



June 2024



## Welcome to the monthly newsletter of the Methodist Church of New Zealand Te Hāhi Weteriana Aotearoa

Connexional Office

Please note there may not be a July edition of the Connexional newsletter. The cut off date for articles is Friday 12th July. You can still send them through to [reception@methodist.org.nz](mailto:reception@methodist.org.nz) incase there is one sent out.



## Remember in your Prayers

Connexional Office

It is with great sadness that we advise the Connexion that Mr Alan Bettany has died peacefully at the hospital at Tamahere Eventide at 1.30am last Thursday morning, 16th May 2024.

Alan is survived by his wife Lindsay and three children, Rachael, Andrew and Fiona, four grand-children and 1 greatgrandchild. Alan served as a very competent secretary of the Hamilton Methodist Church Trust for thirty years and was the Vice President of the Methodist Church of New Zealand, Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa for the 1991/92 year.

His funeral service will be held at the St John's Methodist Church, Hamilton East 20 Wellington Street, Hamilton, on Thursday 23rd May at 11.00am. Messages can be sent to Andrew: [abettany@gmail.com](mailto:abettany@gmail.com). Haere ra te Rangatira Alan, moe mai ra.

Ngā manaakitanga

Rev Tara Tautari | General Secretary

With sadness and grateful hearts, we announce the peaceful passing of the Reverend George Basil William Bell on Friday, June 7, 2024, at Olive Tree Rest Home in Palmerston North, at the age of 96.

Basil served in ministry for 32 years. He was stationed in Bluff for 7 years, Morrinsville (Waitoa) for 5 years, Whakatane for 10 years (where the Anglican/Methodist Parish was formed), the Co-operating Parish in South Hokianga for 4 years, and Dargaville for 6 years.

He became familiar with Te Reo, and his success in mastering Marae protocol was evidenced by his invitation to take his place among the tangata whenua of Waimamaku in welcoming the annual diocesan Hui—an honour Basil counted among the highest he received.

Basil was the loving husband of Nancy (dec) and Betty (dec), and the beloved father and father-in-law of Graeme and Maaki, Philip and Marilyn, and Kathryn and Lance Patterson. He was also the cherished Poppa of Matthew, Tim, Rebecca, Andrew, and Alexander, and the great



Poppa of Ruby. Additionally, he was a loved stepfather to Betty’s family. Reverend Basil has been a valued member of the Wesley Broadway congregation (Manawatu-Rangitikei Parish) since his retirement over 30 years ago.

A celebration of Basil’s long and full life will be held at The Lychway Chapel, Roy Street, Palmerston North, on Thursday, June 13, at 10:30 am.

All messages should be sent to [lancekathryn56@gmail.com](mailto:lancekathryn56@gmail.com).

Ngā manaakitanga

Rev Tara Tautari | General Secretary



**Join the movement and make a statement with our exclusive Hāhi Climate Justice Decade – Rekindle the Vā of Papatūānuku tshirts and hoodies!**

Connexional Office

Hoodies available in light blue or black. T-shirts available in white or black. **T-shirts are priced at \$35 plus postage, hoodies are priced at \$87 plus postage.**

These shirts and hoodies go beyond fashion – they’re symbols of solidarity and support for a cause that affects us all. Crafted with care and passion, our design embodies the essence of whenua and moana, reflecting their dynamic interplay and reminding us of the interconnectedness of all living beings and the urgent need for climate justice. Printed with environmentally friendly, water-based inks, each shirt is a testament to our commitment to both the planet and the people fighting for climate justice here in Aotearoa and globally.

Wear your values proudly and spark conversations wherever you go. Whether you're attending Church, a march, hanging out with friends, or simply going about your day, our Climate Justice t-shirts are the perfect way to amplify your voice and raise awareness about the urgent need for environmental action.

Don't miss your chance to be part of something bigger. Get your Climate Justice t-shirt or hoodie today by emailing [info@methodist.org.nz](mailto:info@methodist.org.nz) and join us in rekindling the sacred Vā of Papatūānuku – because together, we can create a brighter, more sustainable future for all.



**Methodist Connexional Property Committee Meetings 2024**

Wendy Anderson

Methodist Connexional Property Committee Meetings 2024 The remaining MCPC meeting dates for 2024

Meeting Dates and Agenda Close off dates below:

Meeting Date - 27 June	Agenda Close off - 17 June
Meeting Date - 25 July	Agenda Close off - 15 July
Meeting Date - 22 August	Agenda Close off - 12 August
Meeting Date - 26 September	Agenda Close off - 16 September
Meeting Date - 24 October	Agenda Close off - 14 October
Meeting Date - 28 November	Agenda Close off - 18 November





## Receptionist/Administrator Vacancy

Connexional Office

Methodist Church of New Zealand - Connexional Office  
(Papanui - Christchurch)



### Receptionist/Administrator

Looking for variety? We are seeking an energetic, personable administration professional who is committed, self-motivated and flexible.

- A unique and varied role in the MCNZ Connexional Office in Christchurch
- Work in a fantastic supportive and established team
- Health Insurance, modern office, free onsite parking

The Receptionist/Administrator undertakes a wide variety of reception, general office administration and secretarial duties. They work closely with all other employees of the Board of Administration to help maintain a smooth and efficient office. The Receptionist/Administrator is proactive in their work habits and shows high interest and engagement in all tasks delegated.

