



September 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 hāhi whānui, tēnā koutou katoa,

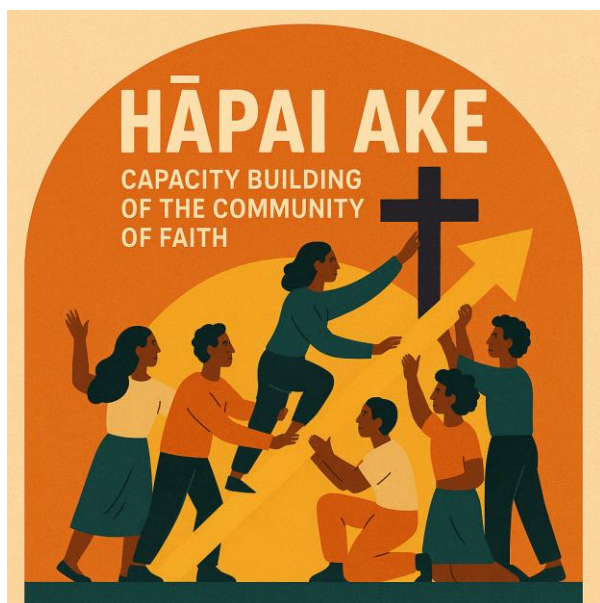
We pause in deep respect for the passing of Tā Tumu Te Heuheu, paramount chief of Ngāti Tūwharetoa. His wisdom, leadership, and guardianship of both people and whenua have been a blessing to this land. Many are now travelling to Waihi to honour him and pay their final respects. Our prayers and aroha are with his iwi, his whānau, and all who mourn this great rangatira.

Earlier this week I facilitated a wānanga on the development of the new Weteriana Hub at Wesley College, Paerata Rise. This project is more than bricks and mortar — it is both a practical and deeply spiritual endeavour, an intentional act of reorientation for Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa. While Weteriana House in Christchurch remains a strong base in the South, the Hub will provide a visible and permanent presence in Te Ika-a-Māui. It will be a space of administration, conferencing, and resourcing, but also a sanctuary where connection with God, with one another, and with the whenua is nurtured. The wānanga was an opportunity to revisit again the land story of Wesley and the Church's relationship with the whenua and the people. In its design and function, the Hub is envisioned as a place where Māori and Taiwi stories stand alongside one another, where historical wounds are acknowledged, and where our bicultural covenant is embodied in concrete and living ways. In this sense, the Hub is an expression of hope — hope for a mission that is contextually rooted, globally connected, and responsive to the challenges and opportunities of the generations to come.

At this time, I write from Auckland, where we are hosting an international ecumenical Working Group on *Decolonising Discipleship: praxes and spiritualities*. Our work is grounded in wisdom stories — narratives of land, people, and encounter that carry both wounds and healing. Stories are not only memories of the past; they are theological frameworks that shape belonging, discipleship, and mission. Here in Aotearoa, such stories emerge from Māori and Taiwi encounters, from mission histories, and from present-day commitments to climate justice. They remind us that discipleship is lived in the tension between remembering and reimagining, always moving toward God's healing and transformation.

This week also brought another important encounter: a Zoom call with Rev David Hardman of the Methodist Liaison Office in Jerusalem on the ongoing crisis in Gaza. Reflecting on the recent statement by our President, Te Aroha, alongside earlier Church statements naming genocide and settler colonialism, Rev Hardman emphasised how vital it is for Palestinians and faith communities to hear the truth spoken plainly by the Churches. Together we spoke of *critical solidarity* and the possibility of a visit in the near future.

As we hold together these many strands — grief and honour, vision and hope, solidarity and truth-telling — may we be reminded that our calling as a Church is to walk humbly, to act justly, and to love with courage. May the aroha of God guide us, the stories of the land teach us, and the Spirit of Christ empower us for the work ahead.



## Don't Just Change—Transform!

Tara Tautari General Secretary

### Reimagining the Polity and Capacity of Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa

The theme set before us by our Presidential team—‘**Don’t just change, Transform!**’—is more than a seasonal slogan. It is both a challenge and an invitation, and perhaps the most significant call our Church must face today.

Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa stands at a crossroads. Much of our life is under review, many of our practices are being reshaped, and the urgent question before us is whether our polity truly embodies our bicultural covenant under *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* while also embracing the richness of our multicultural future. Our Law Book affirms the bicultural journey, yet its structural expression remains partial. Te Taha

Māori, though constitutionally recognised, continues to function as a Connexional Committee rather than as an equal governing house. Tauwi Strategy and Tauwi Stationing likewise operate without structural alignment with Te Taha Māori. These realities place before us an uncomfortable but vital challenge: does our polity genuinely reflect the covenant partnership we proclaim, or has it become a mechanism for institutional maintenance?

### New Wine, New Wineskins

At the most recent Tauwi Strategy meeting, one possible pathway was raised: a Two Whare structure. In this model, Conference remains the Supreme Governing Body, under which stand *Te Whare o Taha Māori* and *Te Whare o Tauwi*. Between them, a Partnership Council becomes the covenant space for shared discernment and decision-making. This framework could give visible and enduring expression to Te Tiriti at the very heart of our polity.

But such transformation is not about tweaking clauses or tidying procedures. As Jesus taught, *new wine requires new wineskins*. Renewal demands fresh structures, new practices, and language capable of carrying the Spirit’s movement today. Our polity must be nimble, relational, less bureaucratic, more biculturally aligned, and spacious enough for all voices within our Connexional family. The Law Book is not meant to fossilise us; it is a living document, responsive to covenant and gospel. If our current polity no longer serves, we must have the courage to imagine again.

### Hāpai Ake: Building the Capacity of Our People

Transformation, however, cannot rest on structures alone. They will not bear fruit unless enlivened by the vision, gifts, and resilience of the people who inhabit them. This is the conviction behind **Hāpai Ake**—lifting up and strengthening the life of Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa so that it may be renewed for mission in this generation.

At its heart lies our Wesleyan tenet: *every member a minister*. More recently reframed as every member a ministry, it reminds us that the future of the Church depends not on structures alone but on the active participation of all God’s people. The whakataukī captures this beautifully: *ka pū te ruha, ka hao te rangatahi*—as the old net weaves out, the new is woven by the young. Transformation requires both continuity and renewal, held together by intentional formation.

This means resourcing presbyters, lay leaders, and congregations to live faithfully into covenant partnership, to embrace bicultural integrity, and to embody the richness of multicultural life. It means creating pathways of mentoring, discipleship, and leadership development across generations and cultures. It means attending to the pastoral, spiritual, and practical needs of our communities in a rapidly changing and often precarious world.





## Resourcing the Future

Through **PACT2086 Resourcing the Church**, we are beginning to invest in this transformation. \$30 million has been committed to renewal, with funds already resourcing the core work of the Church and supporting new dreams through Moemoeā applications. From youth development to social mission, from climate justice to global ecumenical connections, these initiatives reveal the breadth of vision alive in our Church.

But resourcing is not only financial. It is spiritual, relational, and communal. We are called to invest in people as well as structures, to foster leadership as well as policy, and to cultivate a theology of abundance that recognises God has already given us the gifts we need. Our task is to nurture and release those gifts with courage and faith.

## A Call to Courage

The challenge before us is immense. It will test our willingness to move beyond institutional maintenance toward covenant transformation. It will ask Tauīwi to engage in deep self-reflection on what covenant partnership means in a multicultural reality. It will call Te Taha Māori to continue to strengthen its kaupapa and tino rangatiratanga. And it will require both to be transformed by one another, that the life of covenant under *Te Tiriti* may be fully embodied.

As Psalm 133 reminds us in its Aotearoa reimagining: *"Aue! How good, how beautiful it is when whānau dwell together in kotahitanga ... there the Holy One commands the blessing—life abundant, forevermore."*

The question before us is whether we will receive this moment with courage. Will transformation remain a word in a theme, or will it take flesh in the very structures and life of Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa?

May we step forward together—prayerfully, faithfully, courageously—into God's future.



## Methodist Mission Southern: Across faiths, across communities: one heart for our young people.

Julie Roberts

One of the quiet blessings of the Mission's work is that we are never truly alone in it. This became beautifully clear recently when our Youth Transition House in Ōtepoti received a generous donation from another organisation that also runs youth houses, albeit not in our rohe. Rather than seeing us as "separate" or even in competition, they chose to support the young people in our care as if they were their own. Even more moving was the way that support flowed across boundaries of denomination and faith. Friends from both the Christian and wider interfaith community stood alongside us, recognising that when it comes to rangatahi who are struggling, what matters most is compassion, not labels.

