

BushFire

The Panui of
Presbyterian Women
Aotearoa NZ

April May 2021



“The human mother can suckle the child with her milk. But our beloved Mother Jesus can feed us with himself.

This is what he does when he tenderly and graciously offers us the blessed sacrament, which is the precious food of true life. In mercy and grace he sustains us with all the sweet sacraments.

This is what he meant when he said that he was the one that holy church preaches and teaches us. In other words, Christ the Mother is entwined with the wholeness of life which includes all the sacraments, all the virtues, all the virtues of the word-made-flesh, all the goodness that holy church ordains for our benefit.

The human mother can tenderly lay the child on her breast, but our tender Mother Jesus can lead us directly into his own tender breast through his sweet broken-open side. Here, he reveals a glimpse of the godhead and some of the joys of paradise with the implicit promise of eternal bliss.”

— Julian of Norwich (1343 – after 1416)



Photo from CWS

Sunday was Mother's Day and for some people it is a tough day where their grief is felt more acutely. Perhaps they have lost a child or lost their Mum. Maybe they haven't been able to have children. For some Mother's Day is hard because for whatever reason their relationship with their mother or children is not all that they needed it to be. Pray for all mothers.

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General Assembly

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand takes place in Christchurch – starting on Wednesday 29 September and concluding on Sunday 3 October.

Our Presbyterian Women report needs to be submitted **in early June 2021**

If you have items for the Executive to consider including in the report, please email Ruth Steven asap (and by 28 May at the latest) on pwanz2016@gmail.com

Presbyterian Women also has the ability to present proposals. Again please email Ruth with any suggestions. Some suggestions (based on the submissions Presbyterian Women have made previously) might include:

- That the General Assembly urges the Government to take urgent and decisive action to enable all children and their families to enjoy a good life, through eliminating child and family poverty, making healthy housing the norm, and improving food security for children and families
- That the General Assembly actively supports and promotes the World Council of Churches' Thursdays in Black campaign throughout the Presbyterian Church and commits to a world free from violence and rape.
- That the General Assembly recognise the disproportionate burden that will be borne by women and girls as a result of human-induced climate change, especially in low- and middle-income countries including our Pacific neighbours, and urges Government to take strong action to achieve climate justice and effectively care for creation
- That the General Assembly commit to work with all parts of the Presbyterian Church to develop a robust climate action plan and aim for Assembly operations to become net zero in greenhouse gas emissions by 2040

Your ideas most welcome.

Peace and security

My common practice on Thursdays is to wear black, with a 'Thursdays in Black' lapel badge. The World Council of Churches initiated a global movement in which participants commits to a world without rape and gender-based violence. As Mothers' Day approaches, it is sobering to reflect on the failure of our society to protect women and children from assault. Police in New Zealand investigate an incident of family violence every 5 minutes. Three-quarters of assaults against women are committed by a family member, and three-quarters of partner violence-related deaths are perpetrated by men. This is an issue that we need to talk about in our churches and use resources such as the It's not okay campaign <http://www.areyouok.org.nz/>

Ecumenical Women at the United Nations invites us to check out the video at <https://youtu.be/B4S3FPa6Uxw> and make the #ThursdaysInBlack pledge below.

Pause for a moment of silence on Thursdays at noon to remember and honour those who have died at the hand of sexualised or gender-based violence.

Pray with us: We stand with invisible victims of sexual and gender-based violence. We see you. We hear you. You are not forgotten.

Post your prayers, photos, or inspirations on social media using the hashtag #ThursdaysinBlack

Pledge: I commit to Thursdays in Black. In solidarity. In protest. In mourning. For awareness. In hope.

By supporting Thursdays in Black I stand:

- In solidarity with 1 in 3 women worldwide who face violence in their lives
- In protest against systems and societies that encourage violence in any form
- In mourning for men, women and children who are harmed and killed in sexual violence
- For awareness and knowledge about the challenges of sexual and gender-based violence
- In the hope that a different reality is possible.

I invite you to stand with me

Mavis Duncanson
UN Convenor
Presbyterian Women Aotearoa New Zealand

Pacific Allied (Womens) Council Inspires Faith in Ideals Concerning All



Rev Alofa Lale

National President

Rev Alofa Lale is a first generation NZ born Samoan, who was born in Wellington and grew up in Cannons Creek, Porirua. She is the eldest daughter of Letoa Levine and Galumalemana Vaotupu Samoa Ta'ase. Alofa is a trained Primary school teacher who also taught at secondary level and has over 15 years' teaching experience.

In 1999-2002 she was the Pacific Liaison Officer at Victoria University of Wellington (VUW). In 2003 Alofa and her husband moved with their young family of three children to Dunedin to train for Presbyterian Church ministry at the School of Ministry, Knox College. In 2007 Alofa was ordained minister of Otago Peninsula Presbyterian Parish and ministered there until 2015 when the parish was dissolved. From July 2016 to the present day Alofa is the current Mission Coordinator at Mercy Hospital, Dunedin. She originally joined Porirua PACIFICA with her mother in the 1970s and rejoined PACIFICA in 2017 and has been President of Dunedin Central Branch since then.



Rev Alofa believes, "There is a beauty and richness in our Pacific women that is unique. I want to affirm this uniqueness and encourage our women to be comfortable in their own selves. Let's value our uniqueness to forge new pathways into the future whilst never forgetting where we come from. We are women of the moana. We are PACIFICA.



Christian World Service is appealing for funds to respond to the rapidly escalating Covid-19 crisis in India.

“Our partners are anxious to protect the communities they work with from infection and hunger in this second wave. They have asked for urgent funding to deliver emergency food assistance and hygiene supplies as well as support community healthcare,” says Pauline McKay, National Director.

CWS works with five partner organisations in Tamil Nadu focusing on the long-term development and justice priorities of Dalit (sometimes called Untouchables) and Tribal (indigenous) communities.

In the first wave, these local partners shared good health information with groups including fish workers, day labourers, forest collectors, and women’s *sangams* as well as distributing emergency supplies to families with no food. They helped thousands of people to access government entitlements and protect themselves from infection.

The rapid surge in Covid-19 infections is overwhelming hospitals and the country’s medical system, denying many people access to treatment. Millions of people are at risk of infection and possible death. The official death toll has reached 204, 832 but the unofficial death toll is considerably higher.

The Human Rights Foundation runs a training programme for women *panchayat* or local council presidents. Many are from the Dalit community and have been able to organise relief supplies for Dalit families. It is unlikely that food rations would have reached them without this representation.

Donations to the CWS Coronavirus Appeal will help protect thousands of Dalit and Tribal families from Covid-19 as local partner organisations:

- Share good health messages to protect people from Covid-19
- Fund personal protective equipment, hygiene supplies and facemasks
- Advocate for access to government food relief schemes and vaccinations.
- Distribute emergency food rations to some of the many people who have received no assistance.

Donations to the Coronavirus Emergency Appeal can be made:

- On line at: <https://cws.org.nz/donate-now-coronavirusappeal/>
- By Phone with a credit card: 0800 74 73 72

April 30, 2021