



1875

WAITARA METHODIST CHURCH
125th JUBILEE
1875 - 2000



2000



I deem it a real pleasure to be associated with this publication I would encourage you to read and enjoy the life, work and witness of the people called Methodist in the Waitara Parish Here is an account of a Parish as seen through the eyes of a group of dedicated members who have maintained a continuity of faithful service within the church and beyond. Through their dedication and sense of Mission, they have forged the widest links between church and community, and in giving service and support have enhanced their faith in caring love From the earliest days we can recognise the loyal and lasting contribution to the spread of the gospel of their Lord, Jesus Christ. Doubtless there will be minor errors and omissions in this record but I trust that what is written will prove of significance to all and will be a lasting and useful record - both informative and inspiring to all those who take time to read.

Sincerely

Rev. G.T Gilbert

Acting Superintendent 1993-96

INTRODUCTION

At the outset, the Jubilee Committee neither seriously considered nor discussed whether a Jubilee booklet should be published. However, during celebrations, when meeting up with Des Hollard (who was aware of the work Rosemary and her helpers had put in assembling memorabilia for the event) he suggested that it would be a pity not to make use of that assemblage to provide some sort of record. The later result of this discussion was an offer from Des that, for our consideration, he would do some costings of printing a booklet.



Jubilee Committee
David Musker (rear)
(from left) Sue Orr, Fay Huffam, Ora Musker

After canvassing the idea amongst Parish Council members and others, we decided to go ahead with a publication in the New Year. Further, after budget considerations with the parish treasurer, it was decided, that the grant of \$500 received from the T.S.B. Bank, would enable us to distribute a copy, free of charge to all those who had registered for the Jubilee.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The compilers of this Jubilee Booklet wish to most sincerely thank Des Hollard of Villa Photographic and his assistant Sarah De Cent for all their help. Firstly, for the encouragement to embark on the project, their guidance in selecting a suitable format and the presentation of material, and secondly for their work in editing and overseeing the printing, which has culminated in a worthwhile result at a very modest cost to the Church.

Also, many thanks to those people who have supplied photographs, other material, and all sorts of information.

WAITARA METHODIST 125th JUBILEE **(article from the *Waitara Angle*)**

The weekend of the 18th and 19th November 2000 was a very special one for Methodists, past and present who have associations with the Waitara church; people coming from many places from Foxton to Whangarei; and messages of goodwill from as far afield as the U.S.A. There were approximately 120 registrations for the Jubilee.

The church buildings were looking smart in a new coat of paint, made possible by a generous grant from the Taranaki Electricity Trust. A Jubilee booklet is to be published in the new year and distributed to all those who registered. The cost of this will be covered by a T.S.B. Bank grant.

Saturday morning saw people registering, greeting old friends, and then joining in a wonderful lunch together. There was a 'cutting of the cake' ceremony and a brief outline of the history of the church and its people.



Cutting the Anniversary Cake 2000
(left to right) Trevor Hancock, Annie Russell, Rita Grey.
Aggregate age 271 years!

During the afternoon, and enjoyed by about forty people, there was a bus trip around Waitara/ past the Methanol plants and up through Tikorangi. There was an interesting display of memorabilia in the Sunday school room; lists of past ministers, events, photos and scrap books.

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The Sunday memorial service was special, with Rev. John Bilverstone from the New Plymouth Methodist Centre, Rev. Fatu Tufuga from the Fitzroy Samoan Church, and Rev. Ken Russell taking part. The Rev Ken who was minister in Waitara thirty four years ago and is now resident in Whangarei, gave the address. The music was provided by our resident musicians, Joan Marshall and Ora Musker.



Bus Trip

(left to right standing) Shirley Huzziff, Bill Marshall, F. Ngatai dvr., Jim Herbert, Lucy Alexander, Doreen Hodson, Joyce Old, Aiden Armstrong (obscured), Norma Geary, Reg Bint, Barbara Smaller, Dome Bint, David Baird, Dianne Baird, Shirley Hirton, Trevor Hancock, Lynette Orams, John Orams, Stan Hodson, Mabel Gungell, Sam Stinson, Rita Grey, Laurie Dombroski, Carol Woodd, Bryan Martin, Eunice Ritchie, Jack Ritchie

[left to right sitting and kneeling) Toni Ngatai, Leeanne Ngatai with baby Bailey, Joan Sargent, Don Berry, Colleen Berry, Vi Martin, Pat Dombroski, Laurie Jenkin, Ruth Jenkin, Hazel Blowes, Brian Woodd

This was a time when people were able to praise God and give thanks for his grace and mercies, past, present and future. A special feature of the service was the beautiful singing of the Samoan choir, with items from both children and adults. This was followed by further fellowship over a scrumptious morning tea organised by Fay Huffam and her helpers. And finally, thanks to all those who worked and helped to make a very successful weekend.

