As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth...
So is my word that goes out from my mouth, it will not return to me empty...

Isaiah 55:10a & 11a

Mount Tapuae-o-uenuku, Marlborough
Welcome to our winter edition of The Witness.

Did you notice the festival of Pentecost a month ago? Or were we too tied up in knots discussing the plusses and minuses of General Synod decisions the previous week so that Pentecost became a blur on our ecclesiastical radar – if we noticed it at all?

Even though the first disciples have experienced the reality of the resurrection (around 500 of them according to St Paul) and the baton of faith has clearly been passed on to them, there is a sense of ‘going through the motions’ in this early church. Although they were meeting regularly for prayer, and to elect a replacement for Judas, there is no indication of excitement. But then on the Hebrew festival of Pentecost (as they were gathering together as usual) the Holy Spirit was poured out upon them and in an instant everything changed.

That change can most dramatically be seen in Peter who a few weeks earlier had denied he knew Jesus in order to save his skin. Now he is out in the middle of the street, supported by the other disciples, preaching a blinder of a sermon – an uneducated Galilean fisherman, now filled with confidence and power.

To read through the rest of the book of Acts is to see a church of vision and purpose – a church devoted to the apostles’ teaching, to the breaking bread, to the fellowship and to prayer; a church that shared its resources with those in need. They still had their theological tensions that needed to be resolved but they were determined that this would not deviate the church from its mission which was all about Jesus.

With Motion 29, General Synod made some decisions that allow parts of the provincial church to proceed in a way that our synod believes to be inconsistent with scripture. But it also set processes in motion to enable us, as a diocese, to remain faithful to where we stand.

I am grateful for that and determined that we be guided, not by the loudest voice in General Synod, but by the authority of scripture, the centrality of Christ and the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit. I hope that is reflected in the stories throughout this Witness and in the life of nelsonanglican!

With every blessing

The Cathedral takes ‘Good Friday’ out to the city.

Photo: Rosalina McCarthy

Contributing Photographers: The Guardian (Motueka), Stuff/Nelson Mail, Rosalina McCarthy, Petra Roper, Albin Hillert (WCC)
The first of February 2018 is etched in the minds of many Ruby Bay and Mapua residents. Cyclone Fehi hit with a vengeance. Within the space of an hour, homes and streets were flooded. The speed at which it happened even prevented some people from moving their cars.

Hills Community Church (HCC) was opened as the local Civil Defence Centre – a place where people evacuated could register for help and receive comfort in the form of food, and a warm welcome. About 50 people needing assistance flowed through the doors, but many others streamed in offering accommodation, food and support to those who needed it. Tea and coffee and baking was also provided and members of the church were on hand to offer help.

On the following Sunday, folk from HCC headed to the centre of Ruby Bay where they cooked sausages and delivered them to properties where residents were working hard at cleaning up debris-strewn, affected properties.

The week following the cyclone Graeme Stradling (a local) co-ordinated teams from HCC who gathered with shovels and wheelbarrows and were allocated properties in need of clean-up support. Church volunteers began an informal door-to-door information-gathering process, to make sure each household was ‘OK’ and to ascertain what ongoing support was required. Many wanted to tell their stories. Residents were tired and the enormity of the situation was sinking in. Advice was given about precious items and also information on free counselling and appointments available through GPs.

As a direct outcome, clear needs were identified, such as whiteware removal, so teams loaded trailers and took these to the dump. Also, Council was informed of safety and health issues that needed to be addressed quickly.

Amongst all of this there were wonderful connections made and perfect ‘God-timed’ moments. A Civil Defence debriefing was held with HCC and information was handed over to a welfare support person appointed to offer ongoing support for vulnerable people.

A week later, a second severe weather event (Cyclone Gita) had many of us on alert. Folk from Ruby Bay battened down the hatches and many left their homes to shelter with friends and relatives. Thankfully for Ruby Bay, the strong winds did not coincide with high tide. We are very mindful of other communities that were severely impacted by Gita.

For many years, HCC has been designated as a Civil Defence welfare centre. God’s timing was evident as just three months before these weather events, a group gathered at the church connecting Red Cross, Police, Fire Service, Civil Defence and the church to assess and strengthen our preparedness for an emergency response in Mapua.

One of the most noticeable effects of the storm was the loss of people’s gardens, the salty water killing many plants. HCC has partnered with a local community initiative to provide free plants and compost for those affected, and advice about what to plant. Gill Bartlett who initiated the idea said, “I am so grateful for the support this project has received from businesses and community volunteers. Mapua is a community with great heart. It is more than plants we are growing – we are hoping, in a small way, to grow more community connections.”

