



St Paul's Presbyterian Church
“Partners in God’s Mission of Love”

NEWSLETTER – March 2023



“Do this in remembrance of Me.”

Service of Holy Communion

**Sunday, 12th March 10:00am. Please accept this as a
personal invitation to be present.**



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Editorial

Pam Clare

At the end of a long and tumultuous week in the aftermath of Cyclone Gabrielle, we gathered at St Paul's for Sunday Worship. It was very different from the planned Art Deco Service, which now seemed so irrelevant (although of course connected with another devastating and life changing event for the people of St Paul's, and for Hawkes Bay, the 1931 earthquake).

It was a time, as our visiting minister Rev Margaret Garland described it, to seek comfort and solace together, to express thanks, and to share experiences.

And the stories. The son who sent a helicopter to circle his parents' house because there had been no contact. The granddaughter's birthday party which despite her fears had turned out to be the best ever, with candlelight and old-fashioned games and a birthday cake baked by her dad on the barbecue. The kindness of neighbours checking up and providing hot water and food, while having to come to terms with being perceived as the needy rather than being among the needed. The joy of power being restored to the fortunate ones and that first cup of tea made with bubbling water over tea leaves rather than from the thermos, such small mercies that resonated after days without power and phone connectivity.

The Moderator in his Lenten message reminds us that though our nation has been sorely tested by a series of traumatic events in recent years, as Jesus was tested, we too have seen our share of angels personified in the aftermath of this latest crisis, Cyclone Gabrielle.

We know that we are in the midst of climate change, and as a church family we are also having to acknowledge that we face a changing season in the church.

In this issue Lynne, as parish clerk, explains the big issues facing the six Presbyterian parishes in the Napier and Hastings area. Three parishes are currently without ministers, and work is being done to explore the most immediate needs and ways we can work together to meet these needs.

Jill McConnochie laments the end of the APW (Association of Presbyterian Women) which became PWANZ (Presbyterian Women Aotearoa New Zealand) and recalls the women's groups active when she commenced her long association with St Paul's.

Jane Morgan updates us on the challenges faced by Nourished for Nil in the aftermath of Cyclone Gabrielle. We acknowledge the late Colin Gibson, composer of church and hymn music, many of which we sing here at St Paul's. Finally, we remember the lives of Anne Silson and also of Marie Geddis, who both had memories shared in recent issues of our newsletter.



From the Parish Clerk: Challenges facing Presbyterian churches in Hawke's Bay

Lynne Arnold

In September 2022, a workshop was held for the Hawke's Bay Presbyterian Churches to look at the status of the churches in Napier, Hastings and Havelock North:

The six churches in this area are St Columba's Havelock North; St Andrew's Hastings; St John's Hastings, St Columba's Taradale; Napier North Ahuriri and ourselves, St Paul's Napier.



Three of these churches (St Paul's, Napier North (Knox Ahuriri) and St Johns) are now without ministers, and all have aging congregations and have various challenges with buildings and finances.

The workshop led by Reg Weeks and Rev Stuart Simpson was challenged with some of the hard questions about the future for our churches.

Since then, two more meetings have been held where the true situation facing our churches has been explored further and some possible areas to work on have been looked at. At times it seems as though there is a lot of talk and little to show for it, but these are big issues and it takes time to develop trust and build the relationships which make these discussions possible. We don't want to rush in and make decisions rashly that impact so many people.

It is clear that this is a changing season in the church, and there is no promise that we will be able to continue as we always have,

or that the model of ministry that we have enjoyed will be the way of the future.

Our Churches are open to shared ministry models within Napier and between Napier/Hastings, but there is a lot of work to be done to sort out what that could look like and how it might work and affect us.

We have no doubt that full time ministry is more attractive than part time, but this may not be realistic when the number of people going into ministry training has reduced and many churches are faced with financial constraints and dwindling numbers.



