



Methodist Church of New Zealand

Connexions - December 2022



Hope, Peace, Joy & Love

During the four weeks of Advent as we lead up to the celebration of the birth of Jesus, who was born in less-than-ideal circumstances, I encourage you to take a moment to reflect on children living in poverty in Aotearoa New Zealand today.

The MSD Child Poverty Report 2022 released earlier this year reported that 11% of our children are living in material hardship - that is about 130,000 children in households that are regularly going without basic items. Material hardship means being unable to afford six or more essential items such as having enough food to eat, warm clothes, and sturdy shoes.

The data showed that it is children that live in beneficiary households, as well as Māori and Pacific children that are most likely to live in material hardship. If you are a child living in a sole parent household, you are three to four times more likely to be living in material hardship, than if you were a child living with two parents. And if you are a child living in a household that relies on a benefit for income, you are four to five times more likely to be living in material hardship than those in working households.

130,000 children living in material hardship is not something to celebrate, it should be an impetus for immediate action. It is hard to visualise what 130,000 children living in material hardship looks like, so try this. Take the combined population of everyone living in Palmerston North, and everyone living in Nelson, that totals about 130,000. Now, imagine they are all children, and sprinkle them throughout the motu - there are our 130,000 children living in material hardship.

In addition, the data shows that work is not the best way out of poverty, as for many households full-time employment does not provide enough income for the household. This is true even when tax credits are applied. Approximately half the children living in material hardship come from households where parents are working.

This is due to the rising costs of housing with many households spending more than half their income on accommodation. This combined with the rising cost of living has impacted those on lower incomes more severely.

The 11% of our children living in material hardship is still above the Government interim target to reduce child poverty to 10.5% by 2020/2021. The Government's long term target to reduce child poverty is 5% by 2027/2028.

This is not something that Government can do on its own. Everyone in Aotearoa needs to commit to ensure that our tamariki are not living in material hardship and deprivation. This shared responsibility means that we all need to be prepared to change to make the lives of tamariki that live in Aotearoa better. A revised tax system that ensures a fairer future for everyone and income security for our most vulnerable may affect those who are better off.

It is time to actively encourage Government to fully implement all the recommendations of the Expert Welfare Advisory Group. This report was released in February 2019 and while there has been some progress, not all the recommendations have been implemented.

It is time to actively encourage Government to find new ways to distribute wealth more equitably via the tax system.

It is time that we had a fairer future for everyone. ActionStation's Fairer Future campaign has a petition to encourage Government to take seven steps toward a fairer future. The seven steps are:

1. Increase core benefit levels to the standard of liveable incomes
2. Raise the minimum wage to the living wage
3. Increase the Disability Allowance
4. Overhaul relationship rules
5. Remove sanctions
6. Wipe debt owed to the Ministry of Social Development
7. Improve supplementary assistance and urgent grants

These seven steps are a circuit breaker for people and whānau whose lives have been most disrupted by the cost of living crisis and the pandemic. You can read the full petition and sign it here - <https://our.actionstation.org.nz/petitions/take-seven-steps-toward-a-fairer-future-for-all-of-us-1>

Members of the Methodist Alliance's working group campaigning to increase benefit levels and abatement rates has been part the Fairer Future campaign. Our working group created a video for MCNZ Conference 2022 which highlighted the underlying issues relating to income security, and featured people with lived experience of life on a benefit and the struggle to make ends meet. We thank them for their courage, honesty and generosity in sharing their stories with us.

We also acknowledge and appreciate the rich and valuable feedback we received from Synods, Parishes and individuals on our discussion paper about wealth distribution and income security. This input helped us shape and refine the report presented to Conference.

We are grateful that Conference agreed to our suggested decisions relating to this and the working group will be crafting resources for parishes to use to facilitate robust discussions within the Connexion and with local political candidates and key Government Ministers.

We live in hope that we can effect change, so that we can create a just and inclusive society where everyone can flourish.

May God bless us with anger at injustice, oppression, and exploitation of people, so that we work for justice, freedom and peace.

May God bless us with the joy of gratitude, so we recognise the small things that make life good.