Throughout this event HCC has endeavoured to meet people at their point of need with loving, caring, practical responses. However, we are aware we were not able to visit every home and some households may not have had the right amount of support. This is valuable learning for the future.

Connie Sherlock and Vanessa Lynch
What has brought you both to this retreat ministry?
Having both retired from our professional life, we find that our combined experience and skills can be better utilised in a shared ministry of recovery and encouragement. Our experience includes counselling, healing, nursing, community work, overseas missionary work, music and different cultural backgrounds. Although we are culturally different, our passion to help was shaped under similar nurturing conditions.

In the long history of Christian tradition the concept of a ‘retreat’ or temporary withdrawal from everyday life, has been an important part of personal spiritual formation. How can we make people aware of the value of this in 21st century life?

The issues of self-care and self-improvement are concerning, particularly in the professional community where stress can affect judgement, decision making, and levels of wellness. The demand for competitive edge against time limits force many to turn to quick-fix remedies with addictive risks. The spiritual component is often ignored or lightly touched; this contributes to inner tensions and conflicts. Retreat explores all areas of the body mind and spirit for de-stressing and restoring optimal capacity. Spiritual exhaustion manifests with physical symptoms, and often treated as such, but fails to explore the root causes. Addressing the impact of spirituality on our physical and mental wellbeing is therefore a big part of the retreat.

Evelyn Underhill wrote of ‘loitering with intent’, getting equipped or stepping aside from the normal routines of life. How do we open our senses to be ready to listen to God?

Our motto is ‘Come apart before you come apart’. The first step in coming to Retreat is to expect that God is ready and willing to speak into our lives. The next step is to develop an intentionality in this, and to deliberately set time aside with God, outside of our normal routines and busy life. Loitering with intent is one way that takes us outside of structured norms into the open wilderness to be able to hear God more clearly in our life’s journey.

Jesus himself took his disciples aside away from the crowd to be alone with him, to refresh and refocus. Refocusing is integrated within the whole retreat process, but staying focused is strengthened through developing godly strategies within existing systems in peoples’ lives.

What part do prayer and the healing presence of the Holy Spirit play in our time of retreat?

Prayer sets the platform to a more intimate relationship with the Holy Spirit. It takes the person deeper into the soul through the chaotic level of self conflicts, fear and uncertainty; surrendering into total humility before God. From this position, connectedness with the Holy Spirit intensifies, as we let go and let God. God longs to reveal himself, and for us to know a closeness to him. As we lean back onto him he ministers to us, to heal past hurts and wounds, and lead us into the wholeness we are designed for, as unique individuals that he loves.

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Le Vai Ola
the water of life

Le Vai Ola is a Christian-based restful countryside boutique retreat in the Teal Valley Nelson, where you can experience peace by the river, waterfall, garden, mountain and valley. Hilary put some questions to Christina and Nanai Naseri about their retreat centre and ministry.
What do people discover when they come to your retreat centre?

People are guided to rediscover who they really are in terms of their identity and as an image of their Creator imprinted deep in the soul. Through times of silence, prayer and reflection, further connectedness can be facilitated, which lifts them to a higher level of awareness in their intimacy with God, and of his divine purpose. Self-discovery is an important part of reflective conversations throughout the whole retreat process. The exciting discovery is of the divine power within, and the capacity to believe and to hold our faith, regardless of circumstances.

A sense of peace greets the retreatant; it is peace released from within that has been suppressed by the conditioned self, elusive under normal pressures of life, yet always available. Many have commented on finding peace as they seek God in times of quiet here, or through the atmosphere of this place, set in a valley in the countryside, by a little river and waterfall, and with a small chapel for personal use.

Some people seek ‘directed’ retreats and others a private time on their own. What are the strengths of each and how do you cater for both of them?

‘Directed retreat’ is mostly experiential in approach, and explores the need for continual learning and opening up further to God. It involves the exploration of functional processes and systems under different conditions, and identifying pressure points and blockages. It challenges views and beliefs from which people respond or react. It encourages exploration of potentials and a fresh awareness of God and self. It uses time frames in a progressive manner, culminating in a sense of closure and a clearer direction ahead as the person leaves the retreat.

‘Private times’ approach is more to the inner self, where the retreatant spends time alone with God, exploring the power of intimacy through silence and prayer. People usually bring their own prepared programs or spiritual activities. Some just rest or use soaking prayers with music.