Napier North - Knox Church Ahuriri

Time has been spent exploring what the most immediate needs are, and how we can work together to meet those needs. As part of this, a Parish Life Resource Tool has been used and all parishes have responded to the questionnaire highlighting areas of strength and gaps.

There are some obvious gaps, but all six parishes have congregational life. Big gaps are apparent in the areas of children and youth ministry, music, technology, finances, preaching capacity, specialised pastoral care, building compliance issues and Health & Safety.

Things to offer could be pastoral care and training in pastoral care. The survey highlights areas of concern and possible ways of working together.

Focus Groups were set up at the last meeting looking at worship and preaching resources, parish configuration and long-term plan, relationship building and health & safety support to deal with compliance requirements.

It is hoped that as we spend more time teasing out the big issues, we will find ways to work together, sharing resources, maybe finding new ways to be a church, strengthening the church leadership, and supporting the churches who have no minister. We need to be very careful that we don't overwork the three ministers we already have in Napier-Hastings.

To help us in the future there are some workshops and shared services planned: -

26th March: Combined worship, St Andrew's Hastings

21st April: Workshop Pastoral Care, Jeff New, Knox CML

22nd April: Workshop on preaching, St Columba's T'dale

28th May: Combined Pentecost Service St Columba's HN

Peter McKenzie is to take a Liturgy training evening and meet with retired ministers, date to be confirmed.

There is a lot going on in the background that is exciting, yet challenging. No answers have been uncovered but there is a sense and confidence that the church can survive these challenging times, but it may look different to what we are familiar with. We believe that God has a future for our church families.

We will keep you up to date with the progress being made. Any recommendations will be brought back to you before any decisions can be made

Next meeting of HB Presbyterians is on Thursday, 9th March 7.00pm at St Paul's Napier.



Figure 1 St John's Presbyterian Church, Hastings

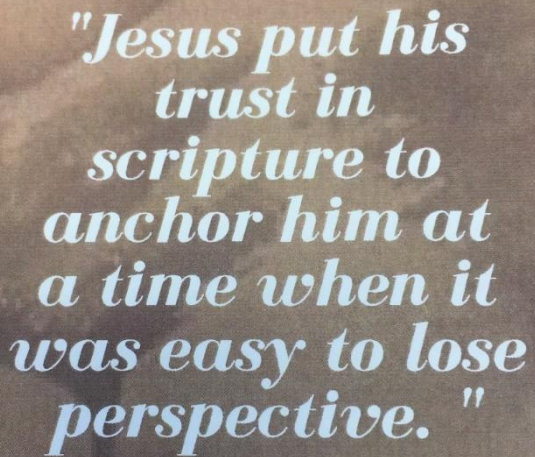
Lenten Message from the Moderator – Sorely Tested

Right Rev Hamish Galloway

Jesus was sorely tested through 40 days of mounting pressure brought on by hunger, thirst, and demonic taunting. We too, in these last few years, have experienced the cumulative impact of one test after another. Add up the Global Financial Crisis, Christchurch earthquakes, mosque attack, COVID pandemic, housing crisis, war in Ukraine, impending recession, flooding and now Cyclone Gabrielle and feel the toll it has taken on us.

How are you feeling this Lenten season?

All that has happened in recent years, and right now, leaves me feeling weary and wondering what will be next. It makes me feel sorely tested, in a nation that has been sorely tested. It causes me to wonder about where we put our trust and what will sustain us in this time of repeated trial.



"Jesus put his trust in scripture to anchor him at a time when it was easy to lose perspective. "

Jesus was sustained by the leading and comforting presence of the Holy Spirit in his time of testing. Jesus put his trust in scripture to anchor him at a time when it was easy to lose perspective. And then, when the rush of testing began to subside, there were angels who helped pick up the pieces! And haven't we seen our share of angels personified in the aftermath of the latest crisis, Cyclone Gabrielle.