May God bless us with the generosity of love, so we can truly understand how we are connected with each other.

Carol Barron, National Coordinator
03 375 0512 | 027 561 9164 |
Carol@MethodistAlliance.org.nz



Do you hear what I hear?

Advent is a time of preparation. A time to focus, with repentance, fasting, and prayer on preparing for Epiphany – remembering the Magi's visit to the baby Jesus and a celebration of Jesus' incarnation on Earth.

Do you see what I see?

The Latin term *adventus* means "arrival" or "coming," particularly the coming of something having great importance.

The focus of the Methodist Mission Southern's work prepares our clients for the coming of something that will greatly impact their lives. A better future. By providing support with our broad range of evidence-based services, we provide support for the aspirations of those who have suffered struggles, some inevitable, many regrettable, and in doing so we are giving hope for a positive future. Change That Works: enough support and challenge for you to risk a better future.

We listen to the same words of Christmas carols year after year, but do we have the same understanding? Are we really listening?

A recent attendee of the Mission's Parenting Through Separation course commented on "how valuable the course had been to her in understanding where her former partner was in the separation process. She had initiated the separation and had already gone through a lot of the emotional process. She was looking for them to be able to communicate freely and couldn't understand why he was being, in her opinion, "difficult". The course gave her a much better understanding that for the one left behind this does not come as quickly and each person has their own process to travel."

Do you hear what I hear?

Christmas carols, of course, tell the story of the Nativity and the birth of Jesus Christ, the words of the hymn O-Come, O-Come Emmanuel originally sung in Latin, with roots in the 8th/9th Centuries, translated in 1861, and is based on Matthew 1:23. We sing "Make safe the way that leads on high, And close the path to misery". One of our youth transition house residents reflected "I had got into some pretty bad situations when away (from the house) and didn't realise how well I had been cared for while at the house."

Do you know what I know?

We Three Kings was written by Rev. John Henry Hopkins Jr in 1857 and the words seem as relevant today as in the time they were written. We are still a society that is striving to support people to live the life Jesus intended for us. "Still proceeding, Guide us to thy perfect light."

The Mission's work encompasses that guiding towards a better future with our early childhood services, self-regulation, and oral language programmes, youth transition housing, Young Mums' housing, client support services, sustaining tenancies, parenting programmes, driver licence training, and capability building initiatives for other social service providers.

"*Till he appeared and the soul felt its worth.*" are rich and meaningful words to Adolphe Adam's (1803–1856) O Holy Night. Kenneth Kovacs writes "Jesus' birth demonstrates definitively for the world that the soul has found its worth, that with his birth the soul felt, knew, acknowledged, accepted its worth, its value."

The value and worth of Methodist Mission Southern's programmes to individual, family and whānau within the community are heard in the 'stories' we share each month through our newsletters. We support and alleviate some of the well-known pressures currently faced in New Zealand with housing affordability, homelessness, social isolation, mental health and well-being, material hardship, family violence, sexual health issues, addiction issues, and the ongoing effects of COVID mean that many whānau are struggling to lead healthy, fulfilling dignified lives. Our vision is of a safe, caring, and sustainable society where every citizen is valued and respected, and enjoys an equal opportunity to lead a fulfilled life.

Kenneth Kovacs reiterates that each and every one of us is valued and respected. "When we sing Joy to the World, we are to remember that we are the joy of God's world. We all matter. The birth of Jesus means that being born, being human, matters, has value, is of inestimable worth. Humanity matters. — God's glory is known. It seems to me that this is integral to what we celebrate at Christmas."

A young mum struggling without whānau support is resident in our Waihopai Young Mums' House. "nervous and anxious young 19-year-old YM who has 8-month-old twin boys.. wanting to continue with education but found herself in a situation where it seemed impossible. She is now thriving as are her boys! We have her connected to the young parents' program at MYPLC Surry Park where she will continue with her Level 3 qualifications. We are just 2 weeks in but we are on the way to helping the YM become the best mum aspires to be."

Do you hear what I hear? Is a relatively modern carol, based loosely on the Nativity as told in the Gospel of Matthew, however, it was written in response to the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962. It is a message of peace.

