



**August 2025**



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

The Connexional Office

**Message from the General Secretary – Rev Tara Tautari**

E te whānau a Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa, greetings in the name of Christ.

As I write, I am in Australia attending the Victoria-Tasmania Synod of the Uniting Church, where important and courageous conversations are taking place about their future vision for the Church and its peoples. It has been a privilege to witness and share in their discernment.

August has been a full and demanding month. I returned not long ago from Ghana, where I attended the Methodist World Council Steering Group Meeting. There I had the honour of facilitating a powerful discussion on Peace, International Law and Diplomacy: The Church in the Public Square alongside Ms Fatou Bensouda (WMC Peace Prize 2025 Laureate and former Prosecutor of the International

Criminal Court) and Bishop Juan Di Dios (President of CIEMAL, the Latin American Methodist Council). Ms Bensouda reminded us that the prophetic witness of the Church is needed now more than ever in the public space. I could not help but be mindful of our own President, Te Aroha, who has spoken out with courage and clarity on behalf of our Church through the Message of Aroha – Humanitarian Crisis and Genocide in Gaza.

No sooner had I landed back in Aotearoa than I was at 409 for the first meeting of the Rekindle the Vā of Papatūānuku Grant Fund disbursement group. This was an excellent gathering, and it was heartening to see applications coming in from all over the motu—evidence of the creative energy and commitment to climate justice alive in our Connexion. Another highlight of the month was joining in the 50th anniversary celebrations of Pulela'a Church, a joyful occasion of thanksgiving and witness.

Straight after, I entered into our Tauīwi Strategy Meeting, where the vision of Te Hāpai ō ki Muri is beginning to take real shape. The commitment of our Kai Hāpai, their team, and our Superintendents is inspiring. I also want to offer my thanks to our co-convenors, Rev Dale Peach and Rev Paulo Ieli, for their steady leadership in guiding this work and holding the space with such care.

Please keep us in your prayers as we navigate this fast-moving and faith-filled season together. May we continue to seek God's leading with courage, humility, and hope.

Ngā manaakitanga,  
Rev Tara Tautari | General Secretary



## Methodist Mission Southern: "I Am No Longer My Own, But Thine"

Julie Roberts

I am no longer my own, but thine. Put me to what thou wilt... These words from the Wesley Covenant Prayer echo in the lives of our young people as they make bold, often daunting, decisions about their futures.

In the past month, eight residents from our Youth Transition Houses have moved into their own sustainable homes in Ōtepoti and Waihōpai. With practical support—furniture, help with moving costs, and wraparound care—they've stepped forward with courage and hope. Winter has settled in cold and deep across our southern rohe. At this

time of year, keeping our rangatahi engaged and active is a priority. Your support helps keep the whare warm, the cupboards stocked, and spirits lifted.

One young mum, eager to give her pēpi a positive start, longed to join swimming lessons but lacked the means. Thanks to support from Active Southland, they were able to join a class—with new swimwear and a warm welcome. Now, they're diving in together—growing stronger, side by side. Housing remains one of our toughest challenges, but the relationships our residents build—with each other and within themselves—are signs of grace at work. They are becoming open-hearted, resilient, and ready to care not just for themselves but for others too.

One former young resident reflected: "When I first moved out of home, I had no support system. I was fearful and anxious. The house gave me time and support to learn what a safe environment feels like. I'm not in fight-or-flight mode anymore. That changed how I looked for my next accommodation — I wasn't desperate. I was able to make safer, healthier choices because I finally knew what it felt like to be secure." These quiet moments of courage—a young mum learning to swim with her pēpi, or a rangatahi setting up their first home—are only possible with the steady support of our community.

May we, as people of faith, continue offering ourselves to God, for whatever work love requires. Ephesians 2:10 "For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." If you'd like to help provide stability and care for more young people, please consider becoming a regular donor. Even a small monthly gift can make a lasting difference.

- ➔ Visit [mmssouthern.org.nz/donate](https://mmssouthern.org.nz/donate)
- ➔ Or talk to us about other ways to get involved.

### Be part of our story, our work, and our community.

To receive our monthly e-newsletters or find out more, contact Julie on **027 267 8140** or [email](#), and follow us on our social media channels.



## Mornington Methodist Church Hall

Greg Hughson

The Mornington Methodist Church Hall in Dunedin has been undergoing major renovations and earthquake strengthening throughout 2025. This photo was taken on the 23rd July. The estimated time for completion of the work is mid-September. Tenants who usually rent the hall (including Toy library and Judo group) have needed to temporarily relocate. Instead of having morning

tea after worship in our hall, this year we have joined with the congregation of the nearby St





Mary's Anglican Church for refreshments in their hall each Sunday. This has deepened the bonds of friendship between us.

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### Opawa Community Church Solar Panels

Sharyn Fairhall

We would love to share with our Methodist Whanau about the Methodist Green Grant Scheme and how this fund has enabled our Church Building and Op Shop to have solar panels installed recently.