Email [reception@methodist.org.nz](mailto:reception@methodist.org.nz) for a full job description.

Please submit, your cover letter with details on how the skills and experience you have will meet the performance measures of the role, and a CV by 5.00pm 21 June 2024 by email to [perterv@methodist.org.nz](mailto:perterv@methodist.org.nz).



## News from Gaza

Christian World Service

Thank you for your prayers, donations and solidarity for the people of [Gaza](#). Last month CWS was able to send a second grant of \$141,000 to the Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees (DSPR) Gaza. Help is getting to some of the people in urgent need.

DSPR staff and volunteers are working in the extremely dangerous and challenging environment. Forced to move from the clinic at Rafah, they have rented a minivan to use as a mobile health clinic and a car for the staff, travelling with the evacuated communities. In the central Gaza region, locals and staff have repaired a few rooms in their vocational training centre in Shijaia so medical staff can treat injuries and illnesses. They are preparing to open a second medical point in the central region once people who are sheltering in it can find alternative accommodation. DSPR Gaza is running psychosocial programmes especially for children and has been able to distribute some food and emergency cash. Read their recent [Update](#).

CWS encourages you to contact your MP or other political leaders and ask for more action from our government to end this bitter conflict. Please remember DSPR and the people of Gaza and the West Bank in your prayers. If you can, please make another donation to our [Emergency Appeal](#).







### Refugee Sunday

Christian World Service

Refugee Sunday falls on June 21 in the Methodist Presbyterian calendar and on July 7 in the Anglican calendar.

It is a good time to reflect on what else your church might do to assist refugees and people displaced by conflict and war. This year's [resources](#) (available this week) include prayers and a

story of aiding former refugees resettling in Aotearoa New Zealand. Supporting CWS is one way of helping refugees close to their home countries.

More than 180 million people [were](#) forcibly displaced in 2022 – new figures for 2023 will be announced shortly by the United Nations. Most refugees – 76% - are hosted by middle and low income countries. Please consider organising a special fundraising event to help. Donations [can](#) be made to Operation Refugee or to one of our current emergency appeals. Please contact [us](#) if you need images or stories.



### Water Appeal

Christian World Service

CWS has launched the Water Appeal focusing on people's right to have clean, safe water. [Hope begins with Water](#) tells the stories of two young women who won scholarships last year because their family now has a rainwater tank and they could attend school. In southwest Uganda, the Centre for Community Solidarity is beginning work in 16 new villages focusing on HIV and AIDS affected families. If you can, please [support](#) the appeal today.



### Operation Refugee

Christian World Service

Welcome to Dori Lloyd our [Operation Refugee](#) lead this year. She is keen to engage young people in this fundraising and learning activity for refugees. Please contact [her](#) if you are a teacher or youth group leader to find out how you can get involved.



### Haiti Appeal

Christian World Service

CWS has launched the [Haiti Emergency Appeal](#) to raise \$10,000 to repair the rainwater system at the Belle Fontaine School that has been damaged by the gang violence that is spreading in the country. Additional funds will support ICKL's psychosocial programme for victims of the violence. ACT Alliance [reports](#) 75% of incidents involve sexual violence. We ask for prayer and support for the people of Haiti.





### A brief report of Wasewase Women's Fellowship Annual meeting- 31 May to 3 June,2024

Una Tikoinaka

“DO NOT CHANGE ONLY, BE TRANSFORMED” by Rev Tara

Tautari.

“ WE ALL HAVE TO GO THROUGH A SPECIAL PROCESS SO THAT WE BECOME PRODUCTIVE TO THE CALL OF GOD “ MO SIVIRAKI, MO BULI YOU ME RAWA NI QAI CAKA NA LOMA NI KALOU VEI IKO “ MO KAUTA TIKO NA YACA I JISU KI NA VEIVANUA KO VEIQARAVI KINA”

A total of 138 Methodist Fijian women gathered at Otautahi to worship God.

2024-2027 Wasewase Women's Fellowship President: Radini Talatoka Ducivaki.



### Youth Week 2024

Julie Roberts, Methodist Mission Southern

First time ever, our Transition House Youth were able to participate in [#YouthWeekNZ24](#) Thanks to [Te Rourou, One Aotearoa Foundation](#). Watch what we did with the lovely people & horses at [#reigningdowns](#)

For Youth Week 2024, the Methodist Mission Southern’s rangatahi living in our Waihōpai Youth Transition House were supported by Te Rourou One Aotearoa Foundation with funding to experience an Equine Therapy/confidence building course at Reigning Downs Hauora Centre.

Follow our stories and podcasts [here](#).



### Annual Update Forms – correction

Viv Whimster

Please [click on this link](#) to go to the Methodist website for a copy of the 2024 Lay Preachers Update Form

This should be completed and returned by 30 September 2024 to the Network at [methlpn@gmail.com](mailto:methlpn@gmail.com)

The form may be completed by Lay Preachers individually or by Parishes and returned by email or post (see address below). Thank you for your support in making sure that the Methodist Lay Preacher list is accurate and complete.

### Expanding the Network

We would love to find two more people to join us as co-convenors on the Network!