Outline of history of church and people, given by Betty Bint on Jubilee Saturday.

The year 2000 marks the 125th anniversary of when in 1875, for the sum of twelve pounds, the present church site was purchased, and a small church, some thirty by eighteen feet was bought and shifted from Belt Road, New Plymouth.



Betty Bint

The original Waitara circuit was quite extensive, stretching from Mokau in the North, Pukearuhe in the West, Tarata in the East and Midhurst on the Southern end. In 1903 it was decided to build a new church. This was done at a cost of four hundred and forty seven pounds, and the new building was opened in February 1904. In 1909 it was equipped with electric light (the source of the electricity was not quoted). In 1907 the Waitara circuit was reduced to Waitara, Lepperton, Huirangi, Tikorangi and Urenui; a much more manageable area!

In 1986 a big improvement was made with the building of a sizable foyer across the front of the church adjacent to the street.

Of course it is the people who populate the district and use the buildings who really make the Church; and looking back over all those years to the early ministers who endeavoured to fulfill the needs of such a wideflung and somewhat primitive parish, and to all the parishioners, many of whom struggled to make a living and raise their families, we cannot do other than pay tribute to the faith, courage and endurance that they showed in meeting the needs of their parish and leaving a base for those of us who are here today.

Among the early family names mentioned were - Bayly, Joll, Pearce, Oxenham and Vosper. In the beginning a second minister or home missionary from New Plymouth

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serviced the then large Waitara area, but in 1882 when Waitara was constituted a circuit in its own right, the Rev. Harper was appointed, followed by Rev. T. Fee.

Earlier ministers within our memories would be the Reverends Gosnell, McGregor, Cumming and Carr. All the ministers have brought with them their own particular talents, qualities and dedication. Typically, these would have been exemplified by the late David Besant, who by dint of much hard personal work and effort, inspired the "7000 Campaign", which eliminated the then current church debt.

Over the years the main church leaders and ministers (until the advent of Rev. Elizabeth Mayes) were likely to be men, but earlier, as is still the case at present, women would have been in the majority. This has been, and is still reflected in the tremendous work that they have contributed to the church through their various organisations and activities, such as Womens' Auxiliary and Guild, Womens' Fellowship, bazaars, flower shows and more recently, garage sales.

Another group of stalwarts who have played an important part in the life and working of the church has been (and still is) the lay preachers who have continually been complementary to our ministry as well as filling many a gap.

Because of a somewhat reduced roll, currently the parish does not have a resident minister, but in partnership with the New Plymouth Methodist Parish, ordained ministry, usually in the person of the Rev. John Bilverstone, is regularly available on a part-time basis. This is supplemented with lay preachers and some other ministers who "fill in".

Our current "set up" is rather unique, and really stems from "necessity being the mother of invention". Although Rev. John has been with us for less than one year, under his guidance the Urenui - Waitara and New Plymouth parishes now have an excellent working partnership for which we are most thankful.



Rev. Ken Russell Giving Jubilee Keynote Church Service Address



**Meryl Fussell, John Chittenden and
Kirsten Faull leading prayers at the 125th Jubilee Service**



Parish Council

**(rear) Reg Bint, Jack Mills (Sec), Fay Huff am, Graeme Orr (Treasurer)
(front) Suzannah Brobyn (Chair), Meryl Fussell (Std), Margeret Ham (Record), June Stevens
(absent) Rev. John Bilverstone, Jack Orchard, David Musker, Fay Bryant, Joan Hunger**

JOTTINGS: HISTORY - DATES - EVENTS

Although records from minute books are sometimes noteworthy for what they do not tell the researcher, nevertheless, a great deal of information can be gleaned from that source.

