



# Methodist Church of New Zealand

## Connexions

Welcome to our first publication of Connexions. We hope you enjoy this new format.

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### From the General Secretary

Tara brings you the latest.

Kia ora e te whānau! Greetings from the Connexional office in Ōtautahi Christchurch. I trust this message finds you well.

It's a real pleasure to be able to bring you our inaugural *Connexions* monthly newsletter, full of news from Aotearoa and beyond these shores. February has been jam packed with exciting events and meetings, and we continue to progress the work of the connexion as we hīkoi towards Conference 2022. In this edition, we get a very real sense of the depth and breadth of the work of the hāhi. Each story is an expression of our fellowship together, a real blessing in these challenging times.

We welcome your feedback on the new format and we keep in our prayers as we journey together.

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## Methodist Publishing Board

New board members sought

The Methodist Publishing Board (MPB) is looking for 2 new members to join their team. MPB is responsible for the governance of Touchstone and funds other publications within our Haahi. Over the past few years we have partnered with the Connexional Office regarding the upgrading and development of the new Methodist website. Meetings are usually every two months and all but 2 meetings are now held via zoom - time and date are yet to be determined.

Ideally the new members will be from outside of Canterbury, enthusiastic and have some knowledge around Journalism, communications and IT.

The appointments are confirmed by the President/Conference. If you would like to be part of this team, please convey your interest to the General Secretary outlining your interest, experience and skills.

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### Prepare For Omicron

It's coming, and for some of us it's already here.

I have had my first Covid-19 test for the latest outbreak and I expect there will be many more. I hope you all have a [household readiness plan](#) in place.

The Connexional Office has split its teams up and different parts of the teams are working at different times in the office.

There is to be no cross over between the new bubbles. If Omicron takes out one office bubble, then the other bubble should be OK.

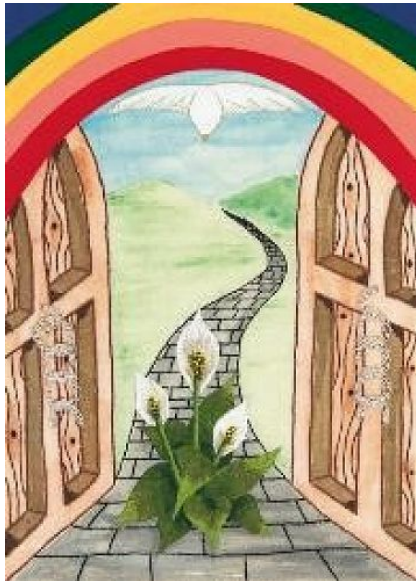
You and your group/s may want to think about something similar. Create multiple networks of support because if Omicron appears at your place then potentially your church place network people may not be able to respond for each other if there wasn't some degree of separation.

A parish in Te Kuiti that had Delta visit last year have some lessons for us:

1. Up to date contact information is a priority. When the parish is all laid up with Covid-19 then phone calls and emails are going to be the primary contact points for many
2. Consider creating separate teams because when your church people are knocked down who will be doing the running around
3. Maintain personal privacy regarding health details. Be respectful.
4. Think now about the ways to manage the emotional outpouring that is going to happen. Think of the stigmatisation that can occur when a group is labelled as Covid-unclean. Support each other and our communities with love and understanding.

**by Trudy Downes, Caring For Our People**

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## World Day of Prayer

4 March 2022

World Day of Prayer is an international ecumenical organisation which enables women all over the world to share the ideas and concerns of the writing country. The invitation is to join in prayer and action for peace and justice.

This year's service is presented by the World Day of Prayer organisation for England, Wales and Northern Ireland, with a theme of 'I know the plans I have for you'. In the midst of all the uncertainties we are living under due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the WDP 2022 theme is offered as a balm of confidence. It is an invitation to place our trust in God in times of suffering.

This year's material reflects a seed of hope to ponder where it needs to be planted in our lives and in our communities. Take this opportunity, to raise awareness on the needs of your

community and offer the gifts of prayers and commitment. A seed, nourished by prayers of intercessor and actions of love, bind us together around the world.

The international website including information and resources: <https://worlddayofprayer.net/>

**by Mission & Ecumenical**

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## Updates to the Covid-19 Response Plan

Please check out the Covid-19 Response Plan on our website, which was updated 09 February 2022.

