



## Seniors Speak Out About the Housing Crisis

*Michael Hermann, CMM Fundraising & Communications Manager*

**In October Christchurch Methodist Mission launched a Doors to Dignity campaign calling for urgent action to ensure all older people can**

**access homes that are affordable, accessible, culturally appropriate, and embedded in community.**

The Listen Up! Seniors Take a Stand on Housing / Whakarongo Mai! E tū tohe ana ngā kaumātua mō ngā take whare collaborative exhibition and graphic novel were unveiled at the launch of the CMM **Doors to Dignity** campaign.

Doors to Dignity calls for urgent action to ensure all older people are housed well. As CMM Strategic Adviser Jane Higgins notes in an essay in the publication, access to safe, affordable homes provides the foundation on which people are able to live in peace, security, and dignity. Increasingly, however, this is not the case for older people in Aotearoa.

The scale of the challenge is significant. The Office for Seniors estimates that by 2050 nearly 400,000 people will be renters. This trend is creating a rapidly growing need for affordable homes among retirees, and unless New Zealand's approach to housing provision changes, the pressure will only intensify as the population ages.

CMM has launched a parliamentary petition calling for cross-party support to significantly increase and target investment in social and affordable housing specifically for older people—ensuring that every older New Zealander can access safe, secure, and affordable housing that upholds their dignity and wellbeing.

Against this backdrop, the Listen Up! exhibition and graphic novel offer a powerful creative response. Created during a 10-week residency at Te Matariki Tai Ora / The Arts Centre in Christchurch by David Cook, the book and exhibition draw into sharp focus what Cook calls “an invisible problem.”

During the residency, Cook—who is a lecturer at Massey University's College of Creative Arts / Toi Rauwhārangī—met with 24 seniors and kaumātua to co-create a response to the housing crisis. The experience was both meaningful and dramatic.

“I chose to work with seniors because these are the people hardest hit by the shortage of secure housing—but this is an ‘invisible’ problem. We got together and shared raw and life-changing housing stories, protests, and visionary plans for a better future,” says Cook. “I was blown away by the energy in the room.”

“We have great resources in New Zealand, but so much need. We see this constantly in media reports that present the problematics of housing security, cost and availability. But we rarely hear straight from the people impacted. I find that troubling,” he says. “Socially engaged art-making is a way to create a counter-narrative to the constant alarming stories we hear from the media. I love doing art projects in, with and through communities.”

Cook recalls hearing from CMM Executive Director Jill Hawkey about her experience working with seniors and kaumātua, and the growing pressures they face—pressures that can lead to homelessness, housing stress, and health issues. “I wasn’t aware of this, so I took up her challenge and started to meet seniors, hearing about their housing experiences. I found a great community at Wesley Village, Whare Tiaki, Otautahi Community Housing Trust, and a co-housing development. I arranged to meet people in social spaces—we talked openly over cups of tea, and very quickly a group of volunteers came forward and said, ‘yes, we want to have our say, this is an important issue.’”

The result was a striking exhibition featuring visual expressions of frustration, resilience, and hope. The accompanying graphic novel captures these themes in a format that is both accessible and emotionally resonant.

Cook says he was drawn to partner with CMM after seeing how the organisation “was leading the way in demonstrating how to do housing well.” “They care about community wellbeing and are trying innovative things, like Whare Tiaki (a shared living residence for kaumātua). They were the perfect people to partner with, opening doors to a world I knew little of.”

Speaking about his artistic process, Cook says he approached the project with an open mind and listened to “people’s tough and beautiful housing experiences, protests and dreams for a better housing future.” After several weeks of facilitating these meetings, he presented the major themes to participants and suggested an innovative format that could present these ideas to a wider public.

“People were surprised by the idea of being on a protest march, and making a graphic novel—but they were willing to go on this wild adventure with me... To my surprise, people loved this activist way of engaging—and we worked together to create photographs and protest placards that spoke bravely to the issues.”

