

# METHODIST LOWER NORTH ISLAND SYNOD

## “SYNOD SALT”

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August/September 2023

## *So What's the Story ...*

**The Story of Levin Uniting: How One Parish Began the Task of Building Bridges.**

**Rev. Sandra Williams - Minister, Levin Uniting Church**



LEVIN UNITING  
CHURCH

“Without a vision the people perish.”  
But with a vision...



This part of our journey started in 2019 with a Parish Council planned retreat, although as with all successful ministries, its foundation is really the many faithful people who have prayed for our church and town over many decades. At this retreat two significant ‘aha’ moments set us off. The first, that we were not happy with the results of a ‘healthy churches’ survey we had conducted. It was clear from the outcome that we were ‘okay’, but, as one dear councillor said, “Okay is standing still and standing still means stagnating and stagnating leads to dying.” We knew, in God’s eyes, okay was probably not good enough. The second was an acknowledgement that we had bridges to build, both within our parish and out into the community. We were not working relationally, with some of our church groups operating independently of each other. And we were largely invisible and irrelevant to the wider community.

Now that we had seen what we had seen, we could not ‘unsee’ it. The only way forward was to do something about it. But what? We began to work away quietly in the background building bridges between the various groups within our parish, sharing the story of our vision, improving parish communication, and working to bring people along. Yes, some fell by the wayside, but many more got on board and supported our potentially crazy plans.

And we took seriously the need to reconnect our church with the wider community. The first step on this new path was to discern what the real needs in the community were and which of these we were realistically in a place to address. Thanks to Presbytery funding we were able to conduct some research – canvassing parishioners and the wider community, gathering statistical data from our town and analysing research from other institutions. It was important to know what the real needs are, not just to assume we knew.



The most glaring need before us were the issues of isolation and loneliness. Being a small parish with a predominantly elderly congregation, we knew our main target mission group was to be the older members of our society. We formed a plan and then sought the funding to put it into action. Thanks to the support of Methodist and Presbytery Central’s Mission Resourcing groups, we could commit to a three-year seeding programme.

Our plan was based around two major initiatives, bringing the Seasons for Growth programme to the Horowhenua, and establishing an “Active Ageing” ministry, ideally spearheaded by a new Community Missioner. It was an ambitious seed-planting plan. But now that our three years is coming to an end, what fruit has sprouted and what of our vision has been pruned?

We never did find the right person to become our Community Missioner, but instead added a Presbyterian ministry intern to our staff for two years. He has been instrumental in watering, feeding, and nurturing our vision. Instead of just developing new initiatives we have partnered with other community organisations whose vision and work aligns with ours. Skills for Living have run cooking classes for widowed men from our church kitchen. Age Concern's 'Steady As You Go' accident prevention and movement classes moved to our lounge. We are involved in the local district council's 'Access and Inclusion' forum. There is a healthier and more intentional relationship between the church leadership and a weekly community meal that our parish has provided for the past 17 years. Parishioners have engaged in rubbish clean-ups around town. We held



an inaugural free lunch for 60 of the town's retirees. And the fruit continues to ripen. Our church hall complex has become a true community hub. Age Concern and Citizens Advice Bureau now operate from our church, and the Hearing Association are about to join us too. These leased spaces are over and above the half dozen or more other organisations who regularly rent our rooms. Most importantly, we are moving from a landlord-tenant relationship with our hall users, to partners working collaboratively for the benefit of the wider community. And our wonderful volunteer works team have put many hours remodelling some of our spaces to better provide for the community and church, including the extension and full renovation of the hall kitchen.

Seasons for Growth, the other initiative in our Building Bridges plan for which we have received external funding, is also bearing some incredible fruit. This educational course that equips people with the tools to work through the grief that accompanies major change and loss, is growing apace. The parish employs a Seasons for Growth coordinator for the Horowhenua district. At the end of 2020 a small handful of learning support coordinators from the local schools trained as companions in the children and young persons' programme (CYPP). This number has increased, and now includes all but two of the learning support coordinators, along with school social workers, a small team under the parish umbrella and people from other organisations. Seasons for Growth is running in nearly every school in the Horowhenua. Seasons for Growth for Adults has been a little slower to establish but fruit is starting to develop in that area too. With a handful of adult-course companions now part of the parish team, two courses were run in 2022, and the Health Improvement Practitioners from the local doctors' practices are now adding the Seasons for Growth programme to their arsenal of support networks to which they can refer their clients. And a course is scheduled for parents who have expressed interest as their children have gone through the programme.

