

Methodist Church of New Zealand

Connexions - April 2022



Tēnā koutou katoa

On Palm Sunday I was at the Tauiwi Strategy and Stationing (TSS) meeting. Palm Sunday is the day we remember Jesus's 'triumphant' entrance into Jerusalem, with the people gathered around him waving palm branches in the air.

Even as we wave, we know Jesus is moving inexorably to his death. Even as we despair, we wait in hope. The hope that comes with Jesus's resurrection.

This then, is Holy Week for us. This journey from death to life with everything in between.

In the busyness of the TSS meeting, it was the devotional moments led by our Superintendents that focused our hearts and minds on this special week. Amidst all the korero and planning on issues as diverse as itinerancy, leadership and discernment processes for ministry - it was our prayer life that called us together to affirm that God is with us – in the the questions we ask, in our shared reflections, and in the hope

that continues to spring afresh in our hearts.

In the words of St Augustine of Hippo "We are Easter people and 'Alleluia' is our song."



Methodist Alliance supports benefit increases but overall benefits remain inadequate

On 30 March 2022, the Methodist Alliance put out a media release about the benefit increases coming in to force on 1 April.

The media release read:

The Methodist Alliance welcomes the increases to benefits on 1 April 2022 but they still fall far short of meeting the actual costs of living, trapping people receiving benefits in poverty.

Whakamana Tāngata, [1] which was released in February 2019, highlighted the shortfalls between the benefit rates and what was sufficient for an adequate standard of living. At that time, a Jobseeking couple with two children, who received the accommodation supplement and Working for Families, faced a shortfall of \$356 a week; and a single person on a supported living payment, who received the accommodation supplement, faced a shortfall of \$137 per week.[2]

With significant increases in the cost of living since 2019, these shortfalls have magnified trapping people in poverty and in accommodation unsuitable for their needs.

Benefit rates are so low that many people receive supplementary payments. The most common is the accommodation supplement which helps with the increasing costs of housing. The second is temporary additional support to help with essential living costs. Both these top ups are subject to claw backs and are reduced if the benefit increases. This means that the increases will result in lower supplementary payments, with the net result of what appears to be a significant increase in effect substantially reduced, leaving some people little better off. For some people, it means they will fall to a lower category for social housing eligibility meaning a longer wait for secure, appropriate housing.

The abatement threshold is the amount a person can earn before their benefit is cut, and is currently equivalent to just seven and a half hours at the minimum wage. This is in stark contrast to when the abatement rate was first introduced in 1986, when it amounted to 15 hours per week at the minimum wage.

A single person with no dependent children who accepts part-time work and earns more than the \$160 a week may see only a few extra dollars a week in their pocket, once the abatement rate of 70c for every dollar earned has reduced their benefit. They may also have work-related costs such as travel to and from work. In addition, their social housing costs may increase as it is based on their income. The total effect may mean that they are financially worse off accepting the part-time work – a powerful disincentive to seeking independence.

The Methodist Alliance urges the Government to ensure benefit levels provide people with an adequate income to live with dignity, with enough money to buy food and pay for housing without having to go to Work and Income for additional support to meet basic living costs. We also call on Government to index abatement rates to the minimum adult wage and restore them to the original levels of 15 hours per week.

Poverty and inequality in Aotearoa New Zealand remain entrenched problems after over 30 years of economic reforms.

The government Covid-19 response which provided higher levels of financial support than existing benefit recipients, represents tacit acknowledgement that current benefit levels are inadequate to support the most basic standard of living for ordinary New Zealanders.

Members of the Methodist Alliance work with some of Aotearoa New Zealand's most vulnerable people, many of whom are benefit recipients. This work has highlighted the desperate and unsustainable situation that our poorest people face in their daily lives - as they often bear the brunt of economic downturns in a way that most New Zealanders do not.

Benefits no longer provide for the most basic needs of recipients (accommodation, food, power). This leaves many people dependant on emergency grants, food banks and high cost debt just to survive. The current benefit system keeps people in a poverty trap and does not support them to gain sustainable employment to increase their incomes, safety, and wellbeing.

