

Spanz



Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand

WINTER 2012, ISSUE 50

Fresh Expressions:

the growth of non-traditional forms of church

www.presbyterian.org.nz

Presbyterian parishes positive about the future of the Church

Last November, 7,745 people from 129 parishes filled in a questionnaire as part of the Church Life Survey. The results give us a unique insight into how we think and feel about our faith.

The Church Life Survey is an inter-denominational survey offered to all Christian churches in New Zealand. It is based on a questionnaire used in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia and it is targeted at providing information to Church leaders that will help them improve their programme.

Since the parishes that took part were pretty representative of the whole church (large and small; rural, urban, and suburban; Presbyterian and Uniting) the survey provides a snapshot of what we look like, with one important exception. Because few Te Aka Puaho, PI and Asian parishes took part, the snapshot does not include this part of our family. So what does it show?

We think our parishes do a good job

Over 80 percent of people agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that, “This parish is resourcing my spiritual journey well” and about one-third of us said we had experienced “much growth” in our faith over the last year. This was almost exactly the same as found in other churches, but we were more likely to say our growth was mainly through our congregation.

When asked to give the top three things we valued most from our parish, our answers unequivocally focused on Sunday worship. Overall we valued much the same as other Christians in the survey, though we placed more value on worship, music and singing and less on holy communion.

We were very positive about our parish programme meeting our needs:

- » About 80 percent usually felt the presence of God at Sunday worship; were encouraged by the service; thought it was an effective mix of music, prayer and preaching; and found the teaching helpful for everyday life. This was about the same as for other churches.
- » More of us (70 percent) were satisfied than those in other churches (60 percent) with our children’s programmes, but our satisfaction was lower (and about the same as other churches) for our programmes for youth and young adults (55 percent). Members of Uniting congregations were much less satisfied with all their youth programmes.

Most of us are positive about the Presbyterian Church and its future

Over 75 percent said they thought it important that their parish belonged to the PCANZ. Almost half of those Presbyterian and Cooperating parishes thought in 10 years time their parish would be bigger, have the same or more ethnic diversity, and be a mix of all ages. (Less than 15 percent thought it would be smaller and older). Union parishes are different: only 20 percent of their members thought their parish would grow and 75 percent thought it would have mainly older people. This probably reflects the older age profile in Union parishes and their much lower recruitment rate. While on average other New Zealand congregations had 14 newer members (those coming for 5 years or less) for every 10 long-standing ones (20 years or more), Uniting and Cooperating parishes only had four. Presbyterian parishes had 9.

Our views and practice of our faith

The survey asked people to pick from a list those approaches to the faith they personally identified with. Overall we particularly identified with “traditional”, “Charismatic/Pentecostal” and “evangelical”, but Uniting and Cooperating parishes had different choices. Identification increased with age (over 20 percent of those aged under 34 saying they identified with none). Almost 10 percent of those under 25 identified with New Age, which was very infrequent for older members.

Our participation in devotional activities is a bit lower than for other Christians:

- » Slightly fewer of us attend church weekly (81 percent compared to 85 percent for other Christians). But those who don’t attend weekly come at least once a month.
- » We are slightly less likely to give more than 10 percent of our income (18 percent compared to 22 percent), but those who don’t give more than 10 percent give between 5 and 9 percent.
- » We are less likely to read our Bibles daily (40 percent compared to 49 percent) and more likely to read them occasionally or never (31 percent compared to 23 percent)
- » In all these areas, the Uniting parishes were the most different, and this is also true of the views that their people have of the Bible.

How many of us value ...	Presbyterians & Uniting	Other Christians	Comments (with an indication of how much the % reduces or increases)
Worship, music and singing	58	48	Higher for those over 65 (add 5)
Sermons and teaching	40	40	Lower in Uniting and Cooperating parishes (minus 15)
Holy communion	28	41	Higher for those over 65 (add 15) Other churches value this more highly (add 10)
Practical care for each other	23	18	Higher for those over 65 (add 5)
Wider community outreach	22	21	Higher for those under 45 (add 5)
Social activities	20	17	No major trends
Ministry for children and youth	15	19	Lower for those aged over 65 (minus 10) Higher in Presbyterian parishes even allowing for age (add 10)

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Aotearoa New Zealand

WINTER 2012 Issue 50

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ISSN 1175 5202 (print)

ISSN 1179 3473 (online)

Next issue

Spring 2012
Advertising deadline
23 July 2012

Design

Tangerine

Printing

Lithoprint

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Cover Photograph

www.istock.com

MODERATOR'S MUSINGS

The Right Rev Peter Cheyne contributes a regular column to *Spanz*



Recently, at the installation of an Anglican vicar, the Bishop of Dunedin spoke about the dramatic changes taking place in the church. He suggested that we have left the “old church” behind. It will never exist again and we do not yet know the shape of the “new church”. He suggested the change we are experiencing now would be greater than the Reformation. In the meantime, we exist in the space between the two churches. He emphasised the courage of people who offer leadership in this uncharted transition time.

We have frequently been told we are in a time of great change as a society and as a church. For all that, there are things that don't change and they may be the only stable things in this period of transition. Bishop Kelvin Wright, on the basis of Jesus' parable of the vine and branches in John 15, identified three: being deeply rooted in Jesus Christ, deep relationships (the branches' connection with each other), and ministry to “the least, the last and the lost” (producing the fruit).

I suspect that in this time of change we do best by doing the fundamentals well. Confusion and uncertainty potentially lead us back to some basics that have become neglected. Let's just do those basics well.

I see disciple-making in that light. It might be unclear what shape the church should take but let's just make disciples! That is what we have been commissioned to do irrespective of the cultural changes around us.

But does the method change because of the context we are in? At a basic level, I believe not. Disciple-making, as modelled by Jesus, still involves intentionality, mentoring

relationships with a few people, aiming for Christ-likeness, training on the job and commissioning those new disciples to repeat the process. It still requires time and prayer and effective training.

The church is still called to be a committed, caring community exhibiting the characteristics of the Kingdom of God and committed to its mission. In other words, inwardly strong (deep community, wholehearted worship, spiritual maturity) and outwardly focused (proclaiming the gospel and the desiring to see God's will done in all aspects of society.)

None of that changes. Our understanding ebbs and flows. There is, for example, considerable debate at the moment about what the mission of the church is and even what the gospel is. I hope that is an attempt to regain a biblical understanding – to sharpen our focus and to clarify.

The strength of those fundamentals also ebbs and flows in the life of our churches. How many churches have developed deep fellowship similar to that described in Acts 2 and 4? Maybe some but not many.

The basics remain. The implementation does need to be re-thought for our age and our society. If investing time into people is a basic principle modelled by Jesus, how do we do that in a culture where people are pressured and have very little time? Let us not change that basic principle as if we can make disciples without taking time. That won't work. Maybe the challenge is to be very counter-cultural and to decide that we will prioritise time for people; we will love people enough to be willing to give them large chunks of our time. Let's work out how to give priority to the unchanging principles.

We are in a time of confusing change but the timeless things provide firm anchorages in a tumultuous sea. I wonder if we put unnecessary pressure on ourselves trying to be clever and second-guess the future when we could simply commit to getting on with the basic things we have been called to, sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading as to how to do them well in our new context, and trusting that God will honour our obedience and the new church will emerge.

FRESH EXPRESSIONS

THE GROWTH OF NON-TRADITIONAL CHURCH

Jose Reader explores the Fresh Expressions church movement and examines what's happening in New Zealand.

Even if you haven't heard the term "Fresh Expressions" before, you're likely to have heard of café church, breakfast church and Messy Church – all of which are types of Fresh Expressions.

"Changing church for a changing world," is the catch-cry of the United Kingdom movement that coined the term Fresh Expressions.

"Fresh Expressions of church are an acknowledgement that today traditional forms of church don't work for a lot of people," says the Rev Sharon Ross Ensor, minister at Wadestown Presbyterian, who, along with a number of ministers in the Presbyterian Church, is an advocate for Fresh Expressions. The Fresh Expressions movement has resulted in thousands of new congregations being formed alongside more traditional churches worldwide.

A fresh expression is a church plant or a new congregation, formed for our changing culture and established primarily for the benefit of people who are not yet members of any church.

The Fresh Expressions movement is also careful to point out what a Fresh Expression church is not: "It is not a new way to reach people and add them to an existing congregation. It is not an old outreach with a new name. Nor is it a half-way house, a bridge project, which people belong to for a while, on their way into Christian faith, before crossing over to 'proper' church".

Still a bit vague on what a Fresh Expression is? There are four elements that characterise these contemporary forms of church: they are missional – serving people outside church; they are contextual – listening to people and entering their culture; they are educational – making discipleship a priority; and importantly they are ecclesial – forming church.