With the cost of power being a significant expense, we are looking forward to having cheaper power bills. We are also excited to know that we are helping impact the environment more positively. This is an important step showing to our tamariki we can make our own contribution for their future.

On Sunday the 20<sup>th</sup> of July we had a celebration "Switch On" day with a cutting of a ribbon and cake. Our celebration happened after the final inspection took place and the panels were switched on for operation earlier in the week.



### Professional Development Grant

Sonia Faulkner

**Due dates for 2025 Applications 15th August, 15th November**

Professional Development grants are funded by the Methodist Church of New Zealand and managed by a committee with members from both Te Taha Māori and Taiuiwi. Each year, funds are equally divided between Te Taha Māori and Taiuiwi applicants.

**Professional development is the acquisition of skills and experience that will enhance ministry.** It encompasses academic learning, the development of tikanga/mātauranga Māori, spiritual formation, and the development of practical ministry skills.

#### **Priority in 2025-2026 will be given to training opportunities which will:**

- enhance theological development aligned with our Methodist ethos and bicultural journey
- reflect our diverse church/community context of Aotearoa
- offer opportunities to first-time applicants and young people
- resource as many people as possible from a limited pool of funding

**Find application forms, eligibility criteria and guidelines** on the MCNZ website under Mahi ([Grants and Funding](#)) or contact the [PDG Secretary Sonia Faulkner](#).

Please note for applications or enquiries during August, these should be sent to [Rev Dr Susan Thompson - Chair of the PDG Committee](#).

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## Bradley Trust Research Grant

Sonia Faulkner

**Due date for Applications 31 October 2025.**

The Bradley Trust was set up with funds left to Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa, the Methodist Church of New Zealand by the estate of Wesley Bradley in 1974.

The fund is administered by the Professional Development Grants Committee (PDG). PDG is a Connexional committee with membership from both Te Taha Māori and Tauīwi.

A total of up to **\$10,000** can be allocated annually to support one or more major research projects in the church and community.

### **Priority will be given to projects which:**

- are aligned with the Methodist ethos and bicultural journey
- reflect the diverse church/community context of Aotearoa

### **Who may apply:**

- individuals or groups undertaking major research projects

**Find current application forms, eligibility criteria and guidelines** on the MCNZ website under Mahi ([Grants and Funding](#)) or contact the [PDG Secretary Sonia Faulkner](#)

Applications will include a one-page outline of the research project indicating the nature of the project and its benefits to church and/or community in Aotearoa.

Applications must be accompanied by two supporting letters from:

- Someone representing the Methodist Church of New Zealand (Synod Superintendent, Parish Steward, Methodist Alliance, Mission and Ecumenical, Tumuaki)
- Someone who can indicate relevance of the research or activity to the applicant, the Methodist Church and/or the community (research supervisor, representative of relevant community group).

Applications and supporting material are to be sent to the [PDG Secretary Sonia Faulkner](#) by **31st October**.



## Rekindle the Va of Papatuanuku Grant fund

Marion Hines

"Rekindle the Vā of Papatūānuku" calls us to restore and nurture our sacred connection with the land, waters, and all living beings. This fund will support projects that embody this spirit

through ecological restoration, sustainability initiatives, and theological reflection on our role as kaitiaki of creation.

Applications for grants from this fund are currently under consideration by the Climate Justice Working Group. Applicants will be informed of the results by the Connexional Office.

### **Climate-induced Displacement Policy**

A major focus for our work this year has been to finalise a draft policy around those displaced by climate events. August synods and rohe are currently considering the draft and providing feedback before the Policy presentation to Conference 2025.





### Green Sunday

Coming up on Sunday 28 September. Find resources for your service on the Climate Justice website.

### CJWG membership for 2025

Mark Gibson, Iriana Rountree, Gillian Laird, Joeli Ducivaki, Elisapesi Havea, George Zachariah, Peter Lane, Alilia Molitika, Siniva Isaia, Siutaisa Tukutau, Lupe Havea and Marion Hines.

Enquiries: [Email](#) or Ph 021 053 2053



### Lifewise Launches Christmas Auction

Cha Clarino

It's never too early to start planning for Christmas. Lifewise is kicking off the festive season with the launch of the Lifewise Christmas Auction.

They are seeking donations of gifts, products, services, or experiences to auction off in support of its vital family services. Every item donated and purchased will directly support Lifewise's essential family services—extending food assistance, nurturing parenting education, and reaching out to families in crisis.

This isn't charity at arm's length. It's a tangible lifeline for families who are struggling — especially now, as recent budget cuts have placed even more strain on the services they rely on.

To contribute, please get in touch at [marketing@lifewise.org.nz](mailto:marketing@lifewise.org.nz)

Your donation can make a real difference especially this coming holiday season.