The low benefit abatement threshold and high abatement rate are major factors in maintaining this poverty trap. While the benefit system aims to help people into sustainable employment, and self-sufficiency, for many this involves transport costs and other employment related expenses like suitable clothing and training etc. A low abatement threshold often means employment is not worth the debt risk of incurring these costs – so is a barrier to employment.

In a fair and caring society, people who receive welfare support deserve to live with dignity and participate in their community. To do this they need sufficient income to cover the basics and just a little bit more for emergencies e.g. healthcare costs. The Methodist Alliance working group campaigning to increase benefit and abatement rates believe that a benefit system which provides income sufficiency will not only restore dignity to those who are in need, but also have an immediate stimulatory effect in their local communities across the whole country and will be particularly noticeable in those areas with the greatest needs.

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

Carol Barron, National Coordinator

03 375 0512 | 027 561 9164 | <u>Carol@MethodistAlliance.org.nz</u>

[1] WEAG, Whakamana Tāngata – Restoring Dignity to Social Security in New Zealand, 2019

[2] WEAG, Whakamana Tāngata – Restoring Dignity to Social Security in New Zealand, 2019, P96



Ecumenical Easter Day service for Radio New Zealand

Following the ecumenical service recorded in Wellington for Christmas Day 2021, for Easter 2022 a special recording of a service has been made in Auckland.

It will be broadcast on Radio New Zealand National programme at 7:10am and 11:00pm; and on Concert Programme at 9:05am.

An international flavour was added to the ecumenical mix with 10 languages used; and the ecumenical diversity including Ukraine Orthodox, Armenian Apostolic Orthodox, Syrian Orthodox, Melkite Catholic - as well as Anglican, Methodist and Roman Catholic.

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by Christian World Service

Put a Smile on her Face

Twenty year old Suzan is about to sit her final exams for High School.

The exams which have been delayed begin April 20. Please pray for her and all students in South Sudan. They have missed two years of schooling and the government has been slow to make the necessary arrangements.

Suzan is one of a handful of young women who will sit the exams across the country. She has received a scholarship and been supported to stay in school by Mission for Sustainable Advancement, our local partner. You can read her story <u>Put a Smile on her Face</u> and watch her video.

If you can please support our <u>Summer Appeal for Gender</u> <u>Justice</u> to help girls and women in need of education.



gender and HIV-AIDS, and the impact of COVID-19 on human trafficking $\,$

Two online consultations were recently hosted and organised by CCA.

One was on the theme 'Towards an Effective Advocacy on HIV and AIDS for Upholding Dignity of Gender and Sexual Minorities' which was held virtually from 24 to 25 March 2022. The Asia region is home to an estimated 5.8 million people living with HIV in 2019 (UNAIDS Report, 2020). Structural factors, such as stigma, discrimination and violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity and the criminalization of same-sex sexual practices, contribute to hindering the availability, access, and uptake of HIV prevention, testing and treatment services among gay men and other men who have sex with men. Removing discrimination and prejudice against vulnerable groups and thereby ensuring that the widest possible information regarding safe sex practices, health services and HIV prevention and treatment measures is accessible to the people who need it most.

About 31 participants from different countries across Asia and beyond attended the online consultation. The participants emphasised on the importance of addressing human sexuality in a comprehensive manner to have effective HIV programmes in churches. The five presenters and resource people for the consultation included Rev Tony Franklin-Ross; who spoke on the issues of gender, toxic masculinity, 'texts of terror' in relation to gender based violence, and Gender-transformative approaches within the HIV response, focusing on Gender Dimensions in HIV programming. Further information can be found at: https://www.cca.org.hk/news-and-events/upholding-dignity-of-gender-and-sexual-minorities-must-be-priority-when-designing-hiv-and-aids-programmes-within-churches/

