



October 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

Kia ora koutou, greetings from Egypt

I'm writing from the St Bishoy Monastery in Wadi El Natrun, where I'm attending the Sixth World Conference on Faith and Order. We're being warmly hosted by the Coptic Orthodox Church in this historic and sacred place, a living reminder of the ancient roots of Christian

faith.

This year marks 1,700 years since the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea in 325 CE, a moment that helped define what the Church believes and how it understands itself. Yet, just as in Nicaea, the conversations here are not without tension. A Faith and Order conference always brings together churches with different histories, traditions, and theological convictions. The diversity that makes the Body of Christ so rich also makes unity a complex and sometimes uncomfortable journey.

This gathering is therefore more than a commemoration, it is a space for honest reflection, deep listening, and courageous imagination. The challenge is not only to remember what once united us, but to ask how that unity can be lived out today amid new divisions, shifting cultures, and the wounds of history.

Ultimately, the unity of the Church is not something we can manufacture or manage. It is a gift that draws us beyond ourselves. Christ calls us, the Spirit equips us, and God continues to draw us toward reconciliation and fullness of life together.

I've been invited to speak on Mission, Common Witness and Apostolic Discipleship, where I'll share how Te Tiriti o Waitangi is our test of covenantal faithfulness in Aotearoa New Zealand, a reminder that right relationship and shared mission must be lived, not just spoken.

It's been twenty-one years since I was last in Egypt for an international ecumenical gathering. Much has changed- the cities, the landscape, the pace of life- but what remains unchanged is the warmth and generosity of the people, who continue to welcome us with open hearts and deep manaakitanga.



Te Tiriti o Waitangi Talanoa Workshops

Shantell Nair

Auckland Central Parish Talanoa Workshops

Parish-wide Workshop

Date: Saturday, 10 May 2025

Location: Epsom Methodist Church

Facilitators: Shirley Rivers & Rev. Metuisela Tafuna

Purpose: To Raise Awareness of the Place of the Te Tiriti o Waitangi and its place in the Methodist Church of New Zealand – Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa's Ministry and Mission.

The Auckland Central Parish hosted a Parish-wide Te Tiriti o Waitangi Talanoa Workshop, gathering members from across the Synod for learning, dialogue, and recommitment to the Methodist Church's bicultural journey. The session was co-facilitated by Shirley Rivers and Rev. Metuisela Tafuna, who together wove history, theology, and pastoral reflection into the day's programme.

Participants were guided through the history of early missionary encounters, He Whakaputanga (1835), and Te Tiriti o Waitangi (1840), with careful attention to the differences between the Māori and English texts and the consequences of colonial breaches. Shirley and Rev. Metui highlighted the Church's complex role in these histories and the significance of the 1983 Methodist Conference resolution to become a bicultural Church.

The workshop was enriched by reflections and insights from long-standing members and leaders of the Church, including Eric Laurenson, Rev. Barry Jones, and David Davies, who shared their deep experience of engaging with Te Tiriti over decades. Their perspectives reminded participants of the progress that has been made, the challenges that remain, and the responsibility to carry this work into future generations.

In small group talanoa, participants discussed what had been achieved since 1983 and what still lies ahead. Key themes included:

- strengthening bicultural practices at the parish level (te reo, tikanga, and inclusive worship),
- equipping congregations with accessible resources and education,
- ensuring the Church's bicultural commitments are lived out in local settings, not just Connexional statements, and
- deepening theological reflection on partnership, justice, and aroha.

The day closed with a collective prayer, affirming Te Tiriti as a living covenant that continues to shape our Methodist identity and mission.