Fresh Expression churches are as diverse as the communities they serve. So what do they look like?

In the United Kingdom, Fresh Expressions churches include Bible-based puppet shows for school-aged children, luncheon clubs that provides fellowship for the elderly, and even a walking church – a mixture of walking, talking, prayer, liturgy and meditation.

While the Fresh Expressions movement in New Zealand isn't as mature as in the United Kingdom, contemporary forms of church have existed here for some time, explains the Rev Sue Fenton. Sue is part of a team co-ordinating an ecumenical support group for people involved in leading Messy Church congregations in the Wellington region. B@TCH at Highgate parish, Fuel at Fairfield, Studentsoul, Blue Lagoon at North East Valley and The Gathering at St Stephen's Bryndwr, are just a few examples of Fresh Expressions in the Presbyterian Church in New Zealand.

Despite the longevity and success of some of these contemporary churches, New Zealand has been slower to equip leaders for these forms of church, says Sharon.

"We've been slow to develop frameworks and training to support contemporary forms of church. Our resourcing and training of ministers needs to reflect our changing world."

Sharon, Sue and Barry Kelk, who is the minister at Highgate's B@tch, attended a Fresh Expressions conference in the United Kingdom at the end of 2011 and all are passionate about applying "new imagination" to how we do church in the future.

Sharon says of the conference: "It was something of a relief to be in an environment where there was an underlying agreement that church in the form we have known it in previous decades – particularly a congregation that meets on a Sunday morning in a purpose-built church building – is not sustainable as the only expression of church for our current and future climate."

Sue believes that Fresh Expressions or congregation planting is partly about removing the obstacles that prevent people from connecting with faith communities.

A common obstacle is lack of funding. While some forms of Fresh Expression discussed in this article take little more than energy and imagination to get started, building a community-facing church can be expensive. PressGo, the national mechanism by which Presbyterian parishes collectively fund promising growth ideas, is one means of securing resources to get a new church started (see page 7).



St Margaret's Silverstream, Messy Church

Some fresh expressions such as Messy Church offer a model that can be replicated across provinces and indeed countries. Others, like Mosgiel's North Taieri's Family 'T', are informed and inspired by ideas from many contemporary expressions of church.

Family 'T' was born out of a desire to connect with Mainly Music families and has been running for about seven years. Between 40-50 people regularly attend the monthly sessions, and as many as 80 people have come along at Christmas. Word-of-mouth plays a big role in building the community says Peter Heim, pastor for youth and family ministries.

He makes the point that Family 'T' is struggling with some of the same issues as traditional forms of church. "We've been going for a while now, and we're trying to discover ways to keep the programme fresh, and how to continue helping people take steps in their faith journey."

Fresh Expressions are often criticised as not being "proper church". This criticism can be based on a misconception that there is no "God stuff", or borne out of a perception that worship isn't robust, or that it's not theologically rigorous.

"For us, we do see it as proper church," says Sharon. "At Wadestown's Messy Church, we frame worship around what we understand to be a Reformed pattern. It's shorter and less formal than in a traditional Sunday service, but the elements are certainly there."

Manna Café offered communion to around 60 people at its Easter service. Manna is a breakfast church led by Wakatipu's Community Parish's Queenstown congregation.

"Look at what the early disciples were doing in Acts, what we're doing now is similar. There's breaking of bread, prayer," says Dave Worrington who is one of a team of five that lead the "message" part of Manna Café.

Before embarking on building Manna cafe, there was a year of prayerful consideration and observation of churches with a similar format, explains Dave. The establishment team, led by Jenetta Coulter, worked out what elements would work well in their environment, and then they purchased the necessary resources – kids' toys, little tables, a coffee machine – and the first Manna Café service was held in February 2011.

Around 40 people attend regularly, and they "tend to be people we'd never see upstairs [in a Sunday service]," says Dave.

Flagstaff Union Church in Dunedin is another parish providing a non-traditional service, Hilltop Family Church, targeted at young families.

While the Flagstaff team of five that run the Hilltop Family Church don't describe it as a Fresh Expression, it meets all the criteria: the target audience is people who don't have any experience of church, and it's not church as we know it.

People sit on cushions on the floor, and activities vary, but typically include Bible-based quizzes and games. A treasure

chest that gives clues to the Bible theme for the evening is opened at the start, and there are also crafts, singing, and prayer. "It's a fast-paced hour!" says team leader Jacqui Pittendreigh.

She says the ministry came about through relationships the church had developed with activities like Hilltop Kids (an after school programme), holiday programmes and music and movement.

"We felt we needed a relevant pathway to bring them towards Christ and that inviting them to our current services was a step too far. We needed something specifically aimed at families.

"We were clear that we wanted it to be church - but not traditional church - and from the outset we wanted to include prayer, songs and Bible stories," explains Jacqui.

Hilltop Family Church is run on the fourth Sunday of every month, and while it's early days yet as the programme has only run for six months, an average of 40 people are attending, and feedback is positive.

Sarah Moreton, who comes along with her young children says, "The family church has a friendly feel where people from the neighbourhood can come and have fun and interact. Each session has a specific theme that is broken down for families to have a religious experience without feeling the pressure to attend regular church services."



Messy Church at Wadestown Presbyterian Church, Wellington.



The Hilltop Family Church runs on the fourth Sunday of every month in Dunedin.

MESSY CHURCH

Messy Church, a concept pioneered by Lucy Moore a United Kingdom-based professional storyteller and actor, is exactly as it sounds – an all-ages, Bible-based form of church where people discover more about Christian faith through arts, crafts, drama, and shared meals. Around 100,000 people are estimated to attend Messy Church in the United Kingdom each month!

In New Zealand, Messy Church is alive and well. Many churches report positively about the community engagement, attendee numbers, and the ability these forms of church have to bring people to faith.

Louisa Marks and her three young children (aged 4, 6 and 8) attend Wadestown Presbyterian's Messy Church service.

Louisa says her children love getting their hands dirty with the different Bible-themed craft activities that start each session.

Having attended traditional church services as well, Louisa says the 4.30pm Sunday time slot was one of the things that appealed to her because it didn't clash with any of the family's other weekend activities.

"We're a busy family and found it hard to prioritise church. At the same time, my husband and I felt it was important for our children to learn about the Christian faith."

Wadestown's version of Messy Church starts with arts and crafts around a particular Bible-theme, and after 30 minutes or so, the group moves to a different space where the worship leader explores a Bible story with them.

Worship looks a little different at Messy Church as well. People are seated in a U-shape and children usually sit in the middle at their parents' feet. The worship leader doesn't stand behind a lectern and is instead part of the U-shaped formation.

A meal ends the two-hour Messy Church session.

In a traditional service, children are often in a different part of the building attending Sunday school, and Louisa enjoys the more inclusive family-friendly nature of Messy Church where children and adults learn and discover alongside each other.

"Messy Church provides another option for people whose children may be asking questions about God but may be wary of a traditional Sunday service."

The Rev Ian Guy, minister of Wakatipu Community Parish says, "Our community is diverse, and we've got to find the best way to connect. For us, Messy Church is a part of that."

Like most New Zealand churches trialling new forms of church, Arrowtown's Messy Church runs alongside its traditional Sunday service.

Neil Logan and his wife Jenny are the creative force behind Wakatipu's Messy Church, which started out in response to the lack of young families coming along to church.

"I didn't know if Messy Church was the answer, but we wanted to give it a go," says Neil.

Operating now for around 16 months, between 20-40 people regularly attend Messy Church at Arrowtown, around 80 percent of whom have no connection to any traditional church.

A team of five including Neil and Jenny run the monthly Messy Church, with a number of others helping out with food and other arrangements. Drama, crafts, song, and storytelling are used to explore themes that have included love, jealousy, creation and of course, the Christmas and Easter stories.

Genesis 37, the story of Joseph being sold into Egypt, was used to explore the theme of jealousy recently and after involving the children in a role play about the story, the group prayed. Neil then donned a coat, and those present wrote prayers on different coloured hearts and attached them to "Joseph's" coat.

Neil explains the overarching vision for messy church, which Arrowtown has adopted as its own. "Our aim is to provide an opportunity for people of all ages to worship together, and to help them feel like they belong in church and to each other. We want to help people have fun and be creative together and to introduce Jesus through hospitality, friendship, stories and worship."

What could be more "churchy" than that?



In late 2011, Sharon Ross Ensor, Sue Fenton and Barry Kelk attended the Fresh Expressions conference in the UK.

PressGo FOR church growth



PressGo

Presbyterian Church
of Aotearoa New Zealand

The PressGo board is looking for projects that will help recreate, invigorate and renew the Church explains convenor the Rev Andrew Norton.