Reflecting on the process, Cook recalls a personal highlight at Whare Tiaki. “One of the kuia said she loved watercress, and missed being able to harvest it from her local creek. I bought a bag of cress at a greengrocer, brought it back to Whare Tiaki and it went straight into the boil-up. I like the way art, activism and community vibes come together.”

The project has “completely changed” Cook’s way of thinking about how we plan for a safe and secure housing future for our seniors. “When first presented with the concept it didn’t seem very exciting—but that came from a place of ignorance. I just didn’t know about the challenges we face. But I turned that ignorance into curiosity, and together we made art that is based on conversations and real-life stories.”



### 2025 Methodist Conference decisions relate to the church's bicultural journey

Important decisions from Conference 2025 have a bearing on the church's bicultural journey - some reaffirmed past Conference decisions, others determined fresh ways the church will exercise its bicultural commitment. **MCNZ Vice President Rev Peter Norman** of decisions from last year's Conference

that relate to the church's commitment to the bicultural journey.

- **He Whakaputanga added to the church's Mission Statement.**

Conference affirmed the formal inclusion of He Whakaputanga o te Rangatiratanga o Niu Tirene (the 1835 Declaration of Māori Independence) in the church's official Mission Statement. This inclusion recognises Māori sovereignty prior to 1840 and commits the church to truth-telling, relational justice, and living with integrity in the stories of this land.

- **Annual Mangungu Commemoration (12th February)**

Conference designated 12 February, the date of the signing of Te Tiriti on the grounds of the Wesleyan Mission station at Mangungu, as an annual Methodist commemoration – grounding the Connexion in covenant rather than colonial memory.

Note: At Mangungu 57 Rangatira signed te Tiriti, making it the largest number of signatures to be placed on te Tiriti at any given time.

- **Te Amorangi ki Mua – Sacred leadership for a shared future.**

Conference affirmed the establishment of Te Amorangi ki Mua, a bicultural governance and partnership group charged with progressing critical matters of structure, stationing, and ministry with a first report due back to Conference 2026.

*Te Amorangi* signals relational, ethical and spiritual leadership.

*Ki Mua* signals movement, courage and being led into the future.

This is not an administrative group – it is sacred, covenantal leadership guiding Te Hāhi Weteriana towards a Treaty grounded future.

### **The Two-House Model: Te Whare Te Taha Māori & Te Whare Tauwiwi.**

Conference reaffirmed the emerging Two-House approach, grounded in Te Tiriti o Waitangi and shaped by *Matike Mai Aotearoa*.

Te Whare Te Taha Māori – tangata whenua authority, tikanga, whakapapa and mātauranga.

Te Whare Tauwiwi – tangata Tiriti identity embracing multicultural richness of non-Māori Methodists.

These houses stand in covenantal relationship, each exercising authority appropriate to their whakapapa, while collaborating towards shared mission.

- **The four Waka/Vaka of Te Whare Tauwiwi**

Within Te Whare Tauwiwi, four waka/vaka journey together:

1. English speaking Synods
2. Vahefonua Tonga
3. Sinoti Samoa
4. Wasewase ko Viti kei Rotuma

Drawing on *Wayfinding leadership*, Conference affirmed a model of leadership that is relational, horizon-focused, attentive to context, and grounded in collective wisdom. This framework reinforces the Conference theme: **movement over maintenance, relationship over rigidity, and partnership over isolation.**



### **Rangatahi Determining and Empowering their Future**

*Alice Dimond, Tokona te Raki*

**An Ōtautahi-based social innovation lab, Tokona te Raki, is creating spaces for young people to dream big, work together and design futures of their own making through its latest rangatahi initiative, Mō Āpōpō Future-Makers.**

Piloted in 2025 across high schools, with youth workers and at wānanga, Mō Āpōpō brings rangatahi together to think creatively about the future Aotearoa that they want to share in. Hope may feel in short supply right now as we find ourselves facing increasingly frequent and complex challenges both in Aotearoa and globally. In a world of blame games, finger pointing and decisions being leveled at us rather than reached with us, these rangatahi are learning that change doesn't have to be something that happens to them, they can assert agency in determining the future they inherit.

