

# Spanz

Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand

WINTER 2018, ISSUE 73

Prison chaplaincy shines  
light in darkness

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## Passing on the mantle of leadership: retired ministers

**I am privileged to have in St Enoch's three retired ministers. Each has shifted to Tauranga, and in various ways are continuing to use their gifts to serve the Lord and the church. One is my supervisor and preaches periodically. He along, with another minister, are gifted pianists and are on the roster for worship. The other leads a home group and has a pastoral heart. His wife has just been made an Elder. None of these ministers were in the parish before I came, and they are incredibly loyal and supportive.**

'Senior active' is the term which the church uses to describe those ministers who have retired from their parishes and yet are in good health and still have a passion to serve. They are willing to make their considerable gifts and experience available to the church, both at parish and presbytery level.

To avoid pitfalls and facilitate the transition from 'active ministry' to 'senior active' some generally agreed principles and expectations need to be affirmed.

### **Expectations on retiring ministers**

It is generally understood that the minister who retires should retire 'out of the parish' in which they last served. This is to ensure the parish responsibility is handed on fully to the next minister. This is *cutting the pastoral tie*.

But given the huge influence of a retired minister, is it enough for a previous minister go away for several years and then return? Cutting the tie means that

the retiring (or previous) minister no longer seeks to have an influence in their previous parish by:

### **Officiating at funerals or weddings**

This often is difficult for the previous minister, especially if the tenure has been a long one. Unless the new minister specifically, and without pressure, gives their accent the previous minister has a pastoral obligation not to officiate.

### **Attending worship**

We often under estimate the influence we have in attending previous churches where we have been the minister. Even if the ministry has been relatively short, cutting this tie does not happen by simply being absent for a few years. If the retiring minister is to stay in their previous parish the new minister must agree. I suggest presbytery be involved in this conversation.

This situation is complicated by some ministers buying houses within the bounds of their last parish. Perhaps presbytery needs to encourage buying outside the parish if it is their last tenure.

### **Taking up leadership responsibilities**

Without an explicit invitation from the new minister the retired minister should avoid the pressure to be part of the leadership. This includes running a home group. Ministers who retire into a new parish can be a wonderful support, help and resource. But this has additional complications when that minister walks back into the parish in which they once served. They and presbytery would have to ensure that the incumbent minister is completely in favour of this and there should be a review of this relationship built into the acceptance of the retired minister coming back. Sadly, there have been examples of retired ministers undermining the pastoral tie of the existing minister by gaining a small group of dissenters around them.

### **Expectations from a previous parish**

Clearly some view the return of a long-serving and much loved retired minister into their parish as the return of a good friend, and in some cases their *real* minister.



Rev Jim Wallace

Presbytery needs to clearly clarify this erroneous expectation. The parish will need to be reminded who their minister is and what this means for them. Particularly for baptisms, funerals, weddings, leading of worship and significant family events.

The same applies in parish planning and future mission endeavors. The parish does not need to get the imprimatur from the previous minister for change, or when new mission seedlings are being planted or old ones closed. The retired minister will need huge integrity to be silent and allow the existing leadership to function.

### **Expectations on the retired minister by the presbytery**

The presbytery needs to honour the retirement of the minister. This means not regarding them as a free and available resource for presbytery. I have spoken to retired ministers who regret immediately taking up presbytery responsibilities. Perhaps a defined period of time out may be the best way to ensure that the retiree properly adjusts to this new phase. In the long run this may have a positive effect in ensuring the continued service of retired ministers.

– Rev Jim Wallace is minister at St Enoch's Presbyterian Church, Tauranga

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## MODERATOR'S MUSINGS

The Right Rev Richard Dawson contributes a regular column to *Spanz*.

### The Spirit in Tonga

**I spent early May in Tonga at the invitation of a ministry based in the Southern Presbytery called 3D Disciples. This is a magnificent disciple-making ministry partnered by the Rev John Gullick and his wife Heather of Riversdale. John has been the Presbyterian minister there for over 30 years and has maintained a lively and active parish for all of that time. He and Heather are a wonderful team; for three decades they have brought people to Christ and disciplined them.**

The 3D model is similar to other models which use a mix of classroom based teaching with practical field-based experience, conducted in a place and context usually quite different from the student's own. This both removes distractions and allows students to experience the dislocation of a cultural shift, which creates space for them to rely on God more.

I went to Tonga as Moderator to both visit the 3D base and to make contact with various church leaders to highlight the work of 3D. It was, frankly, a God-moment for me.

Tonga is still a world immersed in a Christendom model. From the royal family to many of the government ministers, public servants and so on, acknowledgement of God's role in their lives is a top priority.

I spoke twice at Tonga's two prisons. On both occasions the prisoners welcomed us by bursting into a beautiful Tongan hymn, perfect four part harmony, sung with magnificent voices, significant emotion and meaning. It was an incredible display of how deeply the Christian faith has been allowed to mold and shape the character of the nation.

Is there also the usual signs of normal human inconsistency and hypocrisy; of syncretism and shallow faith? Of course. But these are significantly outweighed by the incredible fruit a deeply Christian up-bringing provides to the majority of Tongans. Prayer is second nature. Scripture is referred to and woven into the fabric of their behaviour at every level of life. Love of neighbour is practiced even on the verdant battlefields of Rugby



League where the hits are ferocious and tempers clearly become frayed yet... after the battle both teams will often pray together and thank God for the ability to play the game and enjoy the battle.

At a gathering I was asked to bless a new car, given to the Minister of Internal Affairs, for use by an officer charged with the care of people with disabilities. All the speakers began by saying they would like to give thanks to God from who every good gift comes. There is a deep and abiding reverence for God in this nation and it starts at the very top.

The Royal family are committed Christians but not simply as church goers. The Queen organises and attends a sam prayer meeting on the first Sunday of every month to pray specifically for the nation and to seek God's guidance in national affairs. I spoke at this meeting and it was a wonderful experience to be with people weeping as they prayed for their nation.

I can imagine some readers wondering, how long can it last? I noticed that things are changing and this is having an influence on the young but I believe that Tonga will weather many of the storms and contribute significantly to a renewed Church throughout the Pacific.

This nation was once known as the warriors of the Pacific. They are now warriors for God. They have turned their energies towards building the kingdom and I think God will use them in marvelous ways.

God bless Tonga!





# FREEING THE *Spirit* BEHIND BARS

L-R three Presbyterian ministers have felt the call to prison chaplaincy: Rev Brett Johnstone, Rev Richard Ward and Rev Perema Alofivae.

**Prison chaplaincy at its best frees the spiritual potential of people doing time behind bars.**

*Matthew 25:36: I was in prison and you came to visit me.*

The Bible is a companion to some of the 11,000 men and women behind bars in New Zealand's prisons, affirming they are worthy of God's love, despite being held accountable for wrongdoing. The daily presence of chaplains in prisons, supported by 1,500 church volunteers of all denominations, is the living, human dimension of that divine love which is gifted to all people open to receiving it.

The Revs Richard Ward, Brett Johnstone and Perema Alofivae are three Presbyterian ministers who work as prison chaplains.

"I had a desire to engage more with those who are disengaged from the Church," Richard explains. "And to be a Gospel presence in the messy side of life."

## Mt Eden Correctional Facility

The move from parish ministry to daily life inside Mt Eden Correctional Facility came in 2015. Richard and his wife Rev

Nikki Watkin had been job sharing at Kohimarama parish since 1999, when they moved from Feilding to Auckland.

Richard approached the Prison Chaplaincy Service of Aotearoa New Zealand (PCSANZ), which holds contracts with the Department of Corrections and Serco to supply chaplaincy services to all the country's 18 prisons. He landed a full-time job at Mt Eden, which he says, "just felt like the right thing to do". Three years later, his calling proven right, Richard is the Auckland regional manager for Prison Chaplaincy.

Brett works alongside Richard at Mt Eden. He was also coming up to three decades as a minister when he decided this year to try something new.

"Choosing prison chaplaincy meant I could retain a ministry role while still being challenged to go beyond my comfort zone," Brett reflects.

Mt Eden is unique, accommodating only remand prisoners. "It's like a big waiting room filled with people in crisis," explains Richard. "Some wait for days, others can be there for years. But it's also a busy, mobile place with endless legal visits and court appearances. That's what makes it a different environment from

other prisons, where there's a lot more certainty and where people know what they're up for."

The prison's other distinguishing feature is that from the time a person arrives until they leave, they are literally never outside. Court attendance is either by audiovisual link or through the basement receiving office and into a prison truck. The walls are 3-4 metres high. It's a forbidding environment, where tensions can run high.

Mt Eden's temporary nature means it offers little in the way of rehabilitation programmes, focusing instead on initial addiction interventions and short practical interventions such as obtaining a driver licence, employment skills, yoga and critical thinking.

Chaplains are part of a large contingent of non-custodial staff such as case managers, the education team and psychologists who share a large, open-plan office space. Richard and Brett spend as much time as possible being visible around the site, and they are generally seen by prison inmates as neutral figures, someone to turn to for practical as well as spiritual support.

"We sit within the system but we're not of the system," says Richard. "The guys feel they can come to us with frustrations about the system, accommodation issues and such like, as well as to ask questions like, 'Can I forgive?' 'Can I be forgiven?' A lot of the time our role is to listen and say, "Yep, that sucks."

Brett adds, "We provide a normalising presence – kind, friendly, affirming, non-judgemental. In that way it's like being a military chaplain. The Church is all about peace, not war, but you offer pastoral care and don't judge the actions of those you support."

## Auckland Prison

At Auckland Prison in Paremoremo, a new prisoner-centred rehabilitation approach is being trialled. The prison has the only specialist maximum security unit, formerly referred to as "D Block". It also includes the medium-security Auckland West division, built in 1981 to relieve crowding at other institutions; a minimum security work and pre-release unit called Te Mahinga; and a 60-bed special treatment unit for child sex offenders, called Te Piriti.

Perema and the other two part-time chaplains are no longer allowed free access to the prison's 650 inmates but instead are one of many providers who wrap around the inmates. Perema has worked at the prison since 2001. He came in with over a decade of experience with military chaplaincy and institutions but is still adjusting to the recent changes in how things are done.

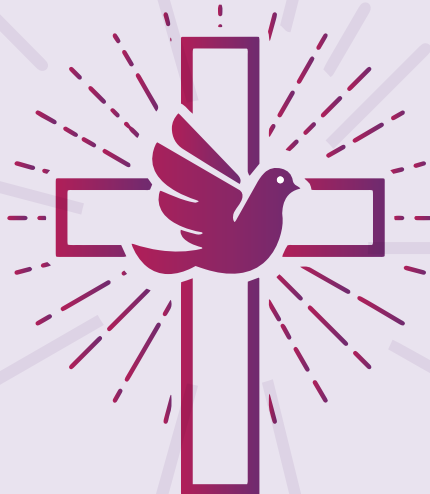
"The new system means we have to book time with the prisoners online in-between their other activities, and book interview rooms. In the secular prison language our chaplaincy is a programme," Perema explains. "The Church was never there to change people and make them see the light of Jesus, but the new systems change the way you do things, that's for sure."

Each month, Perema and the other two part-time chaplains are required to write reports that account for their time and note progress with inmates. They also have more regular contact with other providers, such as the team of 12 psychologists and the case workers, "so the left hand knows what the right is doing," Perema says. The intention is to roll this new rehabilitation approach out to other prisons around the country.

All three chaplains agree that despite popular perception, there is no stereotypical prisoner. The men come from all backgrounds and cultures. While a few prisoners see 'doing time' as a side effect of their chosen lifestyle, prison is mainly a levelling experience says Brett.

"We all make mistakes and learn from them. A wise man once said to me that people inside are the ones who've been caught. That's the only difference."

The media portrayal of brutal corrections officers also needs a refresh. "They're genuine, caring and positive men and women who do their best for the inmates," Brett says. "We should banish the old image."