Youth Parish-wide Workshop

Date: Saturday, 9 August 2025

Location: Auckland Central Parish

Facilitators: Shirley Rivers, Reverend Kaurasi Lagi & Shantell Nair - Parish Youth Leader

The Youth Parish-wide Te Tiriti o Waitangi Talanoa brought together rangatahi from across the Auckland Synod. For many participants, this was their very first introduction to the history and meaning of Te Tiriti. Several openly shared that they had not previously known about the Treaty of Waitangi, making the workshop an eye-opening and insightful day of learning. Rangatahi engaged deeply, asking honest questions about colonisation, partnership, and justice. They highlighted the importance of being included in conversations rather than being spoken for. Many expressed a desire for:





- more interactive and creative learning resources,
- ongoing opportunities for dialogue and education,
- spaces where they could lead initiatives in bicultural practice, and
- ways to connect with other youth across parishes to overcome isolation.

The workshop also reinforced that young people bring fresh perspectives, courage, and creativity that are essential for transformation. Leaders noted that sustainable change in the Church must actively involve rangatahi, empowering them to shape and lead the bicultural journey for their generation.

Conclusion

Together, these two workshops represented significant steps in the Auckland Central Parish's ongoing bicultural commitment. The May session deepened historical and theological understanding, grounded by the wisdom of experienced Church leaders, while the August youth workshop brought fresh insight and energy, highlighting the need for continued education and leadership development among young people. Both gatherings affirmed that Te Tiriti o Waitangi is not a static historical document but a living covenant — one that calls the Methodist Church of New Zealand to embody aroha, justice, and partnership in every aspect of its life.

The Parish extends heartfelt thanks to Shirley Rivers, Rev. Metuisela Tafuna, and all contributors for their leadership, as well as to the rangatahi who courageously stepped into the August talanoa. We recommit ourselves to learning, listening, and acting so that the promise of Te Tiriti may be fully lived out in our parishes, our Synod, and the Connexion.

Baring Square Methodist Church Ashburton Centennial Celebration Sunday 8 March 2026



The Baring Square Methodist Church Ashburton was officially opened on 13 March 1926. Next year on Sunday 8 March the Parish will celebrate the Centennial with a special Church Service at 10.00am followed by a light meal.

The Church was damaged in the 2011 earthquakes. More than a decade later, in February 2023, the parish and community gathered to celebrate the conclusion of a major refurbishment and upgrade project.

The Parish welcomes any memorabilia or stories from the past and invites anyone with an interest in the Church - past and present - to join the Centennial celebrations.

Please contact the Baring Square Methodist Church office: office@ashburtonmethodist.church





Wesley Historical Society's annual lecture

Lynne Wall

The wider Methodist whānau are warmly invited to hear the online presentation of the Wesley Historical Society's annual lecture and panel discussion on Thursday 13 November 7.00 - 8.30 p.m. This will be part of the Annual Conference programme. A link to access this lecture will be forwarded later.

The speaker will be Rev Dr Nasili Vaka'uta, Principal of Trinity Methodist Theological College, and his topic will be Rereading the

Bible in/under Stolen (Is)lands: from Oceania to Palestine.



World Homeless Day 2025 Brings Auckland CBD Community Together

Karen Coleman

Event at Federal Square Highlights Compassion, Collaboration, and Hope

World Homeless Day 2025 in Auckland, organised by Lifewise and funded by the Waitematā Local Board, was marked by a vibrant and meaningful gathering at Federal Square, where the community came together

united to focus on the issue of homelessness.

This year's event unfolded against a sobering backdrop: as of September 2025, latest figures from Auckland Council reveal that Auckland has reached a total of 940 people sleeping rough. Executive Chair of Methodist Mission Northern, Pam Elgar ONZM says "This is a shocking and distressing milestone for the city, highlighting the growing urgency and complexity of the homelessness crisis."

