

Greetings to you,

There has been growing concern about the effect of the Christchurch earthquake on churches' insurance premiums and now that the figures will soon be available there is bound to be considerable consternation. I am very conscious that few churches can easily find extra money at the drop of a hat and this increased requirement will be very difficult. For some churches it might test their very viability. On top of increased insurance premiums there is the looming question of local body requirements for buildings to be strengthened.

No doubt there will be meetings around the country where managers, deacons and elders feel the pressure of these increases and search for solutions.

I am not sure that there are simple answers. Council of Assembly has agreed to establish a committee to:

- a) Investigate long-term insurance requirements and alternatives for the Church and
- b) To look at short-term insurance requirements including, but not limited to, issues of seismic testing and strengthening of buildings. We need to work on this together and find ways forward.

In the meantime, can I ask that you take a considered and prayerful approach? We do need to hear God's leading in order to make good decisions. If paying the insurance premium is going to mean cutbacks elsewhere, please make those decisions conscious of where God wants us to place our priorities.

It may also be that we no longer need some of our buildings in order to serve our mission, freeing up funds that would have gone to pay insurance (and other payments). These increases might be the catalyst to reassess what we do and do not need.

Every parish's situation is unique and each one will have to grapple with the issues and decide the best way forward. Let's continue to pray for each other and for the ongoing life and mission of our Church in the midst of rapid change and uncertainty.

If you need advice, please do feel free to contact Margaret Fawcett at Assembly Office, email [margaret@presbyterian.org.nz](mailto:margaret@presbyterian.org.nz) or phone (04) 381 8291. And let's continue to support each other.

May God bless you,



Peter Cheyne

Moderator Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand