and a member of the RDPC community-facing ministries team. She believes the RDPC will provide consistency and continuity for community projects, but the various congregations need to get to know each other better first.

"I had no idea that there were so many Presbyterian churches in Rotorua and I was surprised that they didn't really know each other. The difference the RDPC will make for St David's is that it provides a wider group for people to relate to, and greater opportunity to meet the needs of families and children," she said.

St David's hosted an RDPC hangi for 120 people in April and there are plans for more get-togethers across the congregations.

In mid-August more than 80 excited children in Rotorua's Eastside communities received a bike of their own, along with a new helmet. 'Bottoms on Bikes' brought together three community agencies to collect old bikes, fix them up and donate them back to the community. St John's supported the initiative through its We-Cycle programme, which has now been adopted by all the churches as one of their community-facing ministries.

Others include: supported accommodation for those who have issues with bond, credit or references; a food bank which doubles as a drop-in centre; a pantry garden which supplies fresh produce for the food bank; and CAP Money, a short practical budgeting course.

The team is also considering cooking classes, Big Brothers Big Sisters mentoring, helping those in debt, resource sharing and micro loans.

Lance says that while there is a growing sense of combined ownership of such ministries, it's also important for each congregation to recognise its own unique mission.

"This is a story of five churches being led to agree that they can achieve better results together than they can individually. The structure that has developed supports this belief and makes the best use of people, money and property resources."

Andrea Candy | Spanz

PIPC Newtown prepares for disaster response

When strong earthquakes shook Wellington in July and August 2013, one Wellington parish was ready with their response having recently run a training course to prepare parishioners to respond in an emergency.

The Pacific Islanders' Presbyterian Church in Newtown initiated emergency response preparations after the Canterbury earthquakes. Training was well underway before the series of quakes shook the Capital.

For the past year the church, whose hall is a Civil Defence Welfare Centre, has actively promoted "awareness and preparedness" within its parish for any sort of disaster, says the church minister, the Rev Tauinaola Tofilau.

"Christchurch was a wakeup call and made real for us the need to prepare our parishioners to care for themselves, each other and their community in an emergency."

In May 2013, the church's emergency management sub-committee organised a First Aid training course for 40 of the church's parishioners.

Course trainers came from within the church's large congregation and included nurses from Wellington Hospital, a paramedic, certified First Aiders and Civil Defence volunteers with Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM).

Trainers volunteered to share their expertise and knowledge with their fellow parishioners to provide the course free of charge.

"We are very grateful to have such qualified parishioners willing to help us to prepare to respond in an emergency," Tauinaola says.

Julia Umaga, the church's chief warden and a member of the church's emergency management team, says that the training course was part of the church's on-going Civil Defence plan.

"Each year we plan to run First Aid refresher courses, and also to invite the Fire Service and Civil Defence to run courses



The Rev Tauinaola Tofilau presents Tony Fitzgerald, of the Wellington Free Ambulance, with a donation from his church, the Pacific Islanders' Presbyterian Church in Newtown.

for parishioners. It's about education, explaining what the different organisations do, what people can do for themselves, and what they shouldn't attempt and need to leave to the professionals. We have a commitment to keeping everyone safe long term.

"Last year our church's Sunday School teachers promoted the theme, 'Being Prepared in case of Emergency', creating awareness around what to do in an emergency for children, young people and senior members of the church."

Tauinaola says that once a month, before the church service begins, there is a PowerPoint presentation to remind the congregation where the church exits and meeting points are located. "Our wardens also have their fluorescent vests and hard hats with them at every service, tucked under the pew."

The church recently made a donation to the Wellington Free Ambulance to assist them in continuing to provide a free service.

Tauinaola says the church wanted to say thank you to the Wellington Free Ambulance for providing volunteers for the church's free First Aid training course.

In turn, PIPC Newtown is happy to share their experience and knowledge. Wellington churches have sought advice on allowing their own buildings to be used as Civil Defence Welfare Centres.

"On behalf of our Board of Managers I explain what the process entailed for us, and the changes and commitment required from our church. Potentially in a disaster

our hall could operate as a Welfare Centre for a considerable time and that would affect everyone in our church because while the Welfare Centre is located in our hall is not run by us but by the Wellington Regional Council and Civil Defence," Tauinaola says.

Julia explains that many of the church's parishioners live within the local community "and they know in an emergency they can come to their home church and Civil Defence will look out for them".

Julia regularly shares with the church's emergency management team her knowledge on Civil Defence; she has completed Civil Defence training and is part of the Wellington region team. Recently, she was called out to a hillside slip in Kingston, Wellington, where she helped to feed and evacuate residents and find them alternative accommodation and transport.

"The Salvation Army came from Lower Hutt with a trailer that had a generator, water, toasters and bread and butter. It made me think how great it would be if Wellington Presbytery could also respond, perhaps with an on-call roster of people who have the resources to help. In an emergency there is a real need for spiritual support that our Wellington churches could offer."

Visit the PIPC Newtown website to download free emergency information sheets that may be useful to you and your parish www.pipcnetwork.wellington.net.nz

Angela Singer Spanz

Church shows heart for community with free family fun

Whakatane Presbyterian Church opened its doors and its heart to its community again by hosting a second Heart to Heart expo and family festival in May.

The free event is designed to build community connections and provide a safe, fun place for families.

This year, more than 500 people turned up for free food and family activities, including a treasure hunt that linked 18 different community agencies.

It was a great day said Whakatane's minister, the Rev Chris Barnard. Two gang leaders told him, "We came just to drop off the missus, but it was so much fun we stayed the whole day".

Families enjoyed a bouncy castle, face painting, Zumba (exercise programme), family games, art and craft activities, spot prizes, live music, karaoke and clowns. A team from the Waimana Pastorate served 285 hangi meals, while church members from Ohope and Whakatane barbecued 500 sausages and prepared hundreds of scones for the Devonshire teas.

Chris says the aim of the event was to help break down barriers and raise awareness of the support groups available in the community. Planning was undertaken with support from Family Works and Presbyterian Support Northern's community mission advisor, Anne Overton.

"We want to have a better understanding of what life is like for those living on our doorstep. We want to be there to help people develop a healthy family life and help those in need and show that we care. But we admit that we are not very aware of what's happening in the community.

"We planned this event to bring the two worlds together, build trust and make a difference. It's about empowering ordinary people to take up the challenge to do

Over 500 people came to Whakatane Presbyterian Church's Heart to Heart expo for a day of free food and family fun.



something about the social issues in our community, not just complain about them. Many agencies already touch many lives in our community and we want to come alongside them and offer our support."

It can be daunting for people to approach welfare agencies or a social worker to ask for help, Chris says. Instead, inviting agencies to set up stands at a fun festival allows people to connect in a non-threatening environment.

Agencies and their clients were invited to a seminar after the event, also hosted by the church, where anti-violence advocates Jude Simpson and Vic Tamati spoke about living without violence.

Chris has spent time encouraging his congregation to be hospitable and take the risk of connecting with others, using whatever gifts they have to bless others.

"We used the analogy of inviting people to our house and talked about how God loves the stranger. We debated whether we should charge people for the food, but we knew there would be those who couldn't afford even \$2. We wanted to say, 'You're coming to my house and it costs you nothing' and for people to be able to enjoy a day of entertainment, food and fun for free. That's the wow factor, but it's just traditional hospitality really."

The congregation, which largely consists of older people, took up the idea with enthusiasm. Anne says from the home baked treats to handmade decorations "all the details were well thought out and done so beautifully".

One 92-year-old helped out in the crèche while another older person had a marvelous time serving sausages and spending time with the children.

Setting up and packing down was difficult for church members to manage last year, so this time local probation officers and community service workers helped out.

Positive feedback about the event has been "overwhelming" both years, says Chris, who continues building relationships with the various community agencies throughout the year. The church hosts meetings of the Eastern Bay of Plenty Family Violence Network and supports other events organised by Family Works and the It's Not OK anti-violence campaign. Links with churches of other denominations, the Waimana Pastorate, and Te Aka Puaho are strengthened in the process.

Chris reflects that it's the church's heart for service that makes an impact.

"Both of the rival gangs in the area were present at the expo, but there was not one incident. It was as if they had laid down their differences for the day. If our hospitality can bring that about, that's huge and that's what we want to achieve."

"Somebody said to me, 'You've put the Presbyterian Church back on the map' but ultimately, of course, it's not about the church's achievements but about learning how to share the love of Jesus Christ with our neighbours."

Andrea Candy |Spanz|



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Synod of Otago and Southland small staff, sizable support

The Synod of Otago and Southland's small staff of three works with 75 parishes over 80,000 square kilometres of the lower-third of the South Island. From Dunedin, they provide support to the Synod's churches in conjunction with Southern Presbytery.

Fergus Sime, Executive Officer for the past six years; Bruce Fraser, Mission Advisor for the past eight years and Moderator of the Synod of Otago and Southland; and Cheryl Harray, Kids Friendly Advisor for the past four years, assist Synod parishes in matters of mission, ministry, finance and property.

The team are currently without a Synod Youth Advisor after Stephanie Redhead resigned earlier this year to spend more time with her family.

"We are a tight team, who work together loosely because we each need to work independently with congregations that request us," Bruce says.

Of the 75 parishes in the Synod region, Bruce, as Mission Advisor, has worked closely with around 56.

"Some of our rural parishes with small numbers are in the process of rethinking how they engage with their communities. Questions I'm asking them to think about are: Why do you want more people in your church, is that the right focus? Are we about growing the Church in numbers or about proclaiming and demonstrating the Kingdom?"

Bruce says that when he works with churches that can no longer afford "a professional minister, I try and help them see that they are followers of Jesus and ministers of the Gospel themselves. They find that realisation quite liberating".

"I might ask the congregation to list the different organisations they are each involved with in the wider community. They don't always recognise that because

they are followers of Jesus, Jesus is in those places when they are present, so those can be their primary places for mission. We have to overcome this reluctance to share our faith. I think this partly comes from this idea we have allowed to grow in the Church that unless you are academically and formally trained in theology you don't have a part to play in speaking about, and sharing, the Gospel."

Bruce was installed as Moderator of the Synod at its AGM in April 2013. His Moderator theme is that followers of Jesus are ministers of the Gospel, and that worship is a way of life not just a corporate event in one time and place. "My theme for the year is no surprise to anyone who knows me!"

Fergus Sime has served the Synod for over 30 years, 25 in voluntary roles including Convenor of the Finance & General Committee and the Synod Executive and Property Commission, and as Synod Moderator. He is a chartered accountant and was appointed Executive Officer in 2007.