Ideally, from the South Island and lower North Island. Can you recommend anyone? We would like the Network team to be a better reflection of the diversity among our many active Lay Preachers in Methodist and Co-operating or Union Parishes!!

#### Convenor

Viv Whimster  
49 Rimu Street  
Gate Pa  
Tauranga 3112  
[vjwhimster@gmail.com](mailto:vjwhimster@gmail.com)  
07 578 6056, 021 137 2349

#### Co-convenor

Ngairie Southon  
[ngaire@southon.net](mailto:ngaire@southon.net)  
07 578 7119, 021 0224 5165





## The Living Wage

Doreen Lennox

The Living wage is seen as the minimum amount needed to pay for basic expenses with some room for other necessities such as visiting the doctor and buying school uniforms, It is based on the needs of a family consisting of two adults, two children and one and a half incomes.

At present the hourly rate is \$26.00 which will rise to \$27.80 on September 1st .

The Living Wage movement is a mixture of community groups, faith groups and unions who advocate for employers to pay their employees the Living Wage as opposed to the minimum wage of \$23.15 an hour.

Recently a group including members of St John’s Methodist Church in Hamilton East met with the City Council to give verbal submissions on why the Council should become affiliated.

At present the Council pay the Living Wage but are not affiliated. This means they could stop this payment at any time and revert to a lesser amount.

Two three minute presentations were given. First by the Rev Alisa Lasi who stated amongst other things that when the going gets tough it is always the people at the the bottom of the socio economic scale who suffer the most. She continued we are here to encourage you to make the Living Wage a permanent fixture, this will reflect the care the council has for its people and justice for the less fortunate.

The second presentation was given by eighteen year old Robert Prescott, a worker. Robert had hoped to go to university and study engineering but was forced to leave school and get a job. His family were struggling financially and he felt he had to help support them. He emphasised how important the Living Wage was in keeping people out of poverty. The council are expected give their decision in July. It is hoped they make a positive one and help families who are finding it hard to survive.



## Four hymns by Shirley Erena Murray

John Thornley

Played on community radio - for online listening in July.

Wesley Broadway, Palmerston North in partnership with Manawatu People’s Radio (MPR)

The following four hymns are found in Alleluia Aotearoa (1996) and originally featured on TV One’s Praise Be programme

‘Where mountains rise to open skies’

‘Every day I will offer you/loving God my heart and mind’

‘God of all time, all seasons of our living’

‘Who is my mother?, who is my brother?’

These provide spiritual comfort and challenge to those who find it difficult to get to services, those who now live in resthomes, those seeking songs that speak to our land and people.

This programme runs through July and can be downloaded from the recent programmes : [www.mpr.nz/show/wesley](http://www.mpr.nz/show/wesley). It remains on the listings during the months of August/September.

Worship leaders will find strong hymns for the Pentecost season, written by our own New Zealand hymn writers.

Programme hosts: Gillillian and John Thornley ([johnngill@inspire.net.nz](mailto:johnngill@inspire.net.nz))







## Mānawatia a Matariki

Lifewise

Join Lifewise, Merge Community and Cafe, and the Karangahape Rd Community in celebrating Matariki this year.

For two weeks, from 27 June to 13 July 2024, Karangahape Rd, Merge Community and Cafe will be transformed into a vibrant hub of activity and celebration.

On Thursday 27 June, Karangahape Rd will be closed between Queen St and Pitt St for several hours of celebration. Here's what we'll be doing at Merge Cafe:

- Test your Te Reo with our street sized game of kupurori (scrabble) from 3.30pm, somewhere between Pitt St and Queen St. On the street, of course.
- Head to Merge Café for a delicious boil up from 5pm - 7pm. You can even sing along with the Street Choir.

But that's not all! The fun continues over two weeks, with activities and events happening every day. We can't wait to share this special time with you.

- Join us at Merge Café for whetu (star making), where you can get creative and make your own star-inspired crafts.
- Take home a piece of Matariki magic by purchasing a street-art inspired garden box and seeds, perfect for starting your own kiwi-inspired garden.

Join us as we celebrate the beginning of Matariki, a significant time in the Māori lunar calendar. It's a chance to come together, acknowledge the year gone by and those who have passed, prepare and plan for the year ahead, to celebrate with kai, kōrero, and have fun with our community.

See you at Karangahape Rd and Merge Café!



## Celebrating Achievements of our rangatahi at our first ever MDYC event

Lifewise

The Lifewise Youth Housing team had the incredible opportunity to launch our Mahi Development Youth Courses (MDYC) event last 23 May, perfectly timed to coincide with Youth Week 2024 (20-26 May 2024). Generously sponsored by The Tindall Foundation, this vibrant event brought together our rangatahi and their whānau from our various housing sites, all brimming with excitement and determination.

The MDYC project has been co-designed by our rangatahi and kaimahi from Lifewise Youth Housing Service. Together we aim to make a positive impact on the lives of the young people in our care as well as their whānau. The kick-off event, initially called T'up event, was attended by sector peers, education providers, and various youth services to create a network of support and development opportunities for our rangatahi.