Three issues stand out in New Zealand's prisons. Māori now make up a higher proportion of all new prisoners than at any time in recorded history, at 56.3 percent, due to the twin factors of a bias in the criminal justice system and a range of adverse early-life factors.<sup>1</sup> Corrections research shows that a disproportionate number of those handed out custodial sentences have mental health or drug issues which underlie their offending. Escalating drug issues such as P use have led to levels of assault, particularly by prisoners on each other, that spiked in 2010 and are still higher than at any time in the past 20 years.<sup>2</sup>

Security has been tightened. Staff now wear cameras and safety vests. "The

prison is run as a tight ship these days," says Perema.

Rev Amiria Te Whiu was seconded from Te Aka Puako in 2013 to develop a new chaplaincy department after Serco took over management of Mt Eden. A rebuild had not included a chapel or cultural centre but had allocated space for both. Amiria's task was to achieve what became Te Puna Wananga and to induct new chaplains.

Her presence throughout that year was instrumental, she says, in bringing the prison's kaupapa to life, a kaupapa based on eight core values of Tikanga Māori, especially Te Arohatanga – compassion for all men.

"There was a lot of support for Māori within the facility," she reflects, "but what is often lacking is the presence of kaumatua to bring a cultural perspective."

Amiria felt she was well-received by both staff and offenders. "It was a blessing to have confidence in what I know and do well," she says.

Working at Mt Eden offers few opportunities for long-term connections and to see the results of any rehabilitation. There is no contact after men leave. The rewards come from being in the moment and its potential for experiencing life anew.

"Working here has taught me to affirm the humanity in each person," Richard reflects. "Jesus was about new beginnings. These are people like us, men with potential who would make an incredible Church. We're not here to be missionaries, but it's great when people find their own way to God."

With every prisoner in identical grey t-shirts and track pants, the social niceties and the masks of personality get stripped away.

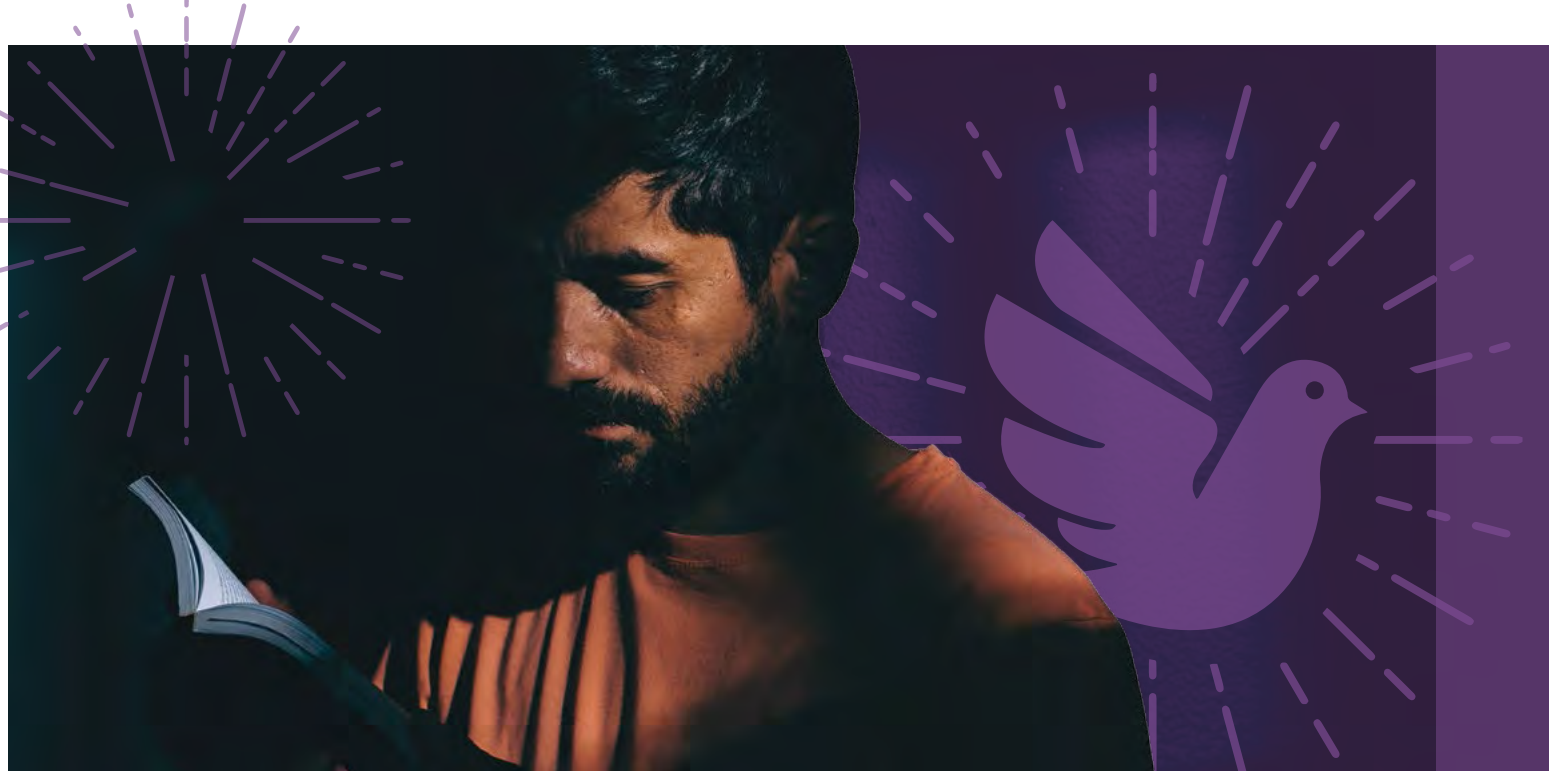
"Men get down to the real questions straight away," says Richard. "It's refreshingly honest and delightfully surprising who wants to engage, who will let down their hard exterior."

One particular moment stands out. "A well-tattooed gang member stood right in my personal space one day to eyeball me with a direct question about God, then while we talked he insisted I share his food, which was a burger mixed with two-minute noodles. That was quite a eucharistic moment! And one which wouldn't happen in Kohimarama."

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.corrections.govt.nz/resources/research\\_and\\_statistics/over-representation-of-maori-in-the-criminal-justice-system](http://www.corrections.govt.nz/resources/research_and_statistics/over-representation-of-maori-in-the-criminal-justice-system)

<sup>2</sup> [www.corrections.govt.nz/resources/research\\_and\\_statistics/assaults\\_in-prisons](http://www.corrections.govt.nz/resources/research_and_statistics/assaults_in-prisons)





Many of the men have had no exposure to the Bible and Richard says that unlike most Christians, who jump around between passages, prisoners will start at Genesis and finish at Revelations. There will be plenty of questions along the way. The Bible Society and Bible League provide bibles for chaplaincy teams to distribute on each site. Other organisations donate regular supplies of daily bible reading notes, i.e. Word for Today and Every Day with Jesus, which are popular with inmates.

The main source of support and supervision for the 43 chaplains in four regions of New Zealand working either full or part-time is PCSANZ. The trust has provided chaplaincy since 2000 and is ecumenical, representing seven denominational Christian churches and the Māori Council of Churches. Its chief executive John Axcell says not every chaplain has to start as a professional minister – many are volunteers who step up into the role.

“A more common pathway is through time spent as prison volunteers in a church group that visits a local prison. They may have some counselling and theological training. They see an ad for a chaplain and think, I could do that.”

The origin of the term Chaplain comes from the French word Chappelle; which is a coat or a covering. The term originates from the old Christian story of St Martin who offered his coat to someone in deep distress, and gave him a lifesaving protection.

Whatever their background, the key qualities that make a good chaplain are the same.

“You have to have a deep faith, some theological training and pastoral skills

and be able to work within the rules and protocols of two institutions at the same time,” John reflects. “Some tikanga sensitivity is also essential.”

A less obvious requisite quality is physical fitness, but not for self-protection. “There’s a lot of walking required, miles of concrete and heavy steel gates. You need to be reasonably strong,” says John.

Team work and flexibility are important, as prison chaplains roster volunteers, coordinate Bible study and facilitate support for prisoners with other faiths. Mt Eden’s volunteers include a Burmese Buddhist monk, a Jewish rabbi and a Muslim cleric. And while prisons are highly structured places, change is constant. Access time with prisoners generally has to be juggled with programmes, legal visits and lock up times.

Perema’s role also includes organising the 30 church groups from around Auckland that rotate leading the Sunday services and spiritual discussions in the units. Clevedon Presbyterian Church has donated Christmas presents and home baking for the past 30 years to all the men held in maximum security. The prison also operates an Angel Tree programme, through the Prison Fellowship NZ, to provide gifts for partners and children. When funds allow, notebooks and calendars with daily quotes are also inserted into the gift bags.

Sunday worship services are held each week in all prisons, facilitated by chaplains but led by local church teams who are among the 1500 volunteers who visit our prisons on a weekly to monthly basis. The age range of volunteers is from 18 to 92.

## Hawke’s Bay Regional Prison

Margaret and Pat Lynch are both 82 and have been visiting Hawke’s Bay Regional Prison twice a month for the past 17 years.

“Our son was in prison in Sydney,” says Pat, “and we couldn’t visit him, so we joined the local Living Waters prison fellowship instead.” Margaret’s church, St Paul’s Presbyterian in Napier, took over the banner of running Sunday services seven years ago, after the leader of Living Waters retired.

The hour-long service is offered three Sundays a month in two of the prison’s units. Attendance rates are generally higher than in the wider community and have been boosted in the past couple of years by the inclusion of live musicians.

“St Mary’s of Taradale joined us,” explains Margaret. “They have musicians. Until then we only had a guitar and had to hope there’d be a prisoner who could play it! Having fellows who can accompany the hymn singing is lovely. The men love it.”

Margaret and Pat also find inspiration from sermons that the ministers of St Paul’s have posted on the church’s website including Rev Sally Carter’s “Minister’s Musings”. They now have a large file of material to add to Bible readings and which form the basis for discussions with the men.

“They often ask for copies of the readings and for bibles,” says Pat.

The couple also go alone together to the prison. “There’s such a need,” says Margaret. “A lot of sadness and often a lack of family. The chaplains are marvelous but there’s only two of them and they can’t cover all the ground. These men need to know the community is with

them and they're not alone. There's love out there."

"We don't know if what we're doing makes an impact," adds Pat. "You just hope there'll be success, but at least we leave a bit of ourselves behind each time and to be honest we often get more than they do. We'll keep going as long as we can, at our age."

Pat says he regrets the absence of programmes such as the Sycamore Tree and the Angel Tree, which the prison used to run, and which he and Margaret helped to facilitate. Sycamore was a restorative programme that brought prisoners and

victims together to discuss the emotional impacts of crime. Local churches have also over the years transported families from Hawke's Bay to Arohata women's prison in Wellington for family visits and looked after children at home while spouses visited their partners in jail. Children of prisoners have also been able to attend holiday camps.

## Rimutaka Prison

Just north of Wellington is one of the country's largest prisons. Rimutaka holds 1,000 inmates and is divided into units of around 70 men in each. Knox

Presbyterian Church in Lower Hutt committed in 2014 to offering a twice-monthly Sunday service at one of the units. Rob McIntosh coordinates a team of six volunteers.

"I felt we needed to be doing something," he says. "At that time, I'd only once visited someone in prison and it was a distant memory, so I didn't know exactly what to expect. It's an intimidating environment but my biggest revelation has been that we're all human beings fundamentally."

The visits help to build bridges of understanding as well as offering practical support.

"The 10-15 guys who come to the services have a great deal of faith and some biblical knowledge. Our presence helps give them focus. And we come away with just as much, if not more, than we've given. The sense of fellowship is greater than I'd anticipated."

Rob says the men look forward to the services. "A couple of times we couldn't get in because of technical issues and we really felt we'd let them down. There's a much greater demand than is being met."

The long-term plan is to expand the ministry to supporting ex-prisoners, to work on making the church a more accepting environment for them.