The Synod's parishes face similar challenges to those facing churches in the rest of the country - the upkeep of older church buildings, building safety and insurance issues, and ageing congregations.

"We have funding available for some aspects of parish life, from this we have paid for Insurance Valuation Reports and Building Reports for parishes. We arranged a discounted bulk deal for



The three staff of the Synod of Otago and Southland: Cheryl Harray, Kids Friendly Advisor, Fergus Sime, Executive Officer and Bruce Fraser, Mission Advisor.

parishes to get Structural Engineering Reports on their buildings, but parishes have to pay for those," Fergus says.

It is the Otago Foundation Trust Board (OFTB) "that holds the capital that is invested to earn income that the Synod allocates, and holds parish property in trust for each parish," Fergus says.

"We decide on the allocations and the OFTB pays them. We have three main funding committees that income is divided evenly between – Educational, Ecclesiastical & Mission and Evangelism. We are restricted by law, the Otago Foundation Trust Board Act 1992, to only give money to parishes in the Otago & Southland geographical area. Nationally, we help to fund the salaries of staff at KCML and the Presbyterian Research Centre."

The Synod is perceived by the wider Church as being rich in funds, and Fergus explains that although "that perception may be correct we have our forebears to thank. The Trust Board's good stewardship has built up that resource. Any other part of the Church could set up something similar.

"This year we gave around \$1.5 million to various groups and congregations in the Synod's area; almost \$300,000 in grants went towards funding national Church work based in the Synod area. This reduces Assembly Assessment for all parishes, so everyone in the Church benefits from Synod funding to some degree."

The Synod has financially supported the mission and wellness in ministry work of

the Rev John Daniel. Recently, John was contracted to prepare a number of mission resources for Synod use.

John says he finished working for the Synod in October 2012 and hopes to have six resourcing manuscripts completed by the end of the year.

"I'm at the refining stage; to make sure they are of high quality I'm seeking feedback from people who are specialists in each of the subjects covered."

John says he would like to make the resources available as downloadable e-publications for all ministers but how they will be distributed "is up to the Synod who have unfettered right to use my work".

Cheryl Harray is the third and most recent addition to the Synod's staff. She is the Synod's Kids Friendly Advisor, and part of the national Kid's Friendly team, based in an office at her local church, Flagstaff Community Church in Dunedin, where her husband Ken is interim moderator.

The Synod region caught the Kids Friendly vision early, Cheryl says.

"After Kids Friendly began as a pilot a decade ago, national coach Jill Kayser was brought to the region to coach churches three times a year. Dunedin/North Otago Presbytery employed me full time to resource children's ministry, and when it became part of the large Southern Presbytery, a part time Kids Friendly Advisor role was created to resource the entire Southern Presbytery/Synod region. I have been in this position since 2010."

Questions I'm asking them to think about are: "Why do you want more people in your church, is that the right focus? Are we about growing the Church in numbers or about proclaiming and demonstrating the Kingdom?"

Although Cheryl works for the Synod, she also works with Jill. "I'm the Kids Friendly Advisor only for the churches in the Synod area, but Jill and I share resources and ideas that benefit Kids Friendly nationally."

Of the Synod's 75 churches, 14 are accredited Kids Friendly and 26 are part of the Kids Friendly network - using resources or working towards the process to becoming a Kids Friendly church.

"We have some churches that do not have children regularly attend, and part of my work is exploring opportunities for them to minister to children and families in their communities. The absence of children on Sundays does not mean that the church isn't doing children's ministry. A little group can do big things."

You can see more on the Synod's AGM, including video, on the Synod's website <http://www.synod.org.nz/page/28/News.html>

Angela Singer Spanz



Kids Friendly inspires international visitor

In July 2012, Jill Kayser, the Church's national Kids Friendly coach, travelled to the UK for sabbatical at Cambridge University's Westminster College, where she met and inspired theology student Henriette Wentink. One year later, Henriette travelled to NZ for a six-week internship with Jill to experience how Kids Friendly works alongside churches, their children and families.

In July and August, Henriette travelled throughout the country with Jill, and watched her share the Kids Friendly vision, participated in Kids Friendly church services, and attended youth events including Connect, a national Church youth event held in Wellington, and regional Kids Friendly training events. Henriette says she was also thrilled to "be able to give back at Jill's invitation to this amazingly hospitable country" by running three Godly Play workshops for churches in Wellington and Auckland [Godly Play is a Montessori method of telling Bible stories based upon the recognition that children have an innate sense of the presence of God].



Cambridge University theology student Henriette Wentink, left, with the Rev Pauline Stewart, centre, and Kids Friendly national coach Jill Kayser.

"I am not exaggerating when I say working alongside Jill has been the opportunity of a lifetime and an amazing experience," Henriette says.

"I have gained so many new experiences and insights that can be shared back in the UK in my future ministry.

"I brought to New Zealand a desire to work hard and learn by watching Kids Friendly in action by 'shadowing' Jill and working alongside the Rev Pauline Stewart of St Heliers Church and Community Centre. What I couldn't bring was Marmite for Jill, UK Customs confiscated it!"

Henriette comes from a Christian youth work and mission background and is mother to a 20 year old son. She is in her second year of Ministry of Word and Sacrament studies at Cambridge University.

She says she knew she had to come to New Zealand once she saw how passionate Jill is about her work.