The MDYC event marks the beginning of a journey by youth, for youth, and we can't wait to see what the future holds. A couple of our young people, Zion and Te Kahu were involved in conceptualising the name of the programme and designing the logo respectively, as seen on the hoodies of our YH team and in the live spray painting of our guest artist.





### MDYC Partners

We mihi to Mana Whenua Ngāti Tamaoho, Kaumatua Toi Katipa, who opened the event with a heartfelt whakataū, setting a warm and welcoming tone for the day. DJ Tony Tonez also provided upbeat music during the event. Our sector partners also played a crucial role in making this event a success as we aim to connect our rangatahi to employment and education development opportunities. We extend our appreciation to each one of them, from MSDs Connected.govt.nz, Te Wāhanga Whai Mahi Employment Zone, Study Link, LSV, to Te Taura Here, Link Alliance and Sky City's Project Nikau for their unwavering support.

A special highlight was the inspiring kōrero delivered by Ezekiel Rauī, youth leader and Head of Te Rourou One Aotearoa Foundation. Ezekiel captivated us all with his powerful message on the importance of self-belief, encouraging our rangatahi to dream big and take bold steps towards their future.

The key moment of the event was the presentation of excellence certificates awarded to our rangatahi, celebrating the employment and education achievements that they have achieved while in the Lifewise Youth Housing Programme. Whether continuing higher education, embarking on apprenticeships, or pursuing other forms of training, these young people have shown incredible dedication and hard work.

A standout moment was recognising Rohario, one of our exceptional rangatahi, who recently received the prestigious Oranga Tamariki Prime Minister's Award. This award acknowledges the talents, achievements, and immense potential of our youth, providing them with a scholarship to support their educational journeys. As for Rohario, she is currently on her way to completing her education in beauty school, a dream she has been passionately pursuing.

As we celebrated the successes of our rangatahi, we embraced the Youth Week 2024 theme: 'Māwhurangi a tama roto ka taka, kāpuia ake ka pūrangiaho' – 'We may not have it all together, but together we have it all.' This theme perfectly encapsulates the spirit of our community and the incredible potential that lies within our youth.

Here's to more successes, more milestones, and a brighter future for our rangatahi! Mauri ora!



### Greetings from the Theology Programme at the University of Otago!

Paul Trebilco

The Theology Programme at the University of Otago offers many opportunities for the study of Christian Theology, both on-campus and to many students across New Zealand through our successful distance study programme.

We are committed to serving Christian communities throughout New Zealand. Enrolments for Semester 2, 2024 are now open, with Semester 2 beginning on July 15. For details of courses go to: [www.otago.ac.nz/theology/study](http://www.otago.ac.nz/theology/study)

This year we are again offering CHTH236/336, Māori Religion and Theology, which will be taught as an intensive from July 1-5 at Ōhope Christian Marae in the Bay of Plenty. This comes highly recommended. A student who has done this course comments: "Staying in the whareniui was a really unique experience for me. The fact that it was a whareniui based upon Jesus was the most interesting teaching tool I've ever encountered."

We are also introducing a new course, PAST225/325 Pastoral Theology: Moana-Pacific Perspectives, that will focus on church life among Pacific peoples. This paper will be taught by Rev Dr Latuivai Kioa Latu.

Among other regular papers, you might consider studying 'God, Land and Exile in the Hebrew Prophets' (BIBS211/311), 'Jesus in the New Testament' (BIBS226/326) or learn about the life







and theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer a courageous German theologian who was executed in 1945 for his opposition to the Nazi regime. (CHTH416).

We are also offering a paper on Theology and Science (CHTH 217/317) in the Pre-Christmas Summer School from 11 Nov – 15 Dec. The paper will be taught as a Distance paper by Dr Nicola Hoggard-Creegan.

We offer many qualification options: Diploma in Theology; Bachelor of Theology; Postgraduate degrees in Theology, Ministry, Chaplaincy, and Faith-Based Leadership and Management; MTheol; and PhD. If you've already got another degree, we offer a Diploma for Graduates, which is 7 papers, 4 at 300-level. (This is the equivalent of one full year's study of Theology, but can be split up across several years.)

Further information:

[theology@otago.ac.nz](mailto:theology@otago.ac.nz)

[www.otago.ac.nz/theology](http://www.otago.ac.nz/theology)

[www.facebook.com/theologyotago](https://www.facebook.com/theologyotago)

Ph 03 479 8639



## Inspiring Change for a Sustainable Future

Marion Hines, Climate Justice Working Group

Plastic-Free July Event - Saturday afternoon 13 July - (Time to be Confirmed)

The CJWG wish to remind you to save the date of our upcoming Plastic Free July event – “Inspiring Change for a Sustainable Future” on 13th July. This event promises to inspire and empower you to have influence in your community. This half-day, hybrid event will deliver timely, relevant and clear information on Plastic-Free and Zero-Waste practices that will raise your awareness of the issues, inspire you to take action, help us build momentum in implementing these initiatives and promote the sustainable practices we need to adopt.

By attending this event, you will

- gain a deeper understanding of the environmental impacts of plastic waste and the benefits of zero-waste practices.
- learn about the theological and ethical foundations of environmental stewardship within faith-based contexts.
- acquire actionable tips and strategies for reducing plastic use and waste in your daily life.
- be equipped with knowledge on how to implement zero-waste practices in your home, workplace and community.