### Latest updates

[Facemasks](#) – who should be wearing medical-grade face masks (door greeters, ushers, presbyters when undertaking

face to face meetings.

[Frequently asked questions](#) – paying employees when they are isolating, facemasks, what vaccination records should employers keep.

### Next update

The Connexional Office response plan if a staff member gets Omicron. This may be useful for your office/work team/parish/rohe when you think about your team response.

**He aha te kai o te rangatira? He kōrero, he kōrero, he kōrero.** *Good communication is required for good leadership.*

**Nā Trudy Downes**



## Social Justice

“Learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; defend the fatherless, plead for the widow.” Isaiah 1: 17, Revised Standard Version

Social justice is the concept of fairness in relationships between individuals in society and equal access to wealth, opportunity and social privileges in society.

The five main principles of social justice are:

1. **Access:** society offers a variety of resources and services to individuals like healthcare, food, shelter, education, sport etc. However access to these resources and services are not always equal. For example, people with higher incomes are able to send their children to private school, pay for their children's tertiary education fees, which then leads to a better chance of securing a higher paying job in the future. However, people with lower incomes have fewer opportunities which limits their access to education and continues the cycle of disadvantage.

2. **Equity:** is the allocation of resources specific to needs of the individual to ensure similar outcomes. This is in contrast to equality where everyone is offered the same resource to achieve the same outcome. Equal distribution of resources is often not equitable as some individuals have more needs than others. Social justice is overcoming unfairness caused by unequal access to economic resources and power.

3. **Participation:** is where everyone is able to voice their opinions and concerns and take part in decision-making that affects their life and wellbeing. If a small, select group of individuals are making decisions for a larger group, and others are unable to voice their opinions, that is social injustice. Societal barriers to participation, like discrimination due to race, gender, and sexual identity, need to be removed and historically undermined and discriminated groups encouraged to speak. It can mean providing resources so people can learn about issues and how to get involved or inviting advocates to speak for underrepresented groups.

4. **Diversity:** an understanding and appreciation of the value of cultural differences. This allows policy makers to design policy to take these differences into consideration and expand opportunities for marginalised and/or disadvantaged groups. Discrimination in employment on the basis of race, gender, ethnicity, age etc are often seen in society and policies that counteract this is one way diversity is taken into consideration.

5. **Human rights:** and social justice are interrelated – they are two sides of the same coin. A just society ensures the protection of everyone's civil, economic, political, cultural, and legal rights. These rights include the right to life, the right to free speech, the right to vote, the right to a fair trial, the right to work and education, the freedom and safety from harm etc. These rights are recognised internationally by the United Nations, protected by treaties, and governments must be held accountable if they violate these rights or fail to protect them.

The United Nations World Day of Social Justice is celebrated each year on February 20th. It is a day to reflect on issues of social justice in Aotearoa like poverty, social and economic exclusion, and unemployment.

Methodists have a long history in working for social justice. Early Methodists lobbied for the abolition of slavery, and prison reform. In Aotearoa New Zealand, Methodist Church recommended that its members give serious consideration to pacifism between the two world wars.<sup>[1]</sup> Many Methodists were conscientious objectors and were imprisoned or placed in detention for the duration of the war.

In 1940, with a background of centenary celebrations of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, Conference expressed concerns about how the terms of the treaty had been violated.<sup>[2]</sup> Conference passed a resolution addressed to the Government that raised concerns that the tribes from the Waikato, King Country and Taranaki were not fully represented and called for a full enquiry to be held into Māori grievances.<sup>[3]</sup> Conference explained the basis for speaking up as being the fact that Methodist missionaries had advised Māori Chiefs to accept and sign the Treaty and assured them that it would stand for all time and be honoured.<sup>[4]</sup>

Methodists were involved in the activities to stop the 1981 Springbok rugby tour. The leaders of the Methodist church, along with other church leaders, encouraged their members to protest against apartheid but to keep all forms of protest within the limits of non-violence and to use passive

resistance.<sup>[5]</sup> This aligned with the Methodist ethos of social justice.