Our world is currently in chaos. Major challenges like climate change, financial instability, geopolitical tension, and technological disruption are converging, and our rangatahi feel the impact. Te Tai Waiora, a report published by the Treasury, says that for the first time in recent history young people will not be better off than current generations. In 2023, the World Economic Forum called our current period a 'polycrisis', describing how these overlapping challenges are amplifying each other making their shared impacts greater than the sum of each part.

Closer to home, the Aotearoa Futures Barometer, a research report published in 2025 by Tokona te Raki tells us that over 50 percent of young people are increasingly concerned about how we meet their needs. Young women in particular are struggling, with 63 percent worried about the future. The research also explored trust, finding that many of the people and institutions that once gave us confidence and hope - including political leaders, councils, iwi and churches - no longer hold the same level of trust.

What this is all telling us is that we're fragmenting as a society, our political worlds are more disconnected than ever, and this is playing a role in how we feel. Young people feel disconnected, disengaged and defeated. So how do we create a new generation of young people filled with hope, and activated to change things for the better?

The challenges of our future don't have to make us feel helpless; they can instead fuel ambition and motivation to take action. Mō Āpōpō is based on this idea – bringing rangatahi together to come up with creative solutions to future problems. The catch? The solution-making must start from a place of collaboration. Leaving blame games and finger pointing at the door, rangatahi are invited to play a new game – one where they learn how to listen to each other, bridge different perspectives and find the common ground our future needs. In a world that rewards certainty, collapses complexity into binaries, and gives visibility to inflamed disagreements, Mō Āpōpō offers an alternative.



One key point of difference is centring a core narrative: the strength of our future lies in our diverse stories and cultures and how these weave together to create something greater than the individual parts. The initiative doesn't shy away from acknowledging the richness of Aotearoa, Māori as the original stewards of the land we call home, and the bicultural foundations our country stands on. While other programmes fall back on the usual and often Western ways we define and solve problems, Mō Āpōpō deliberately recentres Māori perspectives and stories as a mechanism to break rangatahi thinking out of the status quo.

For rangatahi on both sides of Te Tiriti the approach resonates, with one saying: *"It was really the use of the atua it made it so clear to me how to approach a problem ... Thinking about issues like that made it a lot more digestible"*. Another reflected on the magic of this approach, saying that it meant that everyone could safely be part of the conversation. While rangatahi bring their individual passions, perspectives and interests into the space, they are invited to participate in open conversations to consider the things they can agree on collectively with their peers.

Rangatahi without power and agency only creates a barrier towards reaching a better future. When young people who are already deeply aware of the challenges ahead of us are empowered to act together, their collective actions can shift our country's future for the better. For many of those who took part in the pilot, it was a life changing experience: *"Before this, I didn't feel like I was a part of the future, but now I definitely do...I really want to help make the change and just keep changing and be positive, because I think the future could be great."* It's time we help more rangatahi with the tools, confidence and relationships to become the masters of what comes next. Only then will we have a new generation leading the change - prioritising curiosity over reactivity, collaboration over polarisation, and future-making over future-taking.



## NZMWF



NZMWF Executive team (left to right) Rebecca Muipu, Sera Toduadua, Janita Liddington, Judith Herbert, Amelia Hoglund, Rita Middleton, Sangata Kaufononga and Moe Petaia. Absent Rev Shelley Walker.

### United in Faith, Called to Serve

**The new NZMWF National Executive team was inducted on Sunday 19 October 2025 at the Pulela'a Tongan Methodist Church, New Lynn, Auckland in a memorable service, involving two choirs and a brass band.**

Outgoing NZMWF President Lesieli Pope led the service and MCNZ President, Te Aroha Rountree, inducted the new team. The theme for the next two years is ***United in Faith, Called to Serve***.