"I am passionate about children and I saw this in Jill too when she ran a workshop for students at Westminster College on Kids Friendly. Straight away I asked her if I could come to New Zealand and learn how the Presbyterian Church ministers with its children. Having now seen Kids Friendly working in churches, I realise there is a lot of learning I can take back to the UK that would transfer into how I will work with children in my church. I do think this has been a life changing experience."

Henriette says she is saddened by the lack of child friendly churches in the UK.

"Yes, there are churches that do stuff with kids which is good, but it does not come

from the heart as Kids Friendly does. I have experienced how at St Heliers, minister Pauline involves the children in the service in such a very natural way, and that is how it should be, and that is how it should be back home in the UK. To see a child as somebody already, with their own voice, and not something the church needs to teach how to believe."

At her home church in Northampton, Henriette says there are many children but she recognises that something is missing.

"My home church has all the programmes for kids, and it has a youth group, but the way I see Pauline and Jill bearing children in mind in everything they do...that does not happen; instead it is imposed by the adults on the children.

"I think there is something lacking in the UK in the way of thinking about children, a cultural thing that you can see in the church too. For example, there are still restaurants where they say children are not welcome and this is okay – it's just awful."

Henriette has one year left of her degree. "After which I will do a year of placement in the United Reform Church, and then hopefully a church will call me."

Ministering to children will always form a large part of Henriette's ministry.

"If a church wants to call me and is not welcoming to children then that will not work for me. It is as Jill says, a church without children is like a body without arms; something very important is missing and I wish more people recognised this important truth."

Angela Singer Spanz



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within RDPC as well as contributing to the worship, pastoral and leadership requirements of one or more of the smaller congregations.

The position is part of a three-person team with two other ordained ministers and a wider team of full-time and part-time paid staff and volunteers.

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The Rev Ian Guy and the Rev João Petreceli delivered an Alpha course that attracted 53 people. Today, 30 Portuguese and Spanish speakers attend the Wakatipu Global Community. Image: Fairfax NZ.

Church cafe serves global community

A new ministry has evolved from more than a decade of serving Queenstown's migrant community.

Pasta Cafe, now in its 11th year, Mana Cafe and now Wakatipu Global Community – are part of the Wakatipu Community Presbyterian Church mission story that sees the congregation reach out to the large itinerant community within Queenstown.

The Rev Ian Guy, minister of Wakatipu Community Presbyterian, shies away from using the word "church" to describe the latest addition to their mission programme because he says the Wakatipu Global Community is about more than just worship.

"It's about 24/7 support for migrants, and very deliberately about living the Christian life together."

"Before the global community was born, we'd hosted small groups supporting migrants with learning the English language. We provided fellowship, and sometimes they just needed someone to stand up and speak for them, or maybe to help them understand simple things like letters from employers. The reality is that immigrants are quite vulnerable. They get taken advantage of the most. It's a natural response of the church to be there for them."

A focus on doing ministry with, rather than doing ministry for was also a catalyst for the latest development. Ian says that over time the congregation had noticed a change in make-up of their community – which was becoming more international – "so the move to form the Wakatipu Global Community was partly our direction and partly the town's direction".

Although the global community has only been going since March this year, around 30 people – all Portuguese or Spanish speakers – regularly attend Sunday evening worship, and one of three weekly discipleship gatherings. There have also been baptisms and special services to recognise Mother's Day, as well as shared meals and other events to foster friendships.

Ian says that the Wakatipu Global Community wouldn't be possible without the leadership of the Rev João Petreceli, a missionary minister from the Presbyterian Church of Brazil.

João has been based in Queenstown since February 2012 and had noticed a real hunger for spiritual conversation among his ministry with South American and Portuguese migrants in the community, and

at the same time Ian was noticing similar interest with their existing connections in the migrant community.

So together, they decided to deliver an Alpha course for those who were interested, and 53 people turned up to the first night.

"Those who attended were hungry for both spiritual input and looking for a sense of community," says Ian, "and from there the Wakatipu Global Community was born".

Rafael Yamaji, 31, from Brazil goes to the Community with his wife Daniele and five-month-old daughter Anah.

Rafael, who often has to work on Sundays, says: "I enjoy being in communion with God and my brothers. Even after a long and hard day of working on Sunday, it is a tremendous joy to be worshiping God".

Rafael describes the Community as "the answer to our prayers" and says he isn't sure where his family would go if it weren't for the Community.

While families like Rafael's are enjoying the fellowship and communion provided by the Community, Ian says that one of the challenges has been bridging gaps between the existing congregation and the new ministry.

"Quite a few of our congregation are involved in some way, for instance preparing and bringing the supper. And others are financially supporting the Global Community. A few St Andrew's people attend worship, which is mostly in Portuguese. They are attending to show their support, to encourage and to show that they care. Many, though, feel a little bit out of their depth, and are struggling to see how they can practically be involved."

Ian and João, though, are quite intentional about bridging gaps between the groups with Ian preaching at the Global Community from time-to-time, and João preaching with the St Andrew's congregation. Ian explains that there are also specific events to draw the groups together and increase the sense of togetherness.

"In June we had a welcome to church night and people came to eat, pray, talk, chat and have fun. The purpose of the gathering was to deepen relationships between the different parts of the parish - Frankton, Queenstown – and the Wakatipu Global Community."

In addition, João has been invited onto parish council as an associate member to have a voice, and so that "we can start dreaming dreams together", says Ian.

