



March 2024



## Welcome to Connexions!

A place to share special stories, events, achievements and celebrations from around the Connexion.

Please send photos and descriptions to [Reception@methodist.org.nz](mailto:Reception@methodist.org.nz)



## Remember in your Prayers

Connexional Office

It is with sadness that I would like to advise the Connexion of death of Eric Russell on the afternoon of Thursday, 8 February 2024, in Christchurch.

Eric was the secretary of the Wellington Methodist Charitable Aid and Endowments Board for 11 years. Eric also served on the Media and Communications Standing Committee of Conference in the early 1990s.

Besides this, he was a notably dedicated organist from a young age at various churches (both Methodist and other) across the country.

It is with sadness that I would like to advise the Connexion of the death of Margaret Inglis, a well-loved Lay Preacher on Thursday 15 February.

Margaret was a member of Linwood Avenue Union Church for several decades. She was also a keen Bible student, sharing her thoughtful understanding readily as a regular lay preacher and worship leader in large and small churches around Canterbury. She was part of the leadership of the Canterbury Methodist Lay Preachers in the 1980s and assisted in the formation of the ecumenical New Zealand Preachers Association in the 1990's

In recent years complications from Margaret's declining respiratory health has forced her to give up singing, preaching and leading worship, but she continued to encourage others to maintain this valuable contribution to church life.

You are encouraged to attend the celebration of Margaret's life, which will be held in the Linwood Avenue Union Church, 378 Linwood Avenue, on Monday, February 26, at 10.00am.

Ngā manaakitanga

Rev Tara Tautari | General Secretary





It is with sadness that I advise the Connexion of the death of Rev William (Bill) Wallace peacefully at Wesley Care last evening, Monday 26 February, at 7pm.

Messages for the family may be sent to Michael Wallace. [mwmwallace@hotmail.com](mailto:mwmwallace@hotmail.com)

### **W.L. (Bill) WALLACE 1933 – 2024**

The death of Bill Wallace brings to an end the life of a very talented man. Born in Christchurch, and a candidate for the ministry from the Durham St congregation, he trained at Trinity College and graduated from Auckland University. He served the Church from 1961, beginning in Dunedin, and finishing at Wainui-o-mata. The majority of his time was within Union parishes, and he had a particular roll in the establishment of the West Dunedin Union Parish, which had the first suburban team ministry in New Zealand.

He was always an ecumenist, and from his university days had a continuing involvement in the Student Christian Movement. While at Palmerston North he helped establish its Massey University branch. He was a leader of the World Conference on Religion and Peace in New Zealand and on the executive of the Asian Conference on Religion and Peace. The SCM of his time was influential within the tertiary education scene in this country, and Bill's own sense of radical ecumenism never faltered.

He was a creative person. At the time of his retirement, he was described as both an artist and mystic. He designed stained-glass windows and sculpture and was a woodcarver. But his lasting gift will be his contribution as a man of letters. He was a poet and hymn-writer. He started publishing his work in 1981, and in 1988 one of his works, 'O threefold God of tender unity' won the Hymn Society of America's 'Search for new hymns.' His hymns are to be found in Alleluia Aotearoa and Hope is our song'. The late Colin Gibson described his hymns as having a strong mystical and prophetic strain. This writer thinks of him as a sensitive and committed liturgist – he had high standards and aimed at providing worship that was both relevant to the times. But he was thorough in his proclamation of the mystery of God and the care of creation by maintaining the highest literary standards.

We honour Bill for his distinctive ministry and assure his family of our sympathy for them at this time.

Haere e te rangatira Bill, moe mai rā i te atawhai o tō tātou Matua nui i te rangi. Moe mai rā i te rangimarie.

Ngā manaakitanga  
Rev Tara Tautari | General Secretary

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It is with sadness that I advise the Connexion of the death of Rev Loyal Gibson peacefully at Wesley Care today, Thursday 29 February. Messages for the family may be sent to Rev Mark Gibson at [watermark2022@gmail.com](mailto:watermark2022@gmail.com).

A funeral service is planned for Tuesday 5 March at 11am at Christchurch North Methodist Church, 68 Harewood Road, Papanui. Further details will be shared by the family in the coming days.

We offer our aroha and respect to Rev Loyal for his dedicated ministry and contributions to the Methodist Church.