### Presenter

Presenter selection is proceeding and will be announced in due course, but we are excited at the quality presenters who are available for this event.

### Venue

We anticipate offering the in-person part of the event in a community facility in the inner west CBD fringe of Auckland.

For those outside Auckland, we invite you to consider organizing a local viewing event at your community venue, where you can join with local groups to take part in the livestream. Let's come together to learn, connect, and take meaningful action towards a more sustainable future.

Please prayerfully and carefully consider if you can be involved in offering a community venue in your community. It is not difficult to do – venues will need to provide good internet connectivity and some very basic technology that you well might have already. We would also





request you consider providing participants at your venue with hospitality by way of refreshments. CJWG would support venues by providing advice and technology assistance, access to marketing material, promoting the specific venue as part of the overall promotion of the event and adding an option to the registration platform so participants could register directly to attend a community venue.

If you want further information about hosting a community venue, please contact Peter Lane directly at [peter.lane@sdcs.co.nz](mailto:peter.lane@sdcs.co.nz).

We believe that this event will be much better for experiencing it in community.

"Join us to learn practical, actionable strategies for living a zero-waste and plastic-free lifestyle. Our expert speakers will equip you with the tools and knowledge to make meaningful changes in your daily life and community, helping you take immediate steps towards sustainability."

Further information email [cjwg.feedback@methodist.org.nz](mailto:cjwg.feedback@methodist.org.nz).

If you want to receive further updates directly to your own email address, please email us your details and request to be added to the CJWG Event list.



## The ecumenical Christian group making waves on big justice issues.

Alex Johnston

Common Grace Aotearoa may be just over a year old, but is having a growing impact in the ministry of 'transforming unjust structures' in society, and activating Christians young and old in a fresh expression of their faith.

Started by Kate Day and Alex Johnston in early 2023, the ecumenical charity has a mission to equip and organise followers of Jesus across Aotearoa to run advocacy campaigns alongside the wider community and civil society that advance policy solutions towards climate, economic and Te Tiriti justice.

More than 120 churches are hosting its Treaty education course '[Belonging in This Land: Treaty Basics from a Christian Perspective](#)', developed alongside Karuwhā Trust and Te Manu Hononga - the Sir Paul Reeves Centre. This two-part workshop is readying Christians to be a gracious voice in the national conversations ahead on the status of the Treaty of Waitangi.

Meanwhile, the group is set to hand in a [5000-strong petition](#) to Members of Parliament in June calling on the government to review a subsidy to large industrial polluters that is holding back their transformation to climate-friendly processes.

Their third area of focus is economic justice, where they have already won a major victory. [The Everyone Connected](#) campaign brought national attention to energy hardship faced by those who are disconnected from electricity due to unpaid bills. Because of the campaign, media coverage skyrocketed, leading to crucial meetings with the Electricity Authority. In January 2024, they finally announced binding consumer care rules for power companies - before this there had been only voluntary guidelines about how companies should treat their customers.

A key part of the work of Common Grace Aotearoa is mentoring teams of volunteers, who learn by doing as they make the campaigns happen and consider what it means to do this as followers of Jesus.

Esme, age 27, has been involved in the economic justice team from the start, and says it has been a faith-building experience so far: "I've spent a lot of time in faith spaces responding to the immediate needs around me. I believe whilst we are called to the injustice in front of us,





we are also called to flip the tables that create those needs. Common Grace has given me an accessible way of doing this work with others - whilst learning skills and building friendships along the way”.

Meanwhile Rev Silvia Purdie, a minister in the Presbyterian church, recently got involved in the climate justice team: “It is very clear to me that God is calling the church to care for creation, and I’m passionate about encouraging a wide range of approaches. As well as small local things, together we can also address big national issues and have a significant impact. What I love about Common Grace is the sense that, with prayer, support and training and smart thinking, small groups of Christian people can make a real difference.”

The organisation provides ways for individuals and faith communities to get involved in its campaigns through weekly emails. To find out more and get involved, head to [www.commongrace.nz](http://www.commongrace.nz).

At present they are also inviting churches to host ‘Belonging in this Land: Treaty Basics from a Christian Perspective’. Anyone interested in this two-part video workshop for communities of faith can learn more at [treatyandbelonging.nz](http://treatyandbelonging.nz).



### **Thanksgiving Service for Reverend Malutafa Fa’alili Fruean.**

Raewyn Devlin, Tokomairiro Co-operating Parish

“And now faith, hope and love abide, these three, and the greatest of these is love” 1 Corinthians 13: vv 13

Sunday 25th February saw our Milton Heritage Church carpark full for the thanksgiving service of Reverend Malutafa Fa’alili Fruean. Members of the Fruean’s previous Ashburton Parish, now known as Hakatere, and those of us from Tokomairiro Co-operating Parish came together, along with his family and regional church members to acknowledge the strength of faith, hope and love we have all witnessed as parts of his church family. Reverend Malu has recently retired from active ministry after 32 years.