Jose Reader | Spanz

Celebrating the Pacific Islands Synod presbytery inauguration

Images from the Pacific Islands Synod presbytery inauguration can be viewed on the Presbyterian Church Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/PresbyterianChurchNZ>



Dignitaries and special guests gathered during the inauguration for an official portrait.

On Saturday 27 July 2013, the inauguration of the Pacific Islands Synod presbytery took place in Auckland. The occasion was marked by ceremony, celebration and rejoicing.

In October last year, at General Assembly 2012, there was overwhelming support to grant presbytery status to the Pacific Islands Synod, giving it status and powers equivalent to a presbytery, or Te Aka Puaho, and the ability to govern and self-manage its contribution to the life of the Church



Large numbers turned out to participate in the Pacific Islands Synod presbytery inauguration ceremony and celebrations.



One of the many groups who performed at the inauguration.

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Tool to make mentoring more effective

A new tool that provides structure and intentionality to mentoring relationships will be a valuable resource for Church mentors and mentees alike.

Dr Carlton Johnstone, Presbyterian Youth Ministry national director, says the Performer tool, which was launched at Connect 2013 after being evaluated by Northern Presbytery's regional youth coordinator, Tala Page, adds another resource to the mentoring toolbox.

Gordon Fitch who works alongside Carlton in the Presbyterian Youth Ministry team says, "Mentoring is happening in pockets around the Church. Typically, a youth worker or adult will be designated as a mentor for a young person. It may start out a little awkwardly, then maybe the mentor takes the young person skating or on an outing and starts building a relationship which is important, but the hard issues don't always get tackled".

It is hoped that the tool will make church-based mentoring relationships stronger and more effective Gordon says.

It offers quantitative evaluation of "where a person is at". After filling in an online questionnaire, the tool charts the person's responses across six dimensions including learning abilities, socialisation, communication, physical image, career planning, and global self-worth.

When used within a church context, the Youth Performer version of the tool can be used which includes a faith dimension (replacing global self-worth in the standard Student Performer).

Heather Ameye-Bevers of Baptist Youth Ministry, who is the licence holder for the Performer software in New Zealand, explains that while Youth Performer is currently in trial stage, it is available to be used.

"The faith questions are based on 'Being', 'Knowing' and 'Doing'. Being focuses on your relationship with God. Knowing is around theology, and Doing is about



Students from Tala Page's Otahuhu Intermediate mentoring programme were given a tour of the local police station after they delivered home-made baking to on-duty officers.

how you live your faith out in real life," Heather says.

All versions of the tool are relatively simple to use: they are online, require only point-and-click level of computer knowledge to complete, and are cost effective at only \$20 per person.

As well as graphs and reports, the tool also offers a range of conversation starters relevant to where the student is in relation to each dimension. Tala thinks these starters are really useful in helping build up a programme relevant to the specific needs of each person.

"The tool really speeds up the understanding of where individuals are at. I've been able to take on more students because assessment of their needs is so much quicker."

Some of the young people that Tala has worked with this year in her role as youth worker at Otahuhu Intermediate have made such good progress they could come off the mentoring programme, but they don't want to, she says.

"One of the girls was persistently wagging and wasn't interested in classroom stuff. Under the mentoring programme, she has improved her behaviour in class and improved the way she manages her anger. I worked with her teachers to give her more responsibilities, and she has really made some positive changes."

Another thing Tala likes about the tool is that it provides reports, including before and after assessments, which make it easier to evaluate the difference that the mentoring is making.

"Success is hard to measure in a quantifiable way, and the tool is providing a mechanism that we can show funders and others who need to understand where a student is at."

Jenny Bickerton, deputy principal at Otahuhu Intermediate, says students working with Tala look forward to their mentoring sessions with eagerness, and that the mentoring is making a real difference.

"I know there is a shining star in every child. The unlocking of how the child views herself or himself takes time.

"Over time I note the changes in them. This usually is to do with a far more positive outlook on life. They are happier and don't seek attention through inappropriate behaviour so much."

"The mentoring tool itself is fascinating," says Jenny. "As I read through one report, I could get a real handle on the way a particular girl acted as she did. The tool showed she was strong in making friendships, but had low empathy for others. While she had a strong sense of her physical acceptance, she was low in body awareness and very low in non-verbal communication. This girl's responses are physical towards others, and she didn't realise the threatening physical stances she assumed in confrontations. The suggestions to help those combinations are very clear and pertinent in the tool."

For more information about mentoring and the Performer tools see www.pym.org.nz/mentoring

Jose Reader Spanz

First look at new look General Assembly

When Presbyterians gather next year for the Church's General Assembly in Auckland, it will be for far more than a business meeting; the event will run for five days and will focus on resourcing and inspiring the Church during a time of both change and opportunity.

From Friday 3 to Tuesday 7 October, 2014, commissioners attending GA14 will approve regulations and set the policy and direction of the Church, and they will also be able to participate in workshops and other activities.

Moderator, the Right Rev Ray Coster, says, "We are imagining a working conference for old, young, Maori, Pacific, Asian and Pakeha people, belonging to a movement and being in community. Assembly will be open to, and will have something to offer, all Presbyterians; this Assembly will not be just for voting delegates. There will be an emphasis on hospitality, creativity, playfulness and spiritual nourishment".

Ray says it is up to the Church to shape the resourcing and inspiration offered at GA14. "We want to hear from you, let us

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know if you would like to come to Assembly and share your story, your resources and to serve."