The Le Vai Ola Healing Ministry

Christina has been trained in healing models in USA, Australia, Wales, and England, and out of that was used in healing in overseas missions. She founded the Nelson Healing Rooms in 2007 and trained teams from a number of Nelson churches. Currently Christina is Area Chaplain for the International healing Order of St Luke the Physician. We are also members of the Mission Order of Saint Paul, which supports our healing ministry. Our skills are basically in facilitating the process of healing as conduits of the power and authority of Jesus.

With our outreach arm we have conducted healing and training seminars outside of Nelson, and overseas. There is a growing interest in healing as well as the need for guidance and support for those with the gift of healing, and as such, we can be available to visit any group or church by arrangement.

Contact details: 7 Teal Valley Rd, Hira RD1 Nelson
Phone 03 545 2409  Mobile 027 256 9968

Christina and Nanai Naseri.
The 2018 conference was a resounding success with nearly 100 delegates from all over the world. What kind of meaningful actions will lead us to a gospel harvest?

My time at the IRCA conference was inspiring. It had an effect that I did not expect. It is impossible to adequately describe the thoughts, conversations and connections that have spurred me on an unexpected journey. So instead I shall simply state that I am on a journey. A journey of seeking information on how we are to face the future as the church.

I shall attempt to digest some seven or so books over the next six months. Each looks at various aspects of change in church or society. At the conference I was struck by global trends indicating significant movement in the underpinnings of cultural, geographical, governmental, organisational and institutional assumptions globally. Many of the assumptions that underly the way we do things are being challenged. The world is changing. Standing out like a sore thumb is the worldwide pressure on resources and the organisation of people in ways that stress community relationships. Isolation and hopelessness are on the rise in the face of complex global challenges. How is our church meeting disaffected and disorientated people with the gospel?

What does this have to do with rural church? Everything. As one person rather insightfully observed: ‘rural churches are like the canary in a coal mine.’ The health of the rural church alerts us to larger issues. That’s a big call, I thought. It seems worth considering the validity of this claim, in a country where sheep well outnumber the people.

Mark Short, National Director of The Bush Church Aid Society, which assists remote churches in Australia, said to me, ‘Sometimes putting something down is good stewardship...’ These words stuck for me. As did the concluding personal remarks of another Australian who summed up the conference with imagery that could be interpreted both literally and metaphorically: ‘We all come from different places around the world. Wherever we come from, there is good soil. Things can grow – it is just that some of us may need to change the way we do things; to tweak things a bit in order for the ground to bring forth its harvest.’

I am challenged to grapple with this question: What kind of meaningful actions will lead us to a gospel harvest? I come away from this conference seeking to learn more about the innovations we require in our churches in New Zealand, so that we can grow in a dramatically changing climate.

Jonathan Wasley – Assistant Priest, Nativity Parish Blenheim
Networking to build strength and resilience

Dreaming of what the future of rural ministry could look like in 2022 was a catch cry of the recent IRCA (International Rural Churches Association) conference. If you were asked what your dream was for the rural Church what would it be? As the conference progressed a small New Zealand group developed two strong dreams.

Our dream is that by 2022 there would be a strategic plan and goals in place for Rural Ministry in the diocese. The rural church has been seen as a smaller form of church with little thought as to how it is quite different in practice and in life, from urban churches. An example of a strategy could be that we identify and train people to be strong leaders of rural parishes. This could often require a different set of skills from urban counterparts.

Another strategy could be the encouragement and the use of technology which could free time. For instance, how many sermons are crafted each week by those leading rural churches? If once a month a sermon was provided electronically, imagine what those six to eight hours could be used for?

The second dream was about education. In a rapidly changing world in which many things are becoming more specialised, the church in general has not thought about the selection and training of clergy or lay, with the aim of specifically training them for rural ministry. Our NZ group with their knowledge could not identify any regular recognised courses that are available in NZ.

In Britain it is mandatory that anyone going into rural ministry must attend a three-day introductory course. Imagine the misunderstandings and heartaches that could be avoided, if we were able to offer a culturally adapted version of this course. Thinking of the collective wisdom and energy across the rural sector in NZ, we could even craft a block course for people engaged in rural ministry. To be the most fertile this should be drawing on the wisdom across the denominational boundaries.

