



Alpine Presbytery

resourcing the braided river

Newsletter 19th December 2024

*This is the last Newsletter for 2024. The next Newsletter will be mid-January, with the cut off for items for inclusion being **Thursday 16th January***

*For a child is born to us,
a son is given to us.*

The government will rest on his shoulders.

And he will be called:

Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,

Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:6)

These words are so familiar to us at this time of year that we can be in danger of losing the astounding way in which God brought these words to pass some seven hundred years later. In writing a sermon last week I was reminded not only of this stretch of time but also of the four hundred years of silence that preceded Jesus' birth. There was no recorded prophetic word given by God from Malachi until God moved to fulfil this word. Four hundred years of silence! God's silence is not a thought that spring to mind when thinking about the birth of Jesus and yet four hundred years of God's silence preceded the most significant act of God's redemptive love as God became flesh and dwelled among us. Eugene Peterson once said, "any understanding of God that doesn't take into account God's silence is only a half truth."

God may have been silent, but the world was anything but silent. Not unlike our world today, it was full of the noise of those seeking power at the expense of the poor and oppressed. The noise of those clamouring for power as one people group clashes with another determined theirs is the only voice that needs to be heard.

While the one voice the world needed, that of God, was silent.

What broke the four hundred years of God's silence? The cry of a newborn baby! As God moved in the most unlikely of ways to speak divine love into the world. Alain Emerson and Adam Cox write "For to us a child is born. In one way childbirth is the perfect symbol of a new beginning, but as we turn the pages of the New Testament, we come to realize it is the birth of this child that will impact not just his own family but also carry the destiny of the whole world... A fresh infusion of grace is coming. God himself is coming. Incognito."

That is a great hope for us to hold on to this Christmas season.

When the noise of the world seems overwhelming, and God seems silent we can trust a fresh infusion of grace is coming. God himself is coming, though God may not come in the way we expect.

When injustice prevails and threatens to tear our families, communities and world apart, we can pray for a fresh infusion of God's grace. We must also realize that God might want to use our mouths, our minds, our heart, hands and feet for God's justice to be seen and heard.

This Christmas when the heavens shout back at us with the silence of God...we can lift our heads in hope... "A fresh infusion of grace is coming. God is coming. Incognito!"

Mere Kirihemete e te whanau Karaiti—Merry Christmas to all in our family in Christ.

Phyll Harris, Alpine Presbytery Moderator

Staff Leave

Dan Spragg is on leave 21 December to 19 January

Abi Trevathan is on leave 21 December to 21 January

Gail is taking the public holidays and the first week of January, so will be back doing Presbytery work on 15 January

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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 sent to Gail Weaver

Presbytery Directory:

All Parish Offices have been given a log-on to Infoodle, 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 Weaver, Office Support, advising of their position in their Parish or the Presbytery.

The Hoon Hay Parish hosted its annual 'Carols on the Lawn' event on Monday, 9 December. The Stedfast Brass led in the singing of an hour's Christmas Carols. The weather was fine and warm and there was a great turnout of folk from the local community. The sausage sizzle was popular, as were the face painting and craft activities for children. The parish op shop was also open during the afternoon.





LOVE IS... NOT VIOLENT...

This Christmas, as we celebrate the birth of the Prince of Peace, let us reflect on the true meaning of love. Love is patient, kind, and protects (1 Corinthians 13). It never harms or controls. If you, or someone you know, are experiencing family violence, please know there is help available.

Reach out to one of the following helplines:
 Shine (0508 744 633), Women's Refuge (0800 733 843),
 Lifeline (0800 543 354), Victim Support (0800 842 846),
 Youthline (0800 376 633), or the Elder Abuse Response Service (0800 32 668 65).

Let's make this Christmas a season of true peace and goodwill, reflecting the love of Christ in our homes and communities.

MERRY CHRISTMAS

Hana Popea
 PCANZ White Ribbon Ambassador



Are you free at the moment?