The Church is seeking expressions of interest from those who are interested in contributing in the following areas: networks that can work together on a particular area of ministry or mission, for example church schools, youth and creativity in music, art and poetry; resourcing, for example, on fresh expressions of church, preaching and spiritual growth; storytelling, for example, stories of churches making a difference in our society; and inspiring speakers from New Zealand.

If you want be involved in GA14, please contact Ray, moderator@presbyterian.org.nz with your expression of interest.

Save the date - 3 to 7 October, 2014 – and don't miss the chance to participate in what promises to be a very exciting General Assembly. See the Church's publications, website and Facebook for GA14 updates.

Angela Singer Spanz



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New way to share Christian message wins award

Papakura East Presbyterian Church in Auckland has secured \$10,000 from PSDS to help progress development of an internet and smartphone technology for sharing Christian messages.

Papakura is the latest winner of the PSDS Ministry and Mission Innovation Award, which was set up three years ago to mark PSDS' 40th anniversary.

The Rev Dr Geoff New, minister at Papakura East, says that their winning entry is about presenting the 'word' through the medium of contemporary technology.

"It's our intention that the technology will allow people to have an initial and unexpected encounter with the Gospel message and the love of God."

Geoff's vision for the project is that it will "litter the world with the Christian message".

"But that's not enough. I won't be satisfied with just an inspirational saying. It's got to lead to eternal life. This product is not the end. It is a means to the end, which is people facing Christ."

Geoff likens use of this technology to the spirit of the Apostle Paul's mission strategy: "I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the Gospel, that I may share in its blessings." (1 Corinthians 9:20-23)

Mark Bartlett, PSDS lending and development manager, says that the Papakura East project was one of several great applications that PSDS received this year.

"With this award, we're looking for something bright and innovative and most importantly something that can be transferred, benefiting more than one parish or entity and hopefully the Church as a whole."

While the idea utilises existing technology, there is an additional element which may require trademark protection, so it is necessary to keep the details of the technology under wraps until a full plan to manage its development is complete.



"With this award, we're looking for something bright and innovative and most importantly something that can be transferred, benefiting more than one parish or entity and hopefully the Church as a whole."

Geoff credits Carl van Wijk, his friend and an advertising and digital marketing specialist of international renown, with coming up with the idea. He also acknowledges God's hand in getting the concept off-the-ground.

"Right now we're in the process of developing and testing the product. Carl is heavily involved in this, and he has support from Rosie Archer, who is a staff member at Papakura East. Rosie has been working alongside Carl to advance the concept. They've even come up with a wonderful tag line which superbly captures the vision."

Jose Reader Spanz



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global mission



Phil King

In July this year, seven young Christians from around the world arrived in New Zealand to begin the second leg of their Training in Mission journey.

The group started out as nine people, but two people are waiting to receive visas to enter the country.

Each year, the Council of World Mission TIM programme brings together a small group of young people for 11 months of intensive mission training. The training traditionally takes part in two countries.

This is the first time that TIM, which is now in its 30th year, has been hosted outside Africa and India. Concerns over safety and security saw CWM investigate alternative locations in 2011, and then-Global Mission coordinator, the Very Rev Pamela Tankersley, volunteered the Presbyterian Church to host a leg of the programme.

According to CWM, the TIM programme is intended to be a stage in Christian formation which helps each participant in a lifelong involvement with the mission of the Church.

The underlying philosophy of TIM is that learning happens best by action and then reflection.

The 16 week programme for New Zealand is being coordinated by Rowan Cant (who himself participated in TIM in 2006) and Angela Norton. Together, Angela and Rowan are responsible for preparing the entire programme (within the guidelines provided by CWM), pastoral care of the TIM students, coordinating immigration arrangements, monitoring progress with training, organising mission placements and...whatever else comes up!

Church hosts CWM mission trainees

CWM TIM students share their stories during a visit to Ohope Marae.

The programme is structured so that learning takes place in a variety of environments Rowan says, with about a third of the students' time dedicated to lectures and workshops at Laidlaw College, a third to hands-on experience and placements, and the final third to reflective processing of what has been seen and observed.

Because of the focus on mission in action, selecting the most appropriate places for their mission experience placement is important explains Rowan.

"Often we tend to look at New Zealand as a 'mission-sending' country rather than a mission field. I wanted to make sure that the team is aware of how real New Zealand's need is and what that means for the people who live here. So we've targeted groups that see themselves as missionaries to their own neighbourhoods."

The programme developed by Angela and Rowan includes placements with Presbyterian Support, visits to Press Go mission initiatives such as Epic ministries in Waipukarau, worship with local parishes, and a four-week visit to Kiribati where TIM students will have the opportunity to witness first-hand the realities of climate change.

"When you live in a country in the middle of the Pacific that sits only a few metres above sea level, global warming is not just an idea belonging to scientists. For the people of Kiribati, it's their entire life and history slowly disappearing into the sea. The team will spend some time

with the people of Kiribati, hearing their stories and learning about mission from an environmental perspective."

During their time in New Zealand, students will also be involved in community and relationship building. There was a week-long orientation at Ohope Marae when they arrived in New Zealand and they attended PYM Connect 2013, but time out is also an important part of the programme Rowan explains.

"Often it's easy for ministry roles to be consuming and burnout is pretty high. Part of learning about mission is to learn that if God rested on day seven, it's ok for us to take a day off."

Either Rowan or Angela will travel with the team during most of their time in New Zealand, which enables for more effective pastoral care of the students and makes the logistics of organising activities for the large group easier.