- 1872 - At a private home. Rev. J. Crump held the first service by a Methodist minister in Waitara.
- 1873 - A Second Minister or Home Missionary employed by New Plymouth circuit to work in Waitara, Huirangi, Lepperton and Midhurst.
- 1875 - Church moved to Waitara/ from Belt Road New Plymouth. Site cost 12 pounds - church and enlargements cost 150 pounds. First harmonium bought - price not to exceed 20 pounds.
- 1877 - Single seats to be charged at one shilling and sixpence per sitting - whole pews one shg. Cost of varnishing church interior - fifteen pounds.
- 1878 - Church built at Lepperton.
- 1879 - Church built at Midhurst.
- 1882 - Church built at Huirangi.
Waitara Circuit was constituted and Rev. Harper was appointed.
- 1883 - Transept (cross section) added at a cost of 275 pounds.
Rev. T. Fee was married. Parsonage required. Eight roomed house built for 430 pounds. It is still occupied, but now privately owned (Maurice Shaw) cnr. Princess St. and by-pass. 2nd parsonage cnr. Mouatt and Gold Sts. 3rd parsonage cnr. Mouatt and High Sts. (present one).
- 1904 - Present church built. The architect and builder was Mr Wickham. The cost was 447 pounds and it was built of kauri. (Surprising - we thought there was plenty of rimu).
- 1912 - 13 December 1st meeting at the Urenui Hall with 11 people. A section was bought from Mr McKenzie for 25 pounds and a church built for 150 pounds.
- 1928 - A Sunday School started at Urenui by Mrs Bill Topless.
- 1935 - Church at Urenui nearly tipped over by a cyclone! Walter Doman (county bridge builder) jacked it back and put Oregon bracing in at both ends.
- 1936 - Urenui Ladies Guild asked for a Sunday School to be built. Fund raising started. Rev. Tom Carr, present Minister (carpenter) got a good deal on timber and Charlie Henwood, carrier, carted it free of charge.
- 1937 - Urenui Sunday School opened with a tea. Mrs Henwood making jelly, fruit and cream for each child. Teas became an annual event.

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- 1951 - Church roof repaired and a new stage built.
- 1952 - Church redecorated and pews re-varnished (they're overdue for a repeat!).
Charges for the use of the church left to the minister's discretion.
The exterior of the church was painted. The quoted cost was 180 to 190 pounds.
The church was re-piled - quite a large undertaking (no pun intended).
During this work a bottle was found inserted in a pile. It was wrapped in a 1903 *Evening News* newspaper, with a hand-written memo inside.
Church Hall at Urenui was opened.
- 1953 - May 12th minutes - A 12ft by 13ft 6 inch prefab to be erected and placed in Waitara church grounds instead of the tent, currently used by the Bible Class.
The young people raised money by putting on various items of entertainment, e.g. Lew Pryme and his skiffle band.
- 1954 - Feb. Proposal to build a Sunday School in Waitara West. Mrs Irene Sharrock offered the use of her sitting room as no suitable building was available.
May - Proposal to extend 10 feet, by way of a lean-to the full length of the hall and classrooms
- 1955 - This building extension was carried out by Hills Bros.
- 1957 - In March a new roof was put on the church - iron, nails and ridging costing 121 pounds. Honours board erected in the church.
- 1958 - August - The matter of a new parsonage was raised (The minister was Rev. J. Osborne).
- 1959 - March - It was moved that 700 pounds be used for the purchase of property (leasehold) and building on the site of the present parsonage. The building was demolished.
October - Mrs Yardley offered gift of organ, later used at Lepperton.
- 1961 - Parsonage building erected, mainly by volunteers under the supervision of Mr H. Decke.
- 1961 - November - Official opening of new parsonage - Rev. Ken Russell the minister.
- 1963 - Urenui Church Hall renovated with rimu ply and hardboard on the walls and ceiling. The Church was named "Church of the Good Shepherd" (appropriate for a country area).
- 1964 - Urenui Church 50th Anniversary celebrated.
- 1975 - Waitara Church Centenary celebrated.
- 1976 - Guild disbanded at Urenui, Members invited to be Trust Members.

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- 1977 - Womens Fellowship recovered pews. Combined services held at Urenui.
Roster system (denominations) in place at Uruti.
Connexional Budget increased 20 to \$1920.
- 1981 - Vote taken on church union. A NO vote.
- 1981 - Winding up of Lepperton Trust.
- 1982 - Mr Allan Surrey appointed vice-president elect of the Methodist Church.
- 1985 - Urenui church extensions. New room dedicated and the foyer added.
- 1986 - New speaker system (sound) installed in the Waitara church.
- 1987 - Dedication of the foyer extensions, and celebratory meal.
- 1988 - Hutchens St. property purchased (old house and 1000 sq. metre section) with a view to building pensioner units. In 1993 as implementation was not feasible it was sold for \$30,000.
- 1991 - Letter to general secretary stating parish's unanimous rejection of the appointment of homosexuals to ministry.
It was agreed to donate \$500 to Radio Rhema for establishment costs.
The parish received advice from headquarters that the Methodist church has no objections to members of the Masonic Lodge being lay preachers.
- 1992 - Members working at *The Daily News* inserting leaflets to raise funds (over \$2000).
- 1993 - Methodist services at Uruti discontinued, but Anglicans carrying on.
- 1999 - Application to headquarters for a grant of \$8000 was approved and received.