I witnessed this phenomenon in Christchurch after the earthquakes and mosque attack. Lovely acts of 'random' kindness from complete strangers. And we see again and again in the aftermath of this latest storm, these angels in disguise.

We find ourselves as churches incarnated in our communities, bearers of the Spirit, guided by the scriptures and with our fair share of angelic readiness for action. In this way we can take a leaf out of the Lenten story of Jesus, in a nation hungering for hope!

And a Time to Die.....

Jill McConnachie



I was sad to read recently that the Presbyterian Women Aotearoa New Zealand is to cease operation, and that at present there are only 111 members nationally.

Along with Hazel Copas, I attended, at Lincoln University, the first conference of the Association of Presbyterian Women (APW) as it was then called, and about seven years ago a smaller gathering along with Ella Haigh, at Rangiruru in Christchurch when the name was changed. Over the years Hawkes Bay Presbyterial hosted three conferences which were attended by women from throughout New Zealand.

Members have participated in many fund-raising activities over the 60 or so years – I recall one of the earliest was “Wells for Botswana” and every year there was a Special Project part of which was for New Zealand charities – “Grandparents raising grandchildren”, “Foetal Alcohol Syndrome” to name just two.

Another important part of the APW and PWANZ was to have representatives on the Special Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council. Those who attended these events have spoken of the wonderful women from many countries who have advocated for the rights of women and children – a task still to do in many countries.

When I commenced my association with St Paul’s, there were four women’s groups – PWMU, (Presbyterian Women’s Missionary Union), Fireside Group, Ladies’ Guild who raised funds for different projects within the parish, and the Women’s Club, to whom we are indebted for the beautiful china in our kitchen drawers. So, what now for the women of the Parish? I commend Dorothy for her initiation of Care and Share, and wish her and those who attend all the best for 2023 and beyond.

Nourished for Nil Update post Cyclone Gabrielle



While many of us were still coming to terms with no power and Wifi, it is interesting to read the email received from Jane Morgan in that first week, outlining the initial response by Nourished for Nil.

“Hi I hope this email finds you all well, and safe after an horrific week. I thought I would send you a quick update in case anyone asks you what is happening at the Napier Food Bank/Nourished for Nil depot.

We have spent the last week collecting all the perishable stock we can from supermarkets / bakeries etc and distributing it to people (sometimes via helicopter, even!) throughout the region. In excess of 50 tonnes, we estimate.

A team of amazing volunteers has worked tirelessly over the weekend to get us ready to re-open later this week.

People in need of food can be directed to either the church on Cranby Crescent or any of our Hastings/Camberley/Flaxmere distribution centres (opening hours and other info is on the N4N Facebook page and website) This depot will continue to service the agencies of Napier, as we normally do.

If anyone wants to make donations, I am in desperate need of tinned spaghetti, pouches of baby food, sweet biscuits and instant coffee – perhaps even those sachets as they can be split across multiple parcels. Thank you for all you do for us."

Jane Morgan, Sustainability Officer and Funding Co-ordinator

Anne Silson – A Life (17 Nov 1939 – 20 Nov 2022)

From the eulogy given by Anne's brother Les at her remembrance service at St Paul's Church on 17th December 2022.

Born in 1939 just as the second world war commenced, Anne lived with her parents and maternal grandmother in Edwards Street, Napier. Mum and Dad subsequently purchased the house in McKenzie Avenue. Anne attended Nelson Park school, Napier Intermediate and Napier Girls High School.

Church has been the centre of Anne's life. For the first 30 years she grew up as part of the Congregational Church. In 1969 with talks of Church Union being actively discussed, due to a number of factors a decision was made to join with the congregation of St Peters Presbyterian church in Onekawa. This was a young church with a large membership but with little knowledge of how church governance worked, so an input of those skills was warmly welcomed.

St Peters evolved through many transitions to eventually become St Stephen's, until it too closed with members moving to either St Columba's in Taradale or St Paul's in the city.