It is a reminder of the prophet Micah's words: "What does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." (Micah 6:8). Each group, each community, has its own way of serving, yet all are part of God's great work of justice and mercy. For the

young people in our houses, this unity is not always obvious at first. Many arrive focused simply on surviving the day in front of them. But as they begin to develop skills, confidence, and a sense of stability, the generosity of people they may never meet starts to register. They come to see that they matter — that people genuinely believe in their potential and want to see them thrive.







At the Mission, we hold deep gratitude for this spirit of cooperation. It shows us that hospitality is not only about what we can do ourselves, but about opening our arms wide enough to welcome the gifts of others. When we do, God multiplies what we have, and lives are changed. Thank you for being part of this wider whānau of care. Your prayers, your giving, your kindness — together with the generosity of unexpected friends — make the Mission's Youth Transition houses a place of safety and hope for rangatahi finding their way home.

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.



*Epsom Tongan Methodist Church Women's Fellowship.*



*Ponsonby Tongan Methodist Church Women's Fellowship.*



*Northcote Tongan Methodist Church Women's Fellowship.*

## NEW ZEALAND METHODIST WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP NEWS

Rev. Siutaisa Tukutau.

We always thank and praise God for all His goodness to us, and for His love that never ceases. We testify that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us (Phillippians 4:13). It's not a promise of achieving any personal goal, but an assurance that Jesus empowers believers to remain grounded and hopeful, finding their true strength in Him.

We are one month away from our Convention (16 - 19 October) where we will come to the end of our role as NZMWF National Committee. The team is well prepared for this important coming gathering of women from all districts.

This month, September, is a special month for women. It is our Role Call Month (mahina Taliui) in which every year our Tongan Methodist Women from all the Parishes and Local Churches show our appreciation and grateful thanks to God for the life we still have this very year. We are called individually in our local churches, and on the last Sunday of the month is the Auckland/Manukau Parish combination service for all women. About 800 women in this service. We answer our call with bible verses and hymns. Women's choirs sing. This month every year is when our elders and women show their joy and appreciation for the love of God that they have. They wear their sparkling dresses, their pule taha, and have

their best kai. September, every year is a graceful and blessed month for all confirmed Tongan Methodist Women. May God bless all New Zealand Methodist Women's Fellowship





## 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.

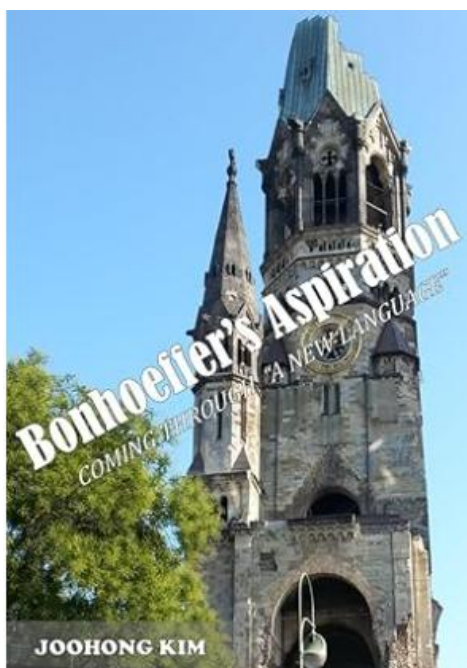




Applications must be accompanied by two supporting letters from:

- 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**.



## Bonhoeffer's Aspiration: Coming Through "A New Language"

Joohong Kim

This book introduces Bonhoeffer's life and aspiration, which is still relevant to the contemporary churches beyond the gap in time and space and explores the meaning of "A New Language" through which, Bonhoeffer believed, his dream could come true. For the sake of the churches today, navigating through theological and cultural challenges in ministry and mission, it offers the answer to Bonhoeffer's question "Who is Christ for us today?" and a case study on the life of a suburban parish in Christchurch, New Zealand, which aims to see how the parish ministry and mission could reflect what Bonhoeffer dreamed of.