Romans 12: 5 says 'So in Christ, we, though many, form one body and each

member belongs to all the other others. In the Methodist Women's Fellowship, we see this unity lived out. Women representing every aspect of life, coming together to serve their families, church, and communities, to pray, plan, laugh, and sometimes to cry. And always, to lift each other up.

As a multi-cultural group, we have chosen a uniform of blue tops over black to express our unity while allowing us to express our own cultural heritage. This wonderful team is looking forward to working together and getting to know more about the NZMWF groups that do such wonderful work all around the country.



### Learning From Other Cultures

*Rev Dr Jione Havea*

**What do we do in order to understand people who are different from us? How do we learn from people of minoritized cultures? Can we free our perception of those people from our biases?**

**The answer is obvious: immerse in, listen to, engage with, learn from, those cultures.**

#### Princeton travel course

Understanding other or foreign cultures is a classic topic in mission, ministry, and theology. In today's multicultural and globalizing societies, this matter is more and more advanced – from a mere theoretical approach to an urgent necessity in the face of society's integration, and the world becoming a global village, to a fully developed course of study in a theological institution.

Because of those concerns, a "travel course" of twenty-one students from Princeton Theological Seminary (New Jersey, USA) came to Aotearoa, led by Prof. Afe Adogame, from Jan 16–22. This travel course offered theoretical, methodological and empirical (on the ground) insights into how we may understand other cultures.

#### Local hosts

In Aotearoa, the Princeton travel course was hosted by Te Aroha Rountree (President, Te Haahi Weteriana), Emily Colgan (Acting Principal, Trinity Methodist Theological College), Andrew Picard (Acting Principal, St. John's Theological College), Maungarongo Tito (Tangata Whenua), and several colleagues.

Upon arrival, the group was introduced to the struggles and accomplishments of the people and the whenua through presentations at Wesley Hall: Wayne Te Kawaa (Tangata Whenua cultures and customs), Reni Maiava (Pasifika migrant cultures and customs), Paul Reynolds (justice in the eyes and interests of Takatapui, LGBT+, Rainbow+), 'Elisapesi Havea (climate justice), Jekheli Kibami Singh (ministry and pastoral care), and the team of Te Aroha Rountree, Emily Colgan, and Andrew Picard (politics of bible translation).

From the lecture hall, the group went for feet-on-the-ground learnings at some of the key locations in the North Island: Kororāreka (Russell), Waitangi Treaty Grounds, Oihi Bay (Rangihoua), Mangungu Mission House, Tane Mahuta, several sacred sites at Waikato-Tainui, and capped off at Hobbiton.

#### Looking ahead

With this event, we look forward to further collaborations between Te Haahi, Trinity, St. John's, Princeton, and other places of learning that are interested in learning from our people, our land, our moana, our hope, our responsibilities, through cultural immersion and theological engagement.



### Church and Community Collide at Christmas

Levin Uniting parish invited the local community to several special Advent events. The participation of nearly 500 people confirmed that their shared space matters as deeply to their community as it does to the parish.

Celebrations began on 3 December with International Day of Persons with Disabilities, welcoming whānau, friends, and neighbours in a spirit of inclusion and celebration. Wet weather did not dampen the atmosphere, with around 120 people enjoying a range of activities that included crafting, games, karaoke, biscuit decorating, a sausage sizzle and a sensory room.

The event was organised in a spirit of collaboration between the parish, CCS Disabilities, Mash Trust, Muaupoko Tribal Authority, and the Limitless Crew. Limitless Crew is a monthly gathering for young adults with disabilities, organised by the young people themselves, with support from Levin Uniting and CCS Disabilities.