Ordained on 14 July 1991, alongside his wife, Reverend Luisa Ema Fa’alili Fruean, they moved to serve in the yoked parishes of rural Matawhero and suburban Te Hapara in Gisborne, on the east coast of the North Island. At the end of 1999 when these parishes combined with the city parish of St Andrew’s to form the Gisborne Presbyterian Parish, they moved to Ashburton, South Island and ministered to St Paul’s and to St Andrew’s churches. 2014 saw the Frueans move to Milton, another two-church parish with churches in Milton and Waihola to minister too.

Lovely words were shared from all three parishes. The following is an excerpt from the reflection of the Matawhero / Te Hapara churches which sums up what we all felt.

“Those qualities highlighted in the last verse of 1 Corinthians 13 come immediately to mind when thinking of Malu’s time with us – and they are – ‘faith, hope and love’.

Malu was an inspiration to our people with his deep faith reflected in his enthusiastic commitment and dedication to the church and his parishioners. His hope in the Lord and his people is remembered not only in his preaching but in his joyful guitar playing and singing in services and other gatherings. And no one has forgotten that wide smile, chuckle and ready laughter so reflective of a life lived in faith and hope. And along with ‘faith’ and ‘hope’ comes that special quality of ‘love’. To us Malu lived that quality among us in so many ways. His love for people was shown in his regular visiting and pastoral care of both young and old, of the living and those at end of life. He was second to none in his pastoral care. His love was also obvious as a family man and in his teamwork with Luisa and their children, Julia and Jason.

One of the highlights was the performance of two songs by the U.R.Y. band, a band the Frueans were involved in in Ashburton. Lead vocalists Megan McAtamney and Jenny Crouchley





along with drummer Jim Crouchley travelled down. Pianist and vocalist Leem Braam put in his apologies. They last performed 10 years ago, it was beautiful.

A shared lunch was enjoyed after the service of thanksgiving.

Reverend Luisa Fruean will now be our full-time minister as Reverend Malu takes time to reflect and enjoy some personal chill out time. We all pray for God's blessings on our lovely Reverend Malu as he enters a new phase in his life. We all give thanks for his time among us and will always remember his active ministry service with much love and gratitude.



### General Secretary Rev Tara Tautari's speech at the Wasewase Methodist Womens Fellowship AGM

The speech was given on Saturday 1 June 2024

It is with great joy and gratitude that I stand before you today. I thank the Wasewase Methodist Women's Fellowship for inviting

me to speak on the vital themes of Women Empowerment and Leadership, within the broader context of being instruments of Peace. Your fellowship embodies a spirit of unity and strength that is truly inspiring. It is a privilege to join you in this gathering, where we seek to encourage each other and explore the critical roles that women play in leadership, both

within our Church and in our wider communities. As we delve into these themes, let us open our hearts and minds, embracing the call to be instruments of peace, agents of change, and impactful leaders in our own right.

During this kōrero, I will touch on four key propositions:

1. **Storytelling and Connection:** Sharing our stories fosters empathy and solidarity, empowering women to challenge stereotypes and advocate for change.
2. **Intergenerational Collaboration and Inclusivity:** Working together across generations and embracing diverse perspectives enhances our leadership and resilience.
3. **Diverse Expressions of Ministry:** Recognising and supporting various forms of ministry, from pastoral care to creative arts, allows the Church to utilise the unique gifts of all members.
4. **Empowerment and Systemic Change: Both individual empowerment and structural reforms are essential.** We must create inclusive environments and dismantle barriers to women's leadership.

But to get us started, I'm aware that for many of you this will be the first time that you are meeting me and so I would like to share with you some of my own story. As I said, telling our stories is part of who we are, a way to connect, to understand each other, and to find common ground. It allows us to see what has brought us to this moment, and it is through sharing our journeys that we can inspire and empower one another.

I grew up in Tai Tokerau in the North Island the eldest of six children. My upbringing in the Weteriana faith and my journey from a small Māori settlement to the ecumenical global stage shaped my understanding of leadership and empowerment. This background fuels my passion for women's leadership in our Church and communities.

I am married with three children - two daughters and one son. My father was of the Ngātihiine and Ngāpuhi iwi and my mother is of the Te Whakapiko Hapū of Ngāti Manaia. My early life was spent on a farm in a small Māori settlement called Waiomio where I stayed until I was sent away to College in Auckland, following the tradition in our family. It started when a Methodist







Māori deaconess, Sister Atawhai George, convinced my grandmother to send my mother to be educated in Auckland and so she went to Kurahuna boarding hostel to attend secondary school. Kurahuna as you may know was established by the Methodist Woman's Missionary Union, a forerunner to the Methodist Women's Fellowship. My mother would also in later years, send her daughters away to Auckland for their education. As I did mine. My youngest daughter is there now, finishing off her year 13 school year. So, there is a whakapapa there between the women of our whānau, the Methodist Womens Fellowship, and Kurahuna, that beyond financial support, and emotional and spiritual encouragement, embraces a legacy of commitment to female education that helped to create a ripple effect of empowerment within our family.

I was thirteen when our Church took the decision to embark on a bicultural journey, Māori and Taiwi- to share resources, to share power, to take decisions together. At thirteen, I didn't know anything about that. That wasn't on my radar, but ten years later when the decision was taken to establish the Council of Conference to model the partnership between Taha Māori and Taiwi, I was appointed as a rangatahi to serve on that first Council. And that was an exciting time for me because the Church was changing and I was right there in the midst of it, witnessing and contributing to this transformative journey. This experience was not just about observing change but about being an active part of it. It opened my eyes to the importance of leadership, collaboration, and the power of shared vision. It was a time when I truly began to understand the of our bicultural commitment and the significant impact it would have on our faith community. It was a time of learning, growth, and stepping into a role that was both challenging and rewarding.