Richard Ward agrees this is important work. The chaplaincy team tries to put external contacts in place with Auckland churches that are receptive to ex-prisoners.

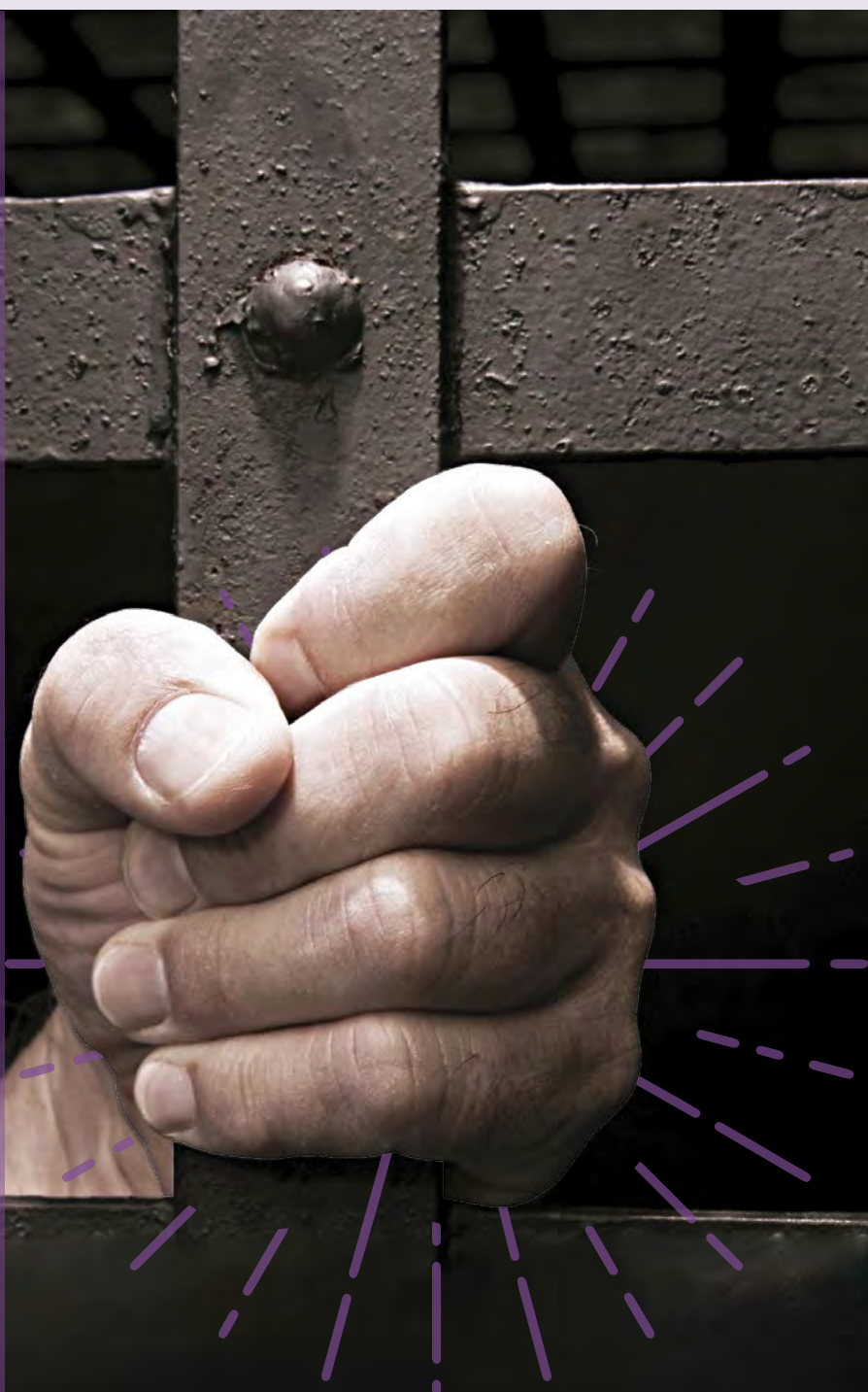
"We talk about Church as a place of love and forgiveness but some who attend our churches are still wary of anyone who's been in prison," he notes.

For John Axcell the challenge is getting new chaplains into the prisons rather than making pathways out of them. There is a lack of clearly defined pathway into this ministry, he says.

"Chaplaincy is typically seen as peripheral to parish-based ministry. It's not in the public eye of church settings so capturing the primary interest of people who might want to offer ministry in a prison setting is a challenge and requires a lot of effort."

Chaplaincy training is accessible as it is available by distance learning through Otago University. Theology courses offered at other training institutes include Laidlaw College, Carey Baptist College and Alphacrucis International College. Anyone wishing to explore prison chaplaincy can also get in touch directly with PCSANZ through their website [www.pcsanz.org](http://www.pcsanz.org) or phone 04 381 4982.

Jade Reidy Spanz





# LIFE OF MUSIC LEADS TO NZ FESTIVAL PASIFIKA CHOIR

**Wellington's Helen Tupai has performed for British royalty in the past, but it was when she directed part of a 250-strong Pasifika choir at February's New Zealand Festival that she felt her heart swell with patriotic pride.**

Helen was a musician almost before she fledged, so when her Samoan friend Tupe Lualua – who is the director of Le Moana dance company – asked if she'd be interested in getting together a Pasifika Choir for the 2018 New Zealand Festival, there was no hesitation.

"Tupe connected me with the NZ Festival team, and the rest is history," she says. "A couple of songs had already been written by renowned New Zealand musician Warren Maxwell [of Trinity Roots], and there was a Samoan traditional song. I was asked to get a 100-piece Pasifika Choir together specifically for the event."

Helen's first port of call was her own church, the Pacific Islanders Presbyterian Church (PIPC) in Newtown, Wellington. Having been raised and baptised in the church, it was where music became part of her DNA and where she knew she could find the choir's core membership.

The Festival brief was specific about including Cook Islanders in the choir, so Helen drew in singers from the Cook Islands Presbyterian Church in Newlands as well as the local Pasifika community. Her newly-formed Pasifika Community Choir was tasked to sing with the Wellington Community Choir – bringing all 250 Samoan, Tongan and



Helen Tupai (standing on chair) of the Pacific Islanders Presbyterian Church, Newtown, formed and led a Pasifika choir who performed for 20,000 people at February's New Zealand Festival.

Cook Islands voices together for the first time. They rehearsed as individual choirs initially, then collaborated for the final rehearsals.

On the evening of the NZ Festival's official opening – February 23 – a fleet of double-hulled waka hourua were welcomed into Te Whanganui-a-Tara, Wellington Harbour, with performances on the Wellington waterfront of kapa haka, song and theatre inspired by the arrival of navigator and explorer, Kupe.

Helen's participation was a natural extension of everything she had done before. Her family's affiliation with PIPC Newton meant children grew up emeshed in the choir and services, and the 'autalavou' or Samoan youth group.

"My brothers and I attended choir practice from a young age. We loved singing," she recalls. "At eight, I started piano lessons with our then minister's daughter, Luisa Fruean (nee Nokise), who is a minister in Ashburton. When Luisa went to Knox College for training, I continued my piano lessons with her old teacher, Maureen Castle. She used to play the organ at PIPC Newton, which was formerly the Congregational Church in the 1960s."

Helen completed all eight piano grades, gaining her performers' certificate through Trinity College, taught herself to play the guitar in primary school and started writing songs.

"I knew early in my life that music was going to be my thing," she says.

She started the Multichoir at Wellington East Girls' College in 1990, sparking a love of choral direction, and became leader for

a youth group at PIPC Newtown in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

"Our [youth group] band was called CONNECT – we called ourselves that after being asked to lead worship at the annual Connect Presbyterian Youth conference, held in Otaki. We met a lot of amazing people and were then invited to share our music ministry in Mangatangi."

Helen directed the Newtown Community Choir in December 2012 for a fundraising Christmas carols event at Government House. She was at the helm for both the Mission Choir's win at the 2006 Teuila Festival Choir competition, and the Pasifika Proud anti-family violence joint choirs event.

More recently, Helen had a hand in bringing the band Tomorrow People as finalists into this year's Vodafone Pacific Music Awards. Her husband Tana Tupai co-manages and is a member of the band, and Helen helped fine-tune some of the musical aspects.

The musical events she has been involved in have seen her meet international figures, including Britain's Princess Anne and Prince Charles, and the late Nelson Mandela.

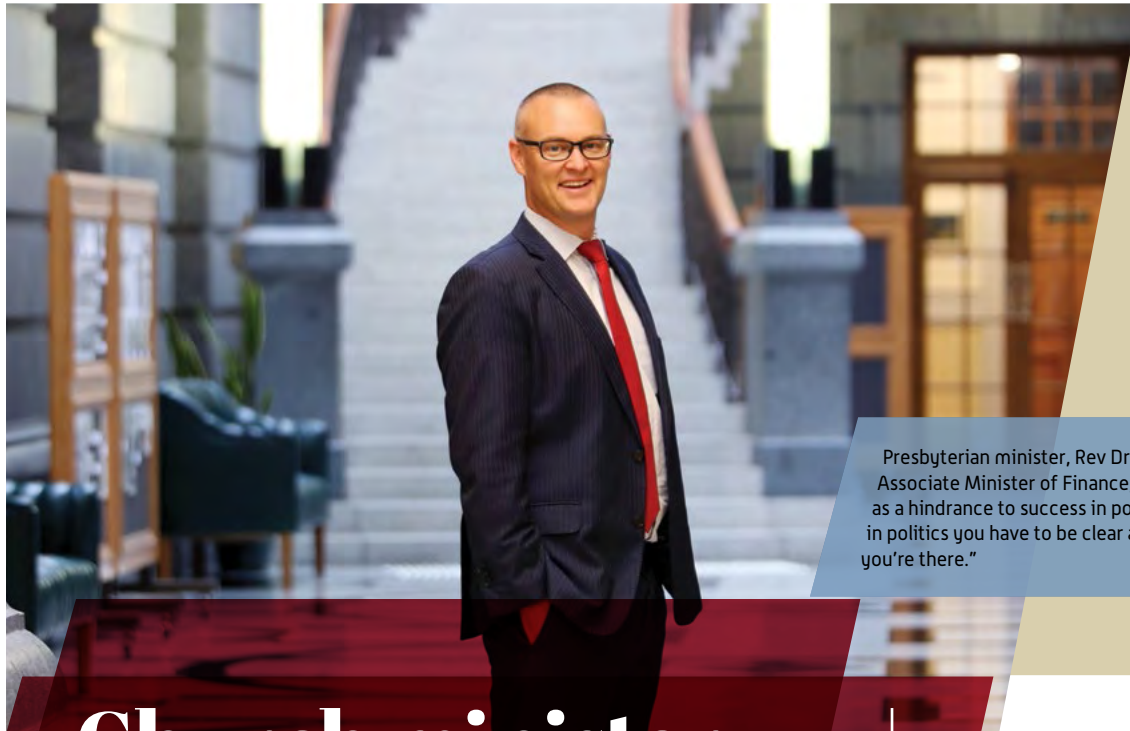
However, being part of this year's NZ Festival was something of a stand-out, she says.

"It was a memorable and emotional experience. It took everyone back to where our forefathers made the sacrifice to leave their homes and embark on a journey for a better life".

She adds, "It's not every day that you're in a choir singing to 20,000 people".

**Viv Posselt** Spanz





Presbyterian minister, Rev Dr David Clark, Minister of Health and Associate Minister of Finance, doesn't see his religious affiliation as a hindrance to success in political life. "To retain your integrity in politics you have to be clear about what your principles are, why you're there."

# Church minister Health Minister

**After just two terms in Parliament, the Rev Dr David Clark is tasting life in Cabinet.**

The new Minister of Health and Associate Minister of Finance is the first person to hold the twin roles of political and Presbyterian ministry since Labour MP Arnold Nordmeyer in 1941. Nordmeyer also held the health and finance portfolios, but unlike his predecessor, David's political experience for the first six years was "in the desert".