If we want to have strong rural parishes within the diocese that are seeking to be all they can be, can we best foster this by creating opportunities for parish teams to meet, talk and share ideas and struggles? The resulting networks will build strength, resilience and understanding which foster healthy practice and growth.

It was our group belief that if we don’t work towards these dreams then the church will continue doing what they have been doing for years. Amalgamating and even abandoning areas. If we fail to dream and plan we can easily miss the opportunities that God is placing before us and therefore miss our calling to go into every paddock and preach the good news.

Martin Harrison – Vicar of Waimea Parish

Surrendered Hearts

At the IRCA conference we were asked to look at our ministry context from the perspectives of ‘what is’, ‘what could be’ and ‘how do we get there’. These were helpful but also challenging questions to ask of ourselves. For me this reinforced what I’ve learnt from attending the 3DM Learning Communities, that whether we’re part of a rural or urban church the primary task for all of us should be discipleship. Before we can focus on programs to re-energise rural parishes we need to address the lack of disciples. After all it’s what Jesus commanded us to do!

We were told that rather than focusing on who we don’t have we should shift to discipling those we have. When this happens, God will naturally raise up people who follow the leading of the Spirit, then we may use programmes as vehicles for ministry. A recurring theme through the conference was that of soil, seeds and germination. In this analogy, the discipleship journey is the lifelong process of soil preparation. We know that a soil deficient in nutrients lacks the ability to grow and sustain continuing life. I wonder if our earnest efforts to sow seeds through programmes aimed to reach our communities have been obscuring the real issues of the deficiencies in our soil?

How do we move forward from here? Being a disciple means to be a follower of Jesus with the goal of becoming like him in character and then helping others to do likewise. It means confronting the areas of our hearts yet to be surrendered to God. It requires recognising that we haven’t always got things right and sometimes we’ve even acted contrary to God’s ways. With the best of intentions, we’ve tried to do more and add more into the lives of our churches without preparing the soil first. We have a deep desire to see our churches full of children and families. We long to see our communities transformed by the gospel. We want to share the hope we have in Jesus with the hopeless. This conference has reinforced for me that all these goals are good and worthy, but we can’t escape the fact that change begins and ends with our hearts being surrendered to Jesus. He’s the one who shapes us, aligns us to him, and transforms our minds so when we look at our people and communities we see them the way he does.

Victoria Askin – Priest in Charge, Spring Creek Parish
Paul: Rich moved over from the UK and we met in Mapua, through the Hills Community Church there. It wasn’t long before we sort of clicked and started hanging out. Then he mentioned that he can sing a little bit—a kind of shower thing—and he embarrassingly strummed out a song and I was blown away. He had amazing talent. I’ve played the harmonica for about 20 years in blues bands, which I’ve always sort of seen as a way to use a creative gift that God has given me, if you like. But being able to play with Rich was probably the first time when it felt like I was using a gift more directly for His purposes, and to glorify Him in the secular scene. You get the opportunity to have relationships with people in bands and get out into that sort of scene, but it has also been really cool to do stuff in Christian circles as well.

Rich: I’ve always had a heart for people that aren’t Christians and wanted to find a way of speaking to people—I always do speak to people about God anyway—but what I found is that music is a good pull; you can talk about God and put people off but if you sing a song people can be drawn into that. Then the question was how you get people to listen to it, so we thought we would force people to listen to it by going busking! We hit the streets of Nelson just sang the original songs—all Christian songs—on the street. We printed off these flyers with a simple message but very honest. And for me the pleasure was just hanging around with a mate, but also doing stuff for God, and at the end of it you could count how many flyers had been picked up. All the songs have got a story behind them. When we do street busking, people don’t want to hear preaching, but they like to hear music, and so the flyers were good because they could pick one of those up, throw it in a bag and maybe read it a week later. That, for me, was great. We’re here not to convert people but to sow the seeds.

Paul: We love playing together. The music itself, you could say, is a little bit raw. High-energy—Richard’s a madman—and generally a mix of pop, soul and blues, raw and real.

I’ve been learning that it’s not so much about me and my story but it’s actually learning to live out God’s story. Jesus talks about dying to self and that our life is not our own once we become a follower of Christ. It’s a transformation of going from an ordinary life in the world of living for our own pleasure and comfort and desires and everything to what God wants us to live for and our identity in Him. Takes a lifetime, I think. To me, that’s the exciting part of the story: you can see that God’s changing you. I’ve got three kids and Richard’s got two, and they all take time and energy. Once you’ve got a full time job, kids needing a lot of input, your relationship with your wife and everything else that goes on in life, trying to keep the music going and all that stuff as well, it’s realising that through all those ups and downs of life God’s teaching us stuff all the way through. And it’s through the hard times that he uses to shape us and to mould us and change us into what he wants us to be. And that’s a hard process—it’s what a lot of Richard’s songs are about.