The second, 'Effects of COVID-19 on Trafficking in Persons' was held on 29–30 March 2022. The online Consultation, which was attended by over thirty participants from across Asia, focused on issues such as the gendered nature of trafficking in Asia, the situation of labour trafficking, and the importance

of comprehensive prevention and response strategies. The Consultation also offered a platform for the participants and resource persons to share innovations, best practices, and strategies of resilience and adaptation in ongoing anti-trafficking ministries amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dr Mathews George Chunakara, the General Secretary of the CCA, highlighted the ways in which the COVID-19 pandemic had worsened human flows and migration, pushing people into vulnerability and into risk of being trafficked: "Human trafficking has been identified as the fastest growing criminal activity in the world today. The magnitude of this heinous crime is difficult to quantify and is often underestimated given its insidious and complex nature, which is only made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic." Further information can be found at: https://www.cca.org.hk/news-and-events/effects-of-covid-19-on-trafficking-in-persons-was-focus-of-ccas-regional-consultation/

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Week of Prayer for Christian Unity – 29 May to 5 June

The southern hemisphere observance of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is in between Ascension and Pentecost.

This year the official observance will be 29 May to 5 June for 2022.

The 2022 theme is "We saw the star in the East, and came to worship him"; prepared by Middle East Council of Churches based in Beirut, Lebanon. Though the text for this year's theme is commonly associated with Epiphany at the beginning of the liturgical year, For Aotearoa-New Zealand, there is the opportunity to contextualise this with the observance of Matariki – and the appearance of these stars in our skies.

If you are planning ahead for local ecumenical services, or looking to incorporate the theme into your Sunday parish worship, The international resources are available at: https://www.oikoumene.org/events/week-of-prayer-for-christian-unity

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Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI): Easter Initiative 2022

Jerusalem is sacred to Christians, Muslims and Jews.

During high holidays like Easter, the holy month of Ramadan and Pessach, all of which overlap in 2022, this sacredness can be felt by locals and visitors alike. But the sacredness of the Holy City and its inhabitants is increasingly threatened by consequences of the ongoing occupation, such as discrimination and violence.

In December 2021, the Heads of Churches in Jerusalem issued

a strong statement urging the international community to take up meaningful action to advocate for a Jerusalem without violence and intimidation, and for the preservation of the multi-faith identity of Jerusalem.

Through this year's Easter Initiative, the World Council of Churches EAPPI seeks to connect the sacredness of Jerusalem with what is sacred to us as human beings: home, family, worship, identity, human dignity and life, and solidarity. The Easter Initiative takes a look at how the sacredness of Jerusalem and its inhabitants is threatened today, shedding light on human rights violations that occur in Jerusalem and that are detrimental to the character of Jerusalem as the City of Peace for people of

different religious and national backgrounds. The programme also highlights the steadfastness of people living in the city and lift up initiatives that invite people to stand in solidarity with those suffering from violence, intimidation and the prolonged occupation.

Pray and act for the peace of Jerusalem: The sacred ground of Jerusalem should be protected for all people sharing the city, irrespective of religious or national identity. WCC's calls on church leaders and elected representatives worldwide to pray for the peace of Jerusalem, to take meaningful action to stop forced displacement, violence and intimidation in Jerusalem, and to support work towards an end to the occupation and a just peace for all people in Palestine and Israel.

A variety of resources including Bible studies, news and reflections, can be found at: https://www.oikoumene.org/what-we-do/eappi/easter-initiative-2022

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Methodist Mission Taituāra a Hāpori (Specialist Support): Supporting those to support themselves.

"There's a grace when the heart is under fire. Another way when the walls are closing in. When I look at the space between where I used to be and this reckoning...." favourite words of mine from Another in the Fire by Hillsong United.

This season of Lent appears to be a liminal space, the space between. Easter will arrive as we transition from Summer to Autumn, through Lent to Holy week. The word liminal comes

from the Latin 'limen', meaning threshold. MMS services support our clients across this 'limen', this threshold, enabling them to transition from one space to a better one. We journey with them strengthening their own advocacy and life skills, from a liminal space where direction can be confusing and courage uncertain, to enabling them to leap forward over the cracks of life so they do not fall through.