“We’d love to support projects that put us at the leading edge of what the future church will look like. It’s about re-imagining the Church, seeing with new eyes and being the good news in mission to our communities.

“When we look back to the “good old days” of the Sunday School, Bible Class and the New Life movements, the Presbyterian Church was a mission movement. PressGo is looking for the signs and seeds of that movement for our context today.

“What we know is that initiatives will succeed or fail on the basis of the people behind the project. The commitment, energy and passion of the leadership team are essential to successful growth projects.”

While some of the projects supported by PressGo can be described as Fresh Expressions, Andrew is reluctant to apply a label to the type of projects that may be supported because each project is considered on its individual merits.

When considering applications, the board looks at a range of factors including how the project links to the mission of the applying parish, the level of financial sustainability, the ability of the project to be replicated or to provide learning to

the wider Church, and importantly the strength of commitment to the project.

One project that has met these benchmarks, and which is deeply bedded in the mission of the parish, is establishment of a pioneer community minister role at Wadestown Presbyterian. The Rev Sue Fenton fulfils this role, and her responsibility is overseeing and growing its community-facing ministries (some of which have been running for 11 years) including Messy Church.

With regular attendance of 40-50 at Wadestown’s Messy Church, further growth in the congregation was hampered by the lack of a resource committed to deepening connections between Messy Church and the community, explains the Rev Sharon Ross Ensor, Wadestown’s minister.

In accepting Wadestown’s application to partly fund its pioneer community minister role, former PressGo board convenor the Rev Ray Coster said, “It would be our prayer that this method of growth could be replicated elsewhere in the Presbyterian Church.”

New convenor, Andrew, points out that PressGo is also “looking for partner churches, individuals and bequests that will work alongside us to invest in growth opportunities for the Church.”

More information about Press Go can be found at www.presbyterian.org.nz

Rodney holidays still on offer to shaken Cantabrians

A community scheme that offers respite to shaken Christchurch residents is still being offered by the Mahurangi Presbyterian Church, north of Auckland.

Last year, the church organised short holidays for about 85 Cantabrians in the aftermath of the earthquakes. Through the 'Rodney Respite' scheme they pooled community funds and resources, including accommodation, rental cars, airport transfers, entertainment, care packages and grocery vouchers. Most people stayed for seven to 10 days.

About \$10,000 is still available in the fund, says Mahurangi Presbyterian's assistant minister and spokesperson for the scheme, Bruce Eirena. Because it was originally given to offer respite to people from Christchurch, and because the need is still there, the church wants to use the remaining money for that purpose.

"Some people are still experiencing post-traumatic stress. If they've lost their jobs, homes and income, those issues don't just go away. In fact the stress may be more acute now because there is the general expectation that it's time to get on with life. That's not possible for some and the need for a break is just as valid now as it was last year", Bruce says.

The idea started with a member of the Mahurangi congregation, whose minister, Nick McLennan, then contacted Darryl Tempero, resource minister with the Christchurch Presbytery, to talk about what could be done. Bruce stepped in to coordinate the system at the Rodney end, and the scheme grew from there.

About 50 members of the congregation offered accommodation. Harveys Real Estate Warkworth (now LJ Hooker) came up with more and many local businesses, schools, service groups and individuals made generous contributions of money, goods and services. A website was set up to process applications and match offers of accommodation with people needing a break.

"I was overwhelmed by the different companies and people who put up their



Around 85 Cantabrians have enjoyed a relaxing break in Rodney in aftermath of the earthquakes.

hands to be involved, and also by the general community response" Bruce says. "In terms of community building, that's one of the really good things to come out of this."

Neville and Margaret Johnson offered accommodation in their Matakana holiday cottages. A German couple with a young child who stayed for a week had seen their Lyttelton house demolished. The Christchurch house they then moved into was also damaged in a later earthquake.

"They had had a very rough time so they were happy to get out for a while," says Neville. "They talked a lot about their experiences which was therapeutic. But they seemed pretty resilient and committed to living in New Zealand. They were prepared to return to Christchurch and make a go of it."

At the Christchurch end, Darryl used his networks among Presbyterian ministers, other denominations, and community agencies to find out what people's needs were and who would benefit from a break from Christchurch. Others heard about the respite scheme through advertisements or welfare centres.

The first family to arrive in Warkworth had been living in a tent in their backyard because their house was uninhabitable. Darryl found some people were reluctant to leave Christchurch, however, in spite of similarly difficult circumstances.

"Sometimes it was hard to get people to take up the offer. There was often such

a strong sense of loyalty, the feeling that others were much worse off, especially among ministers and other recovery workers. They'd say, 'How can I go when many of my people can't?'"

Many Christchurch residents are still stressed. But the strain is different now as they cope with the emotional toll of dealing with insurance companies and earthquake recovery agencies. Zoning announcements can be particularly traumatic and some people are still waiting for their properties to be assessed.

The Rodney Respite gave people hope because it showed someone cared. "The value of that is hard to describe and measure but it was an extremely generous offer, and anecdotally, it's been enormously successful," Darryl said.

Darryl recalls teenagers whose whole demeanour changed when they returned home, while a highlight for Bruce was seeing families smile again.

"When people first arrived, they were in shock and just struggling to survive day to day. But within a few days you could see them unwinding and relaxing. Having a breather gave people the opportunity to reassess and often they had a plan by the time they went back."

For more information about the Rodney Respite scheme, email rodneyrespite@mahu.org.nz

By Andrea Candy Spanz

St John's provides supported housing

for community

Many of Rotorua's disadvantaged are emerging from a trust's respite addiction treatment programme with nowhere to live.

The residents, who could be suffering addiction problems or a have history of mental health challenges, are being shunned by landlords, and are therefore unable to obtain references to lease accommodation through traditional streams.

So St John's Rotorua Presbyterian church has partnered with Bainbridge House Charitable Trust for a supported housing project, which attempts to partially address that need.

"They were really excited about it," St John's Rotorua community faithing ministry team chair Robyn Spurdle says.

"They've got people who have done their chits with their family – their family don't want to have a bar of them - and they often can't get into accommodation...therefore they can't go through normal flatting channels or rental accommodation."

A few years ago, Rotorua District Council announced plans for main arterial route changes for the city, which would put the road right past St John's. In response, several church members purchased the flats behind the church, thus safeguarding the parking and entranceways to the buildings.

A trust placed the 18 flats with a rental agency, but last year a decision was made to work in partnership with Bainbridge House Charitable Trust, Robyn says. As current tenants leave the housing estate, the flats are being re-tenanted with people who come out of the treatment programmes. Currently, three are being used for this purpose.

Robyn explains the reasoning behind the church's interest like this: "Because we operate a foodbank from the church, we have a lot of people drop in requesting help. So our minister Lance Thomas had people come in needing accommodation. They didn't have any money for bonds, and they just couldn't get into a flat," she says.

"It was really his idea that perhaps we should be using the flats, which were previously just rented out through an



Duncan Walker, Arthur Vanner, James Beattie and Symon Stamm of St John's Rotorua tidy the garden of a house bequeathed to the church.

agency, to provide accommodation to people who are really needy."

Possible tenants are put forward by Bainbridge, Robyn says, and it picks only people who have a chance at rehabilitation.

The first tenant moved in late last year, and as he's a painter has since been employed by the church to do renovation and painting work. Robyn is enthused about this because she says it provides an added spin-off of employment for him.

"He actually spoke in church Christmas Day about what an amazing thing St John's has done for him."

The church furnishes the properties with donations of things like furniture and crockery, and the supported housing project is staffed by Sophie Leopard.

The tenants don't get any special treatment over and above normal tenancies, and in fact they are charged "roughly \$40 a week" extra on top of market rates for rentals, which Robyn says is "banking a bond".

"It's meant to be a hand up, not a hand out."

Once the tenants have been in the supported housing scheme for six months, they move on with a positive tenancy reference, a bond, the furniture in the house, the experience and skills of running their own household again, and, Robyn hopes, the drive to go forward with the

ability to continue to rebuild their lives. Robyn says the need for such a supported housing programme in Rotorua is huge.

"People [who need accommodation] are coming in all the time. It's a really big need. We could probably fill a flat every six weeks, if there was one available."

Meanwhile, the supported housing scheme is not the only way this ministry is getting into matters of housing.

An elderly gentleman bequeathed his 1930s home to the parish and a working bee of more than 50 tidied up the grounds one Sunday afternoon. Over some time the house was renovated - with help from parishioners - so it was able to be rented out. Resulting funds are earmarked for community faithing ministry projects, and include part funding the foodbank.

"Huge numbers of people in the congregation really helped with that house," Robyn says. "We had an electrician who provided his services for free, and people helped with the curtains."

Robyn stresses that she is very grateful for her congregational peers support with the projects.