No reira e te Rangatira, moe mai i roto i ngā ringa atawhai o to tātou Ātua.

Ngā manaakitanga  
Rev Tara Tautari | General Secretary





## Sharing Climate Hope

Christian World Service

In South India, Dalit women and children are planting trees as a carbon sink. While in the Philippines and Nicaragua, Oneida and Ramona are better prepared for the warming climate thanks to your donations. Our local partners want to train more people to grow new food crops using eco-agricultural techniques adapted for their changing climate. With your help some of the poorest families can grow more food and improve their livelihoods and future. Please read their story and support our [Climate Appeal](#).



## Take the Next Step

Christian World Service

CWS is looking for people willing to make a monthly donation to support people to exchange poverty for life. As a Partner for Life, you will know that you are putting words into action and sharing God's love for our world. You can donate through your bank account or online. Find out [more](#) or contact CWS by email at [cws@cws.org.nz](mailto:cws@cws.org.nz) or phone 0800 74 73 72



## Donate Now for End of Year Tax Credit

Christian World Service

CWS is grateful for your generous support throughout the year ending March 31. In April, we will send receipts for the year so you can claim a tax credit for your donations. Information on how to do this is available on the [IRD website](#). It is not too late to donate and then claim the credit. [Donate](#) today.



## A Message to Ukraine

Christian World Service

Thank you for [supporting](#) the people of Ukraine over the last two years. Watch the new video from ACT Alliance. Your prayers and donations form a message of solidarity and care. CWS has sent more than \$314,000 firstly to relief efforts in Ukraine itself and then to assist refugees like Natallia (pictured) in Poland. Please continue to pray for peace and support the [Ukraine Appeal](#).



## The Need is Overwhelming in Gaza

Christian World Service

Please continue to pray for peace in the Middle East. Five months of fighting and extreme shortages of supplies are causing immense suffering in Gaza. UN Women [reported](#) that as long as the war continues an average of 64 women will be killed each day. Children [are](#) now dying from hunger. DSPR Gaza is doing all it can to provide medical and psychosocial care to some of the 1.7 million people in the south. Without a ceasefire or permanent halt in hostilities, agencies cannot deliver enough aid to keep people alive. **"The destruction of our premises, the limitations of our resources, the poor connection and fragmentation have never prevented DSPR Gaza from keeping a light in the middle of darkness and trying to help people live with dignity,"** says DSPR Gaza.

Please help DSPR Gaza reach more people by donating to the [Gaza Palestine Appeal](#).





## Make your Bed!

Julie Roberts, Methodist Mission Southern

It can be hard to make your bed if you don't have the pillow, the linen....

Please watch our [YouTube short](#) on why our Transition House residents need bedding.



## Is anyone in your parish interested in Lay Preaching?

Viv Whimster

Ngairé Southon and Viv Whimster are offering an online zoom course for Lead Worship starting on Wednesday 3 April. This would suit anyone starting at the basic level but also be a useful refresher.

To register for the link or for more information, please contact Ngairé at [ngaire@southon.net](mailto:ngaire@southon.net), mobile 021 0224 5165 or Viv at [vjwhimster@gmail.com](mailto:vjwhimster@gmail.com), mobile 021 137 2349.

We are also looking for more presbyters and experienced Lay Preachers as mentors for Lay Preachers in training. Many thanks to those who have already offered, we'll be in touch very soon!



## Methodist Lay Preachers Network

Viv Whimster

A warm invitation to all Lay Preachers, interested, in training or experienced, to join us for a zoom conversation and catch up.

Waikato Wairiki Methodist Synod is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

**Topic:** Methodist Lay Preachers Network zoom

**Time:** Mar 13, 2024 07:00 PM Auckland, Wellington

### Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83881664530?pwd=eG1zRjdaMGFRdER4S0tOdi9KUGNoQT09>

**Meeting ID:** 838 8166 4530

**Passcode:** 374659

Please pass this on to any Lay Preachers who do not have email. They may be able to join up with someone on zoom locally for the evening.

### More information from

Viv Whimster [vjwhimster@gmail.com](mailto:vjwhimster@gmail.com), 07 578 6056

Or

Ngairé Southon

[ngaire@southon.net](mailto:ngaire@southon.net), 07 578 7119.





## Community Dinner

Allison Edwards

2024 is here and the Community Dinner will be held on the first (1st) Friday Of March, May, July, September and November 2024.

