



Methodist Church of New Zealand

Connexions - August 2022



Transformation...

...from a reserve to a tiny forest

I had the pleasure of attending the Central South Island Synod meeting at Opawa Community Church, Christchurch in the weekend. It was a great gathering and the movement of the Spirit was palpable in the kōrero and the sharing of experience and knowledge as we worked through the Synod business.

One of our discussions focused on the report to Conference "Kōrero Papatupu Whenua (Land Stories). Working through the paper allowed us to engage and further explore our understanding of whenua and property and of our Church policies in this space. However, it wasn't until our good friend Mark Gibson took us on a hikoi, a walk, later that day that our 'document' suddenly became real in a very special moment when walking the whenua connected us with a spirituality of place and time.

The following is taken from Mark's notes and words as the group walked together following the river not far from the church. The name of the awa is Ōpāwaho.

"We are going on a hikoi along the awa to a special place to hear a little of an unfolding story of transformation and hope; decolonisation and regeneration. It is a 10-12 minute/800m walk. You will need good walking shoes or boots. In places it is still a bit slushy. We've had a few drops of rain lately. It's a floodplain!

I will lead the way. I encourage you to walk in silence/meditatively. Being attentive to the life you see and hear around you. Seeking to walk **in** the land, rather than merely on it. Walking in the floodplain of the awa. We will stay on the riverside and off the road as much as possible.

Every river walk I lead, and every gathering in the place we are going begins with karakia/with a blessing. It is an acknowledgement that both whenua and awa are sacred.

So, let's do that now.

Blessing for the walk to Te Ngahere Iti The Tiny Forest

In a wairua of wonder and humility let us now walk in silence in the whenua, walk by the awa.

As we walk with the incoming tide may God fill us with aroha for whenua, for awa, for each other.

As we walk may our journey and living in this place deepen and grow.

In the name of the one who dwelt with the wild creatures, we pray.

Amen

Nau mai ki te ngahere iti. Welcome to the Tiny Forest.

Notice where you are standing. From here the climb over the hills begins.

Ahead is the old pathway called the Rapaki track.

The people of Rapaki, Te Hapu o Ngati Wheke knew this place intimately.

It was a place of rest and sustenance before the slog over the hill.

Ngati Wheke also came over the track and into this area we now call St Martins to harvest harakeke. Pre-colonisation the wetlands west of here were extensive.

The kind that did not grow around the harbour.

Ngati Wheke also hold a crucial place in the unfolding story, history and journey of Te Hahi o Weteriana. So, it is good that we have come here too to learn and to grow.

Look at the plaque on the rock. Volcanic rock from the hills, connecting this place even more strongly with them. It tells a story.

The tiny Forest was designed by a local and planted by many other locals young and old to celebrate the sesquicentennial of the signing of Te Tiriti O Waitangi. But there is a significant backstory, and an exciting, emerging story. This is a deeply storied place. Whenua is above all a relationship, a community, a place of story.

While acknowledging the importance and power of story, before we walk, notice too the indigenous fern tenaciously growing out of the rock. As we reflect on story – as people of faith – this is surely a parable.

Now let us walk again silently, meditatively, attentively through the tiny forest to the other side. There we will pause to hear some of the backstory, and some of the emerging story.

This was once a flourishing wetland teeming with life that tangata whenua lived in balance with because they knew themselves to be part of it, not separate from it, or above it.

So, they lived with the whenua, not against it. It nourished them, and they respected and cherished it.

Colonisation changed all of this. Colonisation changed the story.

Both people and land were colonised.

First the wetland was drained and cleared for pastoral farming and horticulture.

Then subdivisions. Over the other side of the awa there became a giant shingle quarry.

Then when it was exhausted, in turn it became a giant landfill. Underneath the now park

is buried toxic waste. When they ran out of space, they dumped it in the awa. The Rudolf Steiner school just downstream from here and on the edge of the old landfill site cannot have a school garden because the soil is too toxic.

Over there, land has been used like a thing. As a mine for an extractive industry.

Then as a dump for city waste. The land has not yet been healed.

