

Motekiai, it has been a pleasure to get to know you a little.

When we first invited you to come to Tauranga, we weren't quite sure what to expect; but we are grateful for the glimpses we have had of a different culture, a different language, a slightly different way of seeing the world.

Thank you for the gifts you brought to us.

Thank you for your skill of patient and careful listening. I have sat in meetings where you have hardly said a word – but you could sum up and tease out the arguments with great perception. Those of us who speak first and regret later really admire this skill!

Thank you for your openness and approachability. I remember the dinner of your face to face in Tauranga with a hall full of people. Somehow you seemed to have spoken to just about every person there – a word, a smile, eye-to-eye contact. You managed to connect with so many. You have worked with our Worship committee and shared with us in Seder meals, foot-washings, outdoor carol services (or indoors when it was raining). Your laugh is infectious; your sense of fun is never far from the surface!

Thank you also for your pastoral care. I know your visiting and listening ear were much appreciated. I suspect that there many pastoral matters that we never heard about – visits to home and hospital, visits to court or welfare. You were an advocate for the Tongan community as well as for your parish.

You have served on the Synod Executive and have acted as Superintendent on a number of occasions when Susan has been away. I hope these have been worthwhile experiences for you.

We will miss you, but we send you on to Wellington with our love. There will be some new challenges, in a much more multicultural, multi-congregational community. Family life will change, especially now that Isabelle has graduated to university and Monui'a is growing up. Wellington will be an exciting city to live in.

Go well, my friend. Go with our prayers and best wishes. Grasp hold of those new responsibilities. Enjoy life. Come and visit some time.

I hope your new congregation can turn on a good Tongan morning tea - occasionally!