[Link to book.](#)

Te Awamutu  
Methodist  
Church



Celebrating 150 years of Methodist presence in  
Te Awamutu

10 AM SUNDAY 2 NOVEMBER 2025

Join us for a communion service of celebration,  
with lunch and a time to share memories to follow.

RSVP (for catering purposes) to:  
[revshelleynz@gmail.com](mailto:revshelleynz@gmail.com) by 27 October.

## Te Awamutu Methodist Church

Shelley Walker

Are celebrating 150 years of Methodism in Te Awamutu, on Sunday 2 November. A communion service of thanksgiving starts at 10am, followed by lunch then a time of storytelling and memories. All former ministers and parishioners are most welcome.

Please email [revshelleynz@gmail.com](mailto:revshelleynz@gmail.com) before 27 October 2025 to register for catering purposes.

Any memorabilia would also be appreciated.





## Webinar

Peter Lane — d|c|t

### Headline:

📅 Save the Date — Free Copyright Q&A for Churches

### Teaser (for Hail/eConnexions summary):

Free online Copyright Q&A for churches — Wed 19 Nov, 7.30pm. Lyrics, livestreams, photocopying hymns... bring your questions.

### Body:

**Wednesday 19 November, 7.30–8.30pm (Zoom)**

*Organised by d|c|t — ChurchTech for Churches*

Copyright. Boring? Confusing? Both?

If you've ever wondered whether you can project lyrics, stream a song, photocopy a hymn, or reuse a prayer — this session is for you.

Join **Peter Lane (yes, the one you've read in Touchstone)** and guests from **CCLI** for a no-jargon, guilt-free conversation about what churches *can* and *can't* do. It's a live Q&A — bring your questions.

👉 Mark it in your diary now. Registration link coming soon.

### Contact:

[peter.lane@sdcs.co.nz](mailto:peter.lane@sdcs.co.nz)



## 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.](#)





## Prayer Focus

The Connexional Office

### Psalm 133 (Aotearoa contextualised)

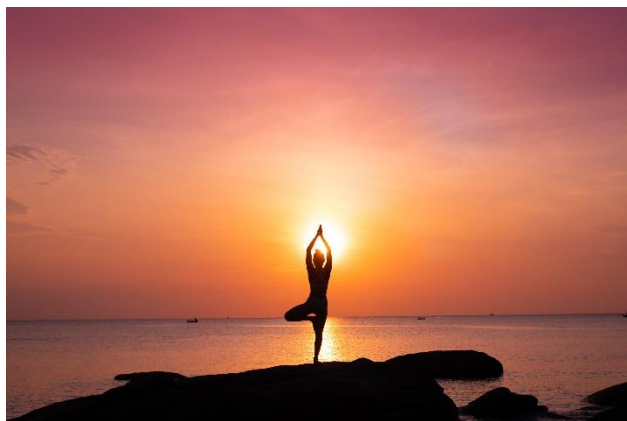
*Aue! How good, how beautiful it is  
when whānau dwell together in kotahitanga.*

*Like the gift of aroha,  
surrounding and embracing us,  
flowing out to heal our wounds,  
reaching deep into the roots of the land.*

*Like dawn over Maunga Taranaki,  
like mists rising through Te Urewera.*

*From the highest peaks to the smallest awa,  
the blessing of life flows free.*

*For there the Holy One commands the blessing—  
life abundant,  
taonga tuku iho,  
forevermore.*



## Meditation

The Connexional Office

Take a moment to breathe deeply and come into stillness.

We live in a world marked by division and noise.

Walls are built, voices clash, and love is too easily forgotten.

Yet within each of us lies a yearning for unity—  
not sameness, but a weaving together of many strands,  
held by aroha, by love.

Unity and love are not easy.  
They ask us to forgive when resentment feels easier,  
to listen when anger demands the last word,  
to reach across fear with courage and compassion.

In the chaos around us, imagine love flowing like water through dry soil.  
Imagine unity rising like dawn,  
gentle and persistent, revealing the face of God in each person.

Sit with this truth:  
You are loved.  
Your neighbour is loved.  
Even those who seem far from you are held in God's love.

Carry this seed of unity and love into the world—  
a small flame of hope that refuses to be extinguished.