"Ironically, it was easier to be in opposition than in government," David reflects. "I believe in the counter-cultural role of the Church. I've pulled back from leadership roles in Church settings while in government not just because of time pressures but because it feels appropriate to do so."

Where his two ministries align is within the Labour Party.

"The founders of the Labour Party were mostly Christians who saw it as a pragmatic kind of Christianity, delivering rather than talking, establishing the Kingdom of God on earth."

David was born into Presbyterian life in Beachlands, Auckland in 1973. "Going to church with mum is just what we did. Dad only went on special occasions, but he was supportive. Church had an overlay of family, it was the church family."

David was fortunate to be embraced by the great hearts and minds of Howick's minister for 27 years, Rev Sam McCay

and his wife Olive. The parishes of Beachlands and Howick had a collegial relationship and David remembers Sam's frequent sermons.

"They were more engaging than school and captured me intellectually," he says.

Sam planted the idea in David that he should pursue a life in ministry. His mother's dedication to her work as a GP in Otara with underprivileged communities, the McCay's open home generosity, their pastoral care and Olive's public service to her community that would earn her a QSM, also quietly infused in David a sense of calling to "applied Christianity".

"I felt both nurtured and stimulated by the Church," he says.

David spent time in Germany as an exchange student and later while completing a PhD in Theology, focused on Rev Helmut Rex, a former Knox College tutor.

A three-year role as a Treasury analyst in Wellington laid the groundwork for election as the MP for Dunedin North in 2011. By then he was married and now has three children.

"Being in politics at this time equally feels like a calling, it's where I'm meant to be. The two 'ministries' run parallel in my life—you don't ever stop being a minister."

Inequality is the biggest challenge he intends tackling in his portfolio. New Zealand's inequality has risen at a faster

rate than any other OECD country in the past 30 years, pushing up towards the top.

"To reverse the direction we've been going in, my number one priority is viewing health through an equity lens," David states. "Last year, one in four adults said they couldn't afford to visit a doctor. We need to ensure for example that parents are well enough to look after their kids, that we have quality schools and health services available."

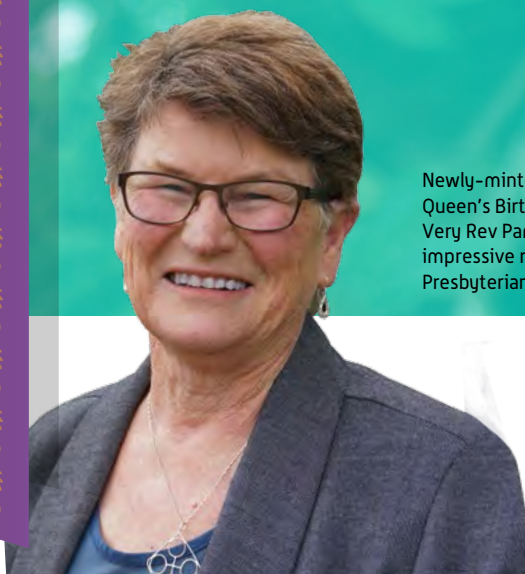
Greater emphasis on primary care, mental health and addiction, and building strong access to services complete the platform of priorities for David's first term in a sector judged to be in crisis, suffering a myriad of effects stemming from chronic underfunding.

With a name that amalgamates as two high-profile previous Labour prime ministers - David Lange and Helen Clark - he is branded as a leader with a clear future. Unlike "Nordy", who struggled to shake the label of puritan wowser, David doesn't see his religious affiliation as a hindrance to success in political life.

"History will be the judge," he admits, "but while religion is often pitched as a disadvantage, I see my ministry as an advantage for two reasons. To retain your integrity in politics you have to be clear about what your principles are, why you're there. And, while the public may be increasingly sceptical about religion and inclined to project self-centred motivations for entering parliament, people are encouraged by politicians with a faith background because they implicitly believe I'm likely to be principled. It's a good starting point for conversations."

Jade Reidy Spanz

# QUEEN'S HONOUR FOR FORMER CHURCH MODERATOR



Newly-minted recipient of a Queen's Birthday MNZM, the Very Rev Pamela Tankersley, has an impressive resumé of service to the Presbyterian Church and community.

**Former Presbyterian Church Moderator, the Very Rev Pamela Tankersley, has been recognised in the 2018 Queen's Birthday Honours announced in early June.**

Pamela was made a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit (MNZM) for services to the Presbyterian Church and to the community. The award recognises her leadership within Church, her role in strengthening relationships with partner churches elsewhere, and her contributions to increasing women's voices within the Church.

The citation also references service given in her home town of Palmerston North where, it reads: "She has been a driving force behind the establishment of budget cooking classes, a children's playroom, and organising children's activities", and notes her record of working closely with survivors of abuse.

Be it offering help at grassroots level, providing governance on a global scale, or representing New Zealand at the United Nations in New York, Pamela's experience in the Presbyterian Church is all-encompassing. Still, she seems almost blindsided by the honour.

"Yes, a great surprise," she says. "I had no idea that I had been nominated. I see this as acknowledging the Church as a significant player in local communities, and the women as often leading that direction."

Following her ordination 31 years ago, Pamela spent more than 20 years ministering in Gisborne, Wellington and Palmerston North. At the same time, she became increasingly involved in Presbyterian Church leadership, and in 2006 was elected to its highest office as Moderator of the General Assembly.

Her strong international ecumenical experience began with her membership from 2005-10 of the general committee of the Christian Conference of Asia. From 2010, she spent two years as Global Mission coordinator for the Presbyterian Church, during which time she helped build relationships with partner churches across Asia and the Pacific.

"That appointment resulted in my being elected Deputy Moderator of the Council for World Mission (CWM), and then Moderator in 2016," she says. "CWM is a Singapore-based international partnership in mission, involving 32 churches in 40 countries. The role took me to many countries."

She also convened the Assembly Business Work Group and has served on numerous national Church committees, including the Council of Assembly.

Through the years, Pamela has advocated tirelessly for the participation of women in both church and society, and from 2011-13 she represented the New Zealand Association of Presbyterian Women in New York at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. Her election to the highest office in the Presbyterian Church – as Moderator of the General Assembly – speaks volumes to that grit; she is currently part of a committee established to consider the role of the Moderator and recommend how the Church might bring more diversity to the nomination process.

"While being called to be Moderator is by vote of the whole Church – and we have had some great men serve in the role – there have been times in our Church when having 'our man' as Moderator

has influenced the nomination pool. This has affected the number of women, Māori, Pasifika, Asian and lay people nominated," she explains.

"Women had been ordained for several years by the time my generation was trained, but we still found much sexism in the Church. The Association of Presbyterian Women was very supportive in giving me and other women ministers many opportunities to bring leadership."

Describing the Church as more "conservative and evangelical" today than when she was ordained, Pamela said there remained a bias towards men for Church leadership positions, even though membership was mostly women, and most of the community work was done by women, and with women.

Her own faith journey, she says, has been one of "serving our God who calls for justice and compassion as true worship".

"I try to live this out. A critical word for me is partnership – with God in Christ, with the community we work in, as Treaty partners, and in international church partnerships."

Pamela's MNZM makes the Tankersley household something of a rarity – a twice-honoured home. She and her musician husband Roy – parents to three and grandparents to six – now have a Queen's Honour each.

Roy was awarded his own MNZM in the 2010 New Year's Honours for his services to music.

**Viv Posselt** Spanz





## GA logo symbolises relationships

**Moderator-elect the Rev Fakaofu Kaio has chosen a powerful focus for General Assembly 2018 – relationships.**

"It is not a theme but a focus for the General Assembly, a vision to guide us," says Fakaofu. "We will focus on Jesus at the heart of our relationship with God, relationship with each other, relationship with the Church, and our relationship with our home church and community. My devotions will touch on the many teachings Jesus had for us about relationship."

### Logo embraces old and new

The General Assembly logo draws its inspiration from a traditional simple wooden cross combined with a contemporary design. "It is embracing the past but it is also very much of this time," says Fakaofu.

"I have chosen a cross because it is fundamental to the Christian faith, and also because my daughter Liana says this design captures who I am."

"The logo is strong, bold, simple, conservative and different. It represents Dad well," says Liana. "The blue represents both the sky and the sea, open spaces, freedom, intuition, imagination and sensitivity. Blue also has meanings of depth, trust, loyalty, sincerity, wisdom, confidence, stability, and faith."

Fakaofu says that developing an image that symbolises both light and dark was important.

"The cross represents the relationship between man and God. This relationship

can sometimes be painful. It is a dual relationship; good times and hard times, death and resurrection."

Fakaofu hopes that those at GA will remember the cross in every debate, in every conversation, be these peaceful or contentious. "It does not mean we cannot disagree with one another but at such times we must put the cross before us."

### GA speakers

Instead of asking an international keynote speaker to address GA, as has been the case in previous years, Fakaofu will ask three senior leaders within the Church to speak on relationship.

"I am thinking of affirming our own people; acknowledging that our senior Church leaders have strong voices. I will be confirming the speakers soon. All three have great knowledge and wisdom; they have travelled the world to speak about our Church and share our stories and now they will bring them to us."

### GA evenings

On the Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights of GA, Fakaofu says that local Christchurch churches will lead performances and presentations in the new St Andrew's chapel.

"These evenings will be times where we can gather and 'Discover our Church'. I hope we will see and hear how churches have recovered since the earthquakes and discover what new exciting shape ministry is taking here."

Angela Singer [Spanz](#)

## Planning General Assembly 2018

From 3 to 7 October, General Assembly (GA) will be held in Christchurch at St Andrew's College.

The Alpine Presbytery is undertaking local arrangements and plan to host around 300 Commissioners, observers and guests. Venue facilities are of the very highest standard, says local arrangement's Liz Whitehead.

"Accommodation on-site is twin-share rooms in hostels built in 2012, so they are nearly new. There are shared bathrooms on each floor, plus common rooms. There is good disability access. Accommodation for four nights is \$230 and includes buffet breakfast. For those booking alternate accommodation we advise you do so early as there are several events on in Christchurch."

Liz says attendees will enjoy hearty high quality meals. "St Andrew's employs skilled qualified chefs with restaurant experience. Special dietary requirements can be catered for, just write your requirements when registering on the GA website."

There will be a ministers' training day on Wednesday 3 October at The Village @ Bryndwr.

### REGISTRATIONS

GA registrations open 2pm on Wednesday. "This is the earliest we can welcome those attending Assembly to St Andrew's as there is another event being held at the College prior," says Liz.

At 7pm on Wednesday, the stunning St Andrew's chapel will host the opening of Assembly with a Powhiri, followed by worship and installation of the new Moderator.

GA business will begin the following morning, Thursday 4 October at 8.30am, in the gymnasium. There will be breaks in business for morning and afternoon teas, during which time Commissioners can mingle.

Sunday 7 October is World Communion Sunday, Assembly will conclude with an 11am Communion at the Chapel, followed by lunch.

**For information and online registration details visit the dedicated General Assembly website which be published by local arrangements in June.**



## Church without walls helps grandparents raising grandchildren

**A blend of biblical principles and practical help is being offered to grandparents raising grandchildren in the Waikato town of Te Awamutu.**

The newly-revived Grandparents Raising Grandchildren support group is being led by St Andrew's Presbyterian Church family worker, Ruth Gilling.

Together with Rangitaia Crowley of the Te Awamutu Māori Women's Welfare League and the St Andrew's congregation, the group wants to provide wrap-around support for an increasing number of grandparents struggling to raise their grandchildren.

Those affected range in age from their 40s through to their 80s; there are even great-grandparents seeking help. Most of them are women, some are battling their own health problems as well, many face exhaustion and isolation, and almost all have come into the situation through unhappy circumstances, frequently involving drug and alcohol abuse and crime. The growing use of methamphetamine is a disturbing factor.

The physical, emotional and financial burden faced is often hidden from view; many grandparents feel ashamed because their own children can no longer look after their families.