Two days later, the church glowed with 800 candles for Levin Uniting's third Candlelit Concert. The December concert followed on from two successful earlier events in May and August. An audience of 100 was treated to the incredible talent of 14-year-old pianist Liubava Lugova, who opened with beautiful classical works and closed with a sparkling jazz number. Liubava set the perfect tone for SAXcess, New Zealand's premier saxophone quartet. Bringing 30 years of experience to their performance, their repertoire included everything from medieval melodies to swing, classical and tango.

Saturday morning brought festive cheer with a bustling Christmas Market. Over 30 stalls, inside and out, welcomed more than 100 visitors. Later that evening the church doors were flung open again for a Candlelit Christmas. More than 160 people gathered as the Horowhenua Young Persons Entertainment (HYPE) led carols and told the Christmas story. Their confidence, creativity, and warm hospitality shone brightly, adding to this Levin Uniting initiative.

The following week was alive with colour, memory, and joy as one of our local funeral homes partnered with us to host their annual Avenue of Trees, held for the first time at our centre over four festive days. More than 50 beautifully decorated Christmas trees, created by businesses, whānau, and community organisations, filled the space, while the vestry became a welcoming Santa's lounge that attracted young and old alike. The event included a moving remembrance service attended by 40 people, special visits from local rest homes and kindergartens, and open hours for the wider community.

By the end of the four days, more than 2,000 people had passed through our doors. The celebrations culminated on Sunday with worship among the trees, followed by our annual parish Christmas lunch. The week was certainly a joyful expression of faith, hospitality, and community connection.





### KSM Awardee Still Serving Te Aroha Parish at 97 Years of Age

We extend our congratulations to Emily Myra (Myra) Caldwell who received the Kings Service Medal in the New Years 2026 Honours List for services to the community and music.

In November 2024, *Touchstone* featured an article on Myra and her extraordinary services to Te Aroha Cooperating Parish. Myra has

volunteered for 81 years, and continues to serve her community at 97 years old.

The KSM citation confirms Myra Caldwell began playing organ for church services in 1943 and continues to play for many events today. She has served on national and local committees for the New Zealand Women's Methodist Fellowship, having been a member for 70 years. In the 1950s, Myra represented Thames Valley in badminton and was Te Aroha College's badminton coach from 1975 to 1988.

Amongst numerous musical, community and sporting accomplishments, Myra:

- sang alto in the Te Aroha Methodist Choir, Te Aroha Choral Society and Te Aroha-Morrinsville Combined Churches Choirs for several years in the 1970s.
- was the piano accompanist for the David Qualtrough Singers group for 35 years.
- plays the piano for Te Aroha Women's RSA meetings and received a Long Service Award in 2024.
- is the pianist at the Manx Society meetings and has been a member for many decades.
- was the Secretary and Treasurer of the Elstow Indoor Bowling Club for 13 years.
- is a Life Member of both Tui Park and Elstow Indoor Bowling Clubs and was Te Aroha Bowling Club's Tournament Convenor until 2022.
- assisted the Te Aroha Good Neighbours foodbank for several years from 2010.



## CARTOON



### Jim's Cartoon

*Brendan Boughen*

Our regular cartoon from Jim, that finds the funny, and sometimes not so funny, side of faith.





### Young People Confirmed in a Joyful Advent Service

*Rev Suiva'aia Te'o.*

**On the first Sunday of Advent 21 young people from the Wellington Samoan District of Sinoti Samoa were confirmed in a joyful service at Crossway Masterton.**

The confirmands – 12 girls and nine boys – came from Wesley Wellington (Central Parish), St Mark's Wesley in Lower Hutt (HCUC), and Crossway Masterton. All three congregations are faithfully led by committed lay leaders, and the Confirmation Service was presided over by Rev Suiva'aia Te'o, the district's only ordained minister. Families travelled from across the Lower North Island to witness their children step forward in faith, filling the church with pride, gratitude, and deep emotion.