"From small acorns, mighty oaks grow." We may not yet be a mighty oak, but there is certainly new life sprouting. And the conclusion of the 3-year seeding funding will not see the end of that growth.

The parish has committed to continuing the Seasons for Growth ministry. Our coordinator, Sandra, is now also the official trainer and overseer of companions in the Horowhenua and Manawatu, endorsed by the franchise holders, the Catholic Archdiocese Wellington. With a growing list of people desiring to train in both the Adult and CYPP programmes, the reach of this valuable resource is set to widen. The parish will continue to employ our trainer/coordinator for 8 hours a week, seeking external funding to cover this and other programme expenses, including the development of a website and the subsidising of course costs for participants.

We are also excited by the path our Community Connections is taking us down, with funding being organised to complete a feasibility study regarding the potential of our place becoming a place for church, community organisations and social enterprises to work collaboratively for the benefit of the wider community. We know that the success of this will require us to employ another staff member beyond the half-time minister that we can afford. This will be a leap of faith, but to get us started we have an incredibly proficient member of our community who has come on board for two months to help determine the right direction and to explore funding options.



This stage of our parish's journey began with God's planting of a vision into soil that has been well fertilised by the historic and ongoing prayers of God's faithful people. That vision took root in a small but committed parish council who were brave and faithful enough to trust God and

their minister and take the first steps. We thought we knew what the journey would involve and what the fruit would be. But as with all faith travels, we skipped at times through sunshine and trudged at times through storms. And the fruit that is growing looks somewhat different to what we first envisioned. Yet, as with all faith journeys, God has been our constant companion. Our spiritual faith has matured through the trials and tribulations, and the fruit is deeper and richer than we could have ever imagined. What have we learned? Take time to dream and discover the vision God has for you and be brave enough to start, for each great journey begins with a single step. And finally, sell the vision to others and get them on board. We would not be where we are today without support from the likes of Presbytery's Mission Catalyst or Presbytery and Methodist funding.

“Without a vision the people perish,” but with a vision...

We wait with strapped boots and bated breath to see where God leads us next.

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## **Notes from Synod – Levin Uniting Church**

### **Friday 28 July – Ministerial Synod**

Topics covered included: Our Ordination, God's World and our Devotional Life, Living Word and Pastoral Responsibilities and Administration.

This was followed by dinner at Cobb & Co to which everyone was welcome.

After dinner the annual accounts and budget for 2024 for were considered and approved along with nominations for 2024. Synod Superintendent: Rev. Nicola Teague Grundy; Secretary: Sarah Laurenson; Synod Treasurer: Glen Williams; Property Secretary: Ian Harris, SALT Editor: Richard Pittams

A service to honour all those who have died followed. Those honoured were:

Alton Angel and Winifred Angel,	Bettie Bell	Nan Bowen	Dennis Coon	
Syd Easton	Rob Ferguson	Shirley Hutt	Michael Jackson-Campbell	
Betty Knight	Rex Millar	Jean Nicholas	Jean Purchase	Jan Robinson

### **Saturday 29 July**

The day was given over to focussing on union and cooperating parishes and members of UPOG (Union Parishes Oversight Group) – an executive on behalf of the partner churches in the lower North Island and includes the regional denominational leaders were invited to be part of the day. (It is not a gathering to which parishes send representatives)

The start of the day was led Rev Peter McKenzie, Executive Officer, Presbytery Central. Peter has been looking back at his own family's history, and from it has tracked and written the dramatic story of a family horse and it's original 'owner'. It is insightful, and at times very moving. Peter has offered to share this resource with any parishes who are interested He can be contacted at:

[peter.m@presbyterycentral.org.nz](mailto:peter.m@presbyterycentral.org.nz)

This was followed by a focus on sharing the stories of union and cooperating parishes in groups around tables, including their strengths, weaknesses and how each parish meets it need. After lunch Rev. Andrew Doubleday, UCANZ Ministry Facilitator, led a question and answer session regarding property, ministry and finance problems in union and cooperating parishes. He pointed out that the property in a union/cooperating parish is 'owned' by the parish while the title is usually held by one of the cooperating partners.

It is worth noting that in the Methodist Lower North Island Synod area there are 36 Methodist parishes altogether, but only six of them are full Methodist parishes. The rest are cooperating/union parishes with a Methodist component along with a Presbyterian and/or an Anglican component.

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## *Situations Vacant*

### **Motueka Uniting Parish**

#### **This appointment will be under Presbyterian administration To be Christ Centred and Community focused**

We are initially seeking a  $\frac{3}{4}$  time minister (preferred option) for supply of up to 2 years.  
This may lead to a permanent appointment.

