



Methodist Church of New Zealand

Connexions - May 2022



Week of prayer for Christian unity 22 May - 5 June 2022

The traditional observance of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in Aotearoa New Zealand, is between Ascension and Pentecost.

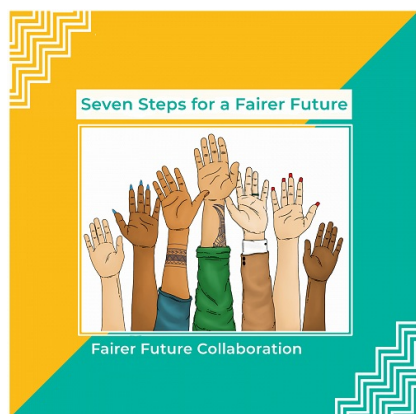
Please consider organising a local observance: whether it be a combined ecumenical service of neighbouring churches, a combined social event or meal, a combined initiative for a local issue (such as a beach clean), or simply commit with other local churches to incorporate prayer within your respective Sunday services for each other's churches and for unity.

The theme for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in 2022 was chosen by the Middle East Council of Churches "We saw the star in the East, and we came to worship" (Matthew 2:2). This theme draws on the Epiphany text as very pertinent to the Middle East churches. For our part of the world, the link to the stars also lends itself to drawing in our own contextual image of the Southern Cross, and having a similar timing to Matariki. The international edition of the resources, including the suggested liturgy, and a 8-day Bible study booklet, are found at: <https://www.oikoumene.org/events/week-of-prayer-for-christian-unity>

by Mission and Ecumenical Board

[Acting] Director: Rev. Tony Franklin-Ross

E-mail: mm-e@methodist.org.nz www.methodist.org.nz/mahi/mme



Seven Steps for a Fairer Future

The Methodist Alliance is proud to be part of the Fairer Future Collaboration – 37 organisations around the motu who are led by ActionStation and are calling on our Government to adopt a seven-point plan of action to support low-income New Zealanders facing the high cost of living and to create lasting change for people most in need.

The seven points are:

1. Increase core benefit levels to the standard of liveable incomes

An update of Welfare Expert Advisory Group (WEAG) 2018 modelling, commissioned by Fairer Future, found significant deficits between income entitlements and basic expenditure will still exist after the April 2022 benefit increases for almost all WEAG model households.

For example, in mid-2022:

- The model couple with three children receiving Jobseeker and paying low rent would need around \$300 extra a week (or 29% additional income or around \$16,000 a year) to meet their total costs (including kids' sport, contingency for e.g. car repair, etc). To solely meet their core costs (rent, food, power etc), they still need a additional \$165 a week (15% more income or \$8,600 a year).
- The model one-parent and three children receiving Sole Parent Support and paying low rent would require around an additional \$240 a week to meet total costs (or nearly a quarter more income: 23%); or an additional \$111 a week solely to meet core costs (10% additional income or \$5,770 a year).
- Even if they are sharing a house to save on costs, the model single adult receiving Jobseeker would require around an additional \$90 a week to cover all costs (22% additional income) and \$50 a week income to cover core costs (12% additional income).

2. Raise the minimum wage to the living wage

During the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a huge reliance on essential workers delivering essential services. The pandemic upended claims about “low-skilled” and “high-skilled” work. Politicians repeatedly said that this was an opportunity to value supermarket workers, bus drivers, and nurses who have kept society functioning while also keeping all of us safe. But wages have not been lifted to reflect that rhetoric.

The Council of Trade Unions (CTU) noted the 6% annual increase in rents across the country and a 4% annual increase in food prices, was not matched by increases to wages which only moved up by 2.4%. The Fairer Future collaboration supports calls by the CTU and others for the minimum wage to be increased to the living wage level - currently \$23.65.

3. Increase the Disability Allowance

The changes announced in Budget 2021 focused on core benefits and did not affect the Disability Allowance. Fairer Future called on the government to increase both Disability Allowance and Child Disability Allowance; for the application process to be simplified; and the Disability Allowance minimum to be set at the current maximum.