Before the service, the confirmands took part in four online preparation sessions, exploring the meaning of confirmation, the vows they would take, the story of Methodism, and what it means to follow Christ with courage and conviction. These sessions strengthened the participants' faith, built fellowship across the district, and prepared them spiritually for their public commitment.

The worship atmosphere on Sunday was filled with reverence and joy as the district gathered in song, prayer, and Scripture. The lighting of the Advent wreath reminded the congregation of Christ's hope breaking into the world, and the service carried a beautiful sense of unity across generations. The lectionary readings, Romans 13:11–14 and Matthew 24:36–44, held the central Advent theme: *"Only God knows that Day."* In her message, Rev. Suiva'aia Te'o called the district to be alert, ready, and to walk in the light of God, urging both confirmands and adults to live faithfully in uncertain times. She reminded the young people that by choosing confirmation, they were leaving behind the things that once pulled them in other directions and placing Jesus Christ first in their lives.

"Confirmation is not just a ceremony," she said. "It is a lifetime journey of discipleship. You are choosing to turn away from the ways of the world and step forward into the will of Christ - whether that journey brings peace or challenge. Today, you declare your faith and allow Jesus to rule your life, guide you, shape you, and use you for His holy purpose."

As the service concluded, the district celebrated the commitment of these young people and the hope they bring to the future of the church. Their courage and enthusiasm shine as a reminder that the light of Christ continues to lead, inspire, and call new disciples even in a changing world.



#### CONTACT DETAILS

I welcome your feedback on content included in this publication.

**Ady Shannon, Editor Touchstone**

Phone: 021 209 9702 Email: [adys@methodist.org.nz](mailto:adys@methodist.org.nz)



### **The Night Maoli Moved a City**

*Rev Keita Hotere*

**Not everyone recognises the name Glenn Awong, yet speak the word Maoli and whole communities light up. Across the Pacific, especially among younger listeners, Maoli has become more than a band.**

Their music is a blend of country, reggae, soul, and R&B, and it features a Hawaiian homegrown soundtrack of cultural identity, pride, and connection.

Just as Bill Wallace, Shirley Murray, and Colin Gibson helped define Aotearoa's worship and songwriting traditions, and just as Charles Wesley once sparked a movement through melody and message, Maoli has carved out its own place in the cultural Story of Oceania.

Glen Awong and his band gather people. They unite generations. They energise Pacific born and Aotearoa raised youth who hear something familiar, ancestral in the rhythm, and the resonance of the music rooted in Christian values. The pull is intergenerational, drawing together fans in a shared moment of belonging.

I felt this deeply at the third Maoli concert, Island Vibe Tour held in Auckland. Standing shoulder to shoulder with my sisters, I realised the night was both a celebration and an education into youth culture. Victoria Park pulsed with life, its atmosphere echoing the spirit of the old 'One Love' concerts that once defined Waitangi Day for so many.

The crowd didn't come to be subdued. The energy lifted you, invited you, almost insisted that you move. People danced, voices rose effortlessly, strangers became whānau as thousands sang lyrics they already knew by heart.

The stunning lineup of local artists primed the crowd with 'Fungai Lupe', Fiji's 'Hey Girl', and Herb's 'E Papa Waiari'.

Maoli did not disappoint, using their distinctly reggae / Jawaiian genre (Hawaiian influenced reggae style) Maoli brings to the stage musical genius belting out their own renditions of 'If I Said You Had a Beautiful Body' and 'I Would Look Good On You'.

Auckland, as the epi-centre of Oceania, brought together a carousel of cowgirls and cowboys dressed to impress. Hibiscus and Koru met cowboy hats and boot strutters, the many Poly-Donatella Versaces', unashamedly brave.

By the end of the night, it was clear that what we experienced was more than a concert. It was a reminder of how music travels across oceans and generations, how it binds the Moana peoples in ways that words alone cannot. Artists like Maoli continue to shape the cultural landscape of our region, not by force, but by resonance. By speaking to who we are, where we come from, and the shared heartbeat that carries us forward.