We are seeking a minister who can:

- Stimulate the congregation with his/her contemporary worship and preaching style.
- Connect with parish members and others within the community.
- Is prepared to work in an inclusive manner with a ministry team and the congregation in sharing worship
- Be a spiritual leader who empowers the congregation through their ministry
- Will be active in building networks in the wider community
- Develop a ministry that is inclusive, warm, encouraging and welcoming.

If you are that person and have an interest in growing God's vision for our town then please contact us on [oaklandsnz@gmail.com](mailto:oaklandsnz@gmail.com)

A full Parish Profile is available on request

Peter Smale

Parish Clerk

027 243 5873

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### **Wellington Methodist Charitable Trust Position Description: Secretary and Treasurer**

#### **Secretarial Tasks**

<b>Task</b>	<b>Details</b>
Board meetings (two a year)	Arranging meeting dates; booking venue or setting up online meeting, catering as needed Agenda – preparing and distributing, together with other material Minutes – preparation and distribution Actions – initiate required actions arising from any decisions Supporting arrangements for any sub-committee or ad hoc meetings, as needed.
Compliance	Charities Services - Charities Register requirements e.g. keeping list of officers up-dated (online) Compliance with the Boards Act Companies Office: maintain the correct address of the Registered Office of the Board Connexional - sending accounts, conference report High Court registration of members – a requirement under the Wellington Methodist Charitable and Educational Trusts Act 1916
Correspondence and communications	Responding to inquiries and requests (usually by email) Keeping Trust information on NZMC website up-to-date
Farm	Farm advisor: managing relationship and key tasks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● annual report from advisor (February)</li><li>● rent reviews (3 yearly)</li></ul>



	<p>Farm Visits – every 3 or 4 years</p> <p>Farm Revaluation – every 3 years (normally), consult with farm advisor, and advise Board members whether to accept</p> <p>Lease – work with the Board’s solicitor and Farm Advisor (include any new legal requirements) to update and complete new leases (normally every 9 years)</p>
Grants	<p>Inviting applications from schools or community groups (as required)</p> <p>Receiving and checking grant applications</p> <p>Preparing applications for assessment</p> <p>Contacting applicants of outcome</p> <p>Preparing grant payments</p>
Member support	<p>Assist the Chairperson and Board Members to undertake their roles</p> <p>Orientation packs – provide new members with a suitable package of information so they become informed about the work of the Board – background statements, Acts of Parliament, recent minutes, special policies, etc]</p>
Other	<p>Hold the Board’s Seal – to be used only with the Board’s approval on legal transactions</p> <p>Institutional memory</p> <p>General record keeping</p>

*For further information contact Nicola Teague Grundy*

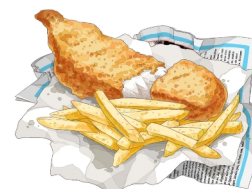
## *Cyclone Gabrielle Update*

### **Presbyterian Methodist Parish of Wairoa Glenys Single**

I thought I would mention two instances four months on.

A couple have moved in with his mother in her small home. With them is their house lot, though some of the larger items we have stored at the Church. Everything has to be removed from the house even the picture hooks off the wall! The house was left too long and already mould is an issue.

We enjoyed Andrew Doubleday’s (UCANZ Ministry Facilitator) visit in June and I have received some very positive feedback. Andrew stayed with us and offered to take us out for a meal. Great idea – except that we have just three restaurants and all were flooded by Gabrielle and are still recovering. Well then fish and chips. Great idea but where? Our two fish and chip shops were in the flooded area. Will they re-open?



However we found the Hospital Store have fish’n’chips and they were great! I have since discovered another shop in town.

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### **Mangapapa Church (Union Parish) Gisborne Stewart Patrick, Senior Elder,**

What a time we have experienced in the last 18months in regards ‘water’!!

There have been 5 Cyclones and unprecedented rainfall. The last 2 weeks in June brought more problems as we have seen landslides, threatening cracks in the ground, and even groundwater rising up to the surface

across the city, flooding the sewerage system in many places. In our neighbourhood a home is threatened by a landslide and there are new cracks in places.

Do remember folk in prayer in this uncertain time for so many. One of our church folk, Anna Alder, cannot get vehicle access to her home at Waihau Beach and there is no likelihood of access to that beach community happening for many months.