Which hymns will you (really) hear this Christmas? What words will catch your attention and focus? May you hear meaning in the words of the carols/hymns you sing this Advent, and may they lead you in preparation, and hope for not only ourselves but for hope, growth, and change in those who are lost, those who are last, and those who are the least.

"For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory" (2 Corinthians 1:20)

"He will bring us goodness and light"

We wish all our supporters a blessed Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

Please join The Methodist Mission Southern Supporters' Club.

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

Contact Julie julier@mmsouth.org.nz



The Connexional Office Closure Times over Christmas 2022

The Connexional Office will be closing from midday on Friday 23 December 2022 and will reopen again at 8.30am on 9 January 2023.

Warm greetings from the Connexional Office as we all start to look forward to Christmas and the New Year with family, friends and remembering those who have left us during the year.

The Connexional Office will be closing from midday on Friday 23 December 2022 and will reopen again at 8.30am on 9 January 2023. Some staff will remain on leave after this time, but they have been requested to setup their "Out of Office" emails.

The last day that the Connexional Office will be able to make payment of invoices or do "one off" manual pays in the payroll system will be Monday 19 December 2022. Any invoices received AFTER this time will need to wait until after the 9 January 2023.

If you need to move amounts to/from Methodist Trust Association deposits, we will need to be notified by Wednesday 21st December 2022. Requests received after this date will be processed on Monday 9th January 2023. The end of quarter interest calculation should be completed by Friday 27 January 2023.

For any insurance claims and other insurance issues during the office close down, Wendy Anderson will send out what to do during this time.

For an emergency calls then phone Peter van Hout (021 977230) but please note that Peter will also be on leave during this time and will not have the resources available to resolve the issue you have until he comes back to the office.



Mission Resourcing Closures

This office will be closed from 5pm Friday 16 December until 9am Monday 09 January.

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and happy holidays!



Archives: Christmas Closures

Friday 23 Dec 2022 - Monday 09 January 2023

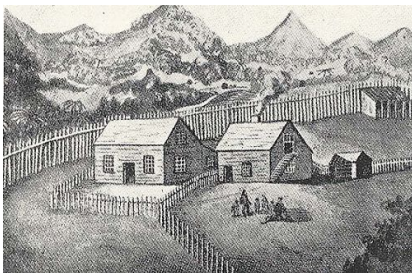
The MCNZ Archives will be closed over Christmas and New Year, reopening for researchers by prior appointment on Monday 9 January 2023.

Research enquiries will not be answered over the closure period as our staff are away on leave.

For information about the records that we hold, our digital collection and other sources for research, please see the MCNZ Archives [website](#).

Meri Kirihimete! Have a peaceful holiday, and we look forward to welcoming you in the New Year.

The Methodist Church of New Zealand Archives Team



Amazing Love: Aroha Kaiora

After the performance of Geoff Allen's play ***Amazing Love: Aroha Kaiora*** a number of people indicated that they did not have any cash on them and requested the Wesley Historical Society Bank Account number to make an electronic payment into. For those who wish the account number is 02-0800-0006128-000. Please write **PLAY** in the reference space.

Ian Faulkner, President WHS



CWS - Christmas Greetings and Office Hours

Our office will close for the Christmas break at 12:00pm on Friday 23rd December and reopen on Monday 9th January.

Please contact us through cws@cws.org.nz during the break.

If there is a crisis or disaster over the Christmas break, please watch our website and social media channels.

Thank you for your support across the year.

May you find comfort and hope in the Christmas story and joy in the opportunities the festive season might bring. And mince pies.

Murray, David, Jordyn, Kathlene, Lily, Lorraine, Nadine, Rob and Gillian.



Reporting Back

CWS hosted the annual Supporter's Council in person in Auckland and online in the evening of November 25.

Murray Overton reported back to donors. Alwynn Javier, [ACT Alliance](#) (Action by Churches Together) Regional Coordinator for Asia and the Pacific brought greetings from General Secretary Rudelmar Bueno de Faria and explained how the ACT Alliance worked. CWS is a founding member of the Alliance which works in more than 140 countries. A video of the presentation and subsequent discussion will be available [here](#).