"I feel blessed, with what we've been achieving."

By Rebekah Burgess [Spanz](#)

Hastings church loses old hall, re-connects with community

When fire destroyed an 80-year-old church hall in Hastings the congregation jumped at the opportunity to develop facilities more suited to the outward-facing ministry they aspired to.

Though the fire completely destroyed the hall, the congregation was remarkably resilient according to their minister the Rev Paul Loveday.

“People were shocked and saddened, but thankfully they weren’t too emotionally attached to the building. So there was a real willingness to discuss how we would move forward.”

Built in the 1930s, the St John’s Presbyterian Church hall was used for the Mainly Music programme and morning tea following services. It also housed the office, a recently re-furbished kitchen and some newly installed audio visual equipment. All were lost in the fire that also extensively damaged the church’s only toilet facilities.

Out of the ashes of the old building positive things have come, explains Paul.

“The fire really brought us together. Before the fire, only about half of the congregation would stay for morning tea. Following the fire, fellowship after the services increased and lots more stayed.”

In mid-July 2010 (the hall burnt down in August 2010) the congregation had gone into a season of prayer and discussion to discover God’s plan for the parish.

The fire ensured the process of discernment continued because a clear future direction for the parish was necessary for a rebuild of a hall, explained Paul. No longer constrained by the existing facilities, he says the fire ended up providing an opportunity to really look at things differently and develop a fresh vision.

“We looked at what we didn’t have by way of ministry, and what sort of resources and facilities we would need to deliver on that vision.”

The outcome was a vision that was outwardly focussed and was about building



St John's Presbyterian Church's new hall

relationships with the wider community. The parish developed a three-year plan that considered worship, pastoral care, discipleship, children and families and other aspects of ministry. This vision helped shape the congregation’s understanding of what it wanted in a new building.

The hall re-build didn’t take the focus and attention of the entire congregation – some people not directly involved in this project set about considering what sort of ministries could be undertaken to fulfil the vision of being more outwardly focussed.

From this thinking, ComCare and Connect were born. Connect is a monthly fellowship gathering for retirees, and around 20 people attend each month. There are plans to increase the frequency of the gatherings. ComCare provides practical pastoral support to those in the community in the form of meals – around 70 meals a month are delivered to households in need.

Paul believes God was very much at work in helping shape the church’s vision and resulting ministries. For instance the kitchen in the new hall was designed before ComCare came into being and the resulting commercial size kitchen is well-suited to the current ministry and any future expansion.

Insurance partly funded the hall re-build, but St John’s was fortunate to have access to proceeds from the sale of Frimley Church, whose parishioners are now part of the St John’s family. Some fundraising was required to complete fitting out the building.

The St John’s congregation of 70 households has so far managed to raise around \$50,000, with another \$13,000 or so needed to complete all of the remaining fit out.

“We’ve moved into a functional building,” explains Paul. “There are some minor things like curtains, speakers and kitchen equipment still to be purchased, but the new building looks fantastic. Things that we didn’t think we’d be able to afford as part of the initial build – security fencing, laying down of new lawn, concrete around the new building and replacing the damaged driveway – have been possible because of the generosity of the community and energy of the congregation and the amazing way funds for the building have been provided.”

During the 24 February 2012 dedication service for Jireh Hall – the name which was selected in recognition of God’s provision – Paul paid tribute to the efforts of the many who had been involved in the project that was completed within 18 months of the fire.

The official opening was marked with a meal for 110 people including the St John’s congregation, members from Gisborne/Hawkes Bay Presbytery and other invited guests. A separate meal for around 60 of the contractors involved with the re-build was also held in April.

By Jose Reader [Spanz](#)

Young Presbyterians prepare to go global

Eight young people are about to embark on what is hoped will be a transformational – both for them and the people they're visiting – mission trip.

The 10-day visit to Lenakel Junior High School on Tanna Island in Vanuatu is the first mission trip under the Going Global banner, and it is hoped that in future the programme will be expanded to other countries, says Gordon Fitch, Presbyterian Youth Ministry (PYM) co-ordinator.

Going Global, a joint initiative between PYM and Global Mission, is about providing opportunities for young adults to join in a cross-cultural experience, and participate in God's mission.

"They will experience what it is to be part of God's global village by serving as a team with a partner-in-mission of the Presbyterian Church," says Gordon.

The eight young people going to Lenakel High are all part of Presbyterian faith communities from around the country. They had to apply to attend, and the application explored their understanding of mission, and their motivations for wanting to go on the mission trip.

"The successful applicants showed a good understanding of what mission means saying that it was about serving God and serving those that are less well off than they are. My hope is that they will also learn mission is about receiving," says Global Mission co-ordinator the Very Rev Pamela Tankersley.

"They're going to Vanuatu to make a difference in the lives of the people they'll be engaging with, and hopefully when they come back they will realise that they've been changed too."

"The Vanuatu students will learn about the world beyond their shores. They will be exposed to other young people's views of the world, and this richness of experience will help develop both them and our missionaries," says Pamela.

The trip requires a significant commitment from the young people as they have to fund the trip themselves at a cost of \$2,000 per person, and the programme will include orientation in mission, engagement

with the school through tutoring and sports, participating in a work project, experiencing Vanuatu life, sharing faith and making friends.

For Natalie Clark, 20, a member of the Studentsoul ministry team in Dunedin, this will be her second overseas mission trip.

"It will be good to get alongside the kids, help them out and have fun playing games with them. I'm looking forward to seeing Jesus impact lives through this mission and seeing growth in my own spiritual life."

She expects that the most challenging part of the trip will be the initial unfamiliarity with everything – the environment, her fellow missionaries – and hopes that she can "embrace it all and not stay shy for too long".

Sami Brook, 18, was inspired to apply to go on the Going Global mission trip by her grandfather's work with the Leprosy Mission.

"While I was growing up, I watched him travel to different countries helping people. I had always wanted to go with him. He retired a year or two ago, so when I found out that there was the opportunity to go and do a trip and make him proud I decided to look into it further.

"I hope to make a difference for at least one person through doing God's work. And also to further my thinking and open my eyes so I can grow. I hope to use some of what I take from it with my work with youth in our community."

The mission team will be housed in the high school's student boarding dormitory, where they will sleep on traditional matting; conditions will be very basic, including only a couple of hours electricity at night and island life usually starts around 6am, explains Pamela. She is encouraging the mission team to keep journals or blog about their experience.

Future young missionaries will have the benefit of a training course to help them understand what to expect during an international mission experience, says Pamela. A grant from the Presbyterian Foundation has enabled the development of an online training resource, which Pamela expects will help people be better prepared for overseas mission engagements.

Jeremy Selfe will be taking part in the Going Global trip as a Global Mission youth ambassador. You can follow him on his blog <http://goingglobalvanuatu.blogspot.co.nz/> Jeremy will also share his mission trip experience in the Spring edition of Spanz.

By Jose Reader [Spanz](#)



Sami Brook was inspired to go on the Going Global mission trip by her grandfather's work with the Leprosy Mission.



Sport is a big part of life for Vanuatu students, who are pictured on a playing field at Onesua Presbyterian College.

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Interns graduating in 2012

from Knox Centre of Ministry and Leadership



Rob Petterson

Rob has been married to Jenny for five years and they have three boys - Matthew (12), Toby (4), and Leo (1). They also have a black Labrador Collie cross, named Meg. Rob is originally from New Plymouth where he attended a Baptist church for approximately 10 years. He says it was in the Baptist church that he came to faith and that in the early years of his Christian life he felt the Lord's call to full-time ministry.

In 2001 he undertook a theological degree in Auckland, completing it in 2003. He next spent time in the workforce while he waited "for the Lord's further leading". Following his theological training Rob began attending a Presbyterian church where he received "the Lord's call to pursue ordination training".

Rob loves music, and enjoys singing and leading worship. His other interests include spending time with his family, playing the occasional game of social golf, technology and film.

He has an eagerness to see the local church being effective in proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He says he loves to see people equipped to serve the Lord, and seeing them become passionate servants of Jesus.



Reece Frith

Reece is married to Kay, and they have three children - Tayla, Conrad and Pippa. Before becoming a ministry intern Reece was in his eighth year as lay pastor of Waiau Pa Presbyterian Church (First Church and Districts).

Reece completed his B.Min at Laidlaw College and says his call to ordained ministry was something that grew and took hold as he served in the local church.

He has a passion for preaching and teaching, and seeing the church as a welcoming, missional community where Jesus is made known.

During his down time he enjoys being with family, playing golf and being a long-suffering supporter of the Auckland Warriors.