The Methodist Law Book contains these social principles<sup>[6]</sup>

1. Wise stewardship of God's good creation.
2. The sacredness of human personality and the equal value of all men and women in the sight of God.
3. Employment and labour relationships based on fairness and dignity.
4. Communal and individual responsibility for the due care for those vulnerable in our society.
5. The opportunity for all to live well and with integrity.
6. The just and fair use of power, technology and strength.
7. The conviction that the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ contains the message that will promote effectively the regeneration and reconstruction of society.

These social principles align well with the principles of social justice.

Members of the Methodist Alliance are working for social justice as they work with the most vulnerable and marginalised in our communities with services like food banks, youth housing, Housing First, etc. Our Working Group campaigning to increase benefit and abatement rates are lobbying for social justice for those who are surviving on benefits. We are telling the stories of people living in poverty, people who are faced with choices every day about what to spend their insufficient income on, and what to go without.

Everyone has a part to play in social justice. Here are some things you can do:

- Contact your local Mission to see how you can support their work.
- Adopt a politician – write to them monthly about a social justice issue like the housing crisis, income insecurity, food insecurity, etc.
- Find an ActionStation campaign that speaks to your heart and read the report, sign the petition, or donate. <https://actionstation.org.nz/campaigns>
- Join the Methodist Alliance working group that is campaigning to increase benefit and abatement rates.
- Make a commitment to do something on Sunday 20th February – even if it is to sit and reflect on issues of social justice and pray for change. Perhaps you could “Stay and Pray” for social justice after you attend church on Sunday 20th.

If you would like more information about how you can support the Methodist Missions, or to join the campaign workgroup, please contact me.

**by Carol Barron, National Coordinator**

03 375 0512 | 027 561 9164 | [Carol@MethodistAlliance.org.nz](mailto:Carol@MethodistAlliance.org.nz)

<sup>[1]</sup> Wesley Historical Society Publication #58 p52

<sup>[2]</sup> Healy, D, Listening to the People of the Land, Pax Christi Aotearoa New Zealand, 2019, p117

<sup>[3]</sup> Ibid

<sup>[4]</sup> Healy, D, Listening to the People of the Land, Pax Christi Aotearoa New Zealand, 2019, p118

<sup>[5]</sup> Wesley Historical Society Journal 1991-2 p38

<sup>[6]</sup> Law Book of the Methodist Church of New Zealand Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa Section 1.IV

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## 2022 Webinars beginning soon!

Join Wendy Anderson and Trudy Downes as they take you through Insurance, Property and Safety considerations for your parish, rohe and work.

**Thursday 24 Feb 2022, 6pm**

Holding emergency drills

Tenancies for Presbyters

[Registration Link](#)

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**Tuesday 08 Mar 2022, 6pm**

All sorts of compliance:

- Building compliance - Wof
- Code of compliance
- PS4s
- Asbestos sign offs
- Contract Works Insurance vs Public Liability

[Registration Link](#)

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**Tuesday 12 Apr 2022, 6pm**

Uniting Parishes – Insurance and Property, Wellness and Safety

[Registration Link](#)

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## Solomon Islands

Remembering the life of Rev Philemon Riti

Mission & Ecumenical joins the Pacific Council of Churches and the Uniting Church of the Solomon Islands in mourning the recent death of Reverend Philemon Riti OBE after years of faithful service in the Solomon Islands, PCC Moderator (2002 – 2007) and throughout the region, and as far as the World Council of Churches in Geneva.

As a minister and later Moderator of the UCSI, Rev Philemon never hesitated to speak truth to and challenge the systems he felt caused harm to God's people. He was forthright in his views on logging, ecological justice, corruption, divisive politics and the need for reconciliation after his country's troubles which overflowed into civil unrest in 2000. As General-Secretary of the Solomon Islands Christian Association, Rev Philemon called for the involvement of the church to bring about an end to ethnic tensions by fostering reconciliation. His genuine concern for the Solomon Islands was manifested in his consistently holding logging companies, politicians and unscrupulous traders to account for their actions.

A true ecumenist, Rev Philemon was instrumental with Bishop Ellison Pogo of the Anglican Church of Melanesia in forging closer links between the clergy of the UCSI and ACOM. But they took this a step further by including the church leaders' wives in this landmark moment at Maravari, Vella Lavella, in 1993.