Rich: I’ve really had this issue with religion. I really struggle with religion. I’ve had amazing testimonies, God’s done amazing things, but that’s the living God. Religion is… I don’t even know where God is sometimes. It’s a story about this historical figure, “We’re not here to convert people but to sow seeds.”
how to live a good life, and that’s not a relationship. For me it’s about fighting for this relationship, and all my songs are about the struggle it is to find that—finding the living God who actively wants to work in our lives. So that’s basically the point we’re getting across. If you say, “Look, you can have this relationship with someone who is wanting the best for your life; he’s got a path written out for you already and all you need to do is trust in him,” there’s a bit of a chance they’ll go, “Oh okay, well if you’re real, you have a go!” And that’s trying to help people see there’s a living God, that’s it not just religion. And that’s the basis behind it.

I had this thought from God which just filled me full of fear—usually I know it’s from God when it totally frightens me to death—about a music festival. The whole idea was to bring all churches, no matter what denomination, together to praise God. When there’s such a pulling together of people, those who aren’t Christians want a piece of it, to be part of the movement. The idea was to get some well-known Christian secular artists as well as worship leaders from different churches, and just open it up to everyone. And find a way that non-Christians can come and have a place to go.

We haven’t had it yet—it’s all working towards that. A lot of people take an idea to the church and say, “Right, here’s the idea, now you finance it and you run it.” Well, you can’t do that. So, we set it up as Rootstock Charitable Trust, and we’re both on the board. I made an album, and money from any CD sold at our concerts go straight into the charitable trust. There’s a long way to go. It’s a hard one—I want it to be right, and it’s going to be expensive to do it professionally, and to make something self-sustainable so it can actually keep going. We want to get other people involved so it feels like their calling too, almost. It’s too big for me, but if you get people in the right groups, you’re ticking little boxes all the way along.

I can’t see it being for a little while. If I build up $50,000 I can approach people for sponsorship and tell them this is where we are, this is who we are, this is the idea. TDC can stop it from happening if we’re not careful, or they can really buy into it and feed money into it too if it was a yearly thing and it was bringing money and tourism into this area, you know? You go through hard times, feel discouraged, your mojo goes and it’s hard to keep driving something when you feel like nothing coming back. But at the moment I feel like God’s starting to open doors, and a few churches have asked me to sing for them. Because that’s what I love doing. It’s not the singing, it’s the message that I’m giving.

Visit rootstock.co.nz to listen to and learn more about Rootstock and the vision behind it.
Take an idea; find some way to make it attractive; like a free meal and a night suitable to most people. Then create interest with crafts, or activities, a Christian perspective by including a talk on the theme and you have what could be described as Messy Church.

But this is not what the Holy Spirit had for the passionate people at St Thomas in Motueka to do.

We ‘do’ Messy Church, sure, but our starting point was with a vision not a programme.

A vision to ‘do life’ with the young families already coming to the facility through other means, yet determined to not patronise them as though something was missing from their lives and luckily we have the answer.

A team established a playgroup over 15 years ago that became Tom Thumbs. But after many years and many kids, now grown up, there was a sense of unfinished business. But what could be done? Youth groups often become trendy, and they rarely include families or are sustainable for kids or leaders. Messy Church seemed to be an answer. But the vicar moved away and the team were left to build the ministry alone.

The new vicar arrived and quickly recognised the vision carriers needed to be encouraged, equipped and prayed for to do just that. Carry this vision – the vision of a Messy Church. And Messy Church is indeed growing a community and culture of its own in ways only dreamed of three years ago.

When the Spirit calls people to mission he provides all that is necessary and if you are a leader in a fellowship and have vision carriers, chances are they are the best to see that vision advance. Lead them, but let them.

We have learnt many lessons from catering, to teamwork, to consistency of purpose. But the biggest adjustment has been the acceptance by the local congregation of this being a genuine Missional outreach.

Mission is not only overseas, it is often local. I am sure you would be horrified if the village we fund a water supply for were expected to pay us back. It is the same with Messy Church. Don’t expect any sort of financial return. This is mission. And yet people keep coming back. Why, because this is their church – it’s just on a different day, and in a different way, to yours.