Recent survey results shared by Heart of the City Chief Executive Viv Beck early October further underscore the challenges facing Auckland's city centre. Business owners and office workers reported that homelessness, a shortage of police, and persistent "neglect and disorder" are crippling the city's heart. These statistics and perceptions, while alarming, do not capture the full human reality of the crisis. "Behind these headlines are real people – our street whānau – grappling daily with immense challenges, including mental health issues, addiction, and a dire lack of safe accommodation and holistic support. Now, more than ever, the homeless need a voice", says Pam Elgar

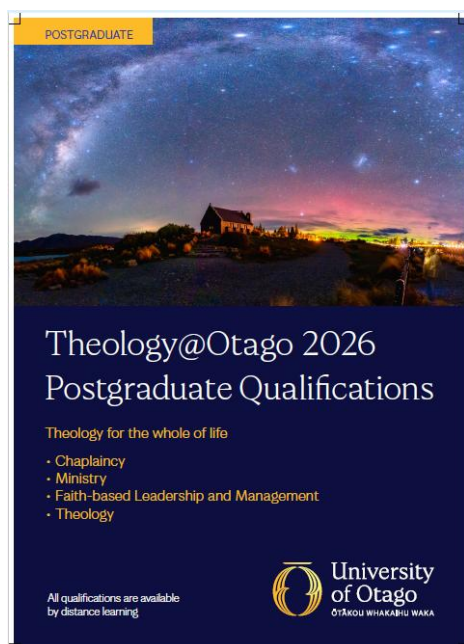
The event at Federal Square provided an opportunity for Lifewise and other service providers, community organisations, volunteers, and those with lived experience of homelessness—affectionately referred to as "streeties"—to come together in a spirit of connection and shared purpose.

The atmosphere at Federal Square was filled with a sense of community and warmth. Attendees greeted each other with open hearts, sharing kai, stories, and laughter throughout the day. Numerous organisations including Auckland City Mission, Orange Sky, The Court of New Beginnings, Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei, National Health Coalition, Browne Pride, Vote on the Go, Westpac and many other stood alongside members of the community, offering support, resources, and aroha, underlining that homelessness is not an abstract issue but a daily reality for many. The event emphasised the importance of empathy, understanding, and collective action in addressing homelessness.





Central to the event were the voices of those with lived experience of homelessness. Individuals shared their stories with honesty, courage, and mana, offering attendees a deeper understanding of the complexities of homelessness beyond the lack of housing.



Greetings from the Theology Programme at the University of Otago!

Professor 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. For details of [courses](#).

- **The subjects on offer** include Old Testament and New Testament Studies, Church History, Systematic Theology, Māori Theology, Pacific Theology, Ethics, Practical Theology and Ministry (including Chaplaincy Studies), and Biblical languages (Hebrew and New Testament Greek). The Theology Programme also has a Centre for Theology and Public Issues, offering papers with a strong social justice focus on contemporary issues.

- You can **study toward a qualification, or you can take a single paper** (or more) for interest, or as part of another degree. (Most University of Otago students can include up to 5 Theology papers in their degree.)

- **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.)

- We're offering a paper on Christian Ministry in te ao Māori (PAST 323/415) as a Semester 1 paper, with a block course in Lower Hutt from 9-13 February, 2026. Details are [here](#). We're also offering a paper on Women in the New Testament and Early Church (BIBS 324/423) as a Semester 1 paper, with a block course in Dunedin from 26-30 January, 2026. Details are [here](#).

Papers on offer in 2026 are in the attached posters and brochures, and a power point.

Further information:

[Email](#).

[Website](#).

[Facebook](#).

[Theology@Otago 2026 Postgraduate Qualifications](#).

Phone number: 03 479 8639





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](#).



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 Taiuiwi.

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**.



James and Martha Trounson Benevolent (hardship) fund.

Mary West

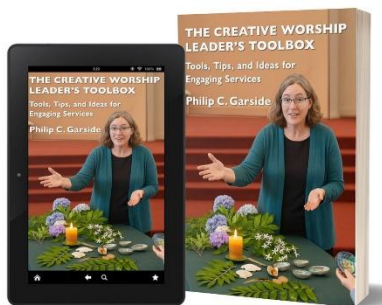
This fund is available for Presbyters or parish leaders where there is no stationed Presbyter.

Applications must be received for a member of a Methodist or CV parish with Methodist involvement. This must be on the current form; this is available either from MCNZ website or the Convener [Mary West](#).