Rev Philemon's vision for a united people and lasting peace for the Solomon's through the joint efforts of traditional and church leaders can perhaps be summarised in his own words:

"We have to be seen together, to unite together, so that our people in the grassroots, especially those affected areas, will also have a deeper feeling of the wider community's concern for them. And, in that way, peace and reconciliation will be (achieved)."

For Rev Philemon Riti – thanks be to God. *(This tribute is sourced from PCC).*

**by Mission & Ecumenical**

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## West Papua

WCC video interview describes human rights crisis in West Papua

During a World Council of Churches (WCC) video interview, Peter Prove, WCC director of International Affairs, talks about the human rights and humanitarian situation in West Papua.

West Papua – the Indonesian provinces comprising the western half of the island of New Guinea – has been a longstanding focus of WCC's concern, and of the Pacific Council of Churches (PCC) of which West Papuan churches are part of the membership.

In the recent interview, Prove provides a helpful background, and indicates increasing concern for the indigenous Papuan population of these provinces "as a result of the persistent and quite serious human rights and humanitarian situation in the region, which the Indonesian government has frankly failed to address and correct."

The WCC and its partners work together to monitor civil and political rights as well as economic, social and cultural rights in the region.

To watch the video, go to <https://www.oikoumene.org/news/wcc-video-interview-describes-human-rights-crisis-in-west-papua>

**by Mission & Ecumenical**

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## "Voices From Bethlehem" Webinar

Reflections on Christian unity in the birthplace of Jesus

The Methodist Ecumenical Office Rome and the Methodist Liaison Office Jerusalem hosted a webinar - "Voices from Bethlehem: Christian Unity in the Birthplace of Jesus" - on 21 January 2022 in the northern hemisphere observance of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. In this webinar Christian leaders from Bethlehem and environs discussed the importance of Christian unity in contemporary times in Bethlehem, the birthplace of Jesus.

The link to the recording is: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SYZYyLQhf\\_I](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SYZYyLQhf_I)

Daoud Nassar (director of Tent of Nations, a recipient of the World Methodist Peace Award, is an educational and environmental farm southwest of Bethlehem) reflected that the situation is difficult for many local Palestinian Christians, who might feel like a minority population. But Jesus spoke to the minority, Nassar noted. "He was talking to a small minority that made a big difference," he said.

Fr Issa Michael Thaljieh, parish priest of the Greek Orthodox Nativity Church in Bethlehem, said that, while people in Bethlehem may face social, spiritual or economic problems, the faithful people still make up the church. "Without the faithful people, I am doing nothing," he said.

Zoughbi Zoughbi, founder and director of Wi'am: The Palestinian Conflict Transformation Center, said it is uplifting to talk about Christian unity despite all the challenges people in Bethlehem face. "These are some of the difficulties we face," he said, outlining some of those challenges, and expressed concern that people are leaving Bethlehem to go live in communities they believe have better opportunities.

Dn. Ashot Ghazaryan, secretary of the Armenian Theological Seminary of Jerusalem, agreed with Zoughbi that the diminishing population in Bethlehem is a great concern. "We see the people in number becoming smaller and smaller," he said, yet in spite of this he still feels part of a large global body. "All Christians are members of Christ's body, and we can read in the Bible what Christ says," he said.

Rev. Anglena Keizer, mission partner assigned to the Methodist Liaison Office Jerusalem and a resident of Bethlehem, shared her personal call to live in Bethlehem, despite the challenges. "The important thing is, God calls and God sends, and he sends by his church," she said.

**by Mission & Ecumenical**

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## Bossey Ecumenical Institute

Applications open anew for Bossey online course in ecumenism

Following a successful pilot project in the spring of 2021, the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey is inviting applications for a renewed version of the 10-week online course entitled "Together Towards Unity. Being Church in a Fragmented World" in 2022. The course will run fully online, from 14 March-5 June 2022, with an application deadline of 15 February.

Sixty students participated actively in the pilot of the course last year, with students and faculty engaging across a variety of key topics and challenges in ecumenism today.

For the academic dean at Bossey, Rev. Dr Simone Sinn, it was a deeply encouraging experience to teach ecumenism in an online format – not least in view of the opportunities it offers for engagement across the globe in a world that connects by digital means perhaps more than ever before. "We encourage young theologians and laypersons with an interest in the field of ecumenical dialogue and engagement to apply for this international course," Sinn says.