**Allan Surrey Vice-President of the Methodist Church 1982-1983
and a lay preacher for over 56 years.**

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**The time capsule buried beneath the church 1986.
To be opened in 2086 -not in our lifetime!**



**Members of the Church Trust at the time of the Centenary
(left to right) Daphne Billingham, Paddy Whittaker, Dale Whittaker,
Noel Billingham, Frank Sharrock, Alan Randell**

MINISTERS

The first Methodist service held in Waitara was in a private house in 1872. The Minister was the Rev. John Crump from New Plymouth. From 1873 to 1881 the following Second Ministers and Home Missionaries from New Plymouth were appointed to take services and pastoral oversight at Waitara.

1873-1874: Rev. J. Smith;

1876: Rev. T.G. Hammond;

1878: Rev. L.M. Isitt;

1879: Rev. L. Hudson;

1880: Rev. F.W. Martin;

1881: Rev. W.S. Harper.

In 1882 the Waitara circuit was formed and the Rev. W.S. Harper was appointed as the first Minister.



Rev. John Crump



Rev. T. G. Hammond 1876



Rev. W. S. Harper 1882



Rev. Thomas Fee 1883-1885

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Rev. L. Hudson 1886-1888



Rev. J. T. Pinfold F.G.S. 1889-1891



Rev. T. F. Jones 1892-1896



Rev. W.G. Thomas 1898-1899



Rev. S. J. Garlick 1900-1903



Rev. J.J. Pendray 1904-1906

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Rev. F.T. Read 1907-1909



Rev. W. Wills 1910-1912



Rev. J.W. Griffin 1913-1915



Rev. G.B. Hinton 1916-1918



Rev. F.B. Lawrence 1919-1921



Rev. W.W. Avery 1922-1923

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Rev. R.B. Gosnell 1924-1927



Rev R. McGregor 1828-1931



Rev. W.B. Cuming 1932-1934



Rev. T.H. Carr 1938-1940



Rev. H. Ford 1938-1940



Rev. W. Jenkin with son Keith 1941-1945

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Rev Harry Utting 1946-1950



Rev. L. Shapcott and family 1951-1955



Rev. J. Osbourne 1956-1959



Rev. Ken and Judy Russell 1960-1964



Rev. R. Hendry and family 1965-1967

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Rev. David Besant and family (left) 1967-1974



exchanged with Rev. Bill Sanford and family (right) 1973-1974

MORE ON MINISTERS

Some Memories and Reflections

Leading up to the Jubilee we had a number of letters and phone calls from some of our earlier ministers who were unable to join in our celebrations, but sent their best wishes and some interesting comments; some of which are recorded here. Also, we have presented some snippets on a few ministers who brought some unique qualities to our parish (no doubt they all did in their various ways).

John Osborne records that he and Enid, as newlyweds, arrived at Waitara with all their worldly possessions in seven boxes on the back of Enid's Dad's trailer, but left with considerably more, plus two children! Waitara will always have a big place in their memories. He remembers how Bert King (choirmaster) used to milk his cows before coming to choir practise, and then go home to his dinner. He also paid tribute to Charlie Tye ("one of the staunchest men I ever had in my congregation") who loaned him the money to buy his first car, enabling him to work independently throughout the parish. "He was a trusting man to lend a large sum of money to a young man without any assets!" The years in Waitara taught him a lot, as the situation was so vastly different from the newly established state housing areas of Panmure and Tamaki where he spent his first three years of ministry.

Richard Hendry also came to Waitara, his first appointment, as a keen young man. He says that he arrived as a particularly green probationer, and in spite of his years of training he had little idea of what to do. Here he conducted his first weddings/funerals/baptisms and worship services. In many ways, a baptism of fire! As well as parish work, he had to finish his ordination thesis. "I will always be grateful for the loving forgiveness of church members who overlooked silly mistakes, unwise words, and youthful indiscretions to help guide my ministry through the next four years."

Some years later in the Auckland area he became involved in party politics and unsuccessfully stood for parliament. He commented that in his young days he was a 'lefty' but now, as a U.S. citizen and the senior minister of Littleton United Methodist Church, a large parish of 1600 members, he is now "older and wiser and a republican." He lives in a suburb of Denver, Colorado. He told the story of when on one occasion while working in his parish up North, he took a corner too fast and ended with the nose of his car up a bank. Presently, when a group of Maori appeared on the scene and he appealed for help, one of them looked at him and said "Minister that's not the way to get to Heaven."

When **Tevita and Tevinia Talakai**, a Tongan couple (and their family), came to their Waitara appointment, the parishioners naturally wondered how they would cope with a minister from a quite different culture; and as to how he would fit into our parish work. While naturally there were some difficulties, particularly in the initial stages, this couple soon gained our warm regard and respect. Tevita was very well trained and

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deeply involved with his faith and ministry. He had a most warm and welcoming smile. One day he told us, that regretfully, because he could not address us in his first language, he could only give us his second best! Tevinia tended to be rather a shy person, and particularly in the beginning, being away from her Tongan community and friends of Auckland felt dreadfully homesick.