4. Overhaul relationship rules

Work & Income and the Ministry of Social Development, continue to apply rules that reflect outdated and Eurocentric models of families. People on income support owe huge debts to the Government because it has been ruled that they are in ‘a relationship in the nature of marriage.’ As well as creating real financial hardship for whānau, the definition of relationship is often not consistent with tikanga Māori.

People who date others for six weeks, or have someone stay for three nights a week, can have their financial support cut - and these rules are often applied in arbitrary and inconsistent ways. The system should be individualised, with flexibility around new relationships, as recommended by the WEAG.

5. Remove sanctions

New Zealand’s welfare system is still full of sanctions, which cause stress and hardship. The WEAG’s evidence suggested people from disadvantaged backgrounds and minority ethnic backgrounds are most affected by sanctions.

A June 2021 report by the Beneficiary Advisory Service showed that sanctions have often resulted in affected people going without necessities.

When the Government introduced its Covid Income Relief Payment in 2020, recipients were not subject to sanctions.

6. Wipe debt owed to MSD

Debt to MSD owed by benefit recipients has almost doubled in five years, and in 2021 it reached over one billion dollars. Unlike other government agencies, MSD does not have the ability to write off debt on hardship grounds. In contrast, both the IRD and the Ministry of Justice has the ability to write off debt due to hardship.

People commonly get into debt to cover essentials of life - like school uniforms, car repairs, and power bills. This is because their income support is inadequate and does not provide a liveable income. Some of the poorest people in our country owe thousands to MSD that they will never be able to pay back and/or leave families with insufficient money and unable to afford basic necessities.

Women and people under the age of 35 are more likely to owe debt to MSD, and the women are likely to be raising children. For some women this means that 25% of their income goes to debt repayment.

If the Government wiped the debt owed to MSD, it would alleviate mental distress and hardship caused.

7. Improve supplementary assistance and urgent grants

Supplementary assistance plays an important role in providing targeted support for those in need. The WEAG recommended changes to the Accommodation Supplement to provide greater support to those in housing need. At present, the Accommodation Supplement is currently unavailable to those with over \$8000 in cash assets, and this should be raised.

Urgent grants would be far less necessary if core benefit levels were set at the level of a liveable income. All supplementary assistance should keep up with the cost of living, and the abatement rate should be increased, as recommended by the WEAG, to avoid whānau being trapped in poverty.

The Methodist Alliance's working group campaigning to increase benefit and abatement rates continues to work with ActionStation and Fairer Future to be a voice for those who do not have one and to fight for a better future where all people flourish.

Carol Barron, National Coordinator

03 375 0512 | 027 561 9164 | Carol@MethodistAlliance.org.nz



Parenting Through Separation

"It seems to me that almost nothing in life is so important as being loved and cared for as a child. Maybe only an early death ever means more, has more bearing on the ultimate shape of an existence. Even a vast lottery win or some other great stroke of fortune means little in comparison, because the legacy of one is liable to affect so profoundly the reaction to the other." Iain Banks

Parenting during ordinary times is hardly ever easy. Parenting through separation brings additional complications and stresses. Ending a marriage or a long-term relationship brings many adjustments, and former partners often find themselves in the middle of confusing and overwhelming conflict.

Children experiencing the separation of their parents are often torn, distressed, and bewildered by the changes they are going through; their overwhelmed parents frequently struggle to ensure each home stays a consistently loving and caring environment.

Being open to strategies that help the entire family to communicate and be mindful of every family member's needs whilst planning a new course of what constitutes family life can seem insurmountable, one of those mountains too lofty to contemplate climbing and many simply do not have the skills to create and stick to a plan that deals with the problems of separation, sustains the certainty of love and care across what is now multiple households, and provides the security that children always need.

Methodist Mission Southern's **Parenting Through Separation** (PTS) courses give free information to help families get through relationship changes. The course can also help grandparents and other involved family and whānau members.