Our clients lead everything we do, and their voice is paramount. They bring the resources for the work and set the targets that we work towards. Our job is to keep them on track, help them develop new resources, and provide a hand up when they stumble.

MMS has Taituāra a Hāpori (Specialist Support) in Dunedin, Milton and Southland and in addition to the community, they are intrinsic to the level of care provided to all residents in our Youth Transition Houses and for the tamariki enrolled in our preschool Little Citizens and their whanau.

Sue Clarke (our Kaiwhakahaere Chief Operations Officer) shares this story "At lunchtime today, a woman arrived on her bike with a bag of groceries which are to be gifted to Little Citizen's families. This lady then shared the reason for this very generous gesture.

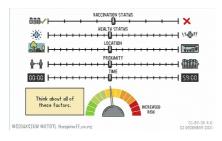
About two years ago and at the start of the first COVID her relationship was dissolving, and she was in despair as to what to do next and for the safety of her two children. She was put in touch with our Taituāra a Hāpori who talked her through what services were available and connected her to them.

Two days after moving into new accommodation, our Taituāra a Hāpori dropped off a care package which meant so much when times were dire, and she has not forgotten this. When I asked her if she needed the groceries herself, she said "No, some organisation dropped these off to me and I want to give these to Mums with families, I am going to go and buy my own groceries."

I thanked her for her incredible generosity to which she replied, there will be more coming! "

The Mission is committed to change that works; working with people from the place that they are at, to the place they want to go next; anticipating the changing needs in society and leading community responses.

Contact Julie <u>julier@mmsouth.org.nz</u> to hear more stories of the Mission's impact via our e-news or sign-up Methodist Mission Southern | Facebook



Risk tolerance to keep using or stop using vaccine passes

Like ripples in a lake after you throw in a stone, our appetite for risk affects our decisions in health and safety and the ripples spread out to include family, friends, congregations, and communities. We individually make risk-based decisions every day; driving a car, wearing seatbelts, mowing a lawn,

changing ceiling lightbulbs.

Most recreational activities carry a degree of risk, and as we age or we are subjected to injuries our decisions become more careful; don't walk the slippery path with a dodgy knee, don't go out in the chilly wind with a cough or cold. In many circumstances there is no one answer that suits everyone. Not everyone has a dodgy knee or a cough or a cold, and not all lightbulbs are in the ceillings.

With the Government's reduction in Covid-19 measures some parishes have been asking if they can still use vaccine passes even though the Church has followed the Government guidelines and vaccine passes are no longer mandatory in our buildings. I think the Government has removed the mandate because Covid-19 has bypassed the need to use the passes.

When considering the continuing Covid-19 risk, there is no one answer that I can give to whether parishes should continue using vaccine passes when they don't have to. The level of risk is different for each parish and even within each building.

The best answer I can give is: before deciding whether to use vaccine passes or not, a parish council should assess the risk that is present in using their buildings.

- Is there a larger number of people with underlying health conditions to consider?
- How good is the ventilation in the building?
- Is the space in the building enough to distance everyone appropriately?
- How long is everybody going to be in the room together?

Additionally, any parish deciding to continue with vaccine passes needs to consider:

- What is the trigger that says to stop using vaccine passes?
- How good are we at including people who stay at home (for whatever reason)?

Ka pū te ruha, ka hao te rangatahi. As an old net withers another is remade.

Nā Trudy Downes

Mobile 027 457 4196 <u>trudyd@methodist.org.nz</u>



Ukraine: world-wide ecumenical prayer and concern

Loving God, your Son Jesus Christ, wept over Jerusalem.

Today, we weep over Ukraine.

We weep for those uprooted from their homes and lives.

We weep for those cowering in basements.

We weep for those who have witnessed death and destruction on their streets.

