

# SYNOD SALT

*Because everyone needs salt in their life!*

*Newsletter of the Methodist Lower North Island Synod*

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*August/September 2022*

## From the Superintendent's Desk:

Memory is a strange thing. Some things we have tucked away in an unconscious part of our brain that return vividly with a prompt. Like the number of song words we can sing along with. Who knew we had all those stored in our heads, brought to the surface again perhaps with just a few notes. And this morning I came across another prompt for me – a newspaper cutting: 1969. Are you old enough to remember? That cutting took me back to the University of Otago common room. Listening on a small radio with strangers to the moon landing. And suddenly remembering I had a dentist appointment that I had now missed. The thing that fascinates me is how it's not just the memory of the event, but the feelings I had then came to the surface too.



Memory is active, selective, and unreliable. Some things we can remember clearly but others for some reason we have left behind. Often the things we remember easily are the more traumatic, deeply affecting things. Everyday things are not usually stored in the memory bank. Like what I had for dinner on 1<sup>st</sup> July.

Which brings me to the point. The 4 Gospels included in the Christian Scriptures are memory banks for we who walk the Way of Jesus to God. Documents crafted for local communities who did not want to forget. They are full of stories remembered about Jesus by folks, and put together in a cohesive narrative to help their communities remember and bolster their life and faith. Each Gospel has a community behind it with concerns and hopes. The first century was a dangerous time for the fledgling Christian community. Remember Paul – he first came to the attention of followers of Jesus because he was active in persecuting them. No wonder they treated him with suspicion when he said he'd come round to their way of being.

When we listen to the Gospels being read on Sundays, I like to think of the community in the first century for whom each Gospel was written. There are some underlying questions to ask which help understand these as living documents, crafted by real people for real people. Why did this story get remembered? Why do some people have names but others are nameless? What is the significance of places mentioned – behind geography there is always attitude. "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" John's Gospel reminds us that "there are many other stories which are not included in this book." I assume the same is true for all the Gospels. They are reminder documents. Memory keepers. But I often wonder about those stories that aren't included too. What were those ones?

The core of our understanding of who Jesus is and was are in these amazing documents. But there is a heap I want to know that they don't tell me. What usually happens is that we make up the bits we don't know. The pictures on many a Sunday School wall when I was growing up showed me a lovely western man with long flowing (and very clean) hair surrounded by lovely western European children. Nothing like the reality of a middle eastern man of the first century. It's fascinating how much we don't know. But it's also incredible what we do know.

Next time you hear the Gospel being read in church, or in your quiet time at home, think of those 1<sup>st</sup> century people who are the content of those stories. And the people for whom they were directly written, struggling in a society to follow the Way (Remember the first Christians were known as the

followers of the Way, not Christians.) Their society was not sympathetic always to a new religion growing in their midst. A little like 21<sup>st</sup> Century New Zealand. Now the biggest response is apathy, and sometimes outright antagonism. Our task as Church, in our places, is to follow the Way of Jesus to God, and build relationships with the people we meet. No matter what.

Arohanui

**Rob**

### **Synod News:**

Our very efficient secretary Rosie Greening has resigned as she has been successful in being appointed to a new position. We thank her for all her help and work for LNIS. On 17 July we welcomed Sarah Laurenson to the secretary's position.

Rev David Harding from Napier has been welcomed onto the synod executive.

*Provisional Executive meeting dates:* 18 Aug, 22 Sept, 20 Oct, 01 Dec. (Zoom)

### **Synod: Friday 05 & Saturday 06 August, St Mark's Methodist Church, Feilding**

#### ***Friday: 1.00pm to 4.30pm***

- 1pm: Opening Worship
- 1.20 Gathering the folks. Who is here? Apologies. Travel stories from today's journey.
- 1.40 What is the news from Parishes? What's going well? Are there any new concerns?
- 2.00 Rev Peter MacKenzie – Exec Officer Presbytery Central  
We hear from our partner church in the majority of LNIS Parishes.  
Reminder: Rotation of Convening Partners.
- 2.30 Afternoon Tea Break
- 2.45 Covid Reflection. 4 questions in small groups, then Plenary
1. What have we discovered about being Church because of Covid?
  2. What is one significant change your Parish has made in the last 2 years that will continue as part of your future?
  3. How would you describe the difference between being "connected" and being "involved"?
  4. What are some "spiritual issues" Covid has raised for people?  
How has your parish addressed any of these?
- 3.30 Zoom input: Rev Greg Hughson (Dunedin)  
"Getting past words alone - selecting images to enhance/enable worship"  
Greg is a magnificent photographer, retired Presbyterian, was Otago University Chaplain.
- 4.10 Closing Reflection