This seems like an innocent question, but in an email or text message it is a **big red flag**

These messages always give the appearance of coming from someone you know, but dig a little deeper and you will see that the email address isn't quite right, or the phone number is not actually in your contacts.

Spam emails have recently been purporting to be from Phyll Harris but, regardless of who they appear to come from, please exercise caution and always verify the request via a known email or phone number before responding.

Stay Scam Savvy this Christmas!

PCANZ Response to the Recommendations of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care

On 21 November, Council wrote to the Church with an update on our work related to the Royal Commission into Abuse in Care, and thanked the Council appointed task group that has assisted Council in its response. We advised Council has completed its response to the Commission's recommendations and that these would be published once finalised and translated to the other official languages of New Zealand - Te Reo Māori and New Zealand Sign Language.

In the December edition of Council News, published Monday 9 December, we noted that our Church's response needed a few iterations to ensure we get it right and fully commit to the mahi needed.

From the last Newsletter

- PCANZ Moderator's Christmas Message
- Presbytery Gathering: 9 –10 May 2025
- Inductions & Ordinations
- Closure of St Kentigern's Burwood United Parish, Christchurch
- St Andrew's Ashburton 150th celebrations
- Sister Eveleen Retreat House

Coming Up

Ordination of Luke Blackbeard: 26 January, 2.30pm, at The Village, Bryndwr

Closing Service for St Kentigern's Burwood Uniting Parish: 23 March

Presbytery Gathering: 9-10 May 2025

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

This work has now been completed. Also completed are the translations for which we are grateful for the assistance Deaf Aotearoa, and the assistance of Te Aka Puahou and Professor Taiarahia Black. Professor Black has also prepared a separate discussion document on, The Value of Translating the Royal Commission Recommendations and PCANZ Responses into Te Reo Māori.

The Church's response to the Commission's recommendations in English and Te Reo Māori, and the New Zealand Sign Language translation, as well as the Discussion Document are all available on the Church website: www.presbyterian.org.nz/about-us/contact-us/historic-abuse

The Church's response accepts the Commission's recommendations. We will focus on those recommendations that apply directly to the Church or require the Church to partner with and cooperate with the government, the proposed Care Safety regime, and work in partnership with survivors of abuse. Where the Commission has not directed specific recommendations to the Church, the Church nonetheless acknowledges those recommendations and will support their accomplishment

We have committed to participating in Puretumu Torowhānui and cooperating with the government over the adoption and implementation of a nationwide safeguarding regulatory framework, which the Church welcomes.

The Church has noted in its response that it requires more time in order to take the planning of its responses as seriously as this work deserves.

One of the Commission's recommendations is that our Moderator make a public acknowledgement and apology to survivors, their whanau and support networks for historic abuse. This is to come. While the Church has previously made sincere apologies at a Commission hearing, and in its response to the Commission findings, the Church's Moderator, Right Rev Rose Luxford, as well as the Moderator of Te Aka Puahou, Rev Tamiana Thrupp, and Moderator of the Pacific Presbytery, Rev Arona Tusega, are working on an apology which requires input from our Church's survivors. Initially it was thought consultation would be completed by mid to late November, however feedback from our survivors is that this sensitive process cannot be rushed; therefore, our survivors will have all the space and time they need, working to a timeframe that meets their needs.

Our Church has acknowledged the difficulty and frustration survivors of historic abuse face in distinguishing between the Presbyterian Church and the seven regions of Presbyterian Support - which are separate legal entities. We separate entities must find a way to work together to make the process to be heard and seek justice easier. Our Church is ready and willing to work with our affiliated social service agencies and schools, and we will initiate this.

We recognise the work we have ahead of us will be challenging. As a Church, we are committed to changing what we need to change, learning where we need to learn, listening where we need to listen, and doing better for all the people in our care past and present.

*Loving God of justice and peace
refresh our minds and stir our hearts.
Show us where we have lost our way.
Let us learn from our past mistakes.
Help us to see a way forward.
And in doing so
May You bring comfort, peace, and healing to all.*

Council now invites all our congregations, all Presbyterians, to share the Church's response.

