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Bush Fire

Presbyterian Women Aotearoa NZ

December 2018

Christmas greetings from our President - Faaolataga Leasi

"Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!" 2Cor 9:15

Wow! the year has now come to an end (almost) but the spirit of your productive work, following the September AGM; is unforgettable. Hence, I wish to acknowledge all your prayers, tremendous support, ideas, views, donations, talents, hospitality, love and mission in actions. Those gifts of yours and ours, are the greatest offering to the birth of Christ – He will bless you abundantly. Continuously in your Xmas prayers, may you remember the victims of domestic violence and poverty; the mothers and children.

Here's the Season Greetings in the various languages (of our respected members)

Meri Kirihimete ma te Tau hou (Te Reo Maori),

Manua le Kerisimasi ma le Tausaga Fou (Samoan)

'Oka kemou ma'u ha Kilisimasi fiafia moha ta'u fo'ou monu'ia (Tongan)

Manuia ko te Kelihimahi, vena te Tauhaga Fou (Tokelauan)

Me Nomuni na marau ni siga ni sucu dei na Yabaki Vou (Fijian)

Meri Kiritimiti! i te ia Mataiti 'Ou (Cook Islands)

'Monuina e Kerisimasi mo e Tau Ffoo' (Niuean)

메리 크리스마스 (Korean)

May you all have a merry Christmas and a blessed New Year!

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2018 WE ARE...at the Well

PWANZ Executive gives a huge bouquet of thanks to the many supporters who hosted and attended from Alpine (Rakaia, Cashmere, Whakatu), Central, Auckland (Forrest Hill, Hillsborough), Southern (St Andrew's Invercargill) and Kaimai (Chartwell Co-operating, Rotorua). Our series of regional gatherings over 2018 are now completed, supported by Christian World Mission with a "building capacity" grant.



NOTE in your diary - Dr Deborah Bower will be presenting at St John's in the City, Wellington event on Saturday 23 March 2019. If you missed out in 2018, make you travel plans now.

The Kaimai Gathering at RDPC St Johns Rotorua 9th November 2018.

The Fab Four (Jean, Tricia, Mary & Cath) did the planning for The Gathering. There were a few challenges to overcome – time changes, speaker schedule changes and all the fiddly bits that make a day successful. The Fab Four had the backing of the PWANZ St Johns Rotorua ladies so on they planned.



On the day, there was to be a Celebration Cake, Craft Stall, Book Stall, Flowers for the Guests, and the Workshop from the Guest Speaker. Chores were allocated, Jobs assigned. So then everyone got busy getting ready. Food was planned, flower bouquets were made, Crafts were gathered, tables and seating were made ready. Many helpful hands in the Kitchen on the day.

Cath greeted everyone and name tags were handed out. Then we proceeded with the day.



People gathered from Whakatane, Mt. Maunganui, Opotiki, as well as many locals. There were 41 in attendance for the Workshop.

Rev. Simon Cowell opened "The Gathering" with singing and a short message. Then prayed for our new PWANZ President Ola and her husband. Ola introduced herself and her role for the next 4 years.





Dr. Deborah Bower spoke a very powerful message on “Jesus talking with the Samaritan women at the Well”. It was informative about how Jesus broke the social norms of the day. We appreciated the chocolate bar rewards for correct answers to Deborah's questions.

Tricia thanked our Guest Speakers and presented each of them with a bouquet of flowers.



The Celebration Cake was cut prior to Lunch being served. As usual RDPC St Johns Rotorua knew how to bless the crowd with a bountiful lunch. There was time for sharing and chatting over the meal.

Then time to leave and clean up. All in all, **A very successful Gathering.**

Faaolataga Leasi writes: On Friday the 9th November, we landed at St Johns around 10'ish and already, the setting up was in place- Jean Bradley was in charge. The warm smiles having been exchanged and I was handed the Parish Directory with a job for me to do. It looks a bit old, but all the numbers I dialled were all 'alive' – I dialled 10 numbers (Cook Islands, Samoans and Tokelauans families). I sounded familiar to them due to fluency in languages, so reminded them to come and see the women at the well in the next 30 mins. None realised I was not their parish clerk. Most of all this is the most-attended Gatherings after all.