On this side the story was more one of neglect. There is a paper road where we stand that was never completed. But it became overgrown with introduced, and unwanted trees and weeds. In its neglect it became a willow forest. It was a suburban wasteland.

Then in the mid to late eighties local authorities deemed that the awa should be widened to improve its navigability and flow for drainage purposes. So, the overgrown bank was completely denuded in preparation for bank re-engineering.

At the eleventh hour this latest chapter in the sad narrative radically changed.

A new way of understanding the urban space broke through.

Instead of widening the awa the decision was made to recloak this bank with indigenous wetland and forest.

This is where the story of the Tiny Forest began.

At first King George V Reserve – was chosen to be one of seven natural heritage projects that would mark and celebrate the sesquicentennial, 150th anniversary, of the signing of

Te Tiriti O Waitangi.

The Tiny Forest, the size of an international rugby field was designed by local, inspirational ecological scientist, Dr Colin Meurk.

It is made up of distinct ecological zones, the ones you find in lowland Canterbury.

So, it is a true celebration of lowland Waitaha, of our region, our place, as it was meant to be. From wetland, to floodplain, to dry terrace forests of kanuka or totara and matai.

Many locals, young and old planted the forest in 1990-91. For a while they protected and weeded the trees, and then apart from the occasional visit by City Care contractors

the Tiny Forest was left to fend for itself. It was in some ways a neglected place again.

Sure, people walked through here regularly but there was no real community engagement or sense of relationship or responsibility.

Not until several years ago when a handful of us who live nearby began talking and envisioned building a relationship between the community and the forest.

We had a few exploratory weeding sessions on the forest edges, but it was difficult to know how we could grow the vision.

Then, when I was part of the formation of the social enterprise Flourish Kia Puawai, we decided to seek funding to make the Tiny Forest the centre of a Regenerative Communities Pilot project.

Funding was secured from several sources, the local community board gave their blessing, and the project was launched in March last year. In the forest and adjacent scout den we held a 30th birthday party for the tiny forest. It was a collaborative effort with Te Hapu O Ngati Wheke, the Cashmere High Green team, the Christchurch City Council and the Opawaho Heathcote River Network. There was a guided walk through the forest with Dr Colin Meurk, enrichment planting was done by young people and there was a harakeke weaving workshop. We even had a birthday cake and sang happy birthday in Te Reo to the tiny forest. It was a grand beginning!

Ever since so much has happened here. Probably over 300 people, nearly all local, have been engaged with the tiny forest in one way or another. A tremendous amount of learning has gone on and a huge amount of mahi has been done to help both the tiny forest and community to grow and flourish.

During a recent online talk Maui Stuart from Te Hapu o Ngati Wheke asked, "How do we connect with the land?" Then responded with "It's mahi, mahi, mahi". This understanding has guided all that we have done in the Tiny Forest.

Colin Meurk, and I, led an eight-session programme, with 25 students from St Martins School. This involved a lot of hands-on experiential learning. Most of these newly planted trees and shrubs around us were planted by them. I have been working with the scouts next door to build a deeper relationship with the forest. They too have done some enrichment planting.

We have started monthly what we call 'give back' sessions for people who live around here. Now we have a network of over thirty people of a range of ages who are engaged regularly in the forest.

We have a highly popular facebook page for the tiny forest. This both celebrates the forest and seeks to build relationship with it and knowledge of it.

We have held winter planting events. The most recent one was two weekends ago and nearly thirty people participated. We even now have a smaller team who do mahi here during the week.

Things just keep growing and growing, organically, mostly by word of mouth. We have resisted ringing in conservation volunteers from all over because we are trying to grow something very local, where deep relationships form, and sense of community grows. This

is at the heart of what it means to be regenerative.

The Tiny Forest is always leading the way. My growing awareness is that we just need to watch and listen and learn. Discovering last year that it has begun regenerating itself with real energy was both exciting and wondrous. The Totara, kakikatea, kowhai, titoki and pokaka are with the assistance of birds bringing on the next generation throughout the Tiny Forest. It is incredible seeing what is going on. Our mahi is increasingly becoming one of just supporting the Tiny Forest to do its own thing.