The new online course builds on the long-established Ecumenical Studies courses at Bossey in addressing current changing dynamics and configurations of ecumenism through a new medium. In an international cohort of students, participants will explore the biblical, theological, ethical, societal, interreligious and missiological dimensions of ecumenism.

Application details are found here: <https://wcccoe.hire.trakstar.com/jobs/fk0slrp?source> For more information on Bossey, see <https://www.oikoumene.org/what-we-do/the-ecumenical-institute-bossey>

Contact the MME acting Director Tony (an alumni of Bossey) for further information and interest in studying at Bossey, either through the online course, or as a resident student of their signature post-graduate programmes.

**by Mission & Ecumenical**

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## Will They Come Back? What Can Religion Offer Our Divided, Post-Covid World?

An interfaith webinar

Conversation and insights both with ecumenical and interfaith partners are crucial as we respond to the reality of a COVID-impacted and 'post-COVID' world. The National Jewish-Christian Dialogue in the United States (co-convened by the National Council of Churches - USA and the National Council of Synagogues - USA) meets regularly throughout the year. Its most recent session, on January 25, 2022, was held on the theme: "Will They Come Back: What Can Religion Offer our Divided, Post-Covid World?"

Presentations were offered by Rev. Cameron Trimble, CEO of Convergence; Rev. Michael Livingston, Interim Senior Minister of The Riverside Church; and Rev. Jim Keat, both the Digital Minister of The Riverside Church and a technology colleague at Convergence. Presentations offered both challenges and opportunities in the current environment.

The webinar can be accessed at <https://youtu.be/iai341lr18k>

**by Mission & Ecumenical**

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## First Friday Letter

Monthly newsletter of the World Methodist Council

Rev Tony Franklin-Ross is the Chairperson of the World Methodist Council's standing committee for Ecumenical Relationships. Tony shares a reflection for the February edition of the WMC First Friday Letter, which can be accessed here: [https://issuu.com/wmcouncil/docs/february\\_2022\\_ffl\\_pdf](https://issuu.com/wmcouncil/docs/february_2022_ffl_pdf)

To subscribe to the monthly letters, go to <http://firstfridayletter.worldmethodistcouncil.org/>

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## Tonga Emergency Appeal

Thank you to everyone who has donated so generously to the [Tonga Emergency Appeal](#) to assist in recovery efforts after last month's eruption and tsunami. Donations have reached more than \$98,000 and are rising each day as more people respond.

The eruption and tsunami have affected 84% of the population. Technicians are working to repair the internet cable so communications can be restored. CWS is waiting for more detailed reports from our partners once this has been completed.

Our long term partner the Tonga Community Development Trust is putting plans in place to assist people affected, although information is limited by the communication challenges. The immediate plan is to work through Ama Takiloa, the network of village-based women's groups, on Tongatapu, 'Eua and Ha'apai. They will assist families to repair rainwater harvesting, replant food gardens and provide psychosocial support, working with other groups and the Town Officer to avoid duplication. Disaster-preparedness training will continue – the [World Risk Report 2021](#) identified Tonga as the third highest risk country out of 181 considered – only Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands are higher.

The women know who is most in need and how best to help. After previous disasters, the women have organised clean-up operations and gone house to house to make sure people have what they need.

**Donations can be made at <https://cws.org.nz/donate-now-tonga/> and by calling 0800 74 73 72.**

CWS encourages people to read the church leaders [joint statement](#) asking for prayers and support for Tonga.

Please continue to keep the people of Tonga in your prayers as they clean up their homes and gardens, and face an uncertain future, especially with the arrival of Covid-19.

**“... Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.” Joshua 1:9**

**by Christian World Service**

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## Christmas Appeal Reminder

Thank you to everyone who has passed on donations for the 2021 Christmas Appeal, [Lighten her Load with Joy and Justice](#). The Christmas Appeal has provided much needed funding for people who need justice now.

Muneeswari's [story](#) is at the centre of the Appeal. Thanks to support and training provided with the help of your donations, she has become a confident Dalit woman with a small house registered in her name and almost triple the pay she earns as an agricultural worker. CWS partner – your partner – the Women Development Resource Centre is supporting Dalit and Tribal families to stand up for their human rights. There is still time to donate to this Appeal.