Keep an eye out — the online auction will be launching soon!



### Lotu Factor Symposium 2025

**Resilience, Resistance, or Risk?**

***Lotu, Covid-19 and the Wellbeing of Tongans***

***A call for papers***

**25 – 26 October 2025 (Labour Weekend)**

**Waipuna Hotel, Auckland**



The Lotu Factor Symposium invites proposals for papers, panels, and talanoa presentations that critically engage with the complex intersections of faith, health, culture, and governance during the Covid-19 pandemic and beyond, with a particular focus on Tongan communities in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Hosted by the Lotu Factor Project Team and the Centre for Advocacy, Research & Empowerment, and supported by the Health Research Council of New Zealand, this symposium will bring together scholars, church leaders, health professionals,

cultural practitioners, and community members to reflect on how religiosity functioned as a mechanism of resilience, resistance, and risk during the pandemic—and what lessons can be drawn for the future.





We especially encourage submissions – and registrations - from Tongan and Pacific scholars, youth, community organisers, clergy, and health professionals.

**Submission deadline: 30 August 2025**

For further information, contact [Nāsili Vaka'uta](#)

Principal Investigator, Lotu Factor Project



Registration will close on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2025, and this is the link. You can also use the attached QR code.



### Rhythms of Grace Church

Are you drawn to contemplative worship, creative expression, and thoughtful community?

Our lead pastor/curator is retiring, and we are looking for new leadership. We're inviting expressions of interest from those who feel called to walk alongside a unique and deeply reflective spiritual community. We are a growing, interdenominational gathering of around 50–60 people. Our rhythm is slower, our worship is creative and artful, and our ethos leans toward the contemplative.

Rooted in the great Christian tradition, we practice a form of neo-liturgical worship that nurtures both soul and imagination. We believe that beauty, stillness, and sacred conversation are vital in shaping us as followers of Jesus and as human beings made in the image of God. This remunerated role is flexible and can be tailored to suit the gifts and availability of the right person (or people). Hours are negotiable. Based in Auckland, we worship in the undercroft of Trinity Cathedral in Parnell.

If this resonates with you, and you'd like to know more, please contact: [Paul Johnston](#) Or [Janet Tuck](#)



### Church + AI – We're collecting stories

Peter Lane

**d|c|t (the Diaconate of Church Technologists)** is creating a new resource to help churches engage thoughtfully and faithfully with artificial intelligence — exploring what's helpful, what's concerning, and what's already emerging in our ministry spaces.

To make this resource real and relevant, **we're collecting true stories from across the Church** — moments that are hopeful, hilarious, inspiring, or even a bit alarming.

Has someone in your congregation used ChatGPT to write a sermon? Tried AI-generated art for a worship banner? Encountered something unexpectedly strange from a chatbot in a pastoral care moment?

**We'd love to hear about it.** Your stories will help shape a guide that's practical, grounded, and rooted in lived experience. 🙌 [Share your story.](#)



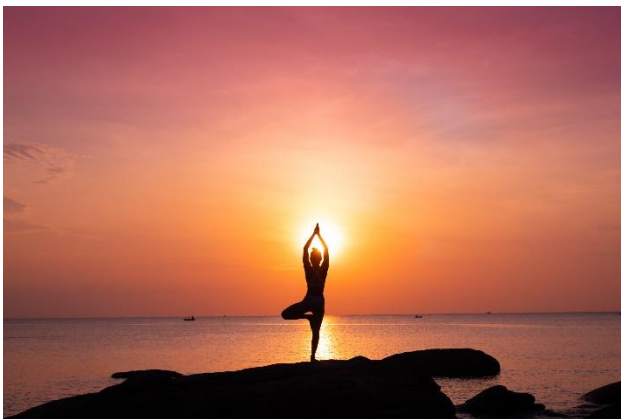


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## Prayer Focus

The Connexional Office

Holy One, Grant us courage to speak with truth and tenderness, that our voices may rise for justice and love.



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## Meditation

The Connexional Office

There are times when silence feels safer. To keep our heads down, to avoid conflict, to hope someone else will carry the weight of speaking. Yet silence, though comfortable, can also be complicit. When the world aches with injustice, when neighbours cry for compassion, when creation itself groans for healing, the Spirit calls us not to remain hidden, but to find our voice.

Courage is not the absence of fear; it is the choice to move forward even when fear remains. To speak with courage is not to shout the loudest, nor to wield our words as weapons, but to speak with truth and tenderness. Truth that does not bend to convenience. Tenderness that remembers the humanity of those who listen.

When we speak in this way, our voices rise not for ourselves alone, but for the sake of love. Love that seeks justice. Love that restores dignity. Love that transforms silence into song.

So breathe deeply. Feel the Spirit fill your lungs. Let courage rise with your breath, and may your voice—however small it may seem—become part of God's great chorus of justice and love.