#### ***Saturday 10.00am to 3.00pm***

- 9.30 Gathering – tea/coffee available
- 10.00 Opening Worship
- 10.20 Business session – Ian Harris (This session will work around others with nominated times)  
Synod budget  
Conference Questions 1- 23 including Officers of Synod for 2023  
Connexional Papers for Conference
- Housing Action Plan – feedback from Zoom session
  - Preparation of Land Stories – a resource
  - Living Life in all its Fullness – Methodist Alliance paper on inequality
  - Terms of Reference for 7th year reviews of Conference Standing Committees
  - Diaconate – the future of Ministry. What ministry does your situation need?  
Led by Nicola Grundy

- Others?

- 11:00 Zoom Input: Dr Emily Colgan (Trinity College)  
– a reflection on her Bloody Bible Podcasts.
- 12.00 Lunch – catered Koha \$10
- 1.00 Plenary session including:
- Where is Sunday in the week? – a conversation about Worship. – Rob
  - July rotation of Convening Partners for Cooperative Ventures – any clarifications?
  - How can Synod assist parishes? Plenary session to gather ideas. Traffic Lights!
  - Recognition of and tributes to those who have died in the last year: Keith Knox, Ron Malpass, Rod Fleury, June Gibson
- 2:45pm Final Worship including Recognition of and tributes to those who have died in the last year.

**Next Synod: 28 & 29 October – venue to be advised.**

## **Conference 2022**

**Saturday 19 November - Wednesday 23 November 2022 Kerikeri, Northland**

**(Turner Centre, 43 Cobham Road, Kerikeri)**

**Pre-Conference Tauwiwi and Te Taha Maori meetings will be held on**

**Friday 18 November, commencing at 2:00pm.**

*Registration closes on Friday 28 October 2022*

If you intend to attend Conference please advise Sarah Laurenson (LNIS Secretary) so we have some idea of numbers attending from LNIS.

Flights into Kerikeri are limited and it pays to book as early as possible. Accommodation is tight in Kerikeri, but a good alternative is Paihia which is about 25 mins away. It is often cheaper to book direct with the hotel/motel rather than through a booking agent. It's worth noting a booking agent may be showing no availability (as their allocation has been sold), but the property's website may still have some which they have held back.



### **The future of Touchstone - Publishing Board welcomes feedback**

The Methodist Publishing Board met recently to determine options for the future of Touchstone. Rising production and distribution costs mean it is no longer sustainable to print and post papers to parishes and individuals, free-of-charge.

Over recent months we have encouraged parishes to reduce the number of Touchstone copies they receive, and to direct their readers towards the online options available. Despite the reduction in the monthly print run, printing and distribution costs cannot be covered by reserves indefinitely.

It is proposed that from July 2023, parishes will be charged \$1.50 per printed copy of Touchstone.

Parishes will need to decide by February 2023 the number of papers they want delivered per month. This quantity will remain consistent for the financial year July 2023 - June 2024. Payment will be automatically charged via direct debit. (Minimum of 5 copies per issue).

We invite parishes and individuals to respond to an online survey seeking feedback on five options proposed. We welcome responses to the two-minute survey (link below) by the end of July. The Publishing Board will base their decision on the survey results and announce a decision by the end of August 2022.

**[The Future of Touchstone » The Methodist Church of New Zealand](#)**

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

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

Please contact Carolyn on [bishopspa@wtanglican.nz](mailto:bishopspa@wtanglican.nz)

## Wellington Methodist Parish News

### Banquet with a Difference.

The 10am congregation of Wellington Methodist Parish had a fun evening putting their prayers into action at a special fundraising event.

The parish organised a banquet, using the recipes and hints supplied by Christian World Service. A small group decided on the menu which included hummus and refried beans on flatbread, lentil soup with optional za'atar, a ricebake made with chickpeas and smoked fish, rice cakes and water for drinks.



"For many months in our prayers of intercession we have been praying for people who have been displaced from their homes because of war, climate change, religious intolerance, politics, the list goes on. We decided that we wanted something more tangible, and so Operation Refugee gave us the impetus to do something," says minister Nicola Teague Grundy. Nicola said people were surprised how good the food tasted. The group enjoyed cooking for the crowd and there was plenty of lively conversation. They challenged participants to come up with a menu plan for a week with a budget of only \$35.