As I look back on those years, I realise how pivotal they were in shaping my understanding of what it means to be an instrument of peace and an advocate for empowerment. The journey of our Church towards a genuine partnership between Māori and Taiwi has taught me invaluable lessons about leadership, resilience, and the importance of inclusivity. These are the principles that guide me today, and I am passionate about sharing this journey with you all as we continue to build a Church that truly reflects the love and justice of God in this whenua.

Not all my Church work has been locally based. I spent 14 years living in Switzerland working for the World Council of Churches in education and ecumenical formation. You know, when you are working for an organisation that is a fellowship of 352 member churches (of which our Methodist Church is a founding member) representing more than half a billion Christians around the world, it really gives you an insight into the vast diversity and richness of the global Christian community. This experience opened my eyes to the different ways in which faith is practised and lived out across various cultures and contexts. It highlighted the common challenges we face and the unique solutions that different communities bring to these challenges. Working in such a diverse environment also reinforced the importance of ecumenism- the idea that, despite our differences, we are united in our commitment to Christ and our mission to serve the world in his name. During my time there, I saw first-hand the power of education and formation in shaping not only individual lives but also entire communities. It also taught me about the significance of leadership development particularly in empowering women and young people to take on roles of influence and service. These experiences have profoundly shaped my perspective and my approach to ministry. They've underscored the necessity of being open to learning from others, of being willing to step outside our comfort zones, and of embracing the global nature of our faith.

In 2019, when I was in a process of discernment about whether I should apply for the role of general secretary, I was acutely aware that there had only been one woman before me (the wonderful Jill van de Geer) and that there had never been a Māori person in the role. This awareness brought with it a mix of emotions- a sense of honour at the possibility of breaking new ground, but also the weight of responsibility that comes with such a significant step. I understood that my decision would not just be about my own journey, but about paving the way for others who might follow. It was about challenging the status quo and demonstrating that leadership in our church can and should reflect the diversity of our community. It was about embodying the very principles of empowerment and inclusivity that we so often speak about, but which require action and commitment to bring to fruition. During this process, I sought guidance through prayer, conversations with mentors, and reflection on the scriptures. I





was reminded of God's call to each of us to use our gifts and talents in service to God's mission. I felt a deep sense of being called to step into this role, not just for myself but for all people like me (women and brown!) who aspire to lead and serve within our Church. Ultimately, I took that step, inspired by the belief that our Church is at its best when it embraces the full spectrum of its members voices and gifts. Woman's leadership and empowerment in this space is not merely an add on or a token gesture; it is essential to the health and vitality of our faith community. When women are empowered to lead, we see a more complete picture of God's Kingdom. We witness the unfolding of diverse perspectives, experiences, and gifts that enrich our collective worship, decision making, and mission.

The journey toward inclusivity and empowerment is ongoing, requiring continuous efforts to create spaces where women can thrive, with their contributions valued and voices heard. This entails actively removing barriers, challenging stereotypes, and supporting one another in our diverse callings. Recognising the complexities of women's experiences and challenges demands embracing intersectionality in our dialogue on empowerment and leadership. Women, facing common struggles for equality, navigate diverse landscapes shaped by factors like race, ethnicity socioeconomic status, and sexual orientation. For underrepresented groups like indigenous women for example, systemic barriers compound challenges, exacerbating inequalities in access to opportunities. Similarly, women facing economic hardship or discrimination based on sexual orientation encounter unique obstacles on their leadership journeys. By acknowledging these intersecting identities and experiences, we validate diverse narratives and deepen our understanding of structural inequalities. Embracing intersectionality enriches discourse on women's empowerment by centring all women's voices and experiences, fostering inclusivity, and guiding more comprehensive strategies for achieving gender equality in leadership. In my role, I am committed to advocating for and fostering an environment where women feel encouraged and equipped to take on leadership roles. This commitment extends to ensuring that our structures and practises reflect our values of equity and inclusion. By doing so, we honour the diverse ways in which God calls and equips each of us.

This is why the work of the Wasease Methodist Womens Fellowship is so important. You have your finger on the pulse as to what is happening in the lives of the women whom you represent and their families and wider communities. You understand the struggles and challenges that are being experienced by whānau in Aotearoa today. On Thursday, we had the release of the Government's budget. Depending on how you add up the figures, you will know what's in it for households. And you know what it takes for your members to survive and more than that, to grow and thrive in this context. What barriers prevent them from reaching their full potential.

And in this context, what never fails to amaze me is the resilience and generosity of our families, who, despite facing numerous challenges and pressures, continue to give and contribute to the Church. They selflessly offer their time, talents, and resources in service to God and others, embodying the spirit of generosity and compassion that lies at the heart of the Christian faith. Whether through volunteering, participating in ministry initiatives, or simply offering a listening ear and a word of encouragement, they exemplify what it means to live out the gospel message in tangible and meaningful ways.

