



Alpine Presbytery

resourcing the braided river

Newsletter 20th December 2023

Availability over Christmas/January

This is the last Newsletter for the year. Gail will be back at work from 8th January, with the first Newsletter due out on Thursday 11th January.

Martin Stewart is about off and on in January; Abi Trevathan will not be available until the end of January.

Christmas Greetings

From Presbytery Moderator, Rev Phyll Harris

In my working days, or nights, before ministry I had the privilege of being at many births of babies bursting into our world in the wee small hours of the night. There was always something poignant about new life breaking into our world in the depth of the night. A divine hush silently proclaiming new life had arrived. There was something about the night that prompted the question "what was it about the night Lord?"

What was it about the night Lord?

What was it about you making your entrance into our world in the deep dark of the night?

Silently slipping in when few would notice,

If you wanted room to be born then surely you would have booked ahead,

If you wanted room to be born surely you would have arrived bright and early in the light of day,

What was it about the night Lord?

If you wanted to be known and recognised surely coming when more than a few shepherds were awake would have been a better idea.

If you wanted to be known and recognised surely being born into a palace and not a stable would have helped, then maybe more than the wise men could have found you.

What was it about the night Lord?

While little town of Bethlehem lay sleeping,

While shepherds their watch were keeping,

That Silent night, that Holy night.

What was it about the night Lord?

The night, the deepest darkness is where my light is needed to shine the way,

The night, my little one, the night is where this world cries out to me in pain,

The night is where hearts need me the most,

The night is the place of stillness where all business has stopped,

The night makes room for me to move in lives filled with frantic rush,

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The night opens the eyes of some to be astounded by my wonder, just as the shepherds were,
 The night can lead wise ones to follow the signs and find me in the most unexpected of places,
 The night can see miracles birthed for those who trust in me, just as Mary did.
 The night, little one, is simply where my light is needed the most.

Emanuel, God with us,
 Will you take our night, our deep darkness, will you be born into it again this Christmas,
 Emmanuel, God with us,
 Will you take our night and silently shine your light to make it holy as you did so long ago?
 Silent night, holy night
 Emmanuel, God with us, shatter our darkness with your light.

Meri Kirihimete e te whanua Karaiti,

Merry Christmas to everyone in the Alpine whanau of Jesus Christ.

From Presbytery Executive Officer, Rev Martin Stewart

Kia ora! Greetings!

Well, that year went fast! Just no time at all ago I was a little freckle-faced kid all excited because it was the week before Christmas! Now I am a middle-aged man, a little bit exhausted but deeply grateful for the pause, and the remembering about the wonder of incarnation and the sheer dimensions of God's grace poured out for freckle-faced kids not quite getting it, and all the rest of us besides. God's poetry of love... unto us a child is born...

It hasn't been an easy year in the community and national psyche though sometimes I wonder if we overstate our struggles. We do not have to look far to see tragedy and suffering, evil and the terrible abuse of power - we are buffeted by all of this, for sure, but we live far from the worst of human misery and surely share the 'lucky country' label with our Australian neighbours. But the buffeting has many forms. It's getting harder to do and be church in our season... There is a lot of pressure as we face change. I liked the simplicity of what this is all about that Darryl Tempero stretched for recently in his reflection at Rev Josh Olds' ordination - the profound call of Jesus to 'come and see', and our responding to that gracious invitation, by relaxing into it, and sharing what we find. Maybe that is our summer invitation!

I want to thank everyone who has contributed to the life of 'Us' - serving in our Alpine whanau. Most of us contribute at the local level in our communities (Us the local church); some do this in distinctive ministries - schools, hospitals, prisons (Us the wider community); some do this regionally (Us the Alpine Presbytery), and others nationally (Us the wider PCANZ). Of course everyone involved in the wider is also local, so it rightly becomes impossible to make clear distinctions.

I have the privilege of being connected to all of our church communities one way or another through my work for the Presbytery - often through one or maybe two people, and sometimes with more. It always warms my heart to experience the commitment, care and passion of these people even if the reason we are in contact is because of something challenging. Whatever would we do without these leaders among us! Thank you all of you for your awesome service!