March will be a Barbeque, wet or fine, these dinners will be held at [St Davids Centre, Church St, Te Aroha](#). **Mark on the Calendar**

Admission is completely free, although a donation would be very gratefully appreciated. If you wish to become a sponsor contact Alli on 0274 884037

This event is a combined initiative by the Te Aroha Springs Community Trust, the Mountain View Church and the Te Aroha Baptist Church for the community of Te Aroha and surrounding areas, this is a truly family event, if you are on your own come along for some great company and meet new people. Or reunite with old friends, as has happened.

Simply turn up from 5.30pm for meet and greet, mix and mingle time. The Meal is served from approx. 6pm. Sorry but due to numbers we are not taking table reservations for the Community Dinner.

An indications of numbers would be appreciated, please phone or text either Lois Lines on 021 0786068 or Alli Edwards 0274 884 037

Contact Lorraine Austin to book shuttle this dinner 027 303 4465



## “Compassionate Creative Connected Communities”

Northcote Takapuna Methodist Parish

Community Enabler Are you interested in leading this parish in supporting rapidly changing North Shore communities to make their places better for everyone through community led development?

- You understand and value the contribution community expertise and experience can offer to both people and place.
- You value relationships and confidently build trust and relationship with diverse groups on issues that matter to them.
- You are confident working in agile and iterative ways that grow local leadership and agency and that support learning by doing.
- You are a joiner as much as a leader and can work confidently on your own as well as part of a diverse team.
- You have a commitment to, and ideally are experienced in, strengths-based Community Led Development principles and practice.
- You are an excellent communicator and can work in partnership within both church and community.
- You are a suitably qualified person in good standing with your own faith/values and wider community.
- You will be able to work to the Methodist ethos, including its bicultural commitment.

A Position Description is available from [office@takapunamethodist.org.nz](mailto:office@takapunamethodist.org.nz) or speak to Superintendent *Rev Peter Norman* Tel: 489 4590.

To apply, please send your CV and cover letter to:

The Parish Administrator, Northcote Takapuna Methodist Parish,  
P O Box 33 1013, Takapuna, Auckland 0740 or  
[office@takapunamethodist.org.nz](mailto:office@takapunamethodist.org.nz)

**Expressions of Interest close 20 March 2024.**



## Operation Refugee Lead 2024 – Job Vacancy

Christian World Service

### About Christian World Service and Operation Refugee

Christian World Service (CWS) is the emergency aid, development and justice agency of New Zealand Churches. We work without discrimination, and in collaboration with the ACT Alliance (Action by Churches Together), along with our own partner organisations around the globe.

Christian World Service is seeking a youth and young adult specialist as our Operation Refugee Lead 2024. This is an important and exciting opportunity to encourage support for refugees in faith-based schools and church youth groups. The role is preferably Auckland-based, for sixteen hours per week over a period of six months. You'll be contacting church/private schools, and youth/young adult groups to encourage students to engage with Operation Refugee – our fundraising programme supporting refugees in countries like Gaza, Ukraine and Afghanistan.

For more information and to apply, please click [here](#).



## Covid-19 looking back and looking forward

Trudy Downes

### Share your story!

Kia ora koutou

Covid-19 has become just another thing that happened. We still take some measures, but we are pretty much back to our new normal.

But what can we learn from our four long Covid-filled years? Share your story so we can do things better when another pandemic occurs.

### Share your story:

- What would you like others to know about your experiences of the pandemic?
- What lessons should we learn from your experiences so we can be prepared as possible for a future pandemic?

[This link](#) goes to an online submission form, pandemic timelines, MCNZ COVID-19 articles, and there are live feedback sessions at the end of March.

The live feedback sessions will be recorded, but only for the purposes of ensuring that all feedback is captured, after which the recordings will be deleted.

All submitters' details will be treated confidentially.

[Please share your story!](#) Talk with your parish, your rohe, and your whānau. Take a moment to reflect because it has been a long four years.

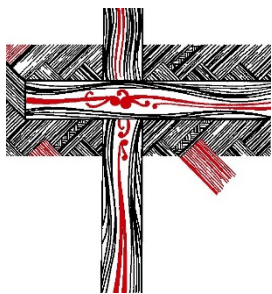
**Online submissions will be available until 28 March 2024.**

Mauri ora!