The CWS Board met on the following day and at the AGM accepted the Annual Accounts and Review. A copy of the Annual Review is available to download [here](#).



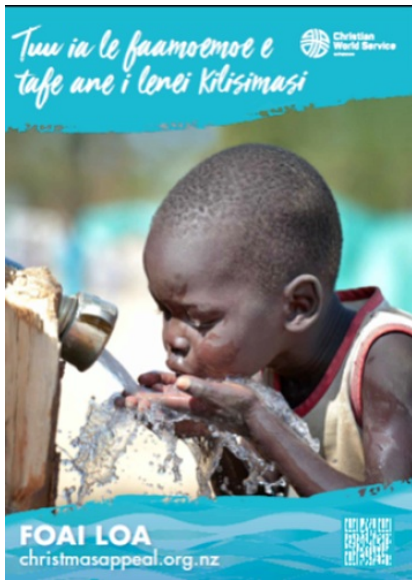
Gifts for Everyone

Give a gift with a promise of change: better income, new skills and healthcare. Buy a meaningful gift.

Go shopping with [Gifted](#). Choose [Bees](#) or [Feathered Friends](#). Help make a [Garden of Dreams](#) or buy [Solar Panels](#) for a Radio Station. Give beautiful gifts that make dreams real. You can choose your gifts as beautiful printed cards or an e-card. Each gift acts as a donation to a family who needs food or a better income.

A gift could [Send a Child to School](#) or help a mother displaced by conflict to set up [A Market Stall](#).

Order your gifts on or before Monday, December 12 if you want a printed card. Send an [e-card](#) any time including on Christmas Day.



Christmas Appeal

Christian World Service invites you to pray and give a gift of love to this year's Christmas Appeal.

[Let Hope Flow this Christmas.](#) On the frontline of the climate crisis people are grappling with not enough water or food for their daily needs. Parents worry for their children. Whole communities want to protect themselves against rising temperatures and future disaster. If they act now, they can learn new skills and strengthen their local community so people can better help each other whatever the future.

Your gifts will give families like Caleb's the resources to install a much prayed for rainwater tank.

Digital video clips, posters and slides in 10 languages, and worship materials for every Sunday in Advent and Christmas are available on our website. Find the resources you need:

<https://cws.org.nz/get-involved/give/christmas-appeal/>



West Papua Independence Day

Calls for support of West Papuan, and boycott of Indonesian products

01 December marks West Papua Independence Day, this year marked sixty-one years since the West Papuans first raised their flag, the Morning Star, as the symbol of their forthcoming independence from Dutch colonial rule. In previous years, the Indonesian military and police have responded with increased violent oppression around this day, arresting and killing those

they perceive as pro-independence activists. West Papua Independence Day was marked by solidarity events around the world, including in Aotearoa New Zealand.

At the World Council of Churches 11th Assembly in September 2022, [a minute was recorded](#). This Minute expressed the grave concern of the international ecumenical fellowship regarding the situation in Tanah Papua, the West Papuan provinces of Indonesia. The Indigenous Papuan people (the vast majority of whom are Christians) continue to suffer serious and systemic violations of their physical security and human rights, including arbitrary arrests, torture and extrajudicial killings as well as sexual and gender-based violence, while independent journalists, international humanitarian organizations and human rights monitors are allowed at best restricted or no access to the territory.

The World Council of Churches urges all member churches and partners to increase their awareness, accompaniment and support for the people and churches of Tanah Papua in the midst of this longstanding and worsening crisis.

Marking the 2022 Independence Day, *the Pacific Council of Churches has launched a call for a boycott of all Indonesian products and programmes by the Indonesian Government until Indonesia facilitates a visit by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR) to investigate reported human rights abuses – including torture, extrajudicial killings, and systemic police and military violence. The call for boycott was endorsed by the PCC Executive Committee last month, in response to information of a similar call at the Methodist Church in Fiji's Annual Conference in August this year.*

"We recall that when God sent Moses to Pharaoh to call for the end of oppression and slavery of the Israelites and Pharaoh refused to listen, God sanctioned Egypt ecologically. In echoing the cry for social, cultural, political, economic and ecological justice by our West Papuan sisters and brothers and in response to the call for solidarity and support from the West Papua Council of Churches, this call for the boycott of Indonesian products and Indonesian Government programmes (economic, cultural, etc) is [being launched today](#)."