Alistair McNaughton

Alistair is married to Catherine and they have three children - James (nearly 12), Grace (10) and Daniel (8). Alistair spent seven years on the staff of Massey Presbyterian in West Auckland and completed his degree at Laidlaw College. He says he and his family are currently loving the internship in beautiful Kaikoura.

The McNaughton's have a passion for the Gospel and being involved with the community.



Murray Shallard

Murray and his wife Jo will soon celebrate 12 years of marriage. Their family includes Jonathan (10), William (8), Frances (5), Noah (cat), Ray & Dymo (dogs), chickens, lambs and hundreds of cows.

After converting the family sheep farm to dairying in 2000, Murray began his own conversion following the Sept 11 attacks in 2001 after which his first prayer was to be a soldier for God.

"Believing that Jesus healed me from a burst blood clot in my head in 2003, and finally trusting him with my future in 2004, he set me free of my past and said to me, 'build and grow my Church, make it an example for others'."

In 2007, from the Riversdale/Waikaiia Parish, Murray began a BCNZ internship degree "where I could use my work in community outreach towards my study. My passion is to see Jesus worshipped; my mission is that through evangelism and discipleship there is transformation and ever increasing maturity of faith."

"My involvement with Global Disciples to strengthen local churches includes both national and international discipleship training and short term missions."

Murray says he is challenged by acting on God's presence, ministering with the Holy Spirit, dynamically and radically transforming people's lives.

Gary graduated from Laidlaw with a B.Theol in 2011 and has been based in the Wakatipu parish since then. His goal is to further his call to parish ministry, as well as "partner in what God is doing there to see God's Kingdom come".



Gary Mattock

Gary Mattock is 52 years old and has been married to Marie for the past 30 years. They have three children, Ben (25), Luke (24) and Mary (21).

He is an intern at St James Presbyterian Church in New Plymouth. Prior to his internship he was employed at St James for the previous 10 years as an assistant minister. "In this role I had wide range of ministry experience including youth, family and pastoral care. I was also involved with local and overseas mission."

While working at St James Gary undertook a theology degree by distance from Laidlaw.

Gary's experience before St James includes 12 years dairy farming in Taranaki. "While farming I was involved in a cooperating church and an independent fellowship."

Gary and Marie spent five years with Youth with a Mission (YWAM). "While in YWAM we were staff on discipleship training schools and led teams into different parts of Asia and the Pacific. Our time with YWAM gave us the opportunity to work with a variety of Christian churches and cultures; it gave me an appreciation of the diversity within the body of Christ."

Gary's interests include fishing, tramping, kayaking, gardening and enjoying a coffee with friends.

.....
If you are the convenor of a Ministry Settlement Board and would like more details about the students who are completing their training this year and wish to view the interns' full profiles on the Knox Centre website <http://knoxcentre.ac.nz/about-us/current-interns> please contact the Rev Allister Lane, a.lane@stjohnsinthecity.org.nz
.....



Gary Mauga

Talofa lava. Gary Mauga is very proud Kiwi-Samoan who is married to his "beautiful (and patient) wife Suliana". Gary's home church is Tamaki Pacific Islanders Presbyterian Church in East Auckland, where he has been part of the worship community for over 30 years.

Born and raised in Otara, South Auckland, his experiences growing up in a poverty-stricken community prompted a natural passion within him "to reflect on how I can contribute to the life of people. The word of God provides Good News and a message of hope to such communities, of which I am a part, and so I give thanks to God for the gifts that enable and challenge me to respond to such a vocation".

After a year of study at Auckland University's School of Theology he spent the following three years at Carey Baptist College where he completed a Bachelor of Applied Theology. He is currently in "a two-year ministry internship at Glendowie Presbyterian Church where the learning experience has been invaluable thus far, with highlights ranging from pastoral visits to preaching to forming very special relationships. I look forward to the remainder of the internship programme".

Gary says it is a privilege to undergo training for ministry with the very supportive team in the Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership. "My family have sacrificed much in support and so to you I owe this acknowledgement. I look forward to the never-ending growing and shaping that will take place in the years to come, as I am transformed into an instrument of God's message of hope to all."

Gary's interests include music, sport, art and food. He says the latter of these is a *special* interest.



Andrew Nicol

Andrew is married to Charissa and will soon have a total of four children - Elliot (6), Theo (4), Eliana (2) and bump (0). In 2006 the Nicols moved to Dunedin after four years teaching at St Bede's School in East Sussex, England. They have loved bringing up their young family in Dunedin where the family has endured the challenges associated with Andrew undertaking and completing a PhD in theology at Otago University.

Andrew says it seems a long time ago "but I started my working life training as a chef and in later years became a primary teacher. During these years I also completed studies at Bible College, and eventually a Bachelor of Ministries at BCNZ Christchurch (now Laidlaw College). Testing the call to ordained ministry in the Presbyterian Church led to a ministry internship at the Highgate Parish in Dunedin. I am looking forward to another stage of this journey as I continue the internship at Kaikorai Presbyterian from June".

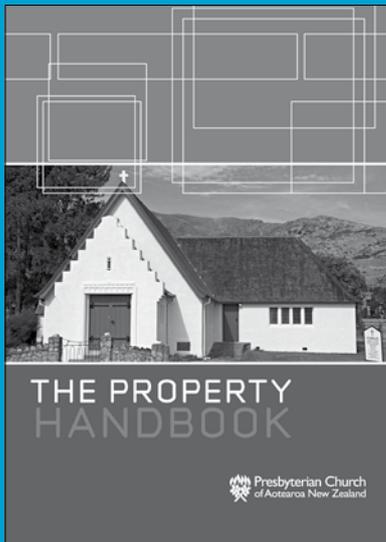
Most of Andrew's friends could probably tell you that the hobby he loves the most is cooking. "Experimenting with foodie things and sharing them is a real pleasure for me. I also relish the new experiences travel brings, reading a brainless thriller novel, weekends away with the family and indulging in a game of rugby - of course I mean *watching* it!"

Andrew's passion in ministry is expressed in his conviction that the Church continues to require sensitive retrieval of the riches of our tradition in order to speak and act with substance and renewed freshness. With this in mind he aspires to a considered, open and relational approach which is open to the leading of the Spirit. "Most importantly, I confess that this ministry is not *my* ministry, but is first and foremost a participation in God's ministry."



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Tim Keel:

GA12 keynote speaker

The focus of this year's General Assembly keynote addresses will be how the gospel is at the heart of life as God's people.

Pastor Tim Keel of the United States is glad to be making his way back to New Zealand to be the guest speaker at Assembly. He served as senior fellow for congregational studies at Laidlaw College for 18 months before returning to the States in 2011.

This isn't the first time Tim has spoken at a Presbyterian Church national event. He also gave an address at Connect 2011, the national gathering for Presbyterian youth workers, an occasion he described as "a great time connecting with and communicating to a group of people who seemed eager to participate with what God is up to in the context of their communities". Tim is now looking forward to the opportunity to reconnect with Kiwi Presbyterians again at this year's General Assembly.

When Moderator-designate, the Rev Ray Coster, invited Tim to participate he jumped at the opportunity to be involved and to return to the country he and his family now sorely misses.

Ray has chosen "Reviving the Flame" as the theme for his term as Moderator and Tim expects his listeners to pick up that theme by exploring how we understand and embody the gospel in our communities.

"The gospel is the heart of our life as God's people. It's the flame that burns at the heart of the church. And we need to be able to engage the gospel and our contexts with hope and confidence.

"I want people to come away from my talks re-energized by how good the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ really is – how transformational, how disruptive, how relevant!

"With a perspective that has been enlarged by the gospel, I'd want people to have a renewed ability to see the way the Holy Spirit is already at work in and around us, and in our churches."

During his time at Laidlaw, Tim had many opportunities to engage with the people and practices of the Presbyterian Church.



As well as speaking at Connect 2011, Tim was also involved in a group that provided reference and support for the Rev Mark Johnston in his role as Auckland coordinator for the Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership.

"I was encouraged both by the commitment to doing ministry from a place of theological reflection in coordination with processes of developing, mentoring and supporting leaders for long-term impact and sustainability."

Tim brings a background in church planting to his addresses at General Assembly. He was the founding pastor at Jacob's Well in Kansas and served there for 11 years before accepting the role at Laidlaw College. He returned to Jacob's Well as senior pastor in late 2011.

Tim gained his M.Div from Denver Seminary. He is the author of *Intuitive Leadership: Embracing a Paradigm of Metaphor, Narrative, and Chaos* and says his time at Laidlaw gave him the opportunity to research and write more than had been possible while leading and teaching at Jacob's Well. His next published work will be a contemporary commentary on Ecclesiastes, part of the Resonate Bible Commentary series published by Intervarsity Press.

"I am passionate about the opportunity I have to serve God in my church, and in the larger context of our world. I'm passionate about creating spaces for people to connect to God, themselves and others."