We encourage churches who are holding money designated for the Christmas Appeal to bank it into CWS's account: 06 0817 0318646 00 and send in the [remittance form](#) or details to Jordyn at [cws@cws.org.nz](mailto:cws@cws.org.nz)

***“Seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow.” Isaiah 1:17***

**by Christian World Service**

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## Invite Murray to Talk

Looking for something different? Invite CWS National Director Murray Overton to speak in person (depending on Covid-19), by Zoom or Skype in your services or to your group. With fresh eyes, he will share stories of how your prayers and donations are ways to share God's love in the world. This year CWS is focusing on the big changes that are being made for families and communities around the world. He is happy to speak to people of all ages.

Interested? Contact [Murray](#) on (03) 366 9274 or 021 082 50118.

**Partner for Life**



There are lots of reasons why monthly giving is a good idea. Set it up once and know that you are giving practical help to people who need water, food and justice every month. You will save postage and time. You can choose the amount you want to give. You can donate by automatic payment you set up, by direct debit or by credit or debit card online. You will get special reports and stories from our partners. You will give our partners security of funding and know that you are giving people the support they need to make the change they want.

If you would like to talk about [Partner for Life](#), please contact [Jordyn](#) at 0800 74 73 72 or watch out for our next mailing.

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## Tongan Youth Talk About the Volcano...

... and share a song for Waitangi Day.

Juliet and Grace Fakahau, youth members at Wesley Broadway in Palmerston North, were recent guests on the weekly church radio programme, part of the Manawatu People's Radio schedule on Frequency AM999. The programme aired live at 11.00 AM on Tuesday 1 February, and can be downloaded any time: [www.mpr.nz/show/wesley](http://www.mpr.nz/show/wesley). John Thornley was host.

Juliet spoke on the aftermath of the Volcanic eruption, and Grace discussed the song 'House of Siege', by two giants of Kiwi pop music, Moana Maniapoto and Don McGlashan. The bicultural history of Aotearoa is summed up in three verses. Email John ([johngill@inspire.net.nz](mailto:johngill@inspire.net.nz)) and he will email you a copy of the words.

Sadly, like many provincial centres, we lose Juliet and Grace as they go to bigger cities – Dunedin and Wellington – for further studies. But their love for family and the home church will ensure they come back for holidays.

by Christian World Service

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## Connecting Communities in Prayer

IRCA Round the World on ZOOM 7-8 March 2022

Come and share 24 hours of celebrating rural people, places and ministries!

We start by joining with the 41st Annual Rural Ministry Conference hosted by the Center for Theology and Land at Wartburg Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa, USA, 0900 local time, 1500GMT, on Monday 7 March.

Check [Time Zone Converter](#) for your local time and date.

Opening hour: Bible Study led by [Dr Craig Nesson](#)

Keynote speaker: [Rev Melanie Mullen](#) Episcopal Church director of reconciliation, justice and creation care.

Time of prayer and building family connection as rural people around the world. Then local teams lead each hour to share stories, music, and prayer. The schedule moves through the

Americas, across the Pacific, through Asia, Africa, Europe and the UK.

Our Oceania slot begins at 0000GMT with Manasa Vatanitawake in Fiji (noon local time), 0100GMT with an Aotearoa NZ team (1400 local time), and 0200GMT with Saltbush Ministry to Scattered Communities in Australia (1300 Eastern time).

The final hour 1400GMT, Tuesday 8 March will feature closing prayer and worship led by our chairperson Mark.

A ZOOM link will be available through registering on Eventbrite, with the ability to come and go as you choose.

Go to <https://irca.online/conferences/> for more information as it comes available. "Like" us on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/IRCA.News> Networking across cultures and borders Feel free to come and go as suits during the 24-hour period.



## Free Music Resources

(plus postage & packing)

Following the completion of our building program here at Trinity Napier, we have a selection of music resources that are no longer required (nor do we have the ability to store) which we are offering around the Connexion for the cost of postage and packing. Please contact us by March 9th as they are no longer welcome in their current storage space. Contact Parish Secretary Joanne Gaudin 0273141680 with expressions of interest. The list of material can be downloaded from the attachment below.

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