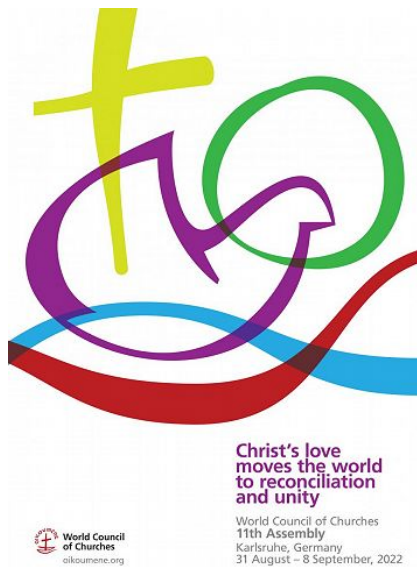
In 2020 5,973 children under 17 years of age had parents who were granted a divorce, as more children now live in homes with unmarried parents this statistic, barely scratches the surface of the number of children having to negotiate the unexpected life changes that come with the breakup of a home.

The economic and behavioural problems are well documented from having parents divided, "One broad-based study also shows that people have an easier time recovering after the death of a parent as opposed to a divorce"!

The Mission's PTS courses give the support and skills to negotiate the changes and offers resources such as how separation affects children, what's best for children when their parents no longer live together, and tools/tips for dealing with the separation, including how to make a parenting plan, and what the law requires. We have had 169 attendees over the past 12 months, however not only in Dunedin, we also offer these courses in Cromwell, Oamaru, Queenstown, Wanaka, Balclutha and online.

If you would like to support the Mission's Parenting Through Separation, please get in touch.

Contact Julie julier@mmsouth.org.nz to hear more stories of the Mission's impact via our e-news or sign-up [Methodist Mission Southern](#) | [Facebook](#)



World Council of Churches - 11th Assembly

The 11th Assembly of the World Council of Churches will take place in Karlsruhe, Germany, from 31 August to 8 September 2022, under the theme "Christ's love moves the world to reconciliation and unity".

Postponed due to the COVID pandemic, the Assembly is now proceeding full steam ahead. Along with official delegates and representatives of member churches, the Assembly has now been open up for general participants to register and attend. For further information and resources on the Assembly:

<https://www.oikoumene.org/about-thewcc/organizational-structure/assembly>


Pre-Assembly gatherings are also arranged: Ecumenical Youth Gathering, Just Community of Women and Men, Ecumenical Disabilities Advocates Network, and Indigenous Peoples.

The 'Brunnen' space will operate like a marketplace, which includes a range of workshops, exhibitions, networking zones and side-events. Workshops are events given once that provide an opportunity for the assembly participants to come together to discuss and explore a specific thematic topic. Every day, over five days, 20 workshops will run parallel, offering a total of 100 workshops to the larger constituency.

Included in the programme are 23 sets of 'Ecumenical Conversations', where each stream which will focus on a unique topic to provide sustained, in-depth dialogue on critical issues affecting the unity, mission and witness of the church today – issues that require a common response. At the same time as ecumenical conversations, workshops will run every day for assembly participants.

Public registration is now open to anyone who is interested in participating in WCC 11th Assembly. Registrants will have access to most assembly programmes, and will encounter and experience the assembly with thousands of participants from all over the world (however only Delegates contribute to decision making processes). From Aotearoa New Zealand, the registration cost is EUR300, plus accommodation, meals and travel costs to be factored in. Registration can be made [through this link](#).

The National Dialogue for Christian Unity will be organising opportunities for delegates, representatives and general participants to meet via Zoom prior to the Assembly, to help in preparations. If you are registering as a participant please contact the NDCU secretary, Rev Tony Franklin-Ross (tonyfr@methodist.org.nz).



**METHODIST CHURCH
OF NEW ZEALAND**

Te Haahi Weteriana o Aotearoa

Lectionary 2022/2023

Orders for the new Lectionary are due by Friday 8 July 2022.

Orders received by the due date are at no charge. After that date the cost is \$2 each.

The order form can be downloaded from www.methodist.org.nz/whakapono/lectionary.

Orders are to be posted to PO Box 931, Christchurch 8140 or emailed to wendyk@methodist.org.nz

Lectionary

The Methodist Church of NZ Lectionary is produced by Faith & Order in July each year.

An order form for Lectionaries (in booklet format) will be [available on the Methodist website](#) from April each year. The 2022 order form is now available.

Booklets ordered between April and July each year are free of charge, thereafter orders will be at a cost of \$2 per booklet.