In the early 1960's Anne was encouraged to investigate Girls Life Brigade as it then was, at Trinity Methodist Church. In about 1964, the 5th Napier company was formed at the Congregational church.

The company moved to St Peter's church in a new suburb with lots of young families and so the roll of the company mushroomed after the merger in 1969 with hundreds of girls attending over the years.

Anne was commissioned as an officer in April 1964. She continued her work in the organisation for over 40 years. The highlights of this association included being a member of the National Executive and attending an International Conference in the Cayman Islands. Anne also escorted groups of girls to international conferences in Singapore and Edinburgh.

Anne always encouraged participation in Girls Brigade. This was her way of showing her faith in action. You may have wondered about the photo (below) on the back of the order of service.



This photo was requested by Anne. It shows Anne in her working Brigade uniform. Brenda, whom she encouraged to complete her gold Duke of Edinburgh award and to become an officer and her niece Rachel who was

encouraged to attain her Queens Award, the highest available award for girls within the Brigade movement.

Alongside her work in Girls Brigade, Anne also held a full-time job. When she left school in 1957, she wanted to be a shorthand typist. She was advised that a clerical career may be more challenging for her. And so, she started work at the State Advances Corporation. The division Anne worked in was State Housing and this changed eventually to Housing New Zealand. When she retired, she was the Hastings Regional Manager. Anne was awarded the 1990 commemorative medal for work in what today is called Social Housing.

Anne's retirement was full. Between church affairs, in particular, being a part of the catering team here at St Pauls and helping to run the parish thrift shop, she also visited members of the congregation, in particular, Pasifika members. Anne also belonged to an embroidery group that met in Havelock North. Floral art was also an interest throughout her life, particularly floral bouquets for family weddings. She was also addicted to watching Parliament T.V. (That one is beyond me!) Anne resided in her own home until eight weeks before her death. She was fiercely independent and strong minded to the end.

**Prayer of Girls' Brigade New Zealand (as requested by
Anne to be read at her remembrance service)**

*Lord Jesus, You are the light of the world. Your word is a lamp
to our feet and a light for our path.*

*As we look upon the Cross and remember what You did for us
there, may we keep the torch of our endeavour burning brightly
until we gain the crown of life.*

Encircle us with Your love as we seek to serve and follow You.

*Help us to show Your love to others that the world may be a
better place.*

We ask this in Your Name,

Amen.



**GIRLS'
BRIGADE**
New Zealand

Recent letter from Canadian visitor to St Paul's

Hello New Zealand friends,

My name is Kathryn Twynam, and I am in Toronto, Canada. I want to tell you about a heart-warming incident that happened in March of 2018, when my husband and I were touring New Zealand with some friends, and spent a couple of days in your beautiful city.

We had a free Sunday morning and St. Paul's Presbyterian Church was only a block or so from our hotel, so as we often do when we are travelling and as we do every Sunday at home, we decided to go to church. As we entered the building we were immediately spoken to and welcomed, and made our way to our seats feeling we had come to a home away from home.

The minister was pottering around at the front before the service began, straightening her notes, arranging the bible, etc. She noticed us right away and came over to speak to us, asking us our names and where we were from, and extending a warm welcome. Well, much to our surprise, during the announcements which occurred later in the service, we were acknowledged by name as the minister encouraged her congregation to "please welcome Bob and Kathy from Canada."

The service was fairly traditional, the type of thing that we are used to here at home, being active members of a very traditional Presbyterian Church. (Both of us are session members, my husband Bob is Clerk of Session.) As I remember, one of the hymns was "Here I Am, Lord" a favourite of ours at Graceview Presbyterian at home.



But the best part happened when the service was over. The couple who sat in front of us, with whom we had chatted a bit before the service, turned around and invited us home with them for “tea”, which I think means “lunch”. Unfortunately, we had to decline, as we had a wine tour booked at 1:00 with our friends. We would much rather have gone home and had lunch with our new friends from your church, but we felt we had to keep our wine tour date with our friends.