Probably the highlight for me so far in this unfolding story, apart from discovering this natural regeneration, was the Matariki-in-the-Tiny-Forest celebration we held in the Scout den on a cold Friday night at the beginning of July. It was for the volunteers. The Kaupapa was to offer manaakitanga, to give back to those who had given back to the Tiny Forest. These circles of reciprocity are central to the culture we are cultivating here. The whole event was organised with our Tiriti partners Te Hapu Ngati Wheke. It was a magical night with a hangi; a time of sharing in a circle where we reflected back and gave thanks, and dreamed of what else could yet be; and some wonderful story-telling by Maui Stuart.

So, we have begun a tradition of doing our annual reflection on our mahi and planning for the new year as part of the Maori new year. In the context of the whenua, the forest and the awa it feels like the right thing to do. The right time of year. The right way to grow regenerative community.

The relationship with Te Hapu O Ngati Wheke is growing. Some of our leadership team,

at the invitation of Maui, spent time with him in Taukahara, the regenerating ancient indigenous forest on the slopes of their ancestral mountain behind Rapaki. We have also been invited to come and help at the next community planting event on the mountain.

The Regenerative Communities Pilot project was launched with a special blessing by mana whenua. We have carried this tradition on. Every event or gathering, or workshop or 'give back session' in the Tiny Forest begins with a blessing. It is a central thread in what we are about.

The next exciting stage of our evolution and development is happening right now.

We are forming a small oversight team of passionate local volunteers. This spring summer we are also planning several workshops that will help to grow the regenerative approach.

The volunteers have asked for a workshop that helps them to learn the Maori and English names of many of the trees, shrubs, grasses and ferns that are part of this living forest.

During our reflective sharing time at our Matariki event we asked the volunteers, "How has being involved in the tiny forest changed you?" Their responses included: pride in our community, taking responsibility in our community, a sense of being kaitiaki for the river and land, colonisation has disconnected us from the land and knowledge about it and this is changing for me, learning about Matariki, reconnecting with the place I grew up with, and recovering a sense of village through working together on the forest.

When we shared ideas for the new year beginning in September, they flowed. You could feel people's excitement and see their sense of relationship and engagement.

Something else we intentionally do here is grow the sense that we are part of an ongoing story. That others began the story, and we now build on their mahi, and one day hopefully others will build on ours. The blessing offered at every gathering always acknowledges those who came before us.

I guess everyone would give their own title to this story.

One of mine is "Transformation" subtitled "from a reserve to a tiny forest".

Or alternatively, "The Tale of Two Sides of the Awa - a story of decolonisation".

I can't wait for the next chapter to begin!

And yes, talking about names, we are actively seeking to decolonise the name.

Our volunteers hate the name. Te Hapu o Ngati Wheke want it changed.

The community Board are very supportive of a name changing process beginning.

This is partly why we call it the Tiny Forest. It changes the narrative. It'll happen. I know it'll happen.

The Jewish prophet Micah called his people to "walk humbly with their God". Over the years I've found new layers of meaning in this phrase. One of my more recent insights is that we walk "with God" in the whenua, in the land. So, it is in our relationship with whenua that humility is seen or not seen. It is in the whenua where we learn to be humble.

As a descendant of the colonising generation this is a particularly challenging task. It means changing the narrative. We need to grow a way of living, relating and being that is genuinely humble in this place we now call home.

Being in relationship with tangata whenua, the people who are the land, being on a

bi-cultural journey, means learning how to walk humbly with them and with the whenua.

It can't be one without the other.

Decolonisation is good climate action too. This side of the awa did a whole lot better in the recent flooding than the other side. Despite City Council efforts to stop erosion it continued unabated. Half the Tiny Forest was flooded but has quietly absorbed the water in preparation for spring and summer growth. On a hot day the temperature in the tiny forest is noticeably cooler than out on busy Centaurus Road.

But I want to leave you with some questions to ponder and converse on as you wander back to Opawa Church.

Hearing some of the unfolding story of this place, of this Tiny Forest, I wonder how the narrative of the land where your parish buildings are could change?

Is it a living community of life or a property? Are you living with the community of life there or against it? How could the whenua in your care be decolonised?