"They don't know what help is available to them or where to look for it, and some of them are of the generation that is resistant to asking for help," says Ruth. "Some are thrust into caring for their grandchildren virtually overnight. Often they have no idea how to tackle everyday issues, things like when to allow their grandchildren to have a mobile phone,

Ruth Gilling (left) and Pat Schwass are two of the leaders of a new Grandparents Raising Grandchildren group that meets at St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Te Awamutu. Around 80 percent of the children who attended the group's April school holiday programme are raised by a grandparent.

issues around dating and driving. And almost all of them struggle financially."

Ruth took on the role of family worker late last year, filling the shoes of her predecessor Pat Schwass and bringing to the table her own experience working with the Waikato Parenting Place. Together with Rangitaia, Pat had run an earlier Grandparents Raising Grandchildren group in Te Awamutu, but it had stalled after one of those involved passed away.

One of the first things Ruth did in her role as family worker was to organise a school holiday programme, run in the last two weeks of January.

"That was a desperately needed outreach that we could get going quite quickly," she says. "But I was shocked to find that 50 percent of the children who came were being raised by grandparents. It made me realise that we have a huge need here – we had to resuscitate the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren support group."

Four grandparents, all of them women, attended the first monthly meeting advertised through the local paper. There were seven at the second meeting and 14 at the third. The need was emphasised further when Ruth discovered that around 80 percent of the children who attended the April school holiday programme were being raised by a grandparent.

"This is clearly the tip of the iceberg; the problem is obviously more widespread than we initially thought."

Ruth contacted the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Trust NZ, an organisation supporting 4,100 grandparents nationally, with around 14 percent of its membership in the Waikato.

The first few Te Awamutu meetings served to identify the need and distribute information.

"A key aim is to inform grandparents about their rights; help them access those entitlements if need be," Ruth says. "We are very much at the beginning, but we want to see what funding we can source to support the grandparents better. One idea is to organise a separate week in the holidays to take care of the children, mainly to give the grandparents a break."

St Andrew's Rev Ron Bennett is right behind the move and has expressed his support for Ruth.

"I know she has a support team from our primarily 'grey-haired' congregation, along with some enthusiastic teenagers to back her up with the holiday programme. I see an overlap here; as the members of St Andrew's work with Ruth, they have the opportunity to form and deepen relationships with these grandparents, and by both word and deed, share the Gospel of God's love," he says.

"It is part of our mission as a church to be a 'church without walls', in other words, a Christian community seeking to reach out in love and service."

*Sadly, in late May, Pat Schwass died suddenly. She will be remembered for her long service to her community.*

Viv Posselt Spanz





# Otago University has first Māori chaplain

When Rev Wayne Te Kaawa was inducted as Otago University's first Māori chaplain on 10 May, he was both breaking new ground and furthering a journey started decades earlier.

The journey began with Wayne's ordination in 2002 and broadened as he ministered in the Putauaki pastorate, Opotiki and Rotorua – staying close to his home base in Onepu in the eastern Bay of Plenty. From 2011 to 2017 he was Moderator of Te Aka Puaho, the Church's Māori Synod, and director of Amorangi ministry.

Fervently driven to help Māori succeed, he moved to Dunedin in 2017 to study for his PhD at Otago University. His topic relates to re-visioning Christology through a Māori lens – examining Māori views around Jesus Christ and how it can contribute to Christology.

Wayne's induction as Māori chaplain at Otago University is the first of its kind for the institution, and the first in decades at any other New Zealand university. The position also includes Otago Polytechnic.

"I will be assisting students and staff with the spiritual aspect (te taha wairua) of campus life," he says. "Being a Māori chaplain also means being a kaumatua and fulfilling requirements around powhiri, marae trip and wananga."

The move coincides with Wayne's appointment into a co-teaching role alongside Professor Murray Rae which will see them launch a new Māori theology and religion paper in Otago's Department of Theology and Religion next year. To my knowledge, says Wayne, this makes me the first Māori to become a teaching fellow in the department.

"At the end of it, Murray and I will co-write and deliver a paper on this new experience," he says. "I love home-grown theology, and Māori theology and religion is such a wide subject area. Hopefully, if the paper is a success, it will lead to other papers in the future."

Both new appointments represent bold steps which Wayne hopes will "inspire other universities to do something similar".

"In accepting both roles, my hope was to be a change agent and trend-setter, a midwife, bringing new things to birth," he says. "There would be close to 20,000 Māori tertiary students



Otago Daily Times

Rev Wayne Te Kaawa's induction as Māori chaplain at Otago University is the first of its kind for the institution, and the first in decades at any New Zealand university.

in this country, and between 500 to 1,000 Māori academic and support staff... that is reason enough to have a specialist Māori chaplain. Having only one Māori in paid tertiary chaplaincy in this country is something that needs to be looked at and addressed positively. The Otago Chaplaincy Trust Board needs to be congratulated for making this decision."

The idea of establishing a Māori chaplaincy had been under discussion by the Trust Board for two years. It was advanced by Wayne's arrival at Otago and his involvement with the chaplaincy team, and from there, a proposal was put to the Māori Centre and Māori Development Unit for approval and funding from the university.

"That was achieved in early 2018. By then, I had become a high-profile Māori on campus and was often called upon by students and staff for advice and leadership. So, when the position was advertised, I was approached to apply," Wayne says.

But burdened by grief following his mother's death in January and dealing with other delicate matters, Wayne hesitated. "In the end, I saw this as an opportunity to be part of something new and special, and pave the way for other Māori to go into chaplaincy."

Between his new roles – and the completion of his PhD by early 2020 – Wayne's diary is full. He worships and works at St Marks in Pinehill, where he hopes to become minister. He is also a kaumatua on Arai Te Uru Marae, chairman of Te Roopu Tautoko ki te Tonga Hauora, a non-profit Māori health provider, and senior advisor for the Otago region to Rino Tirikatene, MP for Te Tai Tonga.

As his journey unfolds, he ponders the destination.

"On my first day at Otago, I wondered, 'what footprint do I want to leave that will ultimately benefit this place and the community?'"

It has so far included pioneering a new methodology, becoming the first Māori chaplain at Otago University, and the first Māori teaching fellow in theology at Otago, and much more.

"I think I may have left a footprint there in some way," he says.

Viv Posselt Spanz

# Presbyterian sermon applauded at Waitangi

Rev Wayne Matheson delivered a well received special sermon at February's Waitangi Day commemorations at Te Whare Runanga.

**Spliced with wisdom from historians, activists and a rock star, Rev Wayne Matheson's Waitangi Day sermon was greeted with a round of applause.**

It was a response that surprised and humbled him, as did the many laudatory approaches made to him after the 6 February 2018 service.

"To be greeted by applause is very unusual at these type of events," he says. "Preaching at such an occasion is a huge honour. It requires study, thoughtful preparation and prayer that you would normally do, but even more so! I felt a weight of responsibility. I felt I stood on the shoulders of others who have experienced that honour."

Wayne is the Presbyterian Church's Assembly Executive Secretary and was invited to preach at the 10am interdenominational service at Waitangi's Te Whare Runanga, the carved meeting house central to commemorating the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi. He also represented the Church at the dawn service.

The call to preach came after other Presbyterian Church leaders earmarked for the privilege this year had initially signalled their unavailability. Standard procedure around the event sees leaders of national churches invited by Waitangi Day services organiser, Te Tai Tokerau Anglican Bishop Te Kītohi Pikaahu, in such a way as to give all mainstream denominations an opportunity to preach.

Presbyterian Church invitations are extended first to the Moderator, followed by the Moderator of Te Aka Puaho. Wayne is the third Presbyterian to preach at

this service – his predecessors being Very Rev Pamela Tankersley and former Moderator of Te Aka Puaho, Rev Wayne Te Kaawa.

"When the invitation came, neither Moderator was going to be at Waitangi, so I was asked to preach. Due to a late postponement elsewhere, the Moderator Rt Rev Richard Dawson, was able to attend. It was great to also have Rev Amiria Te Whiu there, representing Te Aka Puaho," Wayne says. "Our Church's very first involvement at Waitangi was in 1940 when Rev John Laughton and members of Te Aka Puaho took part in the centenary service."

Although familiar with Waitangi Day commemorations, Wayne decided to use the theme of the "journey to justice" and sought to weave into the message various aspects drawn from others, as well as biblical texts which remain relevant today.

He selected the readings of Micah 6: 6-8, and Luke 4: 14-21, then referenced historian Michael King's book, *The Penguin History of New Zealand*, in which King described concern for the welfare of Māori held by Colonial Office officials influencing Treaty writers as "genuine and profound".

Other Treaty historians said Christian missionaries played an important role gathering further signatures, Wayne told his audience, and therefore bore a moral obligation to foster its ongoing honouring.

"So here in 2018," he asked, "we who stand on their shoulders, what do our readings say as we grapple with the

public consequences of faith in relation to this journey to justice?"

Wayne included material from Jim Wallis's book *God's Politics*, in which he notes that in a world that promotes private spirituality, there is an avoidance of the public consequences of faith. He also spoke of Dr Martin Luther King Jr's call, even as he faced threats to his own life, to "recapture the gospel glow of the early Christians ... who willingly sacrificed fame, fortune and life itself, on behalf of a cause they knew to be right".

He also drew on the lyrics from the U2 song "40", a Song of Thanksgiving, to illustrate his point around the passage of time, saying while "the arc of the moral universe is long, it bends toward justice". Others he referenced included Dame Whina Cooper, Dame Claudia Orange, Keith Newman, Dr Laurie Guy, Dr Paul Moon, Dame Anne Salmond, James Belich and Rabbi Abraham Heschel.

Several people approached Wayne afterwards to tell him how helpful they had found his sermon.

"They were from various church backgrounds and other walks of life," he says. "Some have contacted me asking for a copy of my notes."

Liz Bayliss attended the interdenominational church service at Waitangi for the first time this year. She was "very encouraged that one of our Church executive members could offer the wider community an informed, inclusive, relevant and challenging address that could be received and understood through the use of straightforward and direct language".

Viv Posselt Spanz



# Small grants *enable* large mission



## Ten parishes received grants totalling \$76,500 from the Presbyterian Foundation in the last funding round of 2017.

Applications for the Foundation's small grants, under \$10,000, are considered twice yearly says PressGo Catalyst Lisa Wells. Discovery Christian Centre in Fairfield, Hamilton was one of the ten successful applicants.

Fairfield received \$10,000, to contribute to the cost of employing the parish's part-time community whanau minister, the Rev Christine Harding.

Christine, who is an experienced and qualified coach, is working with the parish's leaders to help them get the best out of themselves and their teams. She will also identify missional needs in and around Fairfield that the parish can respond to.

Incomes in Fairfield are significantly lower than the average for Hamilton, residents typically have lower levels of formal education and needs in the community are high, says Rev Mike Uttley minister at Discovery Christian Centre.

Christine's work supports the mission of the parish to support young people and their families, and present the good news of Jesus. She has pioneered the parish's ICONZ for boys group, which now attracts around eighteen 5-7 year olds each week, says Mike. Discovery's sister congregation - Oaks Christian Centre - has an ICONZ for girls group where approximately 30 attend each week, 90 percent of the girls don't attend church.

Discovery plans to offer its first Messy Church worship session to build connections between the church and those who attend ICONZ and other activities.

## Strengthening families

East Taieri Church's capacity to do work to strengthen families in their community received a \$10,000 boost from a Presbyterian Foundation grant awarded in late 2017.

The Mosgiel parish's work with families builds on the efforts of community facilitator Joy Davis, who for the past eight years has been building connections and partnerships with the local community.

In that time, says East Taieri minister Rev Martin Macaulay, Joy has built up the church's connections and partnerships with local agencies and groups to the point where they are now a credible part of the social services landscape in their community.

A meeting between Joy and the principal of Taieri College identified a need to provide young people and their families with information about safely engaging with technology. Joy pulled together an event in partnership with a range of community agencies, which addressed important issues like cyber bullying, smartphone use, social media and more, says Martin.

This is one of many examples of Joy's work reaching out into the community says Martin.