More Than Gold

Not many people know how difficult Dame Valerie Adams' journey to the top has been.

MORE THAN GOLD tells the story of how this incredible woman persevered through every obstacle with determination and faith.

This movie has the power to change lives. View the trailer and see if it is still on at your local cinema.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xcAjmi-lv_I



Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel:

Commemorating 20 years.

The World Council of Churches' Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (WCC-EAPPI) was created in 2002 by the World Council of Churches based on an appeal from local church leaders to create an international presence in the country. WCC member churches have since engaged over 1,800 Ecumenical Accompaniers from 25 countries to

serve 3-month terms in placements around the West Bank.

Working closely with local communities, Israeli and Palestinian human rights groups, and international agencies, the programme has maintained a constant presence in the region ever since.

Ecumenical Accompaniers from all age groups aim to offer a protective presence to vulnerable communities, monitoring and reporting human rights abuses. They join Palestinians and Israelis who work in nonviolent ways for peace, by simply being a presence that makes the costs of human rights abuses more apparent to the perpetrators, persuades them to act differently, and deters attacks on civilians. Often, simply being a visible presence at security check-points, or accompanying children to schools, can make all the difference to fostering peace. [Read more here...](#)

Further information on the EAPPI programme can be [found here](#).

Christian Conference of Asia

27 September - 4 October 2023

Kottayam, a historic city in the southern Indian state of Kerala has been chosen as the venue for the 15th General Assembly of the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA), scheduled to take place from 27 September to 4 October 2023.

The General Assembly is the supreme body of the CCA, which normally meets once in five years; the Executive Committee resolved in 2019 to hold the General Assembly in India in September 2020. However, the COVID-19 pandemic added to the uncertainty of organising the Assembly as per the original schedule, and subsequently, it was twice decided to postpone it till the situation became conducive.



Children, Youth & Family Facilitator

We are seeking to employ a Children, Youth & Family Facilitator to continue to grow and strengthen our children, youth and family programmes within the congregation and in the wider community.

This person will have a strong personal faith and a willingness to support young people to explore their Christian faith and

spiritual growth.

Chartwell Cooperating Church's mission is 'to know and share God's love' and our vision is 'to be the hands, feet and body of Christ in the community.' We are a diverse and inclusive parish which unites people from various Christian backgrounds.

The successful applicant will have many of the following attributes:

- Experience and a passion for working with young people and children
- Experience with running events or ministries
- A willingness to participate in the Chartwell Cooperating Church community
- An energetic, approachable and confident leadership style
- Self-motivated with effective time management skills
- Strong organisational and administrative skills
- Computer and social media literacy
- Experience or knowledge of basic budgeting and health and safety documentation

The Facilitator will work in collaboration with the ministry team to develop relationships and foster the concepts of manaakitanga and aroha.

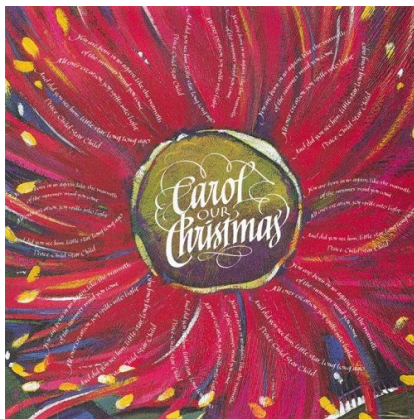
The role is **30 hours a week** with flexible hours which will start in the new year.

Applications must include your **CV** plus a **covering letter**. The covering letter should explain why you are applying for the role and how you think your experience and skills fit the requirements we are looking for.

Please address your application to the Parish Council Chairperson and send to office@chartwellchurch.org.nz (only applications sent to this email will be accepted)

You can contact us on the same email for the Position Description, the Youth & Family Strategic Plan or if you have any questions.

Closing date for applications is Friday 19th January 2023, or earlier should a suitable applicant be found.