A brief devotion led us in spirit setting – thanks to Rev S Cornwall, followed by my brief introduction of Deb and her '2' dogs. On the go, Deb played a pivotal role in expressing the insight story of “of the woman at the well” that fed the hungry souls and ears. Even mine were not full enough, didn't want to miss any clips of this story in depths.

My cultural perceptions and assumptions of the woman at the well story, was well verse when my Women's group dramatized it at our Bible Studies a few years ago. Tears being shed when this woman (actor), poured out tears in begging Jesus for some water of life – we all cried and prayed after that. Deb has a powerful spirit via a theological view, in connecting the missing parts of the conversations between Jesus and the Woman – it's IN us, it's within us – More to come in 2019 so keep being a member of PWANZ and you'll in.

Wellington Suffrage Celebration 2018

Over a hundred Presbyterian Women and Methodist Women of the greater Wellington area joined together to celebrate 125 years since women in New Zealand earned the right to vote. Rev Hana Popoa-Dell led our service on Sunday 25th November 2018 at St Ninian's Uniting Church – Karori. The Island Bay Girls' Brigade read the lessons and helped with the afternoon tea.



The sermon on Ruth and Naomi by Rev. Hana had inspired us of our significant roles as mothers and women of faith, in relations to suffrage. The Honourable Luamanuvao Dame Winnie Laban, our guest speaker highlighted a historical journey of her dear mother who was a founding member/elder of the Presbyterian Church. Amongst the guests were Rev Clare Lind, Rev Anne Gilkison, and Rev. Linda Hope from Auckland, Sergeant Loretta Tevaga-Hunt, the president of the Methodist Women, and delegates from the Anglian Church. The cutting of the cake represented 2 generations, the past and the future. The wonderful singing led by Pasifika Women of Porirua and Newtown and the special songs/hymns of the occasion being led by David. The offering was gifted to the work of the Girls Brigade. The service ended with a wonderful spread and viewing the memorabilia being designed by our members from the various groups.

Visit our facebook page for more pics and information.

Presbyterian Women – Membership

Join Presbyterian Women for just \$10 per year? Join now at this reduced rate till 30 June 2019. NB: Following the recommendation at the AGM 2018, individual membership will increase to \$20 per annum from 1 July 2019. Membership includes:

- BushFire newsletter;
- a vote at the Annual General Meeting;
- participation in PWANZ's submissions to Parliamentary Select Committees;
- a voice advocating for women and women's rights in the wider church;
- joining an organisation with Special Consultative Status at the United Nations and sends an annual delegation to the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW);

Annual General Meeting 2019

Whakatu in Songer Street Stoke, Nelson will host the AGM of PWANZ over the weekend of 13 and 14 September 2019. The programme, and meeting papers will be available closer to the time, but this is early notice to put the date in your diary, book travel and organise accommodation.

Suffrage 125 'Vote' Celebration

Women's first ever vote in a national election was celebrated in the Grand Hall of Parliament on 28th November as part of Suffrage 125. It was an honour to attend with so many other women from around New Zealand. In 1893, over 90,000 women went to the polls for the first time. Speeches, waiata and the launch of the online version of 'Women Together', first published by Anne Else in 1993 marked the occasion. The updated version created by NZHistory will allow future generations to learn, enjoy and remember the whakatū wahine who blazed a path for us to follow.

Find out more at: <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/women-together> #Whakatūwahine #KateSheppardSentMe
Carol L Grant

NZMWF National Convention

This year the national gathering of NZ Methodist Women was held at the Garden Hotel from 25-28 October 2018 under the banner “Chosen people, Called to Proclaim.” Whilst I was invited to attend the whole convention I was only able to attend on the Friday afternoon and what a privilege it was. I was delighted to be greeted by so many familiar faces from around New Zealand which reflects the close links forged over the years between MWF and APW/PWANZ groups in the regions.



As guest speaker I was invited to reflect on the UN Commission on the Status of Women held each year in New York. It was great to meet two talented women from the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women, the World Secretary, Itamua Mataiva Robertson and the World Treasurer, Leu Pupulu of the South Pacific Area which has the responsibility for focusing on Goals 13, 14, and 15 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. All the other SDG's have been divided among eight other Federation areas around the world. The World Federation has three representatives each year at the UN Commission on the Status of Women and representative world Methodist delegations. The Convention devotions were uplifting and the singing was inspiring. A strong Executive of twelve amazing women will be based in Auckland for the next two years.