Angela and Rowan both became involved with TIM because they were keen to learn, keen to link missionaries, and to help others in their spiritual journey.

Rowan says, "What I remember from my [2006 TIM] team is that we laughed a lot, pranked each other a lot, shared a lot of personal stories and became like our own family. So I'm looking forward to meeting the family and working with them to find out how they can use that joy".

Jose Reader Spanz



Phil King

Going Global

youth to experience stark realities of life in Myanmar

In November this year, eight young Christians will embark on a missional experience when they visit Myanmar as part of the Going Global programme.

A joint initiative, between Presbyterian Youth Ministry and Global Mission, Going Global provides an opportunity for young adults to engage in cross-cultural mission explains Global Mission coordinator, the Rev Phil King, who will travel with the group.

"The young people are at a formational time in terms of faith and life, and the trip helps develop understanding about the sometimes stark realities of life beyond the shores of New Zealand.

"The visit provides an opportunity to challenge the world view they have about Christianity and mission."

"The trip is very much about 'dwelling amongst' rather than going to 'do' something because a lot can be learnt by being with others, hearing their stories, observing and participating in their way of life.

"Dwelling amongst is about recognising that God is already at work.

"Christianity is something that is universal and people respond to that in their own culture and context. We go to listen. We go to form friendships. It's about sharing something of ourselves and learning from others."

Participants will spend most of their two-week visit at Tahan Theological College, where the Going Global team has been invited to take part in the College's end-of-year and Christmas event.

A focus of the visit will be helping the College prepare for the Christmas Fun Fete, which is a two-night festival where staff and students host the local community in a Christmas celebration.

As well as helping to prepare and set up for the celebration, the Going Global team will perform songs in a cultural show that is part of the festival, and will take some Kiwi food and crafts to share the culture of New Zealand with the students and locals.

Phil is also trying to organise a visit to LIFT headquarters in Yangon.

LIFT – the Livelihoods and Food Security Trust – is an agency of the United Nations, and its goal is to improve the food and livelihood security of poor and vulnerable people in Myanmar.

"Hopefully what the young people discover during our trip feeds back into church life. Ideally, they will bring back a developing awareness of our need to live responsibly."

Some previous Going Global participants have really taken to heart what they've seen and learnt Phil says.

"One person came home to Wellington and decided to contribute to Downtown

New Zealand visitors join in a game of soccer with local children on a Ricebowl Mission trip to Myanmar.

City Ministry, recognising that there is real need at home. She personally did something about it, and then encouraged her congregation to do the same.

"Another young adult who has been to Myanmar has gone on to do post-graduate development studies majoring in refugee resettlement.

"Going Global is also about building capacity and leadership development. It's about becoming more aware of the needs that are in front of us."

As well as spending time at Tahan, the Going Global team will also visit churches, local markets and some tourist attractions like the Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon.

They will also learn about the Presbyterian Church's partnership with the Presbyterian Church of Myanmar and visit projects funded through the Ricebowl Mission, which is coordinated by Angela Norton who is also travelling with the group.

Going Global is now in its second year, and each year teams go to either of two destinations, both of which are with partner Presbyterian churches: Presbyterian Church of Myanmar (PCM), or the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu (PCV).

As well as getting hands-on experience of mission in a different country and culture, Going Global is also a learning experience. Prior to this year's trip to Myanmar, there will be an orientation day where the travelling team will go through six teaching modules about mission, including the theology of mission, mission as partnership, development, community building and cross-cultural awareness.

Jose Reader | Spanz



Parish considers building mission partnership in Vanuatu

The desire to build a sustainable mission partnership was at the heart of a recent trip to Vanuatu by representatives from Hibiscus Coast Presbyterian.

The main purpose of the visit was to learn about the Presbyterian Women's Missionary Union (PWMU) training centre and hostel in Port Vila and assess its suitability as a mission project.

The Rev Phil King, Global Mission coordinator, accompanied the Hibiscus Coast team to Vanuatu, and set up the initial meeting between the two groups, as well as providing ongoing encouragement to the parish to get things started, says Hibiscus Coast minister, the Rev Dr Ron Mills.

On the second day of their week-long visit in May 2013, Ron and Alison Bennett and Wynne Haysmith from Hibiscus Coast were given a presentation on the hostel and training centre by leaders from PWMU, and they later shared a meal together. They returned later in the week to observe one of the training courses in action.

While the Hibiscus Coast delegation had hoped to come away from their visit with detailed answers to their specific questions about financial management, course attendance levels, and other key facts to help the parish's decision-making, it soon became clear that this wasn't going to be possible due in part to the lack of full records, Ron explains.

"PWMU seemed so focused on the vision and the big picture that it was hard to get answers to some of our more specific questions. We understand that this is not unusual in investigating potential Global Mission projects. We came away, though, impressed with what has been achieved by the PWMU to date."



Phil King

Ron and Alison Bennett, and Wynne Haysmith of Hibiscus Coast Presbyterian, visit with women from the Presbyterian Women's Missionary Union training centre in Vanuatu.

The training centre has been operating since 2004, and aims to provide students with skills that will ready them for employment or life skills that will equip them better for life in their communities. It also provides training to strengthen the capacity of their own PWMU members to run their local PWMU organisations effectively. There is a diverse range of courses offered including tourism training, basic computer skills, numeracy and literacy, book-keeping, meeting procedures, catering, sewing machine maintenance and bee farming.