Exciting Opportunity: Ministry Team Leader for a Restart Mission in Rural Mid-Canterbury

Alpine Presbytery is seeking a **Team Leader** to spearhead an inspiring new ministry initiative in the Methven-Rakaia-Mayfield areas of Mid-Canterbury.

This **half-time ministry position** (initially for five years) is rooted in the vibrant communities that were part of the recently closed Plains Presbyterian parish. The closure marks a bold step toward reimagining what church can look like in this new season. With a renewed vision and a willingness to explore fresh approaches, we're "casting the net on the other side of the boat."

We are looking for someone who is:

- Energetic and organised,
- Thoughtful and faithful,
- Pastoral at heart, and
- Passionate about finding creative ways to "be church" in a changing world.

Key Details:

- You will work closely with the Presbytery-led Development Team.
- The role is based in Mid-Canterbury.
- A related half-time, Methven-based seedling ministry is also being planned, providing additional opportunities for collaboration and growth.

If this sounds like a calling for you, we would love to hear from you! Note that there is an additional half time ministry role in Ashburton that this role could be paired with.

For more information contact **Abi Trevathan** (resourcing@alpinepresbytery.org)

To express your interest, send your application to **Executive Officer Martin Stewart** by **20th January 2025** (executiveofficer@alpinepresbytery.org)

Ministry Opportunity: Alpine Presbytery Youth Enabler

Alpine Presbytery is seeking a **Youth Enabler** to play a pivotal role in fostering vibrant and collaborative youth ministries across the Presbytery. This position focuses on building connections, providing strategic support, and empowering local churches to develop and sustain effective youth ministry programs.

About the Role:

This part-time position (15 hours per week) is based in Christchurch, with regular travel across the Presbytery region for meetings and events. Flexible working arrangements, including some evening and weekend commitments, may be required.

We Are Looking For Someone With:

- Strong relational skills and the ability to foster connections and collaboration.
- Experience in youth ministry leadership or support.
- Strategic thinking and planning capabilities.
- Effective communication and representation skills.
- Pastoral care abilities and a heart for supporting ministry leaders.
- Strong organizational and budgeting skills.
- Familiarity with the Presbyterian Church context, or a willingness to learn.

How to Apply: For more information or to apply, please contact **Abi Trevathan**: resourcing@alpinepresbytery.org

St Johns Presbyterian Church, Hawera: Minister - Full Time

St Johns, Hawera is calling a full time Minister to serve and lead its congregation. This position is one of leading a ministry team including a Pastoral Assistant and a Youth Pastor (both part time). More specific details about the role are set out in the Parish Profile. Further information is available by contacting the MSB convener. The Ministry Settlement Board welcomes expressions of interest along with CV and will follow these up in confidence. For further information contact Rev John Mattock (Convenor, MSB) jandcmattock@kinect.co.nz

You can watch the Vacancy video here: youtu.be/DhOPLokGa18

Office Administrator Community— St Paul's Trinity Pacific, Christchurch

The key areas of accountability for this position are in Leadership Support, Leadership in Mission, Pastoral Care, Spiritual Nurture, and Health & Safety

This position will support Property and Finance, Rev Makesi Alatimu and the Church Council to:

- Work in harmony with our Ministry Teams, to support Reverend Makesi Alatimu and have a firm grasp on the purpose, values and strategy of St Paul's Trinity Pacific Presbyterian Church and align key leadership teams with its mission: "Connecting Christian faith with everyday life in the heart of the city"
- Seeks to provide support to Ministry groups in church such as youth leaders and youth ministry.
- Communicate effectively with our young people.
- St Paul's will support you with professional development and training in line with our church purpose, values and mission.

For more information or to apply contact maa.trinitypacific@xtra.co.nz

To download the Position Description, go to tinyurl.com/ykjmw58d