Finally, what we hadn’t planned on was the extended vision God has for our journey. Too often ministry is compartmentalised but we see it holistically. We have a vision of +65s connecting with the pre-school families who may not have a Nana nearby. Empowering retired folk to head the activity table and share life with the young families. Active rather than reactive elder care. And it’s fun and gives purpose.

From Tom Thumbs came Messy Church. From Messy Church has come Alpha, and from that a young Mum’s life group, and Youth Alpha now has a youth group possibility. All connected and supporting each other. Sharing and caring and doing life. This model is a work in progress and is only the start.

Russell Pickersgill Brown – vicar of Motueka

Motueka Parish

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Russell Pickersgill Brown – vicar of Motueka
My first name is Dorothy. I was told when I was about seven years old my name meant ‘gift of God’. Looking back over 80 years later, I believe that was the beginning of my spiritual journey.

My father and brother both sang in the choir of the local parish church. I attended morning and evening services with my mother on Sunday. In the afternoon I would attend Sunday School. I gained a good knowledge of the Bible and what being a Christian involved. I took the meaning of my name seriously and tried to behave in what, as a young girl, I thought was a suitable manner.

Fast forward to March 24 1955. I gave birth to a rather sickly little boy weighing only 4lb 3oz. We christened him Mark and we weren’t able to take him home until he weighed over 5lbs. Feeding continued to be a problem. He was often sick and failed to gain much weight. He didn’t reach the normal milestones such as smiling, being responsive and sitting up. I wondered if he was partially blind and deaf.

My husband and I met at Guy’s Hospital, London, where I trained as a nurse and he as a doctor. We took baby Mark to see a paediatrician at five months old and were told there was nothing wrong with him. In despair we took him to the children’s ward at Guy’s Hospital. He was admitted immediately and put in a small cubicle all alone. We gave permission for various procedures and were told to come back next day for the results. I hated leaving him, so put him in God’s loving care.

Next day the paediatrician wanted to talk to my husband whilst I visited Mark. Mark had fair curly hair and blue eyes but the baby in the cubicle was a stranger to me, he was bald! I was assured by a nurse it was Mark. He’d had his head shaved for a brain test and we were told we could take him home next day. That evening my husband said the doctors told him that Mark had a poor prognosis and could not survive much longer. They advised that if he got a chest infection or stomach bug not to give any antibiotics. Three weeks later he got the lot. We knew he was dying.

The night of 22/23 November 1955 we sat up with him. He died in my arms about 3am. As he took his last breath his older sister aged two years four months woke up crying, something she never did. My husband went upstairs to console her and I followed with Mark in my arms, still warm and cuddly. Sarah’s bedroom had a large window and we were drawn to it. The sky was lit by a mass of bright silver stars. We were transfixed by them. As we watched, a shooting star shot across the sky.

It was a special moment to us, as an expression of the Holy Spirit. I felt strongly that as Mark died, he called in to say farewell to his big sister as he started on his next spiritual journey. I treasure that moment. I knew joy and peace knowing Mark was relieved of his suffering. That starlit moment was reassuring to me. God, who loves us is there for us on our spiritual journey.

Beatrice (Dorothy) – Nelson Cathedral
The diocese hosted the Anglican Care Conference over two days at All Saints Church in Nelson. People involved in Anglican Care ministry came from around the diocese to listen to speakers from government and non-government agencies, to share with us from their area of expertise.

The four government agencies painted a picture of what is happening across the diocese. They were surprised to learn of the level of involvement that parishes have in their communities. They expressed an interest in the future possibilities of partnerships between the agencies and the church.

The first of the government speakers was Detective Inspector Paul Borrell from the Tasman Police District. He described the Police District in the area, the problems associated with methamphetamine and gangs and also the direction needed to reduce the number of people entering the ‘Justice Pipeline’. He explained some options to deal with offending and clearly there is an opportunity for Anglican Care to be involved.

The second speaker was Louise Waaka, Regional Commissioner for the Ministry of Social Development (MSD). She invited us to consider ways we could work together to assist those in emergency housing. There are already examples where partnerships exist for example, foodbanks.

Dale Bradley, Manager of Housing New Zealand in this region outlined how they worked with other agencies around social housing. A senior tenancy manager advised that Housing NZ is the last resort of accommodation for clients. Some of their clients lack life skills like cooking and maintaining the house and garden. This could be an area where Anglican Care could become involved.