Create Safe Spaces for Refugees

This tells the story of Mona, a refugee born in Lebanon but who could not go to school.

When she was 12 her desperate father sought help from DSPR Lebanon. The director enrolled her in an adult literacy class with older women. Mona flourished. Now 19, she has learnt to read and dance. Thanks to the women who cared for her she

has grown in confidence and is exploring new options. Her father cannot speak highly enough of DSPR.

Ten year old Maryanna told her story soon after her family fled Ukraine. Meet her in a child-friendly space at the Budapest airport in Hungary.

Read the [Autumn Story](#) to see some of the ways our partners support refugees.

Please support our [Autumn Appeal](#) to share justice with displaced people.

by Gillian Southey
Christian World Service



This week we pray for: India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka

Ecumenical Cycle of Prayer

Pray with us! The Ecumenical Prayer Cycle takes us through every region of the world over the course of a year.

Praying for each place on earth and its people at least once a year, we affirm our solidarity with Christians all over the world, brothers and sisters living in diverse situations, experiencing diverse problems and sharing diverse gifts. How about including the countries in each week's cycle of prayer in your parish bulletin, or in your Sunday prayers of intercession? You

can find the list on the WCC website <https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/prayer-cycle> or on the refreshed MME webpages <https://www.methodist.org.nz/mahi/mme/prayer/>

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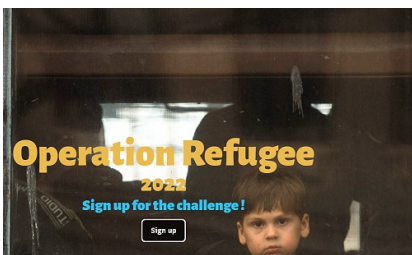
PAC Distribution Group

Share your dream or story

Grant requests close 30 June 2022

For more information visit our [website](#).

or email Wendy Keir



Operation Refugee

Will you join CWS in this year's Operation Refugee?

In Matthew 25, Jesus instructs us to "Welcome the Stranger". On June 20, we are launching this year's Operation Refugee: Pray, Walk, Eat. Refugees need our prayer and support in the places where they are sheltering. Sign up.

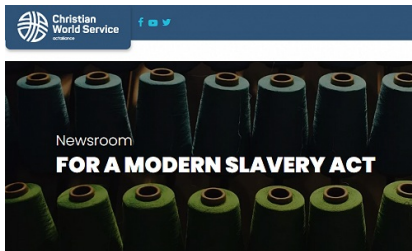
We have broadened the focus to assist the rising number of people who have fled their homes – at the last count around 84 million people. The need is greater than ever this year and each of us can make a difference, together. Together we can help vulnerable people in places like Afghanistan, Jordan, Ukraine, and Lebanon.

You could take up Operation Refugee as an individual challenge, but it might be easier to do it as a team or church. Challenge yourself to walk a distance to reflect how far refugees must travel to safety, organise a gathering with others or eat refugee rations for 5 days. Perhaps organise an event with a special collection if that works best for your church. Check out the details on [our website](#). Call Murray on 0800 74 73 72 if you want to talk it over.

Refugee Sunday is on June 26.

Worship Resources will be available on our website at the beginning of June. If you have a prayer or other resource you would like to share, please send them to [Gillian](#).

by Gillian Southey
Christian World Service



Towards a Modern Slavery Act

CWS is supporting a joint initiative calling for our government to pass a Modern Slavery Act.

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment is [asking for submissions](#) regarding modern slavery, worker exploitation, forced labour and people trafficking. An estimated 40 million people are affected by slavery and

exploitation. Our Indian partners are actively involved in education and action on modern forms of slavery, child labour and trafficking. You can read more and find out how to make a submission on our [website](#). Submissions are due by June 7.

by Gillian Southey
Christian World Service



Maundy Thursday

Splice is a part of Methodist Mission Northern. We try to express and live out our Christian faith in the inner-city of Auckland.

Our programmes include chess for adults and juniors, creative writing for adults and kids, teaching English and Chinese and showing and discussing films. The intention is to connect with people, to build relationships, friendship and trust. We then

earn the right to share our faith.