As a trained choirmaster, Tevita was also a tremendous musician who could sing in almost any key or part. Under his guidance Waitara soon had a creditable choir which was a joy to the members and to the whole congregation. Tragically, a few years after returning to Auckland Tevita succumbed to an illness when he was probably in the prime of his ministry. It was indeed a sad time for everyone, which was reflected at the time of the memorial service held in his honour at Waitara.

David Besant was a minister who, as well as fulfilling his pastoral duties, brought a lot of energy and imagination to fundraising, notably "Target 7000". Under his leadership the parish worked hard, through a queen carnival, a beard growing contest, sponsored bike rides etc. So successful were these efforts, that one year after the commencement, a mortgage burning ceremony was held to mark having paid off the loan on the new parsonage! As well as all the hard work, the parishioners gained lots of enjoyment and tremendous satisfaction. Another of his efforts was "Adventures in Partnership". This entailed working to raise funds, a third going to the Red Cross, a third to missions and the remainder to the church. At this time David also largely forsook the use of his car for his local work, and for a period gained employment in the local meat works. He used the local press for publicity and support for all these projects. David promoted "Be Aware", with a competition to encourage people in learning the use of Maori words in greetings etc.

Paul Grant was another young minister, who along with his wife Heather made a big impact on Waitara Methodism. While journeying to Waitara to take up his appointment, Paul admitted to having qualms as to his abilities for the tasks ahead. The reality was quite the reverse. With Heather, who was a top musician, organiser of the choir and musical activities, they both gained the respect and deep regard of the members of the parish, which extended to the wider community and brought extra people to our services. Sadly, illness overcame Paul, and Methodism was denied the full services of a much loved and talented couple until his later recovery.

During a difficult two year period between appointed Ministers, the Parish Council, ably led by **Rob Hooper**, provided the necessary services to keep the church functioning.

The appointment of **David Baird**, not an ordained minister, but a highly qualified secondary teacher who had taken early retirement, was a first for the Waitara Methodist Church. David came as a lay supply appointment for one year, which amazingly stretched to four, as David and Dianne fitted in so well with church and community.

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Rev. Noel and Daphne Billingham 1975-1984



Rev. Paul and Heather Grant and family 1984-1987

Two years without an appointment. Interim Ministers were...



Rev. Basil and Nancy Bell



Rev. Tevita and Tevinia Talakai 1989-1994

Tevita Talakai - A Tribute

On this day oh Lord, we give our grateful thanks to you,
For your servant Tevita, who tarried and gave us a wider view;
Of service and dedication, and great personal warmth as well,
That so touched all our hearts with a long and lasting spell!
And as we dry our tears, and pay our last respects to him,
We give thanks indeed for his friendship, and the memories
that will surely not grow dim.

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Rev. Elizabeth Mayes

plus



Dianne and David Baird 1994-1998

Brian and Marion Peterson and Bill Rice (not pictured)

(no appointed minister from 1998-2000)



Rev. John Bilverstone 2000- (on a part time basis)

SUNDAY SCHOOL 1920 - 2000 **(Contributed by Lena Chittenden)**

A special day for a Sunday School anniversary 1926. I remember taking part in this day. There were three families, the Gosnells (the ministers daughters), the Thomas twins (my sister and myself), and the Wilson sisters. We were dressed in the church colours of blue and white, and each of us carrying a posy of flowers. We walked in single file down the two church aisles and stood before the minister - all the while a hymn was being sung.

After church ended some of us went around to the minister's place for lunch. We were having "prize giving" in the afternoon and it was too far for us to walk home. At the age of eight, it was a long eventful day. I wonder how many of us remember the small colourful cards with a biblical text that we were given, and had to recite the next Sunday.

I left Waitara in 1928 and returned in 1944. The minister at that time was the Rev. Jenkin. The Rev Harry Utting was the next minister and it was at that time that I became a Sunday School teacher. I took the infant classes with the help of E. Keats, and later V. Crow. The room at the rear of the hall was large enough to accommodate the 20 plus children.

Rev. Len Shapcott followed. The classes had increased and we now tried other activities such as a fancy dress ball and Sunday School picnic at Urenui. Teachers that I recall were; Ken Surrey, Miss Spargo, Mrs D. Appleby, Mrs M. Orchard, Miss Keat, Miss V. Crow, Mrs N. Henderson, Mrs V. Tate, Mr J. Orams and S. Chittenden. Superintendents were - K. Surrey, F. Silby, J. Orams, and they closed the classes with a benediction.



Sunday School teacher for many years, Lena Chittenden, with parents and pupils.

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The photo of the Sunday School members was taken during Len Shapcott's ministry and gives an indication of the size of the Sunday School. Rev. John Osborne was the next minister, followed by Rev. Ken Russell.