What is the fern on the rock that we will pass again saying to us?

What is the Spirit saying to Te Hahi about whenua?

Walk with someone else and reflect together on these questions."

by Tara Tautari



Tindall Foundation Funding Makes a Difference

Methodist City Action, the Methodist Mission in Hamilton, its qualified chefs, and a band of volunteers provide a community meal every Monday at 12 noon for only \$1. Between 50 and 70 people attend the weekly community meal.

Funding from the Tindall Foundation was used to replace the aging freezer in the community kitchen. The new freezer enables Methodist City Action to take advantage of seasonal produce while the cost is low. Having a reliable freezer means that meat can be bought on special, which also reduces total costs. In addition, the running costs are lower than the previous antiquated freezer and the quality of the contents is sustained for longer. Methodist City Action purchased an upright freezer, so it is much easier to see what is in stock and to organise it to suit the different needs the kitchen serves – community lunches or cookery classes.

The Methodist City Action kitchen pumped out almost 2,500 meals, despite lockdowns and ever-changing regulations. Over 570 volunteer hours made this possible. When it was not possible to host the community meals in person on the premises, due to Covid-19 restrictions, Methodist City Action provided takeaway meals, with social distancing, scanning/signing in and mask wearing.

The community meals are open to anyone and people experiencing homelessness, hunger, lack of funds or just loneliness attend. A variety of support services are offered and referrals to other services are also made. Recently, a hairdresser made contact and now offers free haircuts before/after the meal which are very popular. While it may be just a haircut, it not only increases self-esteem and confidence, it also shows that people care.

You can find out more about services offered at Methodist City Action by checking out their website: <https://www.mca.net.nz/page/our-services/> or their facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/category/Community/Methodist-City-Action-1142049765885340/>

Siaola, Vahefonua Tonga Methodist Mission, also received Tindall Foundation funding. Their original application was for an education and training expo, but due to Covid-19 it was not possible to hold the expo in person or online. The Tindall Foundation agreed to Siaola repurposing this grant for food security for vulnerable families. Food parcels were provided to families who were required to self-isolate due to Covid-19 and were unable to access food due to the mandatory requirements, did not have family or friends to do their shopping and needed at least five days' supply of food.

Food parcels were tailored to the individual needs of the family. So they sometimes included baby formula, nappies, and culturally appropriate food, including Halal meats.

The recipient families expressed their thankfulness and appreciation of the food parcels provided. Often families reported they were very afraid as Omicron was peaking and they had been in lockdown since August 2021. Some Tongan families were especially afraid as they did not understand all the mandatory changes and what was required of them, as most of the messaging was in English. Siaola supported the families by providing information to isolate and delivered over 2,000 food parcels to Tongan families throughout the Auckland. Siaola also held Covid-19 vaccination events.

The Methodist Alliance is a local donation manager for the Tindall Foundation and we distribute grants in accordance with the Tindall Foundation priorities. Funding rounds are held annually and we report to the Tindall Foundation on the outcomes the grant funding has achieved. You can check out the Tindall Foundation priorities, what is funded and what is not here: <https://tindall.org.nz/family/>

The Methodist Alliance is very grateful for the Tindall Foundation funding that makes a difference in the lives of many whānau in Aotearoa New Zealand.

If you would like more information about how you can support the Methodist Alliance, the Methodist Missions, please check out their websites or contact me.

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Let us not grow weary of doing good

Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. Galatians 6:7

The Methodist Mission Southern website states: **Doing what is right. Not what is easy.**

The stories that we gather monthly from each of MMS services tell of how things are not easy, however, problems are overcome, solutions are found and our clients can move forward. Whilst we embody our vision of a safe, caring, and sustainable society where every citizen is valued and respected, and enjoys an equal opportunity to lead a fulfilled life, we are required to be problem solvers in our fast-paced society and one that is getting faster.

How does this work when the social and economic backbone is unstable and constantly changing?