**TRUDY DOWNES**

[healthandsafety@methodist.org.nz](mailto:healthandsafety@methodist.org.nz)





## New Zealand Easter Hymns Played on Radio

John Thornley, Wesley Broadway, Palmerston North  
11 A.M. each Tuesday & Saturday morning on Manawatu People's Radio (MPR) Frequency 999AM.

Each programme lasts half an hour

Hosts: Gillian and John Thornley (3569681)

Email: [johngill@inspire.net.nz](mailto:johngill@inspire.net.nz)

Two selections are played with five hymns each programme.

### Hymns for Holy Week:

'God who weeps when we are weeping' by Marnie Barrell

'For the crowd another busy day' by Colin Gibson

'And Jesus said, don't be afraid' by Shirley Erena Murray

'Honour the dead our country's fighting brave' by Shirley Erena Murray'

'Great ring of light' by Colin Gibson

'When the storm winds blow' by John Weir

**Hymn for Good Friday:** 'On a cool and autumn dawn' by Bill Bennett.

**Hymn for Easter Sunday:** 'Where the light of Easter Day' by Shirley Erena Murray.

Colin Gibson's 'He Came Singing Love' concludes each programme

This Easter programme airs live in the Manawatu area, 11 A.M. Tuesdays and Saturdays, Frequency AM999, Online Station website: [www.mpr.nz/show/wesley](http://www.mpr.nz/show/wesley)

The Wesley Broadway partnership with the local community radio, Manawatu People's Radio (MPR), offers interviews, news and a variety of music that links the sacred and the secular worlds.

To purchase the books and CDs published by the NZ Hymnbook Trust

Email Philip and Heather Garside: [books@pg.pl.co.nz](mailto:books@pg.pl.co.nz)



### Tell us what you think

Ady Shannon

Last year when we transitioned from a printed version of Touchstone to an online version, we promised to undertake a review in 2024.

If you haven't already responded, we invite you now to spend just a couple of minutes answering five questions regarding the relevance, format and content of Touchstone.

Your feedback will be helpful as we consider how we communicate as a Connexion and as a church community. To access the survey online, [CLICK HERE](#).





## Life Being Renewed

On behalf of the committee Pat Jacobson.

Like many places, Wairarapa has had to do some hard thinking and some re-organisation of the way we look after our parishes. St James and Featherston have linked with a retired Minister willing to help.

We had a unique experience on Thursday the first of February when Rev Neti Petaia was inducted as Minister of Crossway church Masterton and St Andrews Greytown.

The Methodist induction service was conducted by Rev Nicola Teague-Grundy and the sermon was preached by the Rev Dr Terry Wall.- the thoughts I noted was that the law of God is a gracious gift, which

holds all of life together. We need to hold together action and contemplation. He gave the image of a Presbyterian as mind, song and heart, like the wind, strings and percussion instruments of an orchestra and also the Presbyterian as conductor; of the symphony of Parish witness.

As the gifts of Office were presented, the Samoan Women's Fellowship presented a stole to Rev Neti that had been designed and made by a small group of women (it was taken back after the service to put the highlights and definitions needed)

At the conclusion of the service there was a time for sharing before the cup of tea.

The ula -fala (red lei) is a special lei which was given to the chairperson's from Greytown and Crossway to seal Rev Neti' s relationship between the two parishes.

Rev Neti's family gave Leis to the important guests, visiting ministers and those taking part in the service Then with much laughter the Superintendent of Sinoti Samoa and the leader of the Wellington Parish welcomed Rev Neti and the family.

Everyone was then ready for a drink

**The Design** - On Neti's Right Hand is the Cross, the chalice and the bread.

On the left hand side is a Samoan Speaking stick -indicating Neti's choice of vocation. and below is the national flower of Samoa indicating his cultural roots. At the base is the Bible.

We used tapa cloth, for some of the symbols, as being a traditional Polynesian craft.

### **National Flower of Samoa.**

This vibrant red flower "Teuila torch ginger" holds significant symbolism in Samoan culture:

1. The Teuila flower represents strength, power, and resilience within Samoan traditions.
2. [It is associated with the natural elements of earth, water, fire, and air1](#)
3. Red is a traditional and essential colour in Samoa; [symbolizing the sun and fire—sources of life and energy2](#)







## Improving English conversation skills

Linda Grigg, Parish Administrator, Waiuku & Districts Combined Churches

An Auckland Methodist-Presbyterian church is reaching 'hidden' migrants in its midst, who need help improving their English speaking skills.