"While we had fun coming up with all sorts of ways to feed ourselves on such a meagre budget, we were sobered by the knowledge that for many people this is reality," she adds.



The parish auctioned Operation Refugee t-shirts and is very close to raising their goal of \$1,000 for Operation Refugee.

"CWS is grateful to the 10am congregation of Wellington Methodist Parish for their practical support for refugees. Operation Refugee is a time for some fun and a challenge," says Murray Overton, National Director.

Operation Refugee runs until August 20. CWS is inviting groups to help refugees from Afghanistan, Syria and Ukraine with emergency supplies, medical care and education. Organise a Gathering or Banquet, plan a sponsored walk or eat refugee rations and raise funds to assist local partners with the work they are doing. Resources are available: <https://cwsoperationrefugee.nz/> or call Murray Overton on 0800 74 73 72.

## **A Little Bit About.....St Luke's Cooperating Church, Bell Block**

*Presbyterian Anglican Methodist - Working Together*

In the early 1970's Bell Block, about half way between New Plymouth and Waitara, was one of the fastest growing areas of New Plymouth. In 1975 the session of Knox Presbyterian Church in Fitzroy (New Plymouth), raised with the Vestry of the Fitzroy Anglican Parish and the Quarterly Meeting of the New Plymouth Methodist Circuit the question of ministry in the Bell Block area, and in February 1976 the first joint worship was held in the Bell Block Scout Hall. It was agreed there that a service would be held fortnightly, with the service content being the responsibility of each denomination in turn. A number of venues were used by the congregation over subsequent years and negotiations began to form a cooperative venture. In 1989 the cooperating partners ratified the full cooperating status of the Bell Block Cooperating Church. A number of people and their relatives who attended these early services are still actively involved in church life today.



The section upon which the current church is built was originally the site of the Bell Block Primitive Methodist Church and includes a cemetery. By the late 1980's the original church building had long since gone and the section and cemetery was a wilderness of years of rampant weed growth. Undeterred, the people set to work to clear the section and the vision of a modern, multi-functional, church facility slowly "came to life". A huge fund raising effort was undertaken by the new cooperative venture and a contract was let for the construction of the building, with the first service in the new church being held on Good Friday 13 April 1990. The 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of the building was celebrated in 2015, but unfortunately Covid 19 intervened with the planned 30th Anniversary celebrations which did not take place.

Today, the tidy building and well-manicured grounds and grave stones, situated on the corner of State Highway 3 and Mangati Road, are the subject of many favourable comments. It is a self supporting church with members of the congregation involved each Sunday in a number of roles along with visiting lay and ordained speakers.



With new sub divisions being developed, growing primary school rolls, and 4 retirement villages (including a new 300 home Summerset village), Bell Block continues to grow providing enormous ministry and outreach opportunities.

***Every parish/church has a story, and "A Little Bit About" is a place where YOU can share that story. Send your contribution – including photographs etc – to [richardsue@xtra.co.nz](mailto:richardsue@xtra.co.nz) for inclusion in future SALT newsletters. I'm looking forward to reading them!***

### **Why Go to Church. . . . . ???**

A church goer wrote a letter to the editor of a newspaper and complained that it made no sense to go to church every Sunday.

He wrote, " I've gone for 30 years now, and in that time have heard something like 3000 sermons, but for the life of me, I can't remember a single one of them. So I think I'm wasting my time, and the preachers and priests are wasting theirs by giving sermons at all."

This started a real controversy in the "Letter to the Editor" column, and much to the editor's delight it went on for weeks, until someone wrote this clincher:

"I've been married for 30 years now. In that time my wife has cooked some 32 000 meals. But, for the life of me, I cannot recall the entire menu for a single one of those meals. But I do know this: they nourished me and gave me the strength to do my work. If my wife had not given me those meals, I would be physically dead today. Likewise, if I had not gone to church for nourishment, I would be spiritually dead today!"

Thank God for our physical and spiritual nourishment!



**B.I.B.L.E. simply means: Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth!**

*The next edition of SALT is for October/November  
Please email any contributions to [richardsue@xtra.co.nz](mailto:richardsue@xtra.co.nz)  
at any time but by 20 September 2022*