Carol L. Grant

Mission News

Special Project

I have posted out the special project package to many groups but need your name and address as our database is not up to date. Email pwanz2016@gmail.com for your group's copy.

***Be the Lifeline for Change* CWS Christmas Appeal**

Tackling injustice, violence and poverty has never been an easy task but with the urgent need to intensify action on climate change, effective action is critical. Over 72 years we have learned much from our partners grappling with these issues on the frontline. They offer dynamic stories of change that can sustain us in our efforts to carve out a fairer future for our communities and the planet.

The Appeal takes its theme from partner the Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees in Jordan who told International Programmes Coordinator Trish Murray CWS support was a lifeline to refugees. CWS is asking supporters to join the lifeline again so our 29 partners in 22 countries can continue working with vulnerable and exploited people to tackle the causes of poverty and injustice in their communities.



This year's Christmas Appeal uses the Sustainable Development Goals as a lens to look at how we can contribute to a world where 'no one is left behind'. Supporting local partners who are on the frontline of climate change or stopping violence against women and children is one way to contribute to this powerful global agenda. Business cannot be left to run as usual. Working together, we can join the lifeline so people have food, water and justice.

Thanks to Rev Clare Lind with the people of Tawa Union Church in Wellington for preparing these resources.

Lighting the Advent Candle of Joy

For those who have no joy in their hearts,
For those whose lives are full of difficulty,
For those who are anxious and have no peace,
We light the candle of joy.

We remember also the voice of God's messengers calling us to be bearers of joy in a troubled world.

Light the candle.

**You, Lord Jesus, are our joy, bring joy to the world.
May this light signal a breakthrough, a brighter future,
A new order and a better way.**

Rev Dr Susan Jones, another Wellington Presbyterian minister contributed new words to old advent hymns for this year's Christmas Appeal resources. Both can be found at <http://christmasappeal.org.nz/for-churches/>

WE ARE...at the Well

Dr. Deborah Bower spoke a very powerful message on "Jesus talking with the Samaritan women at the Well" and unpacked the reading from John 4.4-42. It is shocking that a similar modern story was hitting the world headlines as she spoke in Hamilton and Rotorua.

Asia Bibi Christian woman was sentenced to death in Pakistan for insulting the Prophet Muhammad during an argument with a group of field workers. Asia Bibi is a mother-of-five from Ittan Wali, a small rural village in central Pakistan.

In her biography, *Blasphemy: A Memoir*, Bibi describes the moment that would radically alter her life forever. On June 14, 2009, she set out to the fields near her house to take part in a berry-picking harvest, for which she would be paid 250 Pakistani rupees for a day's work — the equivalent of just under \$3. She described a climate of open hostility towards her from the women she worked with, because she was part of the country's Christian minority, which makes up less than 2 per cent of Pakistan.

Around midday, dehydrated and sweltering in the sun, Bibi walked to the nearby well to have a drink of water. But after she refilled the bucket a second time, a woman screamed: "Don't drink that water, it's haram!" According to Bibi's account, the shouter then turned to the dozen other women working in the fields and said: "Listen, all of you, this Christian has dirtied the water in the well by drinking from our cup and dipping it back several times. Now the water is unclean and we can't drink it! Because of her!" It was one sentence she fired back with that would seal her fate: "What did your Prophet Mohammed ever do to save mankind?" After this, Bibi said the women started screaming, spitting at her and physically assaulting her. She ran home in a fright.

Less than a week later, she went fruit-picking in another field when she was confronted by a rioting crowd, led by the woman who had initially shouted at her. The crowd surrounded her, beat her and took her to the village, screaming: "Death! Death to the Christian!" The village imam said: "I've been told you've insulted our Prophet. You know what happens to anyone who attacks the holy Prophet Mohammed. You can redeem yourself only by conversion or death."

Bibi was taken to the village police station, covered in blood, where police interrogated her and put a report together. She was then put into a police van and taken straight to prison. She was in that cell since 2010 and was acquitted of blasphemy in October this year.