Some Bible Class boys had formed a skiffle group under the leadership of Lew Pryme. This was to raise money to build a small room for their Sunday School teacher for many years, Lena Chittenden, with parents and pupils bible class, and so they toured around Taranaki. This room I also used for my class of ten to twelve year old boys. The main hall had been widened and we could have classes there, plus the little stair room, access to the stage, the infant classroom at the back and the kitchen. Unfortunately the bible class room had to be demolished and my class of boys occupied the stage, a most unsatisfactory arrangement. A separate Sunday School building was erected and Mrs Tate took the infants.

The bible class was flourishing, and exchange of pupil's ideas was encouraged between Whiteley, New Plymouth and Waitara Methodist churches.

Through the years the number of children has declined. The big "baby explosion" was over, the number of religious groups had trebled, and television was a feature in most houses. In the time of Paul Grant's ministry there were a few more children entering Sunday school and Mrs S. Orr took the class for a while.

Currently on the first Sunday of every month several grandparents may bring the children to church, and a time is set aside to address the children. Mrs Betty Bint gives the children further religious studies and activity books are available on the current sermon.

MUSIC AND MUSICIANS

Over the years music and musicians have played an important part in the life of the church. From minutes written in 1875 we read of a harmonium to be bought, cost not to exceed 20 pounds! Today the church has a lovely organ bought just last year and one which was well used at the time of the Anniversary.



Violet Grubner



Arthur Parkes

As a small girl Violet Grubner assisted her mother Mrs Crow by pumping the organ of the time - an early start to her musical career! Over the years choir numbers have waxed and waned. Names that come to mind as organists - C. King, A. Parkes, Miss Blight, Mrs King, Mrs. Crow, Mrs. Keat, Mrs. H. Grant, Mrs. J. Marshall, Mr. E. Wilmshurst, Mrs. A. Marshall.

At its height the choir had its own social committee, this in the 60's and 70's. The choir built up again with the encouragement and enthusiasm of Paul and Heather Grant, Tevita and Tevinia Talakai; while David Baird invited Urenui and Tikorangi folk interested in singing to join also. The choir sang to raise money for the parsonage and for various church projects or simply to just entertain as at Age Concern or social events.

Sometimes the choirmaster has also been the organist (Arthur Parkes), the Minister (Tevita Talakai/David Baird). Another choir master who built up music in the church and also in the local high school was John Orams.

The church had connections with an early "skiffle group" led by Lew Pryme. This group of five young people performed on washboard, comb, broomstick etc. and raised money to build an outside Sunday School room (now gone). The members were Lew Pryme, Wayne Geary, Roger Ireland, Tony Turner and —Somers.

WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

Mr Allan Surrey, when writing his history of the Methodist Church in Waitara at the time of the Centennial in 1975, mentioned the invaluable work done by the women of the church. At this time in 2001 women outnumber men in the church. This has provided the opportunity for women to use the strengths and talents they have to benefit the church body. Generous and willing help has been given over the years by women, especially in the area of fund raising for specific projects.

In December '99, Women's fellowship celebrated 60 years. Initially two complementary organisations were involved: Auxiliary devoting itself to missions, while Guild concentrated on local affairs, as well as providing companionship for the women of the church. Fellowship was born out of the frustrations of one woman President, trying to do justice to two monthly meetings, one Auxiliary and one Guild, all the while being expected to provide programmes and leadership for both as well as look after her two small children.

At the 60th anniversary celebrations of M.W.F., a photo was taken of all five women who have served as President since its inception, including Mrs Connie Collins who has had 60 years of membership. What a wonderful record of service!

Women have contributed to the making of a new servery, transforming an erst while junk room beside the stage, have laid new lino there and in the cloak room off the back lounge. Associated with many projects has been ongoing labour, from the sewing of curtains, cushions, banners, wallpapering, floral decorations, serving refreshments after church etc. Trading tables are contributed to and manned. Food Bank is supported.

A certain amount of work is still done in the community such as helping with Age Concern, visiting the sick, visiting folk in hospital and supporting the leader of Girl's Brigade. The Privacy Act has meant less visiting at the hospital as people are reluctant to make the trip to New Plymouth unless they are sure the person to be visited is actually still in hospital and it can be difficult to ascertain this over the phone.

While David Baird was leading the church, old minute books were borrowed from Archives in Christchurch and we were able to make a list of previous presidents and secretaries. A good foundation has been laid and we thank them for their contribution. Our church and buildings look so well maintained. It is a credit to our members and we thank God for his continuing mercies.