And so on Maundy Thursday we had an outdoor communion in Freyberg Place in downtown Auckland. We invited everyone to join in and afterwards, ask questions, and discuss whatever they want. Of course, you have to prepare for the unexpected when you take faith out into a public square. But all good, God has it all in hand.

The Communion:

Me: "and this is the blood of

Dan (homeless guy comes up): "hi guys, gee, that looks nice - can I have a cup?

Me: [Thinking: ok, this isn't in the Directory of Worship.....winging it ..] "Sure, this is plum and boysenberry tea - it is red, like the colour of blood - reminds us of Jesus, especially at Easter.

Dan: oh, hey, that is cool. Yeah, red, love the plum taste.

Me: Here, have a slice of bread too (breaking it) this reminds of Jesus' body getting beaten up.

Dan: whole grain - great, yeah that is super healthy. Tasty. Ta.

Me: Sure, hope you enjoy it.

Dan: Thanks heaps, my name is Dan.

Me: Please to meet you, Dan. I'm Stuart. This is our team from the Chinese Church (who had come to help)

Dan: Hi, guys, great to see you. Oh, sorry, hey, I think I'm interrupting.

Me: "No worries, Dan" (Thinking this communion service is now a total shambles)

Dan: "By the way, I was going to say bless you, but I can see you already are."

Me: (thinking): "Perfect. All good. No worries."

Stuart Vogel, Programme Coordinator, Splice



Treasurer Position

World Day of Prayer Aoteroa/New Zealand (WDPANZ) National Committee is seeking a Treasurer.

It is not a complicated role. Since the phasing out of cheques all banking is done on line and payments likewise.

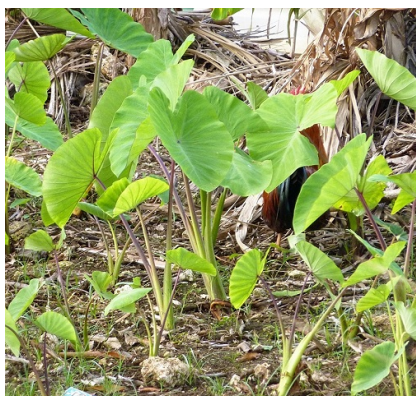
The main tasks are:

- Report to the monthly national committee meeting and present any invoices for payment.
- Pay invoices and reimbursements
- Reconcile the remittance forms sent in from WDPANZ groups around the country with the Bank Statements
- Follow up groups to ensure they have deposited the offerings from the collections at the World Day of Prayer annual services.
- Answer financial queries from WDPANZ groups
- Prepare the annual accounts for review.
- Arrange for the distribution of the offerings to the recipients of the annual grants.
- Transfer to the World Day of Prayer International Committee the annual 5% of the income to help with their running costs and make a contribution to the travel fund to help those from developing countries to attend the four yearly international meetings.

The annual budget for the World Day of Prayer Aoteroa- New Zealand Committee in 2020/21 was \$55,281.87. The financial year is from July to June.

The National Committee meets on the third Friday of the month from 9.30 to 11.30 at the Bishopdale Church of Christ in Greers Road Christchurch.

If you are interested in the position please contact Pauline McKay (National Chairperson): pauline_mckay@hotmail.com or call her 021 289 1225. This is a voluntary position and there is no remuneration for it although expenses will be reimbursed.



Tonga Appeal Update

Tonga Community Development Trust is undertaking a needs assessment on Tongatapu, Ha'apai, and 'Eua and appointing new staff to manage the recovery programme.

CWS is grateful for the generous support to the [Tonga Emergency Appeal](#) after the eruption of Hunga Tonga Hunga-Ha'apai in January. The women's programme Ama Takiloa will train and support the identified communities to repair and replace rainwater systems. The groups will re-establish gardens with a focus on disaster resilient foods like pele, and new crops like vanilla and kava as well as sandalwood trees. Families will receive chickens or ducks and materials to house

the birds.

The Family Centre in Lower Hutt is producing a training video on community-based psychosocial care based on their extensive experience in Samoa. The video will help staff train local groups as they provide support.

Ama Takiloa will assist the groups in marketing the traditional crafts that provide important family income. In the second year, they plan to produce their own recipe book using disaster-resilient foods like large taro. The programme will give local people the resources they need as well as train them in first aid.