The government is currently restructuring the health sector due to stress and inequities (hello HealthNZ), and the \$500m a year Oranga Tamariki spends on support agencies, *and* the basis for social sector commissioning (all \$6bn a year), and soon, Local Government which is a major social housing provider will also be restructured (following 3 waters), bringing major changes to organisations such as ours and many others in 2023.

To keep our young mums in education will add exponentially to their earning potential and quality of life for them and their whānau. To encourage our Youth Transition House residents to gain a skill or return to education places them not only on the path of independence but also to be part of a society that they nearly/did drop out of, and one that perhaps did not support them as it should have.

MMS actively brings the changes that work, not easy when the social and economic structure feels like it is in free fall! Today's buzz words of equitable, accessible, cohesive, and people-centered, sound fabulous but should we be feeling nervous that these words will disintegrate into the opposite, a shift of awareness is required and so getting worse before we achieve this? What happens when we place more stress and inequity on those who are in need?

Our stories are integral to who we are, let us not be deceived and diverted by being in a season of need or a season of plenty. We embrace our humanity and recognise that we need a respectful community where we are all equal, whether a homeless rakatahi who has fallen out with his parents, a young teen mum who needs guidance and support, or loving parents who are struggling with divorce.

Let us all try taking the conscience stand of doing what is right, not what is easy, pray into these governmental changes that they will support the work that all of our organizations do, and let us not grow weary of doing good.

Read about our stories in MMSouthern's e-news – [contact Julie](#) if you wish to receive these/sign up on our [website](#) /or through our [Facebook](#) page.

Be part of our story, our work, our community.

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East Africa Appeal

The situation for many people is worsening as drought continues in East Africa. Four back-to-back droughts are challenging the food security of nearly 20 million people, of whom 918,000 are displaced.

It has been nearly three years since the affected communities have had decent rains and the request for humanitarian assistance has become even more urgent. A fifth drought

threatens.

In Somalia, the United Nations [reports](#) at least 7 million people are facing an acute food crisis by September. Rising wheat prices and the war on Ukraine where Somalia sources more than 90% of its supply have made the situation much worse. The people are on the brink of starvation and urgently need more help.

CWS is [appealing](#) for people facing famine in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia. Funds will enable ACT Alliance local members to distribute emergency cash transfers, food, fast growing seeds, animal feed, water and sanitation, and provide protection to some of the most vulnerable people. Your [donation](#) will help families survive.

Fatima and her five children (*pictured*) fled their home in search of food. They now live in a makeshift tent in a camp for internally displaced people in Baidoa, Southwest State, Somalia where ACT Alliance is working.

Please keep families throughout the world facing hunger in your prayers.

Green Sunday

The Conference 2021 Workshop on Climate Justice identified certain areas of work the church wanted CJWG to focus on.

One of these was establishing a Green Sunday to be included every year in the Lectionary. Following feedback from synods about the proposed date clashing with Father's Day, Green Sunday will now be recognised every year in the Lectionary on the 4th Sunday in September within the Season of Creation.

For 2022, this celebration will occur on **Sunday 25 September**. The following resources are available to the Connexion on the [CJWG webpage](#).

- A Green Sunday worship resource from the Faith & Order Committee (several language translations intended)
- The Conference 2021 Climate Justice video
- A list of practical activities for the rest of the day such as river/beach clean-up, tree planting, etc.

It is our hope that congregations will focus on the Climate for the whole day and that church or individual families will be encouraged to share an activity together.

Climate Justice Working Group



Stand with Sri Lanka

The situation in Sri Lanka remains extremely difficult during the current political and economic crises.

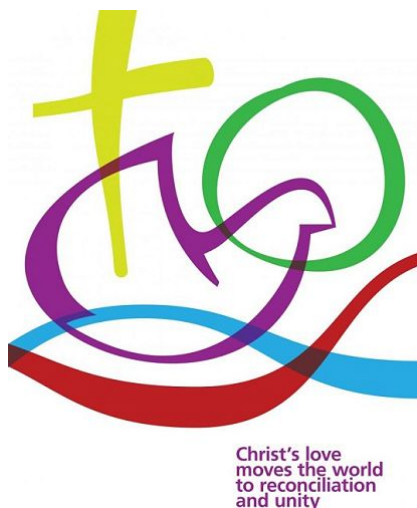
The UN [reports](#) 6.3 million people do not have enough to eat and many are living on one meal a day. CWS partners are supporting some of the most vulnerable people.