In Ron, Wynne and Alison's report back to their parish, there were several factors that PWMU had identified (and that they observed) as impeding PWMU ability to deliver courses: a lack of suitably trained tutors; dated equipment including dilapidated computers – many of which didn't even function – and the standard of curriculum materials (in English instead of Bislama, and in some cases overly complex).

"For example, the computer manual for a six month basic computer skills course assumed a fair knowledge of English, and it was quite wordy. Our initial reaction was that it was quite unsuitable. They need the kind of resources and manuals that are really written for people who are coming to this for the first time," Ron explains .

The size of the training facility limits the number of participants to no more than 15 people at any time. PWMU has plans for a new building with a larger training facility and better hostel accommodation. The accommodation attached to the current

training centre is not in good condition.

While support for this significant project was one of the things that PWMU were interested in exploring with the Hibiscus Coast parish delegation, Ron, Wynne and Alison believed that this would require a coordinated approach from a number of organisations, and was beyond the means of a single parish.

The areas where they observed their parish could make a meaningful difference were in the provision of training resources, assistance to train course tutors, and in the provision of targeted financial help for the replacement of equipment like computers, or for specific initiatives, such as support for the successful literacy and numeracy programme for Bush Missioners.

The parish is keen to support PWMU, and a formal proposal will be made to the parish annual meeting this month which will decide the specifics.

For Hibiscus Coast, mission is very much about two-way engagement, and Ron is careful to point out that the parish's support will be in the context of ongoing conversations and will likely involve more visits to the training centre.

"We think the positive outcomes for us would be about partnering with part of the body of Christ in a different cultural situation, experiencing the generous and warm hospitality the ni-Vanuatu people are capable of, and growing an ability to look outwards in mission beyond the boundaries of our own church community."

Jose Reader | Spanz



Learning to help others in need

The familiar smell of a sausage sizzle was a sign that the kidz@andrews, of St Andrew's Presbyterian in Blenheim, were up to good. Unfortunately the congregation did not buy all their sausages – so they were back on the job the following Sunday, selling more. Minister the Rev Johanna Warren was not present when the kids decided what to do with the \$285 they raised. She left them a number of choices and told them to write down their instructions.

A few weeks later, she sent Christian World Service their handwritten message and a cheque to help refugees in Jordan, now numbering half a million people, mostly women and children. The money will help long term partner, the Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees (DSPR) of the Middle East Council of Churches, help some of the families with food, rent and education assistance and other support.

Raising funds the children of St Andrew's had some fun, but they also learned one of the basics of the Christian faith, helping others in need.

For the Very Rev Bruce Hansen, growing up post-World War II, this global outlook was an essential aspect of the Christian life, expressed through support of what was then the National Council of

Churches' Christmas Appeal and refugee resettlement. "This was part of our story, the way in which the Presbyterian Church expressed itself and its social responsibility."

The need in war-torn Europe proved a catalyst for the growth of what was known as 'interchurch aid'. In response to the first Christmas Appeal in 1945, the National Council of Churches contributed funds for relief in Greece. Interchurch aid had its roots in the mission movement of the 19th century. Churches began to respond to requests for health and education programmes, as well as material need, in the same way as the early church shared food and medicines with the poor they encountered.

The appointment of the Very Rev Dr Alan Brash to lead the combined newly-formed National Council of Churches, and the older National Missionary Council in 1947, gave much needed energy to this emerging international work. In his time as General Secretary and later with the East Asia Christian Conference (now Christian Conference of Asia), Christian Aid and the World Council of Churches, Alan was renowned for his strong advocacy for the needs of Asia and zeal for all things ecumenical.

Another longstanding aspect of what is known as diakonia or shared service is the help provided to refugees. For Bruce,

Women and children in the Zaatari Refugee Camp, near Mafraq, Jordan. Opened in July, 2012, the camp holds upwards of 20,000 refugees from the Syrian civil war. International Orthodox Christian Charities and other members of the ACT Alliance provide essential items and services.

the Very Rev Dr Ian Fraser, a key figure in the early days of refugee resettlement and founder of the now closed Nansen Home for Aged Refugees, was another Presbyterian who expressed the Church's ethos of social responsibility, something that he thinks the Church is in danger of losing.

CWS is an ecumenical space where New Zealand churches make visible their concern for others. The growing awareness of our responsibilities, as part of a global Christian community called to make God's love real, has informed our work for almost 68 years. This compassion begins with the biblical obligation to care for orphans, widows, strangers, prisoners and people in need. Today, it continues in supporting relief and development programmes and wider action for justice and peace. For CWS this has meant a growing emphasis on partnership, recognising local expertise in community development and humanitarian assistance. The importance of listening and understanding are the cornerstones of diakonia. As well as sharing food and support, partners stand alongside those struggling for their right to food or vote, and speak out when injustice breeds despair and violence. CWS does this work as part of the church community and shares these stories of hope.

In Jordan, DSPR is stretched beyond comprehension, but they are doing the upmost to meet the needs of Syrian refugees and the Palestinian refugees who once found refuge in Syria. CWS is appealing for support to enable them to do the work that is on their doorstep.

As so many Presbyterians have done before, the children of St Andrew's are learning by doing. For Bruce Hansen diakonia is fundamental to the Gospel and something that the Church needs to rehear and reclaim.

CWS SYRIAN REFUGEE APPEAL



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