Finally Peter Bramley, CEO of Nelson Marlborough Health told us some of the issues the health sector is confronted with. An ageing population, obesity and sadly, high levels of poor dental health especially in the 0–4 year age group, which has the largest number of presentations to the emergency department per annum. Peter is open to looking at opportunities for partnership to improve some health outcomes in the communities we work with.

We then had the opportunity to hear from local agencies – Strengthening Families, Women’s Refuge, Whanake Youth Health Services and Age Concern. In many cases, parishes are already engaged with these groups but it was timely reminder of how we could be involved.

Using the information we were given in the morning, Trish Lui from Wellington led us through a series of questions. Trish is an experienced facilitator especially in the area of Appreciative Inquiry. We asked:
- What’s working well?
- Some problems in the community?
- How can we collaborate better?
- What about leadership?

This method helped us start with a very positive approach. The discussions that took place and the subsequent recording from group work, will give us great insight into ways of working in this space going forward. Once we have collated all the material it will be made available via links on the diocesan webpages.

It was a great conference with the opportunity to gather information which will help us respond appropriately to needs in the community. Most importantly we will have the chance to develop new partnerships with people who believe we are already making a significant contribution to the community. With new partnerships and more knowledge we can do even better. We must continue to turn outwards, talk to people, find out what is happening and respond.

It is our community and our response.

‘For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do’. Ephesians 2:10

Laurie Gabites – Motueka Parish

Anglican Care Committee would like to thank all those in our parishes, paid and unpaid, who work tirelessly and dedicatedly to reach out to others with Christ’s love through caring service in their communities.

The committee members have been greatly moved by reading in the recent accountability reports of the hundreds of lives that have been touched in the diocese. They acknowledge and applaud the massive effort and passion behind the work carried out with the help of social service grants.

The Committee wish you every blessing for your ministries in 2018. Thank you all!
Above two photos: Anglican Care Conference.

Rev John Hearne (far right) with his wife Heather receives his licence as interregnum vicar for the Awatere Joint Venture.

Jesse Sherlock - confirmation at Hills Community Church, Mapua.

Passover meal, Cobden Parish.

‘Out to Lunch’ – seniors outreach at Stoke Parish.
A chance introduction in 1886 by a Bishopdale College tutor in Wairoa, near Lake Tarawera, led to the college playing a significant role in the development of the Maori Church.

Bishop Suter was one of several bishops visiting Tarawera on their way home from General Synod. As the story goes, as waiata were sung one boy’s voice stood out above all the rest. An introduction between the young singer and the musical bishop was made by Rev FW Chatterton, a tutor at Bishopdale and vicar of All Saints from 1888 to 1902. The 14 year-old, Frederick Augustus Bennett, would eventually become the first bishop of Aotearoa.

Bennett’s home and village were destroyed four months later in the Tarawera eruption and perhaps that helped facilitate his move to Nelson where Suter enrolled him in the Bishop’s School.

He went on to study at Nelson College and then trained for the ministry at Bishopdale College 1895 to 1896, before becoming a curate at All Saints under Chatterton’s guidance.

Bennett’s mentoring by Suter and Chatterton came at a time in Maoridom when a group of young, educated political leaders were rising up to address Maori needs. Apirana Ngata, Maui Pomare and Peter Buck were all ‘old boys’ of the Anglican school for Maori, Te Aute College.

Although the Maori population had reached its low point in 1896 (42,000) it slowly began to increase, so by 1921 there were 56,000 – as many as at the time of the first census, just before the Land Wars.

Spiritual leaders in Maoridom were equally needed so it was an historic and important moment when Bennett was consecrated Bishop of Aotearoa in 1928 in Napier Cathedral.

While at All Saints, Nelson he ministered to the Port and Toi Toi Valley areas, but also had responsibilities for Maori across the diocese, forming a special relationship with Motueka Maori, culminating in the building of a church for Maori in 1897 at Te Awhina Marae.

Bennett’s co-worker in getting the church established was Huta Paaka. Bennett married Huta’s daughter Hannah, on May 11, 1899 at St Thomas’ Church in Motueka, officiated by Bishop Mules. Archdeacon Thomas Grace translated the sermon into Maori.

That same year Bennett left the diocese to work among firstly, Taranaki Maori, then in Rotorua, before becoming assistant superintendent of Maori in Hawkes Bay until his appointment as bishop.