May the grace of God envelope you as you take some time off to rest in the lazy days of summer!



PCANZ Moderator's Christmas message 2023

You can read the message here:

www.presbyterian.org.nz/moderators-christmas-message-2023-the-gift-of-hope-in-difficult-times

Newsletter Items: Please share this Newsletter around your Parish, especially with members of Session/Parish Council and all office bearers.

Details of events, or requests to be added to the distribution list should be emailed to gail@alpinepresbytery.org

Presbytery Directory: All Parish Offices have been given a log-on to Infodile, so please contact them initially if you need any contact details.

Due to our obligations under the Privacy Act, logon access is not openly available; anyone wanting this should send a request to Gail at gail@alpinepresbytery.org, advising of their position in their Parish or the Presbytery.

PCANZ Ethics & Risk Management Workshop

Dates for PCANZ online half-day Ethics & Risk Management Workshops for 2024

- Tues 27 February; 9-12:30
- Tues 16 April; 1-4.30
- Tues 4 June; 9-12:30
- Tues 6 August; 1-4.30
- Tues 15 October; 9-12:30
- Tues 19 November (tba - either 9-12:30 or 1-4.30)

To register, email Kate Wilson at kate@presbyterian.org.nz

From Last week's Newsletter

- **People helping People—PSUSI Newsletter**
- **Ministry Conference 2024**
- **Vacancies:**
 - **Glenfield Community Church, 0.5 part time Nationally Ordained Minister**
 - **Children and Families Ministry Leader, Hope Presbyterian Hornby**
 - **Vacancies at ICHC**

Call for Research Participants

Laidlaw Centre for Church Leadership is working on a research project to support churches in Aotearoa in training more pastors and ministry leaders.

About the Project

This project seeks to understand the experiences and challenges faced by emerging leaders called to pastoral ministry in the Christian church in Aotearoa. The aim is to identify barriers to entering pastoral ministry or becoming ordained ministers, so that support can be put in place for potential leaders. By identifying barriers that require support, it also aims to facilitate the training of more pastors/leaders, to address a leadership shortage in Aotearoa. Results from this research will be summarised in a report, which will be distributed by Laidlaw Centre for Church Leadership to pastors and denominational leaders in Aotearoa New Zealand, with the aim of facilitating support.

Why Participate

By participating in this survey, challenges and supports can be identified to help identify ways that more pastors and leaders can be trained and supported. Your participation will also support training of ministry leaders for other denominations and churches across Aotearoa.

How to Participate

We are looking for anonymous survey responses from three groups of people:

1. **Pastors/Leaders involved in the process of training new ministry leaders or ordained pastors.** We want to hear your experiences of training leaders to identify helpful support systems, potential barriers, and identify what the expectations are for successful ministry leaders in Aotearoa. This survey takes approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. Link: <https://forms.office.com/r/jQwDs0ZeS7>
2. **Recently ordained pastors / leaders (ordained in the last 5 years)** We want to hear the experiences of recently ordained pastors to find out what has been helpful and what has been challenging, so that support can be put in place in the training process. This survey takes approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. Link: <https://forms.office.com/r/WTfhiUYjax>
3. **Those called to ministry who did not complete training processes, or chose to pursue other vocational calls.** We want to hear from this group to identify any potential barriers or support needs to help support leaders to train for ministry. Link: <https://forms.office.com/r/wVWvm23Rja>

We are also looking to interview a small group of people to hear more about their experiences.

All surveys will be anonymous. Individuals or churches will not be named.

Please forward this research to anyone you think fits one of these criteria, or, if you fit the criteria, complete the relevant survey.

Resources

A selection of resources and links to resources to assist you with your work and outreach can be found on our website here: alpinepresbytery.org/resources/

Online Worship Options

Visit the "Resources" page of our website to view the links from those of our churches offering this.

Alpine Presbytery

Culture & Strategic Framework
[Click here](#) to download this document, updated September 2020