"Charleston Belles" - Concert Fundraising

(back) Ora Musker, Mavis Randell, Meryl Fussell, Rosemary Whittaker, Shirley Hussiff, Irene Sharrock, Gwen Orchard, Ruth Hall, Betty Bint

(front) Beryl Whitehead, Jan Hill, Dot Mudgeway, Ruth Yandle

Previous Presidents and their Secretaries:

- March 1939 - Mrs Ford re-elected president. Vice president Mrs Hunt, also secretary.
1940 - Mrs Smaill now signing minutes (1st March). June meeting, Mrs Ford welcomed back after a long illness
1941 - Mrs Hunts farewell, Mrs Dennis now secretary
1945 - Mrs Connie Collins president, Mrs Dennis secretary
1950 - Miss Jakins president, Mrs Dennis secretary
1951 - Mrs Tye president
1954 - Mrs Herbert president, Mrs Northcott secretary
1962 - Mrs Judy Russell president, Mrs Henderson secretary 1963 - Mrs Collins president, Mrs Bint secretary
1964 - Mrs Christiansen president, Mrs Bint secretary 1965 - Mrs Parkes president, Mrs L. Alexander secretary
1967 - Mrs Hendry/Mrs Kendall joint presidents, Mrs Leach secretary
1969 - Mrs Oliver president
1971 - Mrs Joyce Besant president. (Mrs June Stevens to preside while Besant Family away in the U.S.A.)
1973 - Mrs J. Stevens president
1976 - Mrs Randell, president jointly with Mrs Meryl Fussell
1980 - Mrs Daphne Billinghurst president, Mrs Rita Grey secretary
1983 - Mrs Rosemary Whittaker president, Mrs Rita Grey secretary
1984 - Mrs Rosemary Whittaker president, Mrs Mavis Randell secretary
1985 - Mrs Rosemary Whittaker president, Mrs Mavis Randell secretary

Waitara Methodist Church 1875-2000

1986 - Mrs Rosemary Whittaker president, Mrs Ruth Hall secretary 1987 - Mrs Jan Hill president, Mrs R. Whittaker secretary

1990 - Mrs R. Whittaker president, Mrs. Ora Musker secretary

1991 - Mrs Rosemary Whittaker president, Mrs. Ina Stinson secretary

1992 - Mrs M. Fussell and Mrs J. Stevens joint presidents

1995-2001 - Mrs. Fussell president, Mrs Joan Bint secretary



Previous Presidents Fellowship [M.W.F.]

**(left to right) Daphne Billinghamurst, Betty Bint, Phyllis Parkes, Meryl Fussell (present President), Mavis Randell, June Stevens, Rosemary Whittaker
Seated - Connie Collins, first President, and still a member**

ONE OF MANY

(Silent workers that is!) As with many organisations, to function effectively, our church relies on a great deal of voluntary work. Of recent years when there has been a need to complement the minister's available time with other Sunday speakers, the convener to arrange and co-ordinate these people with the minister, has been Ernie Wilmshurst. His efforts have been (and are) much appreciated. We have never been left without a front man or woman, and have enjoyed a wide range of outside speakers, from retired ministers, and other denominations, to lay folk from our own parish. This has given us lots of variety and benefit.

MEMORABLE MOMENTS

Trip To Auckland To Meet Our Tongan Contemporaries (taken from Nancy Widmer's much fuller account)

While the Talakais were at Waitara, a trip to Auckland to Tevita's old church was planned, and on June 27th 1992, 35 church members set off by bus to visit the Tongan community at The Dominion Road Methodist Church. On the way the group practised choruses that they were to sing, and how to pronounce the Tongan greeting - Maloelei.

After arrival we were first treated to a Welcome and Kava Ceremony, following which we were taken to our various billets with the Tongan families who treated us to dinner - Tongan style - a lovely spread, full of variety to which we had difficulty to do justice. In the evening we attended a wonderful, colourful concert, where the various groups were competing to raise funds for their new church. All family members, young and old took part. A novel part of this was for members of the audience to either place money in one or other of the competing groups' boxes, or to stick dollar notes to the on stage performers who were coated with oil. It was announced that \$13,224.65 had been raised.

The following morning, Sunday we attended the Tongan service which was another experience. Some of the visitors were asked to wear the Taovala - the national costume - a humbling experience.

The singing of the Tongan choir of 100 voices rendering the Hallelujah Chorus was truly magnificent, and all without music. The Waitara Choir made its contribution which was well received. During the service, our representative presented to our hosts the gift of a "hymns number board and box" beautifully created by Jack Orchard. At the conclusion of the service we were conducted to a banquet hall, with the tables laden with many varieties of food, including 14 roast pigs!

As we were leaving for home we were given many gifts from our hosts and sung to on our way. Quite a heartfelt and moving farewell! To experience the spontaneity of these peoples' welcome, their liveliness and fun, their hospitality, enthusiasm and dedication to their church, was indeed memorable for us all.