The Women's Centre (pictured) purchased 250 clay stoves and will provide 6 months' worth of firewood for factory workers in the Free Trade Zones, with a grant from our general emergency fund. The Devasarana Development Centre says that it is finding local trainers to run its workshops for small farmers to avoid travel costs. Members have supported the protests and are hopeful for a better outcome in elections.

Monlar, the Movement for Land and Agricultural Reform, reports small farmers are finding it a little easier than people

in the urban areas, but the plantation workers are more likely to be hungry. Read their report and statement [here](#).

Please remember Sri Lanka in your prayers and through your support of the Winter Appeal. We are inviting you to [write](#) to Foreign Minister Hon. Nanaia Mahuta about the need to uphold human rights and good governance in Sri Lanka as well as make additional humanitarian funding available.



World Council of Churches – the 11th Assembly is about to begin

The Assembly of the World Council of Churches ('WCC') is a special time in the lives of member churches, ecumenical partners, and other churches, as it brings together more than 4000 participants from all over the world.

It is a unique opportunity for the churches to deepen their commitment to visible unity and common witness. This makes a WCC Assembly the most diverse Christian gathering of its size in the world.

The theme of the 11th Assembly of WCC is "Christ's love moves the world to reconciliation and unity". The Assembly will take place in Karlsruhe, Germany – from 31 August to 8 September 2022, with additional pre-assembly meetings. The MCNZ

delegates are Rev Dr Susan Thompson and Rev Tara Tautari, with Rev Tony Franklin-Ross (MME acting Director) as Advisor. In addition, Te Aroha Rountree is attending as a delegate from Te Runanga Whakawhanaunga I Nga Hāhi O Aotearoa, and Filo Tu as part of the Assembly staff. The Aotearoa-New Zealand contingent also includes delegations from the Anglican and Presbyterian churches.

The WCC Assembly is the highest governing body of the World Council of Churches (WCC), and normally meets every eight years but has been delayed because of the covid pandemic. It is a unique time when the entire fellowship of member churches comes together in one place for prayer and celebration.

The assembly will gather amidst perplexities, anxieties, and fundamental questions about the way we inhabit the earth, make sense of our lives, live in society, and accept responsibility for future generations. These questions have been amplified by the global COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences, the climate emergency, and manifestations of racism worldwide, which have further revealed structural economic inequality, gender discrimination, and other forms of injustice in our societies and in our world.

In this fragmented and fractured world, the assembly theme is an affirmation of faith that Christ's love transforms the world in the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit. It is a radical call to the churches to work together unceasingly and with people of other faiths and all those of good will for just peace and reconciliation. It is a call for the visible unity of the church to become a prophetic sign and a foretaste of the reconciliation of this world with God, and the unity of humankind and all creation.

Please hold in prayer the WCC Assembly and the delegations attending, including those travelling from MCNZ and Aotearoa-New Zealand.

*God of grace, we give thanks for the rich diversity within the one body of Christ.
Lead us into greater understanding, that together we may serve as the hands and feet of Christ.
Spirit of God, keep on blowing.
Sail over the barriers that we build to divide ourselves from each other.
Resurrected Christ, ignite the passion of God's mission within our hearts.
Let us continue in our journey, united in the caring love of Jesus Christ, to bring new hope and fuller life to all
humanity and creation*

AMEN.

More information can be [found here](#).

MISSION AND ECUMENICAL BOARD

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



Radio Programmes offered by Wesley Broadway Community Radio

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

August 9/16:

5 hymns for Pentecost, including old favourites and 3 texts by Shirley Erena Murray, performed by the Festival Singers of

Wellington, Viva Voce, Chamber Choir of Auckland, and Sacred Heart College, Lower Hutt. Composers: Jillian Bray and Colin Gibson.