In a world that often emphasises self-interest and individualism, the sacrificial giving and service of our families stand as a powerful counter-narrative - a reminder of the impact that acts of kindness and generosity can have on the lives of others. This same spirit of selfless service is beautifully exemplified in the life of Jesus Christ, who's actions and teachings embodied the essence of faith-filled leadership. Jesus consistently placed others before himself, reaching out to the marginalised, the underrepresented and advocating for justice and compassion. His leadership was not about asserting power or dominance, but about serving others with humility and love. He washed the feet of his disciples, healed the sick, fed the hungry, and ultimately sacrificed his life for the redemption of humanity. In doing so, Jesus set a profound example of what it means to lead with faith, compassion, and selflessness.

The work of women in the Church and broader community further illustrates this faith-filled leadership. Women in the scriptures, like Deborah and Priscilla. Women who are committed to





God's calling. Deborah, a prophetess and judge, led Israel with wisdom and courage, demonstrating that leadership grounded in faith and righteousness can bring about transformative change. Priscilla, alongside her husband, was a key figure in the early Christian church, teaching, and mentoring others. Her dedication to spreading the gospel and nurturing the faith of others highlights the essential role women play in the spiritual and communal life of the Church.

In our contemporary context, women continue to lead with faith and resilience, often under challenging circumstances. They have diverse expressions of ministry and serve as presbyters, educators, caregivers, and advocates, embodying the teachings of Jesus through their actions. Their leadership is characterised by a deep sense of empathy, a commitment to justice, and an unwavering dedication to the well-being of their communities. By nurturing and empowering others, they help to build strong inclusive and compassionate communities of faith. But that wasn't always the case. Throughout history, the Church has often perpetuated and even reinforced patriarchal norms, inadvertently sidelining women from positions of authority and influence. Despite the teachings of equality and justice within Christianity, women have frequently been excluded from leadership roles, with their voices marginalised or ignored. This failure to uphold gender equality not only contradicts the principles of love and inclusion espoused by the Church but also hinders its ability to fully reflect the diversity and richness of God's creation. By recognising and openly addressing these past shortcomings, we can begin to dismantle the barriers that have inhibited women's leadership within the church, paving the way for a more equitable and inclusive future.

Sisters, one thing that has been brought to my attention and is puzzling to me is the absence of a female presbyter within the Wasewase whānau and it raises important questions about the barriers and challenges that may have hindered women's progression into leadership roles within the Synod. While it's tempting to assume that no barriers exist, the reality is often more complex, and I believe that addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach. One barrier to appointing a female presbyter may stem from entrenched historical and cultural norms within both our Church and broader society. Traditional gender roles have often confined women to supportive rather than leadership roles, while patriarchal structures in religious institutions may consciously or unconsciously perpetuate gender bias. This lack of representation of women in leadership positions creates a cycle of underrepresentation, with few visible female role models to inspire and mentor aspiring women leaders. Furthermore, systemic barriers such as limited access to education and training opportunities may hinder women's ability to develop leadership skills and pursue careers in ministry.

In addressing these barriers, it's essential to recognise the importance of ministerial formation in equipping women for leadership roles. Conference in taking a decision last year to plot a new direction for the way in which the church will undertake mission resourcing and ministerial formation has opened the way for a renewed look at how we support our women in theological education and ministerial formation. By investing in comprehensive ministerial formation programmes tailored to the unique needs and experiences of women, the Church can empower them with the skills, knowledge, and confidence needed to assume leadership positions. This includes providing access to theological education, formation training, mentorship, and support networks specifically designed to nurture and empower women for ministry.

Last week I co-facilitated the Trinity Methodist Theological College symposium on ReWeaving Theological Education- remembering 180 years of Theological Education in Aotearoa. During that gathering I had first conversations around the development of a special Womens Leadership Initiative to encourage women into ministry and to enable their ministerial formation. My hope is it under the leadership of the new Te Hāpai ō ki Muri and the Kai Hapai we will see some traction on this initiative. In the interim, it is incumbent upon Wasewase and the Woman's Fellowship to embrace this challenge and commence planning for the appointment of the first Wasewase female presbyter. Achieving this goal will require careful planning and strategic deliberation. But we are up for the challenge and with God's grace, guidance, and our collective dedication, I'm confident that we can succeed. This milestone will mark a significant step forward not only for women in the Church but for the whole Church.





And let's not stop there. Let's keep creating opportunities for Womens empowerment and leadership in diverse ministries throughout Wasewase.

In closing, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to you all for the opportunity to share with you today. I believe that together with God's grace, we have the power to shape a future where the voices and leadership of women are not only heard but celebrated and embraced. So let us commit to taking tangible steps, whether it's mentoring young women, advocating for structural changes, or actively supporting initiatives that empower women. With open hearts, minds, and a shared commitment to being instruments of peace and agents of change, I am confident that we will continue to motivate and empower one another as we journey forward.

Let us remember that our actions speak louder than words. It is through our dedicated efforts and unwavering resolve that we will bring about the meaningful change we envision. Together, let us turn our aspirations into reality, ensuring that the spirit of empowerment and leadership thrives within our communities. Thank you and may we all be blessed with the strength and determination to make a lasting impact.

Nō reira, e te whānau, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā tātou katoa.