25th Anniversary Celebrations

In June 1997, the Waiwhetu Methodist Church in Lower Hutt merged with the St Lukes Presbyterian Church to form the Waiwhetu Uniting Church.

We are planning a Celebration of the last 25 years on Sunday 19 June 2022, to which we invite former members and pastors.

For further information, or to register your interest, please contact Brenda Baker, Phone 04 569 5308 or

brendabaker@xtra.co.nz

We look forward to hearing from our many friends from the past.

Brenda Baker



Thank you from World Day of Prayer National Committee

I would like to thank all of you who organised services to mark the 2022 World Day of Prayer on Friday 4 March.

As with last year some services were not held in person because of COVID 19. They may be held at another date when people feel more comfortable about meeting in person.

Moreover, the National Committee have heard from someone

who watched the Canadian service because there was no in-person local service. Overall, we have had very positive comments about this years' service and in a number of instances the music. Many included the prayer for Ukraine in the service and thank you for making this last minute addition to it.

As mentioned last year the National Committee were committed to having an active and up to date website in time for the 2022 services. I hope you have taken the opportunity to become familiar with it. All the resources are available on the website. Our thanks to Gemma Dixon from the [new] black for creating such an attractive site and we have received many complimentary comments about it.

Moreover, in the future we have decided to live stream the preparation workshop that is held in Christchurch in late January. This means that it will be a national workshop because people can join regardless of location. The workshop is held on the last Saturday in January and we will let you know the details later in the year.

With an active website we are able to post details of services throughout the country so I **implore** you to let us know these so that they can be posted on it. If you have not already sent in your group report form the details can be put on it. If you have returned the form and already know the details of the 2023 services please send these to wdpnz@xtra.co.nz. We are aware that sometimes where and when the service is to be held is not decided till later in the year and therefore we will remind you again. We often get enquires from people about where services are being held and now we have the means to inform them.

Unfortunately, due to the COVID 19 pandemic, the four yearly International Committee meeting will now be a virtual conference. The in-person meeting was to have been held in Edinburgh. The theme is 'New Heart – New Mind – Called to Hope (Eph. 1:18). The 2023 service has been prepared by the Taiwan National Committee and the theme is "I Have Heard About Your Faith".

I would like to remind you to return the yellow forms with the details of your 2022 services and to inform us that you have transferred the offerings to our bank account. The disruption caused by COVID does not seem to have significantly affected this year's offerings.

Once again many thanks for your efforts to make WDP 2022 happening. Keep up the good work, as we support our sisters, who give us each year little insights into their lives' joys and difficulties, so that we can respond with prayerful actions. I would also like to acknowledge those who were unable to attend a service but made a personal donation, thank you for your support.



Easter Music Series offered by Wesley Broadway Community Radio

- in partnership with Manawatu People's Radio (MPR)

The following 3 programmes are the May offerings from Wesley Broadway

May 3: Songs for Peace – a contribution for Anzac Day including 3 songs by Shirley Erena Murray, and Kiri te Kanawa singing Tama Ngakau Marie

May 10: Gillian and John Thornley share 4 songs for Easter

May 24: Sweet Honey in the Rock, internationally-acclaimed African American women's choral group

Each programme is repeated in the following week.

How to listen to the programmes

Live: These can be heard live in the Manawatu area at 11 A.M. each Tuesday and Saturday, on Frequency AM999.

Online: Programmes can be downloaded via the station website: www.mpr.nz/show/wesley. Programmes stay for 2 to 3 months, and are listed by date and topic.

Wesley Broadway Radio Hosts:

John and Gillian Thornley welcome response/enquiries. Email: Johngill@inspire.net.nz

National Dialogue for Christian Unity (Aotearoa New Zealand)

The purpose of the NDCU is to develop existing relationships, giving expression to koinonia, and sharing and receiving the gifts which each member church has to offer.

Formed in 2016, the member churches are Anglicans, Roman Catholics, Methodists, Presbyterians, and the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). A number of ecumenical organisations, and other denominations such as the Salvation Army, are associated as 'observers'.

A twice-yearly newsletter is produced, the latest is now available.