The two older hymns are 'Bless the Lord O My Soul' and 'We Plough the Fields and Scatter', sung by the Durham Street Methodist Church Choir, chosen to honour the ministry of the **Reverend Eileen Shamy** (1926-1999). She chose traditional hymn music for services with sufferers from Alzheimers diseases and related Dementias. It was an experience to stir emotions and revive remote memories, leading to worship, in her own words: 'more significant than sermons'.

August 23/30:

Stories from the Agape Fellowship, a Palmerston North support group for people living with physical and mental illnesses, including social isolation in older years. The Agape Fellowship has been central to the outreach ministry of Wesley Broadway for more than thirty years.

Future programmes for 2022:

more Pentecost songs from the New Zealand poems and poets, including carols for Advent and Christmas.

HOW TO LISTEN TO THE PROGRAMMES

Live:

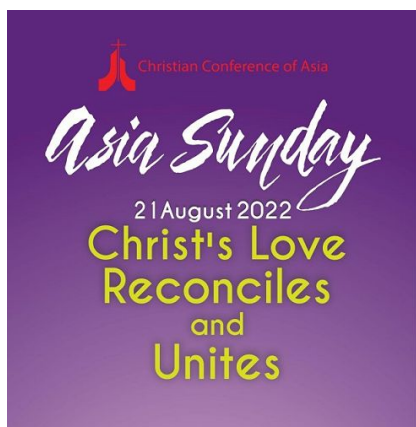
These can be heard live in the Manawatu area at 11 A.M. each Tuesday and Saturday, on Frequency AM999.

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 topic and date.

Wesley Broadway Radio Hosts:

Gillian and John Thornley welcome responses/enquiries.

Email: johngill@inspire.net.nz



Asia Sunday – “Christ’s Love Reconciles and Unites”

This year, Asia Sunday will be observed on 21 August 2022.

Although Asia Sunday is annually observed on the Sunday before Pentecost, this year Asia Sunday is being organised in the run-up to the 11th Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC), the theme of which is ‘Christ’s love moves the world to reconciliation and unity’.

With a focus on reconciliation and unity in the Asian context, the special liturgy contains prayers of intercession for the people of Sri Lanka, Myanmar, and the Philippines that are coping with challenging and uncertain times.

The liturgy resource can be [found here](#).

MISSION AND ECUMENICAL BOARD

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



Operation Refugee

A shout-out to Wellington Methodist Church which [held](#) a banquet in support of this year’s [Operation Refugee](#). The funds raised through the dinner and an auction will assist refugees from Afghanistan, Palestine, Syria and Ukraine. Thank you!

So far individuals and groups have raised more than \$12,000 for Operation Refugee but CWS wants to double that before August 20, when the challenge ends. Talk to your parish or group about how you can stand with refugees and have some fun – it’s also okay to do your challenge later in the year when it is a little warmer.

Sylvia Haddad from DSPR Lebanon has written:

“The education programme for the young Syrian refugee students is very busy and going well. We even used the online method for

those that live too far to attend in person and for those who cannot afford our now very expensive transport costs. I don’t have the exact numbers with me who went to Syria for their official exams, but I estimate that there were around 220 who sat the 2 official exams of the Brevet and the Baccalaureate. Passing the second exam will allow them entrance into universities.

The economic and political situation in Lebanon is deteriorating as more businesses close and people lose their jobs. The devaluation of the Lebanese pound and the inflation in prices is affecting everybody as many essential items cannot be imported such as medicines, and the hospitals are suffering. A good number of nurses and doctors have left the country and so have many teachers and professors. All have to make a living and so have to seek work elsewhere.

But we at DSPR Lebanon continue to work hard to help people continue with education, vocational training and community development and provide relief funds when we receive.”

Check out [Operation Refugee resources](#) for recipes, quizzes, a group Bible study and ideas for organising a Gathering. Or simply call National Director [Murray Overton](#) to discuss how you might be involved: 0800 74 73 72.

Preparing for the Season of Creation & Green Sunday

The Season of Creation is a global movement, an annual month-long season when Christian communities pray and act to protect creation.

It is an opportunity to dig deep into our faith and come away feeling refreshed in our unity and our love for each other and the Creator. The season starts 1 September, the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, and ends 4 October, the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of animals and ecology beloved by many Christians.