Tim is married to Mimi who has been involved with children's ministry at Jacob's Well for more than 12 years. Together they have three teenage children.

By **Jose Reader** [@spanz](#)



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Asian Mission and Ministry coordinator will bridge cultures

The Rev Han Kyoung Gyun carries a copy of the PCANZ Book of Order with him wherever he goes. It's a vital tool for his new role as the Presbyterian Church's Asian Mission and Ministry Coordinator.



The Rev Kyoung Gyun, his wife Jennifer and sons Sejoo and Sungjoo.

Kyoung's priority for the next three years is to help migrant Asian Christian congregations find a home within the Presbyterian Church. As he networks with ministers and communities he uses the book as a guide to help them understand the differences between East and West and bridge the gaps.

His appointment is supported by the Council for World Mission and the Presbyterian Church of Korea (PCK). As a result Kyoung will focus particularly on Korean congregations in New Zealand. Eleven congregations have already been welcomed into the PCANZ and another three or four are considering membership. Since June 2011, two more Korean ministers have been received into PCANZ, and during May 2012 six Korean ministers went through the PCANZ interview process.

"The problem is not just the language barrier. It's a result of not yet understanding the structure, history and character of the PCANZ and the difference between the practice of Korean Presbyterian congregations and the practice of New Zealand's Presbyterian congregations. This is what we need to overcome."

Some Korean congregations have been established in New Zealand for a long time and are large and thriving, but they struggle to make the transition from 'migrant' to 'settler' status, says Kyoung. They still conduct their services and ministries entirely in Korean and have chosen their own ministers, independently of the 'mother church' back in Korea. As a result,

there is little continuity of leadership; missionary ministers stay for only two or three years before returning to Korea.

Kyoung is well aware that the partnership between PCANZ and Asian congregations is not a one-way street, and he quotes research that indicates that by 2026, 18 percent of New Zealand's population will be of Asian origin. He hopes that, eventually, there will be a place for an Asian Synod alongside the Pacific Island Synod and Te Aka Puaho.

Kyoung is also tasked with developing leadership in the next generation of Asian Christians in New Zealand. He is passionate about ministry among young people and is looking forward to talking with them and listening to their expectations and future plans. As children of migrants, many are caught between two cultures. Church can provide a supportive community but an over-emphasis on church-centred activities can make it hard for young people to participate in wider society. Added to this are the hierarchical expectations of many Korean families, and a conservative evangelical Korean theology that tends to separate the 'sacred' from the 'secular'.

"We do not think much about participation and outreach in society – even the programmes for leadership and disciple-making mainly focus on commitment inside the church within the Christian community...In this way of thinking, young people's commitment can only be to missionary work."

"Young people's needs and opportunities are quite different from those of their parents, elders and ministers. I would like to gradually assist Korean ministers to be aware of young people's needs and how we can provide relevant programmes for our younger generation."

Kyoung is well-qualified to act as a bridge between Asians and Kiwis, seniors and young people, ordained ministers and lay people. As a young man, he worked for PCK Youth and was then ordained as an army chaplain. He has wide experience of other cultures, having lived or worked in 16 countries in Asia, Europe, North America and the Pacific. In 2003 he and his family moved to the Philippines as mission co-workers from the PCK to the United Church of Christ. For the next seven years, Kyoung was engaged in church and leadership development, strengthening a newly formed presbytery from fewer than 40 congregations to more than 50 in a semi-rural area south of Manila.

Kyoung, his wife Jennifer, and their sons Sejoo aged 16 and Sungjoo, 10, feel quite at home in Mt Roskill, a particularly multicultural suburb of Auckland. St John's Presbyterian Church has provided an office for Kyoung in the newly opened Asian Ministry Centre, thanks to a grant from the Presbyterian Savings and Development Society.

By Andrea Candy [Spanz](#)

PSDS grants continue to help the Church grow

During the past two years the Presbyterian Savings and Development Society (PSDS) has given more than half a million dollars in grants to Presbyterian parishes and organisations throughout the country.

“People know us as a savings society,” says Mark Bartlett, PSDS lending and development manager. “But what they probably do not realise is that PSDS is a religious charitable entity which exists solely for the purpose of serving the Presbyterian Church.

“Our core business is providing finance at attractive rates to churches for capital projects. All our profits go to the Presbyterian Church and Presbyterian organisations to support national and individual projects.”

Benefactors include the Church’s national ministries Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership, Presbyterian Youth Ministry, Kids Friendly, Te Aka Puaho, and Presbyterian Women Aotearoa New Zealand. Many individual parishes have also received grants towards IT equipment, sound systems, kitchen equipment and the like.

“We have gifted over \$100,000 in recent years to help local parishes buy all sorts of things,” says Mark.

“The list is varied as to the types of projects and events we will assist. For example we have recently gifted \$3,000 to the Going Further youth event and

\$2,500 to Studentsoul for their Strength Finder course, a grant of \$1,000 went to St Peter’s in Tauranga for their work with Christians Against Poverty, and \$500 was gifted to Clevedon for their youth mission activities. The Presbyterian hospital chaplains received \$2,100, Moderator Peter Cheyne was granted \$5,000 for community pastoral care, St John’s in Mt Roskill was granted \$7,500 to build an office for the Church’s Asian Ministries Coordinator, and grants have been given to Turakina and Solway colleges for gym equipment.”

PSDS does not fully fund projects; rather it makes a grant contributing to the total cost.

“Some of the grants are larger, for example more than \$200,000 for the Knox Centre ministers’ training programme and \$150,000 for Kids Friendly and \$50,000 this past year for PressGo. We accept grant applications throughout the year and are delighted to help,” Mark says.

The society celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2010 with a \$40,000 Ministry and Mission Innovation Award to be awarded over four years to Presbyterian and Union parishes and Presbyterian groups. This year’s award winning innovation will be profiled in the Spring edition of Spanz.

Last year’s award winner, St Andrew’s Uniting Church, Whangarei, received funding towards a Big Day In community festival attended by 400 people. Applications for the award close at the end of February each year.

PSDS has also given generously to the Church in times of greater need. In 2010, immediately after the first Canterbury earthquake, PSDS gave the Christchurch Presbytery \$20,000 and a further \$50,000 was given after the second quake. An additional \$70,000 was

given to fund the work of the Rev Darryl Tempero in providing support to ministers and congregations in post-earthquake Christchurch.

Following the departure of PSDS’s previous general manager Paul Walker due to ill health, Simon Bilton was appointed general manager in October 2011. Simon leads a team of four at PSDS’s Auckland offices.

Currently around 40 Presbyterian churches, plus a number from other denominations, have loans from PSDS.

“Because the number of grants that can be made is determined by our trading performance, PSDS is always looking to hear from more investors or churches that need loans,” explains Mark.

“We think differently from banks in the way we assess loan applications and credit criteria, and we do not charge establishment fees, penalties or early repayment fees.

“We understand the intricacies of dealing with the Presbyterian Church Property Trustees, the Synod of Otago and Southland and the Otago Foundation Trust Board, and we are able to help parishes with the legal processes at no cost to them.”

PSDS has reserves of \$6 million dollars and over \$48 million in total funds. Total loans made to churches over the past 42 years exceed \$65 million.

“Many of the loans to churches are between \$50,000 and \$500,000, although we have a few over \$1 million,” says Simon.

“Several loans are for facilities such as church halls and day care centres that can create income for churches. We are pleased to say that in 42 years we have never had a bad loan - and that has everything to do with the kind of people we are lending to.”

By Angela Singer Spanz



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General Assembly theme "Reviving the Flame" unveiled

Incoming Moderator the Rev Ray Coster has chosen "Reviving the Flame" as his theme.

Ray, who is minister of St Andrews Church in Mount Maunganui, will become Moderator at General Assembly 2012, which starts on Thursday 4 October in Rotorua.

He says his theme is about acknowledging that the Church is in need of revival, a new spark to make its flame burn brighter.

"I love the word revive. It speaks to me about God never giving up on God's people. In some ways I feel as though our Presbyterian Church has been in a wilderness for many years. We are all now aware of our Church's downward statistics. We have moved from a denomination of about 130,000 people at weekly worship in the early 1960s to around 30,000 today. It could be very easy to become despondent about this, give up and feel like we are failing. But the desert or wilderness is a place of meeting and restoration. That's where revival, refreshment and restoration begin.

"In one of the servant songs in Isaiah (42:1-4) it speaks of God's servant: 'A bruised reed he will not break and a smouldering wick he will not snuff out'. God does not consider the bruised reed or the smouldering wick as useless or past their time, rather God restores or revives them. That is my prayer for our Church."