## REFLECTION



### Living in the Present Moment

*Rev Dr Susan Thompson*

**I have just returned from the South Island. In Ōtautahi, I saw a friend who has recently entered residential care. She's younger than me but is living with early onset dementia.**

Dementia is a tough disease and it was hard to see its effects on someone who was once full of life. My friend smiled and took my hand; we looked at photos and walked around the garden; I told her I loved her and would be back to visit her again.

As we age it's likely that we will all be touched by similar kinds of experiences. Always sobering, they may make us reflect on the fragility of our own lives and the things that are most important to us. Seeing my friend reminded me that none of us knows what the future holds. We may have all sorts of plans and priorities but life can change in a heartbeat, upending all our hopes and assumptions. In this new reality we're forced to rethink our priorities as the things that once seemed so important become less so.

It's likely that we will need to learn to live with a far more modest set of hopes focused not on the future but on the present moment. For my friend, the most important thing now is the present and the way those who love her share it with her. This means my hopes for future visits are very simple: to try to create small moments of joy, however fleeting; to stay close to my friend in times of sadness or distress; to wrap her in love so she knows she is always cherished and to seek to be for her the presence of God, in whom we live and move and have our being.

As the new year begins, I'm less inclined than I once was to make fixed plans or to look too far into the future. Instead I'm more interested in wanting to make the most of every moment, for as the Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh once wrote, "our true home is in the present moment" and "to live in the present moment is a miracle".



## WORLD NEWS



### A Poem for Peace, Healing & a Nuclear-Free Future

Teatuahe Teiti-Gierlach, a Mā'ohi poet from the Hawaiian Kingdom, writes about oppression and injustice from an Indigenous lens.

**Touchstone** shares a poem she wrote in recognition of the 30th anniversary since French nuclear testing in the Pacific.

*For Mā'ohi Nui, the Marshall Islands, and Kiribati  
radiation may rest in our bones  
for as long as we live*

*but so does our fenua  
so does our salty sea  
so do our tupuna*

*we may never know an island  
free from nuclear scars  
we may never know ourselves  
free from colonial scars*

*but we know what it means to heal*

*from Mā'ohi Nui to the Marshall Islands to Kiribati  
our people know what it means  
to survive genocide after genocide  
invader after invader  
loss after loss*

*our people know what it means  
to keep loving  
creating, growing, healing*

*our people know what it means  
to wrap our grief  
in 'auti  
to weave tiare tahiti around our broken hearts  
rub mono'i into swollen skin  
and stand again and again*

*so that our mo'otua  
may know an island  
free from radiation  
so that our mo'otua  
will grow into bodies  
free from radiation*

*from Mā'ohi Nui to the Marshall Islands to Kiribati  
we stand  
hip to hip  
hand in hand  
voices rising to our sacred sky  
reminding our Atua  
that we are still here  
we are still theirs*

*may this week remind us  
that we are not alone in this fight  
we are not alone in this grief  
we are not alone in this life*

*our brothers and sisters from across our ocean  
carry the same stories*

*may we return, years from now  
and celebrate*





## Wesley Historical Society

The Wesley Historical Society Journal 2025 edition is currently being printed prior to distribution to members. WHS President Ian Faulkner presents a precis of the articles included in the coming publication.

The Society aims to record material that tells the Methodist story in Aotearoa and the Pacific, as a way of reviving memories and capturing untold (even if controversial or

parallel) stories; and is open to receiving possible articles for review. The Society encourages all who have an interest in where we have been as a denomination, to anchor understandings of where we are today, and to inform our journey into the future.