The Methodist Church of New Zealand has commended the recognition of Green Sunday for the 4th Sunday in September, timed to be within the Season of Creation. For 2022, this celebration will occur on Sunday 25 September.

Whether preparing for a month-long Season, or a one-off Green Sunday, now is the time to develop the theme and ideas for marking this locally or regionally. Watch the [video here](#).

Available to download are:

- Information from Methodist Mission & Ecumenical on the Season of Creation and Green Sunday
- A resource from the international and ecumenical Season of Creation workgroup
- Watch the video

MISSION AND ECUMENICAL BOARD

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uNETy August 2022

UCANZ NEWSLETTER

If you are anything like me, you will be longing for this winter to be over. I'm tired of the cold and the rain and COVID. Once again, the Standing Committee had to meet via Zoom for its meeting at the end of June, and even then, winter ailments prevented some from attending. However, we had a very

positive meeting with signs of Spring on the horizon!

Breaking News!!!

You will be pleased to know that our long search for a new EO is finally over. The Personnel Committee brought a person's name to the Standing Committee meeting, and this person was unanimously endorsed as the best candidate for the position as we move to the next stage on our journey together. Unfortunately, I cannot release their name yet, but we are all happy and excited at the prospect of working together from early next year. Watch this space!

Concerns

Some of our discussions at Standing Committee centred on concerns that had been expressed by several parishes on the increasing financial burdens they were being subjected to by the Partners. Annual Levies are higher this year having risen from 7% to 8% of Assessable Income. By the time GST is added this makes a big difference to an already struggling congregation. We noted too that the Property Consolidation exercise being conducted by the Presbyterian Church is also adding to the stresses of some parishes as well. Your concerns are our concerns, and we will continue to talk with the Partners about them.

I am delighted to report though, that any concerns we had about the change of Convening Partners have turned out to be very few. Apart from a few minor hiccups, everything seems to have gone smoothly. So, thanks to you all for being willing to try something new, and I hope you enjoy and make the most of the next three years with your new Convening Partner.

Parish Membership and Financial Statistics

As I have been taking care of the UCANZ Office over the past few months, I have come to realise how vital it is that parishes fill in and send back the annual statistics forms which are sent out by UCANZ. If this is not done, then any change in personnel and addresses are missed and the opportunity to claim any allowances against the annual levies is lost. Your Membership Statistics Form was sent to you in June and is due back now. If you haven't received one, please contact me at the Office. We need this information for our UCANZ Directory 2022/23. Your Financial Statistics Form will be arriving soon.

Forum 2023

Standing Committee is already thinking about UCANZ Forum 2023. We are looking at April in Christchurch and hoping for a big attendance to welcome our new Executive Officer. In preparation, we need you to be thinking about nominating new members for our Standing Committee. These are exciting times as we look to steer UCANZ in a possible new direction.

Kind regards / Ngā mihi nui
Rev Geraldine Coats for UCANZ

Yearbook Updates

Details that have changed are in *italics*.

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Breaking New Ground – A Call for Expressions of Interest

Did you ever hear of such a thing as a Missioner? The Archdeaconry of Waitotara which extends from Stratford to the north, Opunake to the west, and Waitotara to the south is seeking just such a person.

A Missioner is NOT a parish priest, and not even necessarily Anglican. The Missioner we are seeking will be adventurous, incorrigible, unphased by history, energetic and imaginative. This Missioner will be sensitive enough to know their own strengths and weaknesses, courageous enough to invite others to mitigate any weaknesses, diplomatic enough to please most of the people most of the time, and loving enough to seek newcomers and welcome allcomers. This Missioner's mission is to build the church communities across the Hawera,

Patea and Waverley areas working collaboratively with existing communities and collegially with their fellow Missioner in the Eltham and Stratford area.

We have a stipend and accommodation and vehicle to offer to the person whose imagination is captured by this opportunity. If you like what you read so far, please contact us. We look forward to providing more detail to adventurers and innovators.

Please contact Carolyn on bishopspa@wtanglican.nz

From The Venerable Chester Burrows, Archdeacon of Waitotara, South Taranaki