The Presbyterian Foundation grant part funds Joy's role and is really supporting us to have capacity to do this work says Martin.

## English conversation group

As part of her role as young families and children's coordinator at St Andrews Centre, Waiuku, Anisha Santhoshkumar recognised that a 'fear of speaking' created a huge stumbling block to immigrants, preventing many from integrating successfully into their new home communities.

With the support of St Andrews Community Trust and a team of volunteers, a comprehensive English conversation programme evolved that includes lots of sharing, laughter and chatter, says Anisha.

The aim of the programme, which received \$2,500 funding from the Presbyterian Foundation, is to help immigrants reach their full potential by removing the fear of speaking and support them to integrate into the community and make new friends.

Attendees practice one-on-one conversations with volunteers from St Andrew's, and a reunion is held a month or so after the end of the five-week programme.

The most recent group reunion was in May and the participants were included in a special church service at St Andrew's, where there were Bible readings and hymns sung in Romanian as well as English. This was followed by shared lunch at one of the volunteers' homes.

From the most recent group, one participant has grown so much in confidence that she has begun volunteering at St Andrew's op-shop.

"These groups provide a pathway for migrants to get away from fear of speaking and build connections and friendships and become productive members of the community," says Anisha.

Jose Reader [Spanz](#)

## The Tindall Foundation Funding Applications

Presbyterian Support New Zealand is The Tindall Foundation Faith Funding Manager for Presbyterian organisations and parishes. We are pleased to invite applications for the 2016 funding round.

The Foundation allocates funds to PSNZ for distribution to projects undertaken by Presbyterian Support regional organisations and Presbyterian and Union parishes under the *Supporting Families and Communities* criteria.

Donations of up to \$15,000 per project can be made. Applications for projects meeting the criteria are now open.

**The closing date is Friday 24 June.**

For funding criteria and application forms please visit our website: [ps.org.nz](http://ps.org.nz)





## Water *for* Seeds

**“What do you want me to do for you?”  
Jesus asked Bartimaeus in Mark 10:46-52.**

This passage, and its powerful question, was important to me last year. I had just begun research for Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership investigating continuing education needs amongst ministry leaders of the PCANZ, funded by the Thornton Blair Research Fund. As I wrote in Spanz [pg 18, winter 2017], I was being challenged to ‘Listening Leadership’. Could I, like Jesus, make a simple commitment to asking questions that might hold potential, as I wrote, for “the profound transformation of us all”?

A year on in my research, I am discovering that listening can challenge and change named assumptions, including assumptions about our own and others’ knowing of God, and so empower potential for transformation in our life going forward.

This was true in Jesus’ interactions where listening, wherever and however it was occurring, proved often to be water for seeds.

The reality of life for a Samaritan woman was overtaken as her imagination was fired when Jesus engaged her in serious theological discussion at a well. She went back to her city, testified, and many believed in him.

A woman caught in adultery found her ‘righteous’ accusers gone when Jesus posed a question and quietly sketched thoughts in sand.

A respected Roman centurion sent Jewish elders across seeming social barriers to request Jesus’ healing help. He amazed Jesus with his faith.

A surprising and strong declaration of faith was made not by the twelve but by Martha when Jesus finally responded to news of Lazarus’ illness.

Jesus was once challenged into healing by a Syro-Phoenician woman pointing out that God’s grace is for everyone, not just the children of Israel.

At the foot of the cross an observant and listening centurion, seeing Jesus breathe his last, was convinced he was God’s son.

Two thousand years later, listening still challenges, changes and empowers.

My role with KCML has been to ask questions about the educational needs of ordained leaders going forward, with post-graduate programme design in view. But, as I listened, I heard something more challenging: that educating members is needed as well if the Church is to thrive, and that flexible, low-cost, bite-sized-and-stackable learning opportunities are preferred. The who and how of education is broader than assumed.

Presbyterians have been active in Aotearoa New Zealand since 1840 but in the process of listening I am hearing that we in the Church suffer when we stop listening deeply and in mutually transformative ways to one another, to

our wider communities, and to the Spirit of God. It stunts our ability to witness. The what-for of our life together is needing expansion.

Presbyterians hold a reputation for intelligent faith and for valuing Christian education, but in the process of listening I am hearing deep concern over levels of biblical illiteracy, a lack of confidence in the Gospel, and God-knowledge that is too small. The why of our faith needs renewed learning.

KCML is finding itself challenged. Can it imagine ways to actively respond and resource into these and other gaps we have been hearing? Growing website resources for connection, including a ‘living library’ of videoed and ‘live’ stories to borrow, creating a BeWise App for training elders and other lay leaders, and developing stackable learning opportunities are three ideas we are working on. And still we are listening.

Listening opens up opportunity to hear the truth, seek profound rather than token relevance, be in the business of thorough-going transformation, and thus engage in a knowing of God and ourselves that matters now and into the future.

Listening is water for seeds.

– Dr Rosemary Dewerse, Thornton Blair Research Fellow, KCML

a faith as  
intelligent as it is  
courageous



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[pym.org.nz/connect](http://pym.org.nz/connect)



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February saw the official opening of St Paul's Trinity Pacific Presbyterian Church in Christchurch.

# New home for St Paul's Trinity Pacific

**One door closed and another has opened for St Paul's Trinity Pacific Presbyterian Church in Christchurch.**

In February this year, the 800-strong congregation moved into their new \$5.8 million home on Fitzgerald Avenue, finally leaving behind the 142-year-old building that had been home for so many generations of Pasifika people in Christchurch.

The new church, with its contemporary design by architect Tom Craig, is wrapped in Pacific motifs gifted by four artists in the congregation and representing different nations.

"It's a simple design that draws you in," says Rev Makesi Alatimu, minister of St Paul's. "It's elegant, and we think it's beautiful. Most importantly, it's a building that all these folks can say, 'there's an imprint of me in it.'"

The other central feature resides in the church's worship hall. The 1902 organ was damaged in a 2009 fire in the old church and because it had been removed, the organ survived the 2011 quake that red-zoned most of the property. It has been restored by the South Island Organ Trust.

The original 1876 stone church was structurally sound and would have withstood the earthquake but the 2009 fire meant that the building was scaffolded and in the process of being restored at the time.

"It's an irony that the earthquake strengthening and repair work was what actually weakened the old girl," says Makesi.

The congregation was able to move back into the old hall at the corner of Cashel and Madras streets some months later and has been there while the new church was planned and built.

"We felt it was important to retain a central city church," says Makesi. "That way it includes everybody. A church in the suburbs would have been locally affiliated."

Makesi was appointed minister of St Paul's in 2013. The project was his first experience of building, and it was also a first for the congregation. The building committee included parish and presbytery representatives who understood the Church processes involved. The project was also under the guardianship of the Church Property Trustees.

"When you haven't done this kind of thing before you learn a lot. The trustees ensured all the details were attended to so there were no nasty surprises," says Makesi. "I can see now that if you do the process well it will serve you."

The biggest challenge, he says, has been to help his community through the inevitable grieving stage. The old site was compulsorily acquired by CERA, the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority, and is being used for a sports stadium.

"There's still a pinch of sadness and anger," says Makesi, "and we felt short-changed by CERA in settlement figure and intend to challenge that, but I believe

that how you deal with setbacks defines us as Christians. I've witnessed how resilient and committed our folk are. There's a lot of excitement and joy. People have come back in larger numbers since the new church opened. We're still here."

St Paul's Trinity Pacific's mission is to connect the Christian faith with everyday life in the heart of the city. The new building serves that mission.

"As grand as the old girl was, it was designed for a totally different era," Makesi explains. "Her stained-glass beauty was only visible from the inside and our mission tended to be defined by it. The earthquake gave us the opportunity to let our mission inform what we build and gives us all sorts of new possibilities for a young generation that has grown up in a vastly different society. It has the hand of God in it."

The new building is outward looking, with the worship hall to the rear, and front-facing office and other rooms, which are all available to rent by the community. The church also offers a Grace women's ministry and Samoan language classes.

Makesi is discussing how the church's new home at 45 Fitzgerald Avenue can play an integral part in General Assembly 2018, to be held in Christchurch from 3-7 October. With a capacity of 400, it is not large enough for the opening service which will be held at St Andrew's College chapel, but they may be involved in a cultural evening or similar.

Jade Reidy Spanz



# Dunedin's ecumenical Easter camp a success



Youth made the most of the fun activities on offer at the Dunedin Easter Camp 2018.

**A move to broaden the scope of an Easter camp, which for 80 years has helped shape the South Island's Presbyterian youth, is showing signs of success.**

Two years ago, it was decided a change in approach was needed, one which sought to transform the established Dunedin Presbyterian camp into a neutral space where all denominations could comfortably share four days of fun and fellowship around the Easter story.

Otago and Southland Synod youth advisor Brad Kelderman says they were keen to organise the camp in a way that catered to youth groups from all churches across the city.

"In 2016, the Dunedin Presbyterian Easter Camp made an intentional effort to offer a camp that youth groups from other denominations felt comfortable to attend. Last year, this was a huge success. We had a number of new youth groups attend from different denominations," Brad says.

That initial success saw camp numbers swell to the point where the event outgrew its traditional venue at the Presbyterian Church's Tirohanga Camp – hence the move to a new site this year, under a revised name.

The change in approach saw 180 high-school aged teens attend Dunedin Easter Camp 2018, held from 30 March to 2 April at its new venue, the Mosgiel A&P Showgrounds. Seven Presbyterian youth groups attended – about half the total number.

In keeping with the new framework, speakers came from Pentecostal, Anglican and Presbyterian backgrounds. Brad says one of the highlights for him was worship led by a Dunedin-wide band called Hope City.

Even with the changes, much of the established format remained the same. Morning and evening sessions were given over to worship and speakers, community time was spent unpacking the material shared by the speakers, afternoons were spent engaging in a range of sports and activities, and shared mealtimes provided an opportunity to enhance wider connections.

Response from youth groups who attended the 2018 camp suggests it hit the mark. They loved it, says Brad, and there wasn't a hint of concern that the uniquely "Presbyterian" feel of previous camps might have been lost in an ecumenical setting.

"If anything, what we are concerned about is losing the intimacy and the sense of community we previously had when the camp was smaller and held at a smaller venue. But this camp managed to maintain the value of both community and connection.

"Now, we get to bring what makes being a Presbyterian special and offer that to other church groups. And in turn, our Presbyterian youth get a glimpse of what it means to be Anglican or Baptist or Pentecostal and so on, which is quite special, and we think healthy."

Brad's views are shared by those of the Presbyterian Church's Moderator, the

Rt Rev Richard Dawson, who has been attending the camps in various capacities since his teen years. He, too, has received positive feedback and suggests the results around the change in approach "really speak for themselves".

"I did security for the first night - till 1am - so I witnessed the setup and arrival of all the campers, and the first night of worship and speaking," he says. "This went extremely well; the campers were really into everything that was offered. The gatherings for worship were well received. The different venue has basically encouraged other groups from other churches to attend and has allowed the programme to focus on individual group life rather than mixing them all up. It is also a more laidback camp with many different and modern activity options."

And while youth groups do tend to form an individual identity based around their church base, Richard believes the bigger camp format encourages Presbyterian-based youth groups because the numbers of people they know from around the region are so much larger.

Positive feedback both from the youth and youth leaders across the board attests to the success of the shift.

"It is exciting to be part of something where there is new life and momentum," says Brad. "We have seen some of the energy from this year's Easter Camp flow on into the Church's local youth ministry."

Viv Posselt [Spanz](#)

# NEW MINISTER PASSIONATE ABOUT APOLOGETICS

Rev Mark Maney says St Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Mt Maunganui has "decided to move into apologetics" so that they can "wrestle with the questions that come up when dialoguing with people of different world views and backgrounds – especially young people whose friends are not Christians".