It wasn’t an easy ride for a Maori bishop in a Pakeha world. He had a seat on General Synod and the right to speak and vote, but only if elected from the Diocese of Waiapu. He could minister in other dioceses only with permission from the diocesan bishop. Bishop Simkin of Auckland (1940-1960) never allowed the Maori bishop into his diocese.

It’s interesting that Bennett had been mentored by Suter, worked under Mules, but was also loved and supported by Bishop Stephenson (1940-53) and his wife Grace. Two years before his death in 1950 Bennett gave a speech in Westminster Abbey at the Church Missionary Association 150th celebrations. While preparing his speech he had understandably become a bit nervous about the occasion but was much encouraged by being handed a note of reassurance sent from Mrs Stephenson.

After his death his widow sent his greenstone pectoral cross to Mrs Stephenson with a note: ‘You were as a sister to Fred’.

Bennett’s son Manu became the third bishop of Aotearoa while another son Sir Charles commanded the Maori Battalion in North Africa during the Second World War.
What became of Chatterton who had supported and mentored Bennett with much devotion? In 1902 he left All Saints to become principal of Te Rau, the Maori theological college in Gisborne, then the only training college for the Maori church.

One of his students was Wiremu Panapa, who succeeded Fred Bennett as Bishop of Aotearoa. Chatterton therefore had a role in training the next bishop, as he had the first.

Chatterton resigned in 1918 to become vicar of Rotorua and superintendent of the Maori mission in the Bay of Plenty. Te Rau was closed and Maori students were trained from then on at St John's College in Auckland.

So, for a small college in one of the Anglican Church's smallest dioceses numerically, Bishopdale College played an important part in the training of Maori in the service of their own church, enabling them to minister the gospel to their own people.

_Brandon Sparrow – Golden Bay parish_
Recently I had the privilege of attending GETI (the Global Ecumenical Theological Institute) at the CWME (Conference on World Mission and Evangelism). The mouthful of acronyms aside, it was essentially an international missions conference with representatives from most of the major denominations and many missions organisations attending. The conference is held every eight years or so, and is intended to be a forum for the global church.

My journey began with an extended trip via Auckland, Hong Kong and Addis Ababa before finally landing at Kilimanjaro Airport (Tanzania). The first half of our programme (‘GETI’) was held for only 110 ‘emerging theologians’ – we were all under 35 – so essentially it was a study programme for younger theologians. We’d already met each other on line and begun learning through readers, and now in person we heard a range of speakers on everything from evangelism, to African theologies, intercultural theologies and interreligious dialogue. There were lots of new ideas. For me the highlight was simply the exposure to those who had different theological approaches from my own. While there was a fair amount of discussion about theology, a lot of this was practical – for example, the discussion on climate change and the responsibility of the Church as stewards of the earth to continually press for widespread change, not only in our own environment practices, but also in the societies we are part of. One practical step that the conference organisers took was to give each of us a metal drink bottle, and to provide filtered water stations, rather than providing everyone with plastic bottled water.

The second half of our time in Tanzania saw us join with the much larger conference, with over 1,000 delegates representing a range of church traditions, missions agencies, and countries. Using the theme ‘Moving in the Spirit: Called to Transforming Discipleship’, we were encouraged to recognise the motif of pilgrimage for the Church’s mission, representing the need for a continual recommitment to work for renewal and transformation in all areas. As always with this type of event, there was a lot of listening to different speakers. A reasonably consistent comment I heard in the different conversations I had with people over meals or in different workshops, was the reflection that the important thing was what people went home and did with what they had heard, rather than the conference itself. I suspect most vicars feel the same way about their preaching!

We heard testimonies from places where the church is flourishing, and we heard of the raw struggles of those living in spaces where the church is persecuted, and those living in countries where there is widespread lack of hope. The call to do missions with those on the margins, rather than to those on the margins, was strongly communicated, as was the need for our vision of mission to not only include personal evangelism, but to offer a prophetic witness in the face of individual need, systemic injustice and consumerism, and its effect on the environment. Apart from being able to experience an ecumenical environment (something I have read much about but never participated in) my experience in Tanzania has increased my awareness of global theological conversations, particularly those from perspectives that I am not familiar with. I am encouraged at the way that many churches are working together, and yet also have a more realistic view of the potential, and the limitations of ecumenical activity. Events like this are good – but only if those who attend go home and ‘do something with it.’

And so to finish, two questions I invite you to reflect on. 1: What are the ‘areas of impact’ that your faith community has the ability to speak into as witnesses to the Gospel? 2: How might we work better together?

Kate Dugdale – Bishopdale College