Waiuku and Districts Combined Churches (WDCC) has two congregations. St Andrew's Centre is based in the heart of Waiuku, a small semi-rural town on the south-western edge

of Auckland. And Āwhitu Central meets in an historic church building on the nearby, picturesque Āwhitu Peninsula. WDCC has run the English Conversation Group, under the auspices of its St Andrew's Community Trust, multiple times each year since 2017.

Participants have come from a surprising variety of nations over that time. These have included Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, the Philippines, Romania, South Africa, Thailand, Tonga and Uzbekistan. Some have been agricultural workers in what is primarily a dairy and horticultural area. But there are many reasons why migrants turn up in the Waiuku community. And often they and their families have little social interaction beyond workplace connections, due to language barriers.

"Adapting to a new culture, language, social norms and customs can be challenging, leading to feelings of isolation and loneliness," says the group coordinator, Anisha Santhoshkumar. Anisha, who is WDCC's minister's assistant, understands this well as she migrated to New Zealand in 2011.

The number of participants in the English Conversation Group varies every term. After the height of the Covid pandemic, there were only around five or six regular participants. But at the end of 2023, there was an influx of Brazilians—mostly working for a local factory—which took the average to around 10 people per session.

"Whether we have two or 10, the same welcoming atmosphere is provided," says Anisha. "Chatting, laughter and support weaves through each session."

While WDCC does some advertising through local community venues and social media, most often referrals come via the congregation or other church programmes, or by word of mouth in the community.

The programme is focused on informal, practical English conversation skills. Sessions are tailored to the needs of the group, and can include social activities such as visiting gardens or beaches, or attending local events together.

"Members gain self-confidence and independence, make new friends, and gain a better understanding of New Zealand culture. Actually, we learn a lot from each other—whether we were born here or not," says Anisha.





**On behalf of the World Day of Prayer National Committee I would like to thank all those who organised and participated in the World Day of Prayer Service on Friday 1 March.**

Pauline McKay, Chairperson, World Day of Prayer Aotearoa New Zealand National Committee.

As I said in the February Touchstone when the decision was made in 2017 that the 2024 Service would be prepared by the World Day of Prayer Palestine National Committee we did not know at the time how poignant, meaningful and prophetic that decision was. At a time when the people of Palestine need our solidarity and prayers more than any time in their turbulent history I urged people to attend the services and I thank the many who did.

The feedback I have received is that people were very moved by the music and the personal testimonies from Eleonor, Sara and Lina. Given the topicality of the service I know of several Churches that used the order of service or extracts from it in their (regular) Sunday Service.

This years' service has attracted some controversy and we are pleased to hear that attempts to change parts of the service especially the personal testimonies were resisted. The reason why the yearly service is written by a different national committee is so that we hear first-hand about the lives and realities of Christian women around the world. Our Christian sisters in Palestine have the right to tell their stories without them being amended to make them more palatable to some peoples world view.

When I participated in the Global Conversation with the Women from the Palestine World Day of Prayer I got the feeling that they felt the world had forgotten about them especially when the question was posed "How could the international community let this happen". By organising and participating in the WDP service you have ensured that they have not been forgotten and have heard their plea for international support and solidarity.

If you are like me and don't carry cash these days, or were unable to attend a service, you can still make a donation via the WDPANZ website <https://www.worlddayofprayer.org.nz/>. The offering from the 2024 service will be used to support the work of CWS partner the Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees – CWS has financially supported them since 1949.

I would like to remind you to return the yellow forms with the details of the services and to inform us that you have transferred the offerings to our bank account. Also a plea to let us know who will be responsible for the 2025 Service as we often get enquires from people wanting to attend a service but we are unable to tell them because we do not have the details of services. If you know who is responsible for the service in 2025 please include it on the yellow form or if this is not decided till later in the year please send these details to [wdpnz@xtra.co.nz](mailto:wdpnz@xtra.co.nz).

Once again thank you for supporting the annual World Day of Prayer service.

*Pauline McKay*  
Chairperson  
World Day of Prayer Aotearoa New Zealand National Committee.