**Rev Mark Maney, of St Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Mt Maunganui, enjoys wrestling with the questions around Christianity in apologetics seminars.**

Apologetics - a branch of Christian theology that aims to present historical, reasoned, and evidential bases for Christianity, defending it against objections - is not everyone's cup of tea, says Mark, but there's definitely a segment for whom confronting questions is very relevant.

"Our culture, media, and online forums attack the Christian faith or bring up questions that make our Christian beliefs seem untenable. We can't always get the answers we want, but we can always wrestle with the questions and see if we can take away some of the objections to Christianity," he says.

"Some people say that you just have to have faith. To a certain degree that is true. But to ignore the questions that are being asked in our culture is not conducive to the mission of the Church.

"When you look at the early Church interacting with hostile cultures, they put an emphasis on living as if the resurrection were true and also on responding to objections. The two combined made a compelling case. The Roman culture, even more hostile to Christianity than our own, was transformed and became largely Christian."

Mark has been instrumental in the creation of Reasons Why, the Tauranga chapter of a network of apologetics groups throughout the country.

"We discuss the reasons why we think the way we do. Why do we think Christ rose from the dead? That's a truly incredible claim to be making! Why do we regard the Bible as authoritative? Why is there pain and suffering? These are fair and good questions that people ask about the Christian faith, both in and outside of the faith."

Mark was born in Edmonton, Canada to parents whose conversion to Christianity caused a breach with their older son. "When it came to me and my younger sister, they didn't want to lose more children and they left it up to us in an extreme way."

While at university in Quebec, his professor suggested he improve his French by studying with a missionary who was learning the language to serve in an African country.

"Through conversations with him, something clicked. It was like putting on glasses. One day I just saw the world in a different way. I could see everything clearly and the Christian faith made sense."

When he returned to his home town, Mark found questions about religion abounded, not only in his theology studies, but from his friends. "The Mormons said how can you be sure what you should believe if you have no prophet? The Eastern Orthodox said why are you not part of the church Christ founded? The atheists said why do you think there is a God, there's no evidence?"

Having completed his degree in Religion and Theology at Taylor University College in Edmonton and his masters in Cross Cultural Studies and Apologetics at Trinity Western University in Vancouver, Mark moved to Auckland.

He worked at Auckland Chinese Presbyterian Church and graduated from the Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership in November 2017. He did his internship at St Enoch's, Tauranga, and was ordained and inducted at St Andrew's in Mt Maunganui in December.

St Andrew's decided to move into apologetics.

"We asked ourselves if there was an area in which our church could contribute, and looked at our talents and strengths, and at what wasn't already being tackled in the area. A lot of churches were working in the social justice area, including us, but we were aware that there were none trying to wrestle with the tough questions that come up when dialoguing with people of different world views and backgrounds – especially young people whose friends are not Christians.

"The exciting thing is that having started this, I have been invited to the polytechnic in Tauranga and Waikato University by Christian groups because they are getting asked questions by their students."

Jane Tolerton **Spanz**



# Church welcomes new Finance Manager

**Sandra Kennerley, who has spent much of her career doing audits for organisations in the not-for-profit sector, started work as the Presbyterian Church's Finance Manager in March.**

"I really like accounts, and the preparation of financial statements is the part I enjoy most," says Sandra Kennerley. "I get a buzz out of taking messy figures and making them tell a story."

Sandra ran her own accountancy business for about 20 years as a way of being able to stay at home with her children, who are now 19 and 20 and both doing university study.

She has recently been working part-time with the Association of General Surgeons while doing the finances for a start-up software business on the Kapiti Coast.

Sandra says she thought the Presbyterian Church would be a comfortable fit for her next career move largely because of her family background. She grew up on the Kapiti Coast where she attended the local Methodist Sunday School. Her grandfather, Ivor Raynor, was a Methodist minister. "He was an amazing man, with a very kind heart. To me he embodied everything the church should represent. Kindness, love and acceptance," she says.

She realised at about age 12 that she enjoyed maths and was good with figures. Her father was a receiver and liquidator, but she says he did not actively encourage her to follow him into the world of accountancy.

It has turned out to be a satisfying career that has allowed her to fulfil family

duties comfortably. After leaving Kapiti College in Paraparaumu, she did a Bachelor of Commerce and Administration at Victoria University.

Sandra started work with a Wellington firm of chartered accountants. She was sent to London on an 18-month secondment with an associated firm before taking a break to have her children.

The gender ratio was about equal when she started. "It shrinks as you get higher up. I never noticed any issue with gender inequality and I was happy that accountancy meant I was able to be a stay-at-home mum while continuing to work, as I could run my own business at home."

The Church is the biggest organisation she has worked for. "It is a big community with a lot of history, and that is something to be respected. It's what I expected – very welcoming and friendly."

Sandra started at the Church at the busiest time of the year, with the deadline for budgets and end-of-year accounts looming. She was suddenly busy helping work out how much income the different cost centres would need and what the costs of the coming year will be. "We need to make sure we have realistic figures to aim for in the next financial year," she says.

"Realistic" has been an important word in her work with not-for-profit organisations. "Being realistic is a big part of financial success in this sector. It is a case of remembering the values of your organisation and what you are there for, but applying common sense,



Sandra Kennerley, Presbyterian Church Finance Manager.

learning to prioritise and finding out what works – and focusing on that."

Sandra expects to do some travel shortly, with Rev Wayne Matheson, the Church's Assembly Executive Secretary, to meet Assembly Office and presbytery staff working around the regions.

Asked what she would like to achieve in the job, she says the most important thing is maintaining compliance with the new accounting regulations of the past few years. "There are a lot of changes going on, and they are not small changes. They take a lot of work to introduce into an organisation. So my goal is to ensure that the Church provides a model financial basis for going forward in the new environment."

Sandra lives in Paekakariki with her husband, Brent, who is also an accountant. "I live by the beach and I love it. I do a lot of gardening and like to watch Netflix. I work hard during the week and I like to relax at the weekends."

On Sundays, she attends the Beach Church in Raumati.

Jane Tolerton Spanz

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## Church creates *right blend* for community

The Blend evening at St Peter's in the City, Tauranga, has become a family night and date night. It brings the local community together over food to see and hear musical talent and poetry.

**St Peter's Blend evening event is a community "open mic night with really good dessert".**

When Rev Cate Williams arrived at St Peter's in the City, Tauranga, as associate minister with special responsibility for children and families, she discovered the church staged an annual café night, which included performance. Run by the youth group, it was a fundraiser for their mission trips.

"It was a lot of work for one night. So I thought what if it was less of an event, and more regular?"

Cate had attended and been impressed with the Ragamuffin café run Bethlehem Community Church, Tauranga. "It appealed to me because it was a way of connecting with a church community beyond my own and a way Christians could do something together without an emphasis on the spiritual."

She crossed St Peter's youth fundraising café night with her memories of Ragamuffin and came up with 'Blend'.

"We called it Blend because we are bringing people together. We thought we would do it via music and poetry but actually, we are bringing people together over food. It is an opportunity to see and hear musical talent and poetry, but it has become more of a family night or a date night, on a budget - it's a cheap date night! Getting people together is the purpose, church and non-church. It is not specifically for the church community or specifically outreach, but people in general.

"We decided to hold it once a month on a Friday night. But we found that after a busy week people do not necessarily want to go out again, and musicians were hard to nail down, so we are doing it each term now."

Cate's observation that "musicians were hard, food was easy" sparked a re-think.

The food was easy because of a dedicated team of women who took over the kitchen and made desserts their specialty. "They just love it. We have the best desserts - including gluten-free, sugar-free, dairy-free, made out of carrots, and it is delicious. They get to experiment."

Attendance has ranged from those aged 15 to 50. "Most are connected with the church but what we find is that there are a handful of people on the outskirts. When they get the word it is happening, they come. This is the way they connect for now. That connection may strengthen, but at least it is a point of contact."

Some people come with a planned performance piece and then approach the person in charge of listing and timing of events. Cate shoulder-taps others. Performances are often interactive, with the audience joining in the singing. "We give away prizes - found in the cupboard or left over from Christmas."

There are also games to play such as Battleship, Scrabble or cards. "That helps give the children something to do and aids interaction between the generations," says Cate.

Church youth members act as Blend's servers. "They love it. They are the bridge between the kitchen and the foyer. They get the best of both worlds, interacting with the ladies in the kitchen and the participants. Some have used it to fulfil requirements for Duke of Edinburgh awards or gaining skills for work opportunities."

Cate grew up in Katikati where she attended St Paul's Presbyterian Church. She felt the call to ordained ministry at age 24. Having begun an internship at St Paul's, she completed her degree in Auckland. She then returned to Katikati as the children and families pastor at her home church before moving to her current role in Tauranga.

Cate is uncomfortable with calling Blend a ministry. "I probably wouldn't call it a ministry as such. That makes it sound as if it has the potential to change people's lives. It's an open mic night with really good dessert. It's a social event that brings people together. Some church people might see it as an opportunity for testimony, but that is awkward for people not associated with the church. However, if the spirit of God is moving, I am not going to get in the way.

"We want our lives to be testimony, and we want Blend to be unintentional, unspoken, unplanned testimony. It's not the food or the music that is the real drawcard - it's the atmosphere."

Jane Tolerton [Spanz](#)



# St John's lives out faith in a practical WAY

**"A practical way of loving your neighbour" is how Rev Stuart Simpson, one of the ministers' at St John's in the City Presbyterian Church in Wellington, describes the work his parish is doing to help refugee families settle in the capital.**

For the past four years, St John's outreach has helped five refugee families by providing practical household items needed to start their new lives.

Stuart says the Red Cross and Catholic Social Services contact them when they need help with a new refugee family in the Wellington region.

"They let us know how many there are in the family and whether there are any kids or special needs such as a baby bath," says Stuart. "We aren't told where the family is from or what situations have prompted them to come to New Zealand. All we know is that often they've come here with very little and need our help in setting up their house."

That involves a trip to Briscoes to buy items such as towels, a toaster, iron, microwave oven, vacuum cleaner, pots and pans and basic kitchen utensils.

St John's outreach team raise the money needed to buy the items through a combination of donations, savings and fundraising. Over the past four years, this has included everything from food stalls to barbecues.

"We also get financial contributions from other Presbyterian churches around the country who perhaps don't have refugees



Rev Stuart Simpson with Enrino (Ino) Pasullean, who helps co-ordinate St John's in the City Wellington's response to assisting new New Zealanders with practical household items.

in their own communities. We've very thankful to St Paul's in Timaru, Knox Waitara and Kaikoura, who've sent us money to help refugee families."

Stuart says the lynchpins of St John's work with new New Zealanders are Ailsa Salt and Enrino (Ino) Pasullean, who co-ordinate the response with the Red Cross and Catholic Social Services.

"They contact Ino with a list of what the new families need and he goes to Briscoes to collect it and deliver it to the Red Cross."

Stuart says those involved from St John's would eventually like to be able to meet the refugee families and see how their practical help is assisting these families to settle.

"It's up the Red Cross, but we're hopeful that one day we'll be able to get to know some of the families."

He is heartened by his parish's response for the call to help.

"Every time we run fundraising programmes, people dig deep. For example, someone might pay \$2 for a barbecue sausage, but give you \$20. I think when you fundraise, people can see the connection with the greater cause and are willing to help."

It is, believes Stuart, a way of living out our faith. "People increasingly want to find ways to live their faith in a practical manner and one way to do this is to help those who need it. Even if you never meet

them, to know that you helped make their lives a little easier is a big thing."

Last week, for example, St John's helped their fifth refugee family with around \$4,200 of household items from Briscoes. "With the generous discount they give us, we actually only spent \$2,000."

But it's not just the refugee programme that St John's outreach is busy with. Stuart says they are "going great guns" with the weekly cafe at the Dixon Street Housing NZ (HNZ) flats across the road from the church. So well, in fact, that the cafe was recently visited by MPs who say the programme could be used in every HNZ community around the country.

"We're also actively supporting the Out of Gate programme, which helps women coming out of prison to ease back into society. This includes practical things such as transport and clothes to more intangible things such as building their confidence. We work with Corrections on this valuable programme, which is yet another way to live our faith with our neighbours."

