

## **TRIBUTE TO REVS EDWIN AND LOIS CLARKE**

The Hamilton Parish very much want to express heartfelt gratitude for the ministry of Revs Edwin and Lois Clarke, who came to us at the beginning of this year to do a one year shared part-time locum ministry when we were left without a Presbyter. I don't know if they actually understood what they were letting themselves in for as we seemed to have a host of accumulated tasks that needed attending to.

Firstly, it was our first year as a joint congregation at Melville after the closure of St Paul's Church which was a difficult time, especially for the St Paul's congregation, as we strived to become one and here the Clarke's did a brilliant job of gently moulding us together with humour and firmness. I know they have spent many more hours than their part-time status and gave much more above and beyond what was called for.

Secondly, Edwin in particular has led us to a stage where the congregation has agreed to have St Paul's church removed from the London Street site. He has arranged meetings with the City Council Heritage Team and the Synod Property Team, written endless letters on our behalf and led us slowly through the processes that needed to happen with patience. He has a vast knowledge of the workings of the Church and the order in how things have to happen and we have really appreciated his wisdom and leadership. He took over the chairmanship of the Parish Property Committee and his leadership was invaluable in slowly working their way through various tasks that we had become stalled on. We now have had the roof on the Melville Church repaired which has taken many years to get approval for, a new data projector, computer and screen for the church, as well as a new wireless sound system, bringing us up to date with how churches operate these days. Edwin has a good working knowledge of modern technology and is teaching us how to use it.

They have both worked on our new combined church roll and a new parish telephone directory and Lois in particular has done a lot of visiting of our more elderly members who can no longer attend church and has organised us into lay visiting teams. She has written a bi-monthly church newsletter which she invites different members of the congregation to contribute an item and this is something that has really been appreciated by members as we learn a little more about one another.

Finally, they are always available if you need to talk through any number of issues that always seem to crop up in a parish. When Edwin is in his office, he is always ready to stop and talk and I have really appreciated his honesty and wisdom. Lois is also a good listener and is always ready with some well thought out and to the point advice. They have led us in some very good devotions and studies and their church services are well thought out and stimulating.

Thank you both for your ministry and leadership, we are going to miss your good common sense approach to matters and the many laughs that we have had on the way. I hope you can now continue on with your retirement in the knowledge that you have left your legacy in some important decision making that had to happen in the Hamilton Parish.