The articles include:

- A revision of Tamati Wake Nene's baptism date, by Rev Dr Gary Clover, ensuring that the record of this significant Ngāpuhi chief, kauri trader and government advisor is accurate.
- The impact on the spirituality of Methodists as viewed through the hymns of Charles Wesley researched and written by Rev Norman Brookes
- The impact of Paula Havea, a Tongan Missionary to the Solomon Islands, as written by Rev Kepa Moa. This was commissioned by the Revs. Phil Taylor and Alan Leadley, themselves missionaries to the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea respectively, and discovered by Ian Faulkner in Phil Taylor's papers.
- Challenges discovered as Geoff Allen researched material for the play *Amazing Love*, the story of Samuel Leigh and Catherine Clewes, that was staged at the 2022 Bicentennial Conference held in Kerikeri.
- An extended article written by Rev Dr David Bell entitled 'We are the memories – a vanishing connexion', exploring some of the pressures that Te Hāhi Weteriana has experienced in recent decades.
- Rev Dr Lynne Wall's review of Josie Laird's novel *Miss Bumby's Mission*. This tells the story of Mary Anna Bumby, the sister of Rev John Bumby, who accompanied her brother on his missionary endeavours, following his arrival in March 1839. Miss Bumby is credited with introducing honeybees to Aotearoa.
- The obituary for Honoured Member Rev Donald Phillips, written by Rev Dr Terry Wall.

The Society administers the Gilmore-Smith Trust that funds research into Methodist History in Aotearoa.

The business of the Society is funded by members who pay an annual subscription of \$35.00. One Journal is published each year, and the Society releases other occasional publications.

Details about membership and the Gilmore-Smith Trust research possibilities may be made in the first instance to President Ian Faulkner by email: [ianf@methodist.org.nz](mailto:ianf@methodist.org.nz) or [ian.faulkner2017@gmail.com](mailto:ian.faulkner2017@gmail.com).



### **Fijian Congregations Recommit to God**

*Iliesa Tora*

**January is an important month for Fijian congregations in Aotearoa. Tradition comes to the fore in the form of ‘fakawela’, ‘fakapauta and ‘veisui, and Fijian Methodists celebrate a new start in their walk with God.**

Traditional practices include fakawela’ (the giving of gifts to rivals or cousins), ‘fakapauta (pouring powder on individuals) and ‘veisui (pouring water on individuals), and Fijian congregations follow an annual programme of recommitting to God and His calling in the first week of January every year.

At the beginning of the 2026 congregation members across Aotearoa participated in a week of recommitment or ‘Macawa ni Veivakavou’.

During daily evening services, messages from the pulpit focused on what members needed to do as they take the important step of recommitting their lives to God. The week rounded off with the service of ‘Veiyalayalati’ or committing to God and renewing our vows with Him.

Wellington and Auckland congregations were lucky to have Rev Dr Taniela Rawaqa as their guest, initially as speaker at the first Sunday service of the year in the capital city, and guest at the week-long recommitment programme. Rev Dr Rawaqa is one of the four Fijian ministers selected by the Methodist Church in Fiji to be a lecturer in the Master of Theology programme being introduced for the first time at the church’s own theological and training institution in Davuilevu.

For the Koroturaga congregation in Wellington, the month also saw the farewelling of longtime pastor, Rev Isikeli Cawanikawai and wife, Radini Sera, who have moved to the South Island to take up their new assignment in Invercargill. The special farewell service was held at the Taranaki chapel on Sunday, 25 January, where Rev Isikeli and Radini Sera were both farewelled in church and traditionally by members of the congregation.

We were honoured to have Fiji’s newly appointed Ambassador to Geneva, Ilaitia Tamata, present at the service. He attended services at the Taranaki chapel during his study days in the capital years ago.

The Sunday service also farewelled students who were returning to the 2026 school year. 2026 is going to be another busy year for the Fijian Wasewase, with many important events included in the church calendar.

The main focus will be on living out our faith in God and being practical about that, following in the path set by the Lord Jesus Christ, as Fijians go out to bear witness to their Lord and King.