And there are the local organisations and causes St John's has been involved with for many years, including Christians Against Poverty and rape crisis. "It's about working with others in our local community who need help," says Stuart.

Sharon Stephenson Spanz



## SOUTHERN CHURCH'S MISSION REACHES TOP OF WORLD

**Five years after it started, a cooperative venture linking Nepal with Wakatipu Community Presbyterian Church is bearing fruit.**

Its success can be seen as much in the supported discipleship now spreading through Nepal as it can in the practical help given to children and teenagers in need. At the heart of it all is a melding of cultures that started in 2013 when Rev João Petreceli da Silva visited Nepal to support Christian missionaries working there.

A missionary minister of the Presbyterian Church of Brazil, João currently lives in Queenstown where he serves as associate minister with Wakatipu Church. While on that 2013 trip, meetings he held with leaders of the Aashish Presbyterian Free Church of Nepal (APFCN) spawned a fruitful friendship, one that became the foundation of an ongoing relationship between Nepal and Wakatipu Community Presbyterian Church's four congregations – Queenstown, Frankton and Arrowtown, and the Wakatipu Global Community.

Wakatipu's primary connection is with APFCN, says Rev Ian Guy, lead pastor of the Wakatipu parish. The focus there is the establishment of two new congregations in remote regions of Nepal, as well as looking at ways to develop further co-operation.

The APFCN consists of 11 church congregations and 24 fellowships. Each church has a designated pastor and at least two elders; the fellowships are seedling congregations under the oversight of the Himalayan Evangelical Fellowship until they are declared (or planted) as churches.

"João's expertise is in evangelism, church planting and discipleship. With his guidance, the Aashish Presbyterian Church has developed a programme that is seeing the Church

train and release Community Outreach Workers (COWs) to 'plant' these fellowships in each district in Nepal."

It works by training and then sending people out to foster relationships with locals, share the news of Christ and establish a new congregation. The long-view held by APFCN is to share the Gospel throughout Nepal's 78 provinces. It is something they accept will take years, but in the meantime, the planters are geared to bringing practical, as well as spiritual, remedies to some of Nepal's neediest.

The Wakatipu Global Community, under the umbrella of the Wakatipu parish and led by João, is a spirited congregation composed mainly of recent immigrants from Brazil and other South American countries. João typically conducts his services in Portuguese, with English translation available.

Out of this rich cultural mix has come support for João's biannual visits to Nepal, with some from Wakatipu and further afield accompanying him to offer teaching and other assistance. Last year, a group of 10 from Brazil, Chile and the United States joined Ian, who went to build relationships and visit the location of church planters, and church elder Dr Deborah Bower, who taught an overview of the Old Testament.

The latest trip to Nepal, from 6 to 16 April, saw João and his wife Tania, Vitor Aguiar, and Rev Nigel Crocombe of the Palmerston/Dunback Presbyterian Parish travel on what was principally a teaching trip, with some members of the team being introduced to the mission.

The visit brought them into contact with another arm of Wakatipu's Nepalese mission; for the past four years Wakatipu has supported homes for children and teenagers – in particular, a boy's home and a rescue charity called The Apple of God's Eye. The latter was started in Kathmandu 17 years ago by Silvio and Rosmari Silva as a ministry dedicated to helping children rescued from sexual trafficking. The children – 260 girls and about 10 boys – some as young as eight, live in one of three homes run by the Silvas.

During the April trip, members of the Wakatipu team gave the boys' home residents a special day out and visited The Apple of God's Eye youngsters to provide spiritual support.

Wakatipu's outreach in Nepal spreads further still: the church has raised funds for the building of a school. Through ongoing fundraising – which includes selling the popular Brazilian dish feijoada (a rich savoury stew) – the church has purchased two motorbikes for use by two of the church planters. It has also raised \$10,000 to build 10 temporary houses as part of a relief project to help those affected by the devastating 2015 earthquake in Nepal.

Viv Posselt Spanz

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## Couple take their skills to Myanmar

A service-driven couple armed with an extensive “to-do” list will soon leave Dunedin for a challenging three years in rural Myanmar.



Rev Helen and Wayne Harray point out where their home will be for the next three years – Kalaymyo in Myanmar.

Rev Helen Harray and her husband Wayne hope to be in Kalaymyo, Myanmar, by early July to begin a mission project that has been over a year in the making.

In a three-way partnership between the Presbyterian Church (PCANZ), the Council for World Mission (CWM) and the Presbyterian Church of Myanmar (PCM), the couple will be working with the PCM's Tahan Theological College. The “to-do” list they take with them includes the establishment of a working and demonstration farmlet, teaching and empowerment, and aiding a microfinance project in the local community.

Those headings mask a mountain of work underlying each; but the Harrays, who in March 2017 did a scoping visit to the region with the Church's Global Mission coordinator, Rev Phil King, feel well up to the task - despite being some nine months behind their initial on-site target. The delay was due to illness on both their parts, but it seems even that turned out to be an opportunity to fine-tune their plans and help bed in funding support.

“The health issues have given us time to wait and further hear what God is saying and to begin to feel more equipped for the raft of opportunities to serve that are evident in Kalaymyo,” says Helen.

The Harrays first looked at Myanmar after a six-month exploration of where they could offer ministry service to best advantage. Their combined skills seemed

a good fit for Tahan Theological College's search for self-sufficiency – Wayne is a civil engineer and farmer, while Helen's strengths lie in teaching.

The College sits in the Sagaing District of the country, bordering the Chin State. It is an under-developed and poor region of Myanmar, but has a strong Christian base and is in a relatively stable part of the country.

A key part of the Harrays' role is to determine the best use of the 12 hectares of land on which the campus sits. There are plans to grow sufficient food on about eight of those hectares, both to feed the students – there are currently 96 – as well as to sell to bolster the College's cash flow. Wayne will also help develop the land as a demonstration farm so the community can benefit in the long-term, and create a succession plan by training future farm managers.

In the three years the couple expects to be there, Helen will teach English to both theological and liberal arts students, teach principles of pastoral counselling to theology students, will contribute to and encourage leadership in women, and will help in a microfinance project already underway in the community.

The Harrays' mission to Myanmar has been facilitated by Phil, working in conjunction with the CWM.

“We are members of CWM, a 32-member body that encourages the sharing of personnel among our churches,

and provides some funding for it,” he explained. “When Helen first approached me about Myanmar, I suggested a Partners in Mission programme, and had the conversation with CWM and the Presbyterian Church of Myanmar. The PCM was enthusiastic and CWM was affirming, and so it went from there.”

CWM will provide a base salary and will cover some of the other costs linked to the mission. Helen says they have had a commitment of around NZ\$46,700 each year from CWM, plus return airfares, the cost of 200kg unaccompanied baggage and ongoing visa costs incurred because the couple will have to leave Myanmar every 70 days.

“The CWM funding is an enormous boost to cover our personal costs,” she says. “We expect we will need about NZ\$120,000 in our first year to cover the cost of livestock, seeds, fertiliser, land development, tools and equipment, labour to help set up – plus our own living and set up costs.”

They're fundraising themselves to cover those expenses - and an initial shortfall - the “old fashioned way”, through churches, family and friends, says Helen.

As preparations for the mission have advanced, the Harrays have also researched the systems that could be employed to develop the land, with organics and permaculture high priorities.

Viv Posselt [Spanz](#)



## BE THE LIFELINE

A women's group at Husn camp talk with the Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees (DSPR) Jordan, part of the Middle East Council of Churches.



**For two years, Shireen has worked as a volunteer with the Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees (DSPR) Jordan, part of the Middle East Council of Churches. She welcomes the chance to get out of her tiny apartment and meet with other women, something she would not have done back home in Syria. She says for her it is better than the '1,000 pills' prescribed by the psychiatric clinic she attended when she first arrived in Irbid, a city close to the border with Syria.**

One of the programmes DSPR runs in Jordan is a network of support groups for mothers. Leaders like Shireen are trained to support their members, collect data and report any pressing needs to DSPR for further help. Shireen passes on what she has learnt to her group – lessons about health, how to improve livelihoods or community issues like gender based violence. In Syria, she had spent her days at home caring for her family, so the biggest challenge has been to find the courage to speak in front of a group.

Shireen's story is not an easy one. With her four children she fled Dar'a in 2015, it is where Syria's uprising first began seven years ago.

"Since I came to Jordan, I was in trauma because of the death of my husband, where he was killed in front of my eyes. It forced me to be a regular visitor to the psychiatric clinic for a long period of time," she says.

A strong woman, Shireen has found new purpose in her role as group leader with new responsibilities outside her home.

She is not sure what the future holds for her homeland. However, her bottom line will always be her own children – she is determined that they will keep up their schooling as she knows this is the best investment for the future.

### Operation Refugee

Christian World Service is looking for people to join Operation Refugee to keep the lifeline of support going to those who have fled Syria. Participants live on the same food as in a refugee emergency food parcel and raise funds to assist some of the 5.5 million people who have fled the country. CWS has a Kete containing more information about the challenge, specially developed recipes and fundraising tips. You can contribute by making a donation to an individual, like veteran participant Rev Sharon Ross Ensor, or to Operation Refugee.

The challenge runs from 16 -20 June with a two-day version for students, Operation Refugee Lite. Fundraising is largely online with lots of support and encouragement from organiser David Lawson and other participants. There are prizes for school teams. Funds raised will provide food, medical care, education and other assistance through DSPR in Jordan and Lebanon.

Welcoming the stranger is a core part of the Biblical tradition. In sometimes harsh conditions, such hospitality was critical to the survival of people often on the move, seeking shelter or returning from exile. In Matthew 25, Jesus identifies such generosity to the stranger as one of the imperatives of our faith.

CWS commends churches helping to resettle refugees in Aotearoa New

Zealand and those supporting the work of DSPR much closer to Syria. Nine out of ten refugees find shelter in developing countries. Thank you for being part of the lifeline.

DSPR is able to use its strong networks and decades of experience working with the waves of refugees that have arrived from Palestine and Iraq to serve Syrian refugees. The free medical days DSPR runs using volunteer professional staff are highly valued by refugees who cannot afford medical services. DSPR supports the refugee communities to run their own schools and tutorial sessions for all ages, plus children's forums where there is opportunity for sport, craft and to learn cultural traditions.

Last year Operation Refugee raised \$61,000 that was matched by the New Zealand government aid budget. It paid for 200 good quality food parcels, 467 packets of good quality clothes for infants, plus training in setting up a small business, psychosocial support for gender based violence for 653 women like Shireen, and follow up treatment for 300 refugees who attended the free medical days. Further help was made possible by donors to CWS's Syria Appeal.

### Refugee Sunday

Parishes are encouraged to support Syrian refugees on Refugee Sunday, 26 June. Worship resources are available at [www.cws.org.nz](http://www.cws.org.nz).

More information on Operation Refugee is available: <https://www.cwsoperationrefugee.nz/> or contact David Lawson at [david.lawson@cws.org.nz](mailto:david.lawson@cws.org.nz).



June 16-20 | 2018



# Be the Lifeline Operation Refugee



THE ULTIMATE CHALLENGE SUPPORTING REFUGEES



[WWW.CWSOPERATIONREFUGEE.NZ](http://WWW.CWSOPERATIONREFUGEE.NZ)







## Some things make for happier, healthier living, **no matter what your age or ability.**

- A sense of community
- Friends, family, whānau
- Being able to give and receive
- Being able to make decisions for yourself
- And, most of all, practical support when you need it.

At Enliven we work alongside you and your family to achieve these things.

### **Enliven services include:**

- Home based support
- Community based social and day activities
- Retirement living options
- Residential aged care

### **To find out more about Enliven services in your area call our regional offices:**

Upper North Island	0800 365 4836
East Coast	(06) 877 8193
Lower North Island	0800 36 54 83
Upper South Island	(03) 366 5472
South Canterbury	(03) 687 1120
Otago	(03) 477 7115
Southland	(03) 211 8200