Carol our Christmas!

Five Carol Programmes offered by Wesley Broadway Community Radio in partnership with Manawatu People's Radio (MPR)

From 11 October to 20 December 2022

Wesley Broadway offers five half hours of New Zealand carols/hymns for Advent/Christmas/New Year/Epiphany.

Readers: Gillian and John Thornley, Juliet and Grace Fakahau

The stories and theologies from Advent to Epiphany come alive in the recordings made with New Zealand choirs and

congregations.

The book and CD, both titled *Carol our Christmas*, are published by the NZ Hymnbook Trust, and can be ordered at any bookshop. There are 52 carols in the book and 24 carols on the CD. New Zealand's Pohutukawa is Aotearoa's Christmas flower and is cover for both book and CD.

How to listen to the programmes

Live: These can heard live in the Manawatu area at 11 A.M. each Tuesday and Saturday on Frequency AA999.

Online: Programmes can be downloaded via the station website:

www.mpr.nz/show/wesley. Programmes are available for 2 to 3 months, and are listed by topic and date.

Programmes for January 2023: Repeat programmes from earlier sessions are replayed. New programmes begin in February 2023.



Uniting Congregations
OF AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

uNETY 2022

News for Uniting Congregations

Our Movement is on the Move again!

We are delighted to announce the appointment of Rev. Andrew Doubleday to UCANZ. Many of you will know Andrew as the soon to be retired President of the Methodist Church here in New Zealand. The Standing Committee met with Andrew in September and an employment statement of intent was signed with him. Andrew will take up the position at the beginning of the New Year. UCANZ, as you are well aware, has the responsibility and pleasure of serving both its Partner Churches (Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian, and Christian Churches of NZ), and the participating Cooperating and Uniting Congregations. The Standing Committee is confident Andrew has all the skills necessary to lead us into our future ecumenical journey.

UCANZ has been much blessed by the legacy of our recently retired Executive Officer, Rev. Adrian Skelton, whose innovation and organisational skills have left the Office Administration in a sound position. So much so that the Standing Committee have agreed that the emphasis of the new leadership Andrew will bring should be concentrated on serving the needs of the congregations. With this in mind, we have changed the title of the position from Executive Officer to Ministry Enabler. We are sure you will all welcome Andrew into this key role for UCANZ and know that you will offer him your fellowship and support.

Church Life Survey 2023

As an organisation UCANZ has been invited to take part in the Church Life Survey which is planned for next year. The Standing Committee have agreed that this will be a good tool for us to use to measure the strengths and weaknesses of our congregations as we make plans for the future and have accepted the invitation. We would therefore encourage all of you, as individual congregations, to watch out for the invitation to join in the survey and sign up for it. The more information we have the more we can channel our resources to the greatest benefit for us all.

Forum 2023

Standing Committee have also been planning the Forum next year. We will be holding it in Christchurch in April after Easter and hoping for a large attendance as we all officially welcome Andrew, listen to some interesting speakers, and discuss our future plans. We will also be electing new members to our Standing Committee. We encourage you all to think of people from your congregations who you can nominate to serve the church in this way. Please get in touch if you need more information or a nomination form.

Thanks

Many thanks to all those congregations who filled in and returned both their Membership Statistics and Financial Statistics forms. From your information we are grateful to Bianca from the Diocese of Waiapu who has collated them and has now completed updating the UCANZ Directory which should be on its way to you soon.

Kind regards / Ngā mihi nui
Rev Geraldine Coats (for UCANZ)
All correspondence please to office@ucanz.org.nz



Interested in studying Theology?

The Theology Programme at the University of Otago offers a wide range of papers and qualifications, all available via distance learning.

We offer an undergraduate diploma and degree in Theology, as well as postgraduate programmes in Theology, Ministry, Chaplaincy, and Faith-based Leadership and Management.

For further information go to www.otago.ac.nz/theology or ph 0800 80 80 98 or 03 479 8639.

Check out our amazing new video! <https://tinyurl.com/theologyotagovideo> It explains who we are as a programme (and also includes some beautiful shots of Dunedin)!