We weep for those separated from parents, from children, from spouses and siblings.

We are amazed at the resilience of people seeking to comfort those in need and so we pray for Governments opening up borders so that Ukrainians can have safe passage.

We pray for churches and individuals providing food, clothing and shelter.

We pray for medical workers ensuring that shattered bodies are put back together again.

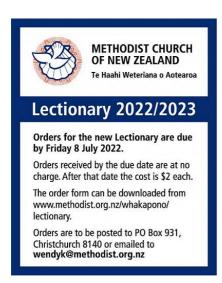
We pray for ordinary Russians demonstrating and voicing their disapproval of the military actions in Ukraine.

May the Holy Spirit give us the willpower to turn our tears into action also.

May we, through our words, prayers and example pursue the things that make for a just peace in the world today and especially in Ukraine.

In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

(Methodist Church of Britain)



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 <u>available on the Methodist website</u> **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.



Tax credits for Donations

CWS reminds you that you can claim a tax credit for your donations.

Information on how to do this is available on the IRD website.

Annual receipts for **Partners for Life** will be sent next week.

If you have lost a receipt, please contact Jordyn at cws@cws.org.nz or 03 366 9274 who will send a duplicate. You

can always donate your credit so more people can access the water, food and justice they need.







A MARKET STALL \$150.00 With a tea or food stall, a South Sudanese mother can support her children.



A PARACHUTE \$85.00 Give psychotherapy session for some of Gaza's traupydised children

Gifts for Mother's Day

Mother's Day is on May 8. Choose a gift from Gifted and support a family who needs life-changing support.

CWS gifts are available as an attractive card or and e-card at any time. We will post you a card which you can include with a box of chocolates, some flowers or simply your own message.

Buy from Gifted and your donation will go to the programme you choose.

Or you could give a gift in memory of your mum – giving thanks for all that she has passed on to you.

Let us pray for all mothers as we remember our own mothers and the women in our community who have shared their love and care.

by Christian World Service



Operation Refugee

Pray, eat walk for refugees in this year's Operation Refugee. CWS will be launching the two months' campaign for this year on June 20.

Please mark the date in your calendar and think about how your church or group can take part. We are suggesting people share food, pray or undertake a walk to raise funds for the

record number of people who have been forced to flee their homes. It can be as simple as hosting a dinner, trying the quiz or other activities we have prepared and collecting a koha or donation. You can register as an individual and collect donations for a walk or the more traditional refugee rations.

This year donations will be used for refugee communities including from Ukraine and in Lebanon and Jordan. The need is great, so please plan to join us! Above is an image ready for a Powerpoint. If you have any questions, please call Meghan or Murray on 0800 74 73 72.

by Christian World Service



Ukraine Appeal

Thank you to you for your generous support to the Ukraine Crisis Appeal. Already you have given more than \$120,000 and much needed donations are arriving each day.

CWS is supporting the ACT Alliance Appeal which is reaching many people with vital supplies, cash vouchers, warm meals and shelter, legal advice and psychosocial support. ACT member are working with local churches in Ukraine and 7 neighbouring countries. In Krakow, Poland for example, the Lutheran Church of St Martin is running a hostel for women and children.

In the east of Ukraine ACT Alliance is assisting families who have managed to escape the siege of Mariupol. ACT member Hungarian Interchurch Aid (HIA) is providing food and other assistance to the families of bus drivers. The escaping families arrive with little and the bus driver's families are sharing what they can with them. The majority stay a short time, wanting to get as far away from the war as possible. If they stay longer,

they are given clothes, food and psychosocial support from local services. In Zaporishzhia, HIA has provided shelter for 65,466 people already and is distributing food packages and hygiene kits. Much of the support has come from locals, but now more is coming from outside.

Please keep Ukraine in your prayers, especially the people who are meeting the families who have fled fighting and siege. Pray for those providing assistance and for those seeking to bring about peace in Ukraine, Russia and beyond.