PENURY OR PLENTY? FUNDRAISING & FUN

Throughout the history of our parish there has been a never ending struggle by the Parish Council and the wider church membership, while fulfilling the accepted roles and needs of the church, to meet the financial concomitance that that entailed.

The main items of expenditure were (and are) - Paying the minister's stipend, travelling, etc; buildings maintenance and insurance, rent, rates and power, church supplies, building renewal and extensions, meeting the connexional budget (the church's contribution to the administration of The Methodist Church of New Zealand), synod and chaplaincy levies, as well as funding various special projects.

It has been interesting to record some of the various "ways and means" that have been adopted to keep from going into "the red," and also to achieve some worthwhile targets.

Fund raising has not been all hard grind (although at times that has been the case) and in the various schemes involved there has also been lots of fun and fellowship. In the latter category we list Midwinter Christmas Dinners, Progressive Dinners, Gala Days, Concerts and efforts from various choirs, the Queen Carnival which was a part of "Target 7000" and the auction of produce and goods on the evening following the annual Harvest Festival Service.

Some of the other efforts were - The cattle scheme inaugurated by Ken Stevens in 1973 (and running until 2000); the *Daily News* "dog watch" effort when we took a team of 18 (+ or -) into the newspaper plant to insert leaflets, supplements etc, starting work at 1.00am; and the more recent bi-annual garage sales. For many years the Methodist Annual Flower Show was a big event in the church calendar, and was well supported by the wider community.

Grants have also been received from organisations such as the Doris Swadling Trust (youth work) and we have benefited from bequests such as those of Elsie Wilson (which paid for the church heating system) and the Chatterton and Major estates. The New Zealand Methodist church has come to our assistance with grants to tide us over difficult times.

Of recent years the Taranaki Electricity Trust and the T.S.B. Bank have also been our benefactors, their grants funding extensive electrical work in the church, as well as this booklet.

Two large fund raising efforts worth recording are - Firstly "Target 7000" which was David Besant's special project, which resulted in the elimination of the mortgage on the then new parsonage; and that to pay for the church foyer extension (which added greatly to our facilities). Both of these projects, as with many smaller ones, were enthusiastically backed by the members, who over the years have put in a tremendous lot of hard work, which of course has also been leavened with lots of fun and fellowship, and the satisfaction of "Missions Accomplished"!

Waitara Methodist Church 1875-2000

Stewardship campaigns were big efforts (first one in 1967); firstly to try to put peoples' giving on a planned and regular basis resulting in direct benefits to ongoing church finances, and an endeavour to involve more folk in membership and attendance. Also, in lieu of the large stewardship effort, numerous other canvassing appeals to members and peripheral adherents have been made.

WAITARA METHODIST CHURCH
18th ANNUAL SPRING FLOWER SHOW
Clifton Hall, Waitara, Friday and Saturday, September 15th and 16th, 1939
ADMISSION: Adults 1s., Children 3d.
SECTIONS:
1 - Open Daffodils. 2 - Cut Flowers. 3 - Decorative. 4 - Home Industries. 5 - Fancy Work.
OFFICERS:
Patron: His Worship the Mayor, Mr J. P. Hughson
President: Rev. H. Ford
Vice-Presidents: Mrs Ormandy, Messrs W. R. Johns, J. Parry, P. J. Allen, L. Chatterton, F. Silby,
R. Andrews, R. Oliver, E. S. Allen, F. Barnard, E. A. George, H. Fugle and E. Giddy
Hon Secretary: Miss E. Fraser
Executive: Miss L. Bayly, Miss R. Elliot, Messrs Hills, Wilson and Silby



Church Nativity Scene, created by Fay Huffam

CONCLUSION

"The Church" is the unique creation of our Lord Jesus Christ. He alone is the builder, whatever human beings may think. When he said "Upon this rock I will build my church," he was referring to himself not Peter. We in the Methodist church are privileged to be part of that body. He alone maintains us, and uses us in the ministry that pleases him. We are grateful and thankful for blessings over the years, and by his grace will serve him and the community for more years to come.

We trust that our readers find this booklet interesting as well as informative, and that we have recorded sufficient of the church's history, activities and Methodist tradition for succeeding generations to have a record to refer to, and to treasure.

May the wonderful caring Christian fellowship which we share in the Waitara-Urenui Methodist Parish continue to thrive, in whatever form or combination that may be, for another 125 Years!



Waitara parsonage, built 1883



New parsonage, built 1961 with lots of voluntary labour.

Within the constraints of time and space we have done our very best to achieve accuracy and balance of coverage. We trust that our readers will make due allowances for any errors or omissions.

David Musker and Rosemary Whittaker - Compilers.