Incorporating the flame into his theme and the GA12 logo was important. "I am proudly Presbyterian. The flame is a symbol of the church, the burning bush is a very significant symbol of our Church, and the Reformed Church."

Ray's hope is that his theme will remind the Church that it is firstly a church of God and not just a religious institution that runs programmes. "There is a really significant 'God-factor' in what we do. So the full title of my theme is, 'Reviving the Flame: Living in the power of God's presence and the presence of God's power'. The mission we do is God's mission. It's all about God. God's incredibly great love for the world and the people who live on this planet."

In his work as former chair of the PressGo board, Ray says he has seen a number of wonderful examples of God reviving the Church. "I hope my theme will inspire and encourage the Church to believe what it believes and see that there is always hope with God."

"Some congregations do not want to be reminded that they have ageing congrega-

tions and declining numbers. But when a church does get that God spark of revival amazing things happen. That catalyst for revival can take many different forms, for example a new form of leadership, new people joining a congregation or a new ministry outreach."

Helping the Church to develop a new mindset will be a focus of Ray's during his two year term as Moderator. "I have met a number of people in our Church who live with a pre-cross mind-set. They still feel, or see themselves as, unworthy sinners. This can stragulate our mission. We should live with a resurrection mind-set. We are an Easter people who are called to live our faith with resurrection excitement and conviction.

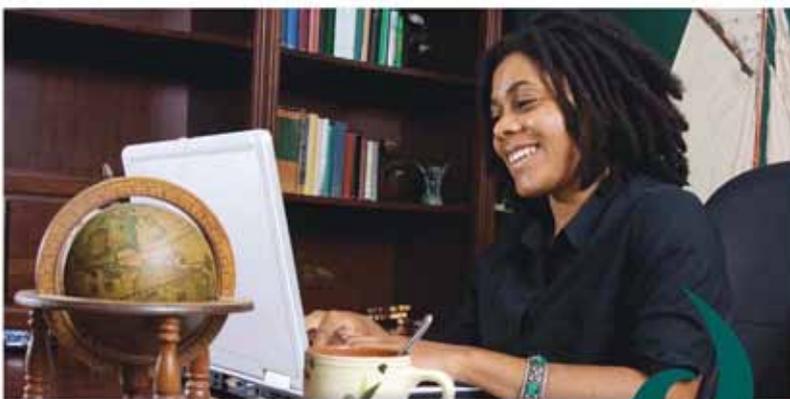
"As a Church we spend 40 days in Lent humbling ourselves, doing Lenten studies and maybe even fasting. Why don't we spend 40 days after Easter celebrating, rejoicing and doing special resurrection studies? Instead of singing about how unworthy we are we should sing as resurrection people. Jesus sets us free. Yes, we can acknowledge we are far from perfect but we are no longer under condemnation. It is time we as a Church said positive things about our faith. Why would anyone want to come to faith if we don't?"



Ray says worship during GA12 will pick up on the revival theme. "I am hopeful that the whole Assembly experience will be very positive, expressing our faith as a resurrection people. I have invited Malcolm Gordon to be our worship leader and I will be working with the Assembly chaplains to ensure that our worship times also reflect the theme."

The Rev Tim Keel, the keynote speaker at this year's Assembly, will elaborate on the theme in his addresses. See page 14 of this issue of *Spanz* for a profile on Tim.

By Angela Singer [Spanz](#)



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Doctor prescribes himself Vanuatu mission

A vision of ready access to medical care led a Manurewa GP to volunteer as clinical advisor at a Vanuatu nurses training facility.

Dr Conrad Surynt, an elder at Clevedon Presbyterian Church, has joined an existing Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu project – the Korvan Community Health School.

Established around 2008, Korvan was built with the generous support of the Korean Christian community in New Zealand and the Uniting World of Australia, and through training NiVan (Vanuatu nationals), the project aims to improve access to health care.

The concept behind the health school is simple: to develop a base of trained community health workers that can provide basic medical support on their home islands.

With only six GPs in Vanuatu to serve the nation's approximately 250,000 people, there is vast shortage of trained health care professionals: around one doctor to every 41,000 people. (In New Zealand, this ratio is more like one to every 1,200 people.) The population is dispersed among 83 islands, and most villages have no access to formal health care of any sort.

New Zealand congregations are being encouraged to consider scholarships for the health school trainees, says Global Mission co-ordinator the Very Rev Pamela Tankersley. Financial support removes a significant barrier to locals being able to enter training, she says.

While the health school has been operational for some time, progress has been slow on developing the frameworks that which will enable the school to run effectively.

"It was very immature as a project, and provided the perfect opportunity for me to become involved," explains Conrad.

"Sure I can go over and be a doctor in a medical centre and make a difference for a week or two, but when I leave, everything goes back to square one. I wanted to be involved with something which had a much more lasting impact."

The intention is that the centre trains 15-20 people each year, and Conrad expects that graduates will become what he describes as "barefoot doctors" and will be able to recognise and treat common basic ailments.

"We want them to be able to go back to their island and understand how to deliver a baby, or understand what a broken arm is and how to treat it."

Conrad's role in the Centre is that of a clinical advisor, and at the moment he spends a couple of weeks a year in Vanuatu, and expects this to increase to about a month a year over time. He provides support to the only tutor that is currently employed by the centre.

Conrad is also in the process of developing a network of professionals that will come to the health school to deliver guest lectures in their areas of speciality.

"For instance the week students are studying obstetrics, a NZ midwife might



Dr Conrad Surynt, an elder at Clevedon Presbyterian Church

deliver this module. A paediatric doctor from Dunedin might deliver some of the paediatrics material. Or a Plunket nurse from Timaru might deliver a module on early childhood health."

Conrad is wary of being one of a number of missionaries that have come and gone from the health school, without making significant traction. He sees his involvement very much in a long-term way, and believes it will be 10 years or so before the vision for the centre is realised.

While he expects to spend an increasing amount of time in Vanuatu in coming years as the project progresses, he's not expecting to reside there. He believes it is too easy to fall into the traditional mission model where the missionaries take over and do things for the local community, rather than facilitating local growth and development.

Conrad's first trip to Vanuatu was two weeks in the middle of 2011, and he went back in December to keep up the momentum. The next trip is planned for September this year.

"It is quite interesting for westerners to think we're ambassadors for God in places like Vanuatu, because most people already have a strong spiritual relationship with God. God is embedded in their culture in a much stronger way than it is in New Zealand, for instance. What they do need is practical loving care," he says.

By Jose Reader Spanz

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Computer gift connects Pacific women

Thirteen women from nine countries gathered in Auckland in March to equip themselves with computer and project management skills to further God's mission in their respective nations.

The five-day course was the first stage of the Council for World Mission sponsored Pacific Region Women's Empowerment Training programme.

CWM committed \$NZD 55,000 to the programme, which included gifting the women's programmes in each country a laptop, digital camera, long-life laptop batteries and other computer equipment.

The course was based around the concept of "training the trainers" and the intention was that the women return home and train other women with the skills they learnt.

"It's really about improving outcomes for women in the Pacific, improving communications and empowering them to see themselves as powerful women," explains the Very Rev Pamela Tankersley, who was one of four women who organised and delivered the course.

"The sense of community that has been engendered by the course is empowering in itself."

The female church leaders who attended the course learnt everything from the basics of operating the new laptops, to using spreadsheets for budgeting and project management. They also discovered how to connect with others via the likes of Skype (internet-based calls) and social networking site Facebook. The trainees even created their own Facebook page, which they're now using to stay in touch. Producing newsletters was also a priority for the women, so there was training on how to use software and the new digital cameras for newsletter production.

Every afternoon was dedicated to project management, where the women discovered more about developing proposals, report writing, risk management and budgeting.

Each woman bought a project to use as the basis for the workshops that made up the programme. The five-day course



Women from nine countries attended the Pacific Region Women's Empowerment Training programme.

culminated with the women giving a PowerPoint presentation on their respective projects which ranged from literacy programmes for women (Solomon Islands), climate change (Tuvalu) and establishment of a refuge centre for young women (American Samoa).

On her return to Papua New Guinea, Jessie Lowa, immediately put what she'd learnt into action, offering basic computer technology training to 17 women's programme co-ordinators.

"The training gave me the courage and the push to call in the co-ordinators and empower them to use computers for our communication purposes. It's much faster to use email than to post letters and wait weeks for the reply."

The surprise hit of the course was the Bible studies. In keeping with the theme of women's empowerment, Pamela selected the story of Esther and Queen Vashti, and the story about the daughters of Jelopheh (about women and land and inheritance) "to illustrate the roles women played in the texts, and to open up the questions of leadership roles of women in the churches".

"Many had not heard the stories before, let alone from the perspective of women."