I have thought about the kindness of the folks at St. Paul’s many times since then, and it has occurred to me that I might be able to let you know how much it meant to us. The internet came to the rescue, providing me with an email address, so I’m taking a chance that you will receive this and know that the good people at St. Paul’s really made an impression on us and we will never forget them.

Blessings to all at St. Paul’s.
Kathy Twynam

Parish Register

Rae Wildbore

Marie Eileen Geddis born 11th May 1927 and died 19th December 2022.

Our loving sympathy goes to Marie's family and friends.





Who's on 'Keith's Seat'?

It's Eleanor and Pam choosing favourite hymns from the many written by the New Zealand hymn writer Colin Gibson.

Colin Gibson, who died recently, was a talented musician and song writer with the wider NZ church. So many of his hymns, published by the New Zealand Hymnbook Trust as Hymns and Songs for all Churches, are very familiar to us, even if we do not always realise that he is the composer and often the lyric writer. He also set other hymn writers' words to music, notably the equally esteemed New Zealander, the late Shirley Erena Murray (died 2020). One source mentions 191 hymns, and there are certainly 47 in "Alleluia Aotearoa", the first songbook published by the Hymnbook trust, with three published in the New Zealand Supplement to "With One Voice".

Colin was Professor Emeritus of English, University of Otago, awarded an MNZM in 2002 and Royal School of Music Honours in 2016.

A favourite and very familiar hymn for our congregation is “He Came Singing Love”. Others we all know and frequently sing are “Our Life Has Its Seasons”, “Every Day” “In This Familiar Place”, “Let Justice Roll Down”, and one we have long sung as a benediction, “Now As We Go”, words by Shirley Murray, with the lovely accompaniment the musicians enjoy playing.

Eleanor, who has sung in choirs since the age of nine years old, thought of his Christmas songs the choir and congregation have sung, modern New Zealand carols that fit our landscape and seasons and that we now expect to sing in the season, such as “And Did You See Him, Little Star?” and “Carol Our Christmas”, (an upside-down Christmas, snow is not falling and trees are not bare, words Shirley Murray).

While she is on Keith’s seat, some words of appreciation for Eleanor, who by sheer willpower has ensured our small St Paul’s choir has continued as numbers have declined in recent years. She has organised and led us in weekly practices, prepared music folders, and was responsible for filing all our sheet music so any piece of music can be found when required, a mammoth task.

And a memorable list of the choirs she has sung in for almost a lifetime, and which tell a life story - the children’s 2YA studio choir which broadcast live, the Wellington Girls’ College choirs, the Wellington Teachers’ Training College choir, then marriage in 1961 and a move to Napier where she sang in Moria Cox’s Plunket Mothers’ choir, a founding member of the Napier Civic Choir in which she still sings, and, of course, St Paul’s Church Choir since 1964.

Upcoming Events

Lenten and Easter Services

- Wed 22nd Mar 2023: Lenten Service at St Paul's
- Sun 2nd April 2023: Palm Sunday Service at St Paul's.
- Thurs 6th April 2023: Maundy Thursday service at Trinity Methodist at 7pm.
- Fri 7th April 2023: Good Friday service at Trinity Methodist at 9.30am.
- Sun 9th April 2023: Easter Sunday St Paul's 10am

Regular Events

Care and Share: Held on the 3rd Monday of the month from 1:30pm in the Church Lounge (February – November)

Lunch group meets monthly on the 1st Friday of each month at noon for food and fellowship at various venues around the city

Jitterbugs Pre-school Music and Movement each Tuesday from 9am (during the school term).

June 2023 Newsletter

The closing date for contributions to the June newsletter will be **Monday 22nd May 2023**. Please forward articles to **Pam** at pamclare@xtra.co.nz or **Bridget** at the church office. Details below.

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