Donations can be made on line at: https://cws.org.nz/donate-now-ukraine/ or by phone: 0800 74 73 72. Thank you.



New Zealand Methodist Mission centenary Solomon Islands

Open Door magazine

Recognising this anniversary, the Methodist Archives has had issues of *Open Door* magazine digitally scanned and these are now available on the website:

https://www.methodist.org.nz/whakapapa/archives/methodist-history/open-door-magazines/

Before *Open Door* was published, accounts of New Zealand Methodist mission overseas appeared in the *Missionary Review*, published by the Australasian Missionary Society.



PDG study options during 2022

The next date for applications to be received by the Professional Development Grants committee is May 15th 2022.

This is an important date for applicants to remember if your chosen course will commence in Semester 2, unless your previous approved application was for the complete academic year.

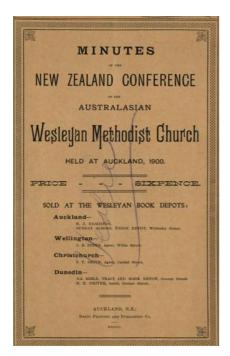
There may be Presbyters and lay people who are interested in study but are unsure where to explore topics that interest them.

The committee has a list of courses and appropriate contact details.

Many courses can be studied at home 'on-line'

Mary West the secretary will forward information if requested.

maryw@west.net.nz 021 026 26031



News from the Methodist Archives

We said farewell to Assistant Archivist Jennie Hood on 23 March.

Jennie is moving to full time work at the Canterbury Museum. During Jennie's 2 ½ years with us, she has worked on integrating and checking the collection transferred to Christchurch from the Auckland Methodist Archives, sorted out some of the digital files sent to Archives and loaded our collection inventories, research guides, photographs and indexes onto the Methodist Church website.

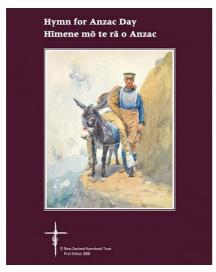
Jennie has been responsible to ensuring the printed Minutes of the Methodist Conference from 1900-2001 have been digitally scanned and can be read on our website. This is a fantastic resource for not just the Methodist Connexion but for researchers world-wide.

https://www.methodist.org.nz/whakapapa/archives/methodist-history/minutes-of-conference-digital-copies/

We are going to miss Jennie and wish her well in her archives work at the Canterbury Museum.

Jo Smith Archivist

archives@methodist.org.nz



Easter music focus for Wesley Broadway community radio

A partnership with Manawatu People's Radio (MPR)

We encourage all to listen online or to the live radio broadcast, and support this initiative to share faith via a secular community radio station. Through music and spoken words, Wesley Broadway explores ways to share a Christian faith journey that touches the experience of non-church people.

How to listen to the programmes

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.

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

Wesley Broadway Radio Hosts:

John and Gillian Thornley welcome responses/enquiries: Email: johngill@inspire.net.nz

The following 3 programmes are the April offerings from Wesley Broadway:

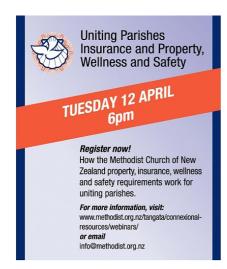
April 5: Traditional Easter Hymns: Wesley, Watts, Cowper, Newton, Crosby

April 12: Four NZ Hymnwriters and Easter:

- Colin Gibson, Shirley Erena Murray, Bill Wallace and Marnie Barrell

April 26: Songs for Peace - a contribution for Anzac Day

Each programme is repeated in the following week.



2022 Webinars!

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

Tuesday 12 Apr 2022, 6pm

Uniting Parishes – Insurance and Property, Wellness and Safety Registration Link

Upcoming

Risk. Legal Conveyancing. Link available shortly.

Click here for past Connexional Webinars

or for more information email

info@methodist.org.nz

Names & Addresses (page 34)

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PAC Distribution Group

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Grant requests close 30 June 2022

For more information visit our website.

or email Wendy Keir