Jessie described the studies as excellent, saying: "It is most comforting to know that God values women as his created beings and not second class."

Pamela used drama, role play and dialogues and other highly participatory methods to explore the meaning of the texts.

"There was learning in this methodology as well, as the women had mostly been exposed to more traditional methods of Bible study."

Sulufaiga Uota, women's programme co-coordinator from Ekalesia Kelisiano Tuvalu (EKT) described the Bible studies: "It was the highlight of the course for me. Pamela really unravelled what the text holds for us as Pacific women. The approaches or methodologies of Bible studies she employed were very thought provoking."

CWM Pacific Region has the empowerment of the women in its churches as a priority goal in its five-year strategic plan. This is in recognition of the fact that women's programmes in Pacific nations are often accorded lower priority and status, explains Pamela who was involved in building the business case for CWM to fund the training.

Before delivering the course, Pamela had recently returned from United Nations Commission on the Status of Women on women's issues and says it was wonderful being involved in a project that gave practical effect to empowering women.

"I was glad of the opportunity to put into practice what we'd been discussing in the UN forum, and other gatherings that I'd been involved with. It was enlightening and satisfying to see the women participating."

By Jose Reader Spanz



Small kindergarten hopes to make big difference

The backers of a kindergarten project in northern Vanuatu hope the project's outreach will eventually spread across the whole of the country.

The village of Talua is so small and so little known it hardly registers on internet search engines. But it is on Vanuatu's largest island, Espiritu Santo. It is there that a mixed denominational team from Chartwell Cooperating Parish in Hamilton has built a small early childhood facility valued at around \$15,000.

The centre, due for completion in early June and based at the Talua Ministry Training Centre, has two aims: to provide a good quality early childhood education for the local children, and to expand the village's outreach.

Bush missionaries are trained in Talua in basic theology and ministry skills. At the same time the pastors' wives study early childhood education to help them work with Vanuatu's children.

After the basic training, the women and their missionary husbands return to their homes throughout Vanuatu and become agents of the project's outreach.

Talua is 35km from Espiritu Santo's main town, Luganville. A drive of around half an hour in New Zealand but the journey is a rough one in Vanuatu due to the terrible roads, says Jack Brinkman, who has headed the team since October last year.

"We have to be very careful that we get all the materials we need," he says. "We can't forget a couple of sheets of metal or screws or a piece of wood because it's well over an hour by four-wheel drive to go to Luganville. It's quite isolated."

One of the goals of the project is to ensure the local people of Talua have ownership of the facility. So they've been involved by clearing the site, putting the foundations in and concreting the base.



Talua men prepare the foundation for the kindergarten

Back home in New Zealand, the Chartwell parish's overseas mission committee has been overseeing the whole project, under the convenership of Trevor Bennett.

"It's a very good thing, not just for the people in Talua, but for our own church too," he says. "I think it is very good for us to be looking beyond ourselves in this way."

The project began when the Very Rev Pamela Tankersley, the Presbyterian Church's Global Mission coordinator, spoke to the Hamilton congregation last June about the rundown state of the old kindergarten. The overseas mission committee then got together with her to see how best to assist.

"Originally the thought was repair," Bennett says. "But it was quite obviously beyond that, great gaping holes in the roof and so on. So we set out to build a completely new building."

Bennett makes special mention of the fact that the team of eight – comprising seven men and one woman – is made up of Anglicans, Methodists, and Presbyterians.

"It's indicative of the fact that denomination doesn't mean nearly so much these days", he says. "Our overseas mission committee

is charged with providing help wherever it's needed, really. We do a lot of work in aid. This is just one more."

Bennett calls Jack Brinkman, the operational head an "excellent leader". But Brinkman, a Dutchman and retired engineer who's been in New Zealand for 32 years, laughs and shrugs off the compliment. "It's just my handyman skills," he says. It's his fourth mission providing overseas aid from New Zealand. Previously he's worked for Habitat for Humanity in Cambodia building a house and in Samoa building fale.

"We emigrated in 1980, so we are 32 years in New Zealand, and I've been extremely lucky. I've been helped [by] a lot of people and now I'm, say, sort of semi-retired, but financially reasonably off I want to give back," he says.

"In the islands, Fiji, Samoa, Vanuatu, the circumstances that these people have to live in is very difficult, so any help we can give them is an improvement for their lifestyle and also their circumstances."

By Rebekah Burgess [Spanz](#)



New ways to tackle famine

Famine is knocking on many doors in West Africa's Sahel region but for some homes it will take longer to hit than in the past.

Christian World Service's (CWS) global partner, ACT Alliance is involved in new ways of heading off food scarcity and famine that are already getting results.

Prevention rather than cure sums up the increasingly popular movement that aims to reduce the risks and impacts of famine and food scarcity.

It's an exciting change in aid and development emphasis that provides a welcome counterpoint to the gathering storm clouds of another food crisis in West Africa's Sahel region.

The figures are already grim with 10 million people in the Sahel region already struggling to feed themselves and their families. One million children are already at risk of severe malnutrition.

The Governments of Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger have already declared a state of crisis and called for international assistance.

CWS launched an appeal for the Sahel Food Crisis early in the year.

As drought, climate change, poor or erratic rains, plus rising food prices and political instability combine into a "perfect storm" another time of severe hunger has hit the Sahel region.

CWS national director, Pauline McKay, said that it was vital for all aid and development agencies to take a proactive approach to the emergent crisis in Sahel.

At the same time it was equally important to start spelling out to the Christian missional community the good things that were happening in the world of development.

"We do not want to court a repeat of the Horn of Africa crisis last year where global action got going too late, but we also need to realise there is some very



Masbore village, Zondoma province. Women share a rice and meat dish prepared for a community meal. In the home, women and children often get the dregs of food as the men of the family eat their fill first.

good development going on in disaster prevention from groups like our ACT Alliance," said Pauline McKay.

ACT Alliance stands for Action by Churches Together, a Geneva headquartered grouping of 100 national churches and groups working in 130 countries for humanitarian assistance and development. CWS are their southernmost member.

Pauline and CWS staff had been impressed with the story that comes from ACT Alliance partners working in Burkina Faso, of the 46 year old widow, Walisim Isoif. Walisim was trained in leather work which has now enabled her to trade as a small business in local markets.

She could also buy cheap grain from a community cereal bank that was set up as part of the same community resilience building project.

The point with her story is that through giving her the tools to shape her economic destiny, hunger will take much longer to impact on her life.

ACT Alliance General Secretary, John Nduna, has been increasingly advocating a much stronger emphasis on resilience building rather than just providing emergency aid.

"This is the heart of our message; not only to provide emergency relief to the most vulnerable populations but also to build resilience to chronic food insecurity, so that people can look after themselves and minimise the need for outside intervention."

The Tindall Foundation Funding Applications

Presbyterian Support New Zealand is The Tindall Foundation Faith Funding Manager for Presbyterian organisations and parishes and we invite applications for this year's funding round.

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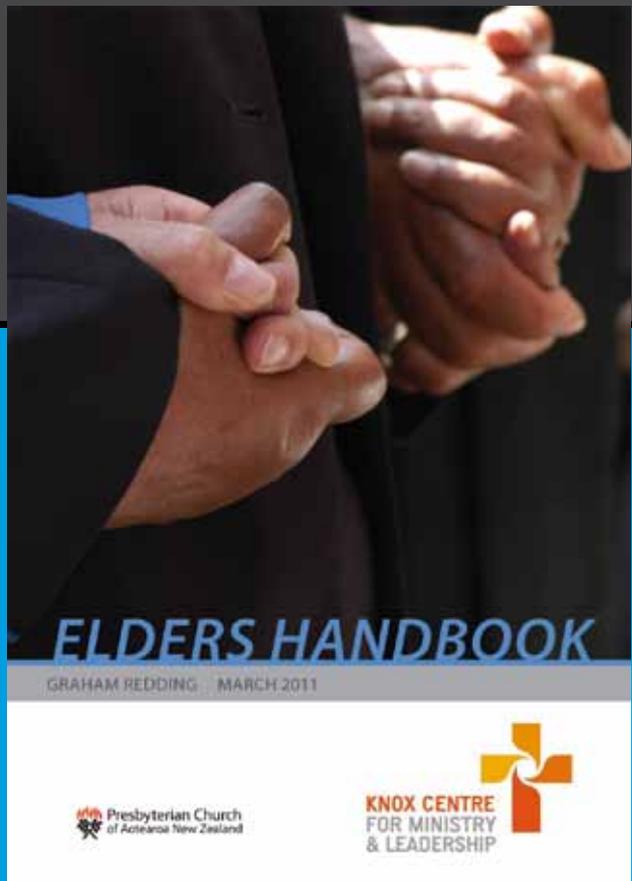
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