Paul Madsen, a Lay Leadership Assistant and an elder at MUP, has been involved with the distribution of solar powered “Clever Radios” in the **Tairawhiti East Coast/Gisborne** area following Cyclone Gabrielle’s visit, in conjunction with *Far East Broadcasting Company New Zealand*, a member and part of an international Christian radio network FEBC. Many of these East Coast communities were cut off and had no power for a month which meant they had *“no phone, no internet, no TV, no radios (unless you had batteries) and consequently no way to check anything.”*

Paul has helped supply these “clever” radios to households, Marae, and Community and Health Centres in Te Karaka, Manutuke, Matawai, Mangatu, Tologa Bay, Tokomaru Bay, Tikitiki, Te Puia, Ruatoria and Gisborne.

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### **Fifteen Easily Singable Hymns from *Alleluia Aotearoa***

This list was compiled by John Thornley, in response to comment from a local church leader, “We’d like to use more NZ hymns but what do we start with out of a total 163 in *Alleluia Aotearoa*?”

- 8. Brother, Sister, Let me Serve You
- 22. Come into the Streets with Me - Palm Sunday
- 23(ii). Come Now, Lord Jesus -Xmas carol
- 36. Every day, a Gem - from Shirley Murray/Colin Gibson
- 59. He Came Singing Love - Colin Gibson’s folk hymn
- 64. How is Jesus Present? - A good one to have when children/grandchildren are present in the service
- 72. In this Familiar Place – A hymn to begin a service
- 85. Let Justice Roll Down
- 87. Lift High the Cross – Easter hymn
- 94(i). Loving Spirit - Goes best to the David Dell tune
- 98. Te Harinui – NZ’s carol for the landing of Samuel Marsden on a marae for first Xmas service on our land
- 127. Take my Gifts – another gem from Murray/Gibson
- 137. The Kingdom is Within You. - A rhythm’n’blues hymn
- 143. Touch the Earth Lightly – a Green hymn
- 146. We Are an Easter People

Order *Alleluia Aotearoa* from Philip Garside Publishing at [books@pgpl.co.nz](mailto:books@pgpl.co.nz) (Also has extensive website)

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### **FROM RIVALS TO FRIENDS**

In May 1860 the Republican Party in the United States held its convention to elect its nominee for the coming Presidential election that was to be held later that year. Four men were vying for the position – a US senator, the Ohio Governor at the time, a judge, and a congressman from Illinois who was really considered a long shot. They were all good men, but the congressman seemed to lack in both respect and recognition.

After all the balloting was done the congressman, Abraham Lincoln, had registered a quite stunning victory, and later that year was elected President of the United States.

Quite naturally the defeated candidates were disappointed with the outcome and were envious of the new president. Lincoln though shocked the nation and the Republican Party by appointing his three rivals to positions in his cabinet. The editor of the *Chicago Tribune* newspaper asked President Lincoln why he had made the surprising appointments when all of them coveted his position, and with their knowledge and political experience might overshadow him. Lincoln replied, "We need the strongest men available in the party in the cabinet. These were the very strongest available. Then I had no right to deprive the country of their services."



What a positive lesson in big hearted leadership. One of the characteristics and strengths of Abraham Lincoln was that he was willing and able to place the good of his country above his personal pride and ambition.

Our decisions can influence, for good or ill, our relationships. How often have cherished relationships been started or saved when a person chooses to be happy rather than envious about other's success? One of the interesting things about Lincoln's cabinet appointments was that they not only blessed the country but also turned political rivalries into warm and respectful friendships.

Abraham Lincoln grew up in a highly religious Baptist family. He never joined any Church, but often attended church services with his wife and children. He frequently referred to God and had a deep personal knowledge of the Bible, often quoting it in his speeches. He realised that people have been created to be different from each other for reasons and purposes we may not understand, and that regardless of how we perceive other people they are all God's creations. If, like Lincoln, we can stand above the fray and recognise and applaud others successes, and we can see the good they too have to offer, we can embrace their contributions and will find our relationships and ourselves stronger as a result.

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*The next edition of SALT is for October/November 2023  
Please email any contributions to [richardsue@xtra.co.nz](mailto:richardsue@xtra.co.nz)  
at any time but by 30 September 2023.*



## The Sin of Lying

A minister told his congregation, "Next week I plan to preach about the sin of lying. To help you understand my sermon, I want you all to read Mark 17."

The following Sunday, as he prepared to deliver his sermon, the minister asked for a show of hands. He wanted to know how many had read Mark 17. Every hand went up. The minister smiled and said, "Mark has only sixteen chapters. I will now proceed with my sermon on the sin of lying."