Applications are considered when an **unexpected situation** has occurred which is causing **financial hardship** for the member/whanau.

NO individual may apply for themselves.

Applications can be received throughout the year when a situation arises.



New book for Preachers and Worship leaders

Philip Garside

Wellington Methodist Lay Preacher, Philip Garside is delighted to announce the release of his latest book: **The Creative Worship Leader's Toolbox: Tools, Tips, and Ideas for Engaging Services**.

Transform your worship services with creative, Spirit-led tools that inspire participation, deepen meaning, and reflect your unique voice as a leader.

Print and eBook editions are available on his [website](#).



The November and December issues of his popular RCL-based, weekly worship resource, **Worship at Hand**, are also now available on the website.





Family and Children's worker at LAUC

Jonathan Barb

Linwood Ave Union Church are looking for someone to work with our families and their young ones (under 13 primarily) Up to 20 hours a week. If you're interested email jonathan@lauc.org.nz for more information.



Prayer Focus

The Connexional Office

A Prayer for Unity

God of all people, draw us together in your love.

Where we are divided, sow seeds of peace.
Where we are wounded, bring your healing grace.

Teach us to see Christ in one another.

Let our differences become gifts, not barriers.
May your Spirit move among us with truth and tenderness.

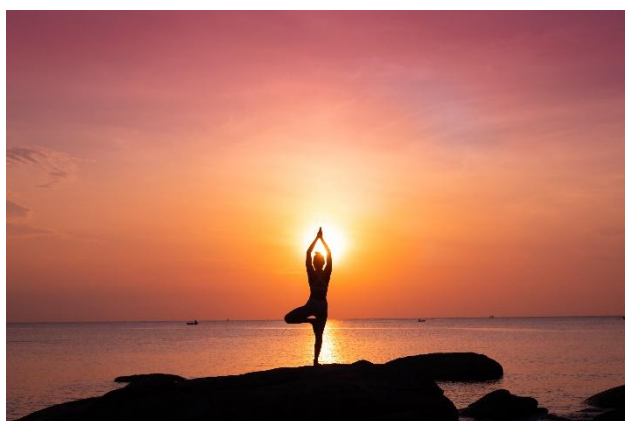
Make our words gentle and our hearts

courageous.

Bind your Church with cords of compassion and hope.

Lead us to walk humbly, to serve faithfully, to love boldly.

Through Jesus Christ, who makes us one. Amine.



Meditation

The Connexional Office

Meditation on the Unity of People

Unity is not the absence of difference; it is the sacred weaving of many threads into one living fabric. Each person, each culture, each story adds its colour and texture to the whole. In God's design, diversity is not a problem to be solved but a gift to be received.

To be one people is not to think alike, but to learn to listen, deeply, patiently, and with reverence. True unity begins when we see the

image of God not only in those who mirror us, but in those whose experience challenges and enlarges our own.

The Spirit of God moves through our divisions like wind through the trees, unseen, yet unmistakable. The Spirit breathes life where we have built walls and whispers hope where words have failed.

In Christ, we are reminded that love is not selective. It stretches across boundaries, restores broken relationships, and reconciles enemies into friends. Unity, then, is not a strategy but a calling, a way of living that flows from the heart of God.





A Contemplative Practice for Unity

The Connexional Office

Sit or stand where you can see the sky or feel the earth beneath you.

Take three slow breaths - breathing in peace, breathing out division.

Become aware of your body, your breath, your belonging in creation.

Imagine yourself as part of a great circle of people around the world, each person breathing, hoping, praying in their own way.

Listen inwardly for the quiet pulse that connects you to them, the life of God that moves through every living being.

Gently place your palms open on your lap or before you.

As you breathe, repeat slowly: *One Spirit, many hearts. One love, many lives.*

Let each repetition deepen your sense of connection, to those near, those far, those known, and those unknown.

When you finish, offer a silent prayer of gratitude:

that in all our difference, we are still held in the same divine embrace.

