

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

From Wednesday through to Sunday the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Aotearoa New Zealand meet. This is the biennial national conference/ decision making body of our denomination. Lorne Campbell went as a commissioner from our parish this year and as a national intern Pauline Hampshire was there to learn the ropes.

I've asked Lorne to reflect on the Assembly... he writes.



The General Assembly was held at St Kentigern's College in Pakuranga Auckland - and boy was it cold! St Kentigern's is a Presbyterian School with the motto " Fides Servanda Est" - "the faith must be kept" ... and the cold weather reminded us of our Scottish roots! Our new Moderator, Rev Rose Luxford was installed at the opening service and as I

walked down to the chapel (see photo left) for that service, the clouds parted and a triple beam of sunlight pierced through the gloomy evening (see photo right) - could this be a sign, I thought, of God's impending blessing upon or gathering? Overall, this Assembly could be described as very harmonious, good natured and of course - "decently and in order" ( see photo below).



Rev Rose's theme for the Assembly and her two year moderatorship was / is "Authentic and hopeful in Christ". This is a theme that encourages us to be honest and real about the state of our churches and our state of mission, but at the same time remember that the resurrection of Jesus Christ reminds us that as we follow

the Holy Spirit's leading into missional endeavours, there is always hope!

Some of the highlights of the Assembly that affect us here in Whangarei were:

1. The decision to keep going with Nationally funded Internships so as not to drain the local churches purses.
2. The decision to change the PCANZ's national standard of 67% for all church buildings right throughout the motu (land), to the Government standard that has been applied to different regions according to their level of risk. This means that our buildings need to reach the 34% standard, not 67% that has until now been expected - I am sure that our BOM will let us all know the ramifications of that!

The actual motion passed was [23.052] *That the Assembly request the Church Property Trustees to review and update the requirements of the earthquake-prone Buildings Policy (dated November 2022) and align their policy requirements pertaining to Earthquake Strengthening with those of the Building (Earthquake-prone Buildings Amendment Act 2016) and the relevant local authority.*

3. It was agreed that the PCANZ recognise the 2022 Bi-lingual edition of Te Paipera Tapu as the preferred Bible in worship throughout the country. This Bible has both English and Te Reo side by side and will promote the shared nature of our mainly bi-cultural journey in NZ.

4. That the dialogue on sexuality, biblical morality, and leadership from the 2022 General Assembly continue and report back to the next General Assembly. There is of course a lot more that could be said about this - and many of us were grateful that this debate did not dominate the Assembly this year. One theme that came through from some speakers is that they are just tired of these issues continuing to crop up at Assemblies... every Assembly since 1985!



A very welcome Coffee cart was set up outside the gym where we met ... and it was very well attended ( see photo left)!

There were of course many other things that were decided upon and debated at the Assembly - and if you are interested to learn more, we will post a link to the summary of all decisions when one is published...

One last comment from me! Prior to Assembly, Howard and I attended the one day AFFIRM conference at Greenlane Presbyterian. One of the most challenging sessions was Rev. Dr Mark Keown (Mark is the Director of Evangelistic Leadership at Laidlaw College) speaking about the "e-word" - yes ... evangelism ... and how we need to build a culture of evangelism in our churches. Whilst at Assembly I chatted with past moderator Richard Dawson and he asked me if I had heard about "Ripple effect evangelism" - which I hadn't. He is very excited about this Australian based ministry and encouraged us to consider it ( they are coming to NZ and visiting his church in 2024) ... basically it is an equipping ministry to help Christians start conversations with people outside the faith, and building a culture of evangelism throughout the church. You might like to have a look at this link if you are interested: <https://www.ripple-effect.net.au/>

God bless all. Lorne Campbell

Here are the notices

### Worship Sunday October 8<sup>th</sup>

Come join us for worship at one of our three sites this week. We are continuing on our journey through the Gospel according to Mark in a series called *The Way of the Cross*.

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|-----------------------|---|
| 10:00am HopeTikipunga | Mark 2:13-17 (Colleen Poyner)           |
| 9:30am HopeCentral    | Mark 2:1-12 (Lorne Campbell)            |
| 9:30am HopeOnerahi    | Mark 1:29-39 (Howard Carter) communion. |

### Zoom service 9:30am Sunday October 8<sup>th</sup>

The zoom service this week will be the 9:30am service from HopeCentral.

Here is the link for the service <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84819102883>

If you are using the zoom app on a mobile device or smart phone the Meeting ID is 84819102883

If you are joining by landline, dial 09 8846780 and follow the Instructions, again the meeting ID is 84819102883.

## Merv Paul.

Merv (93), who with Edna, was a long-standing member of our church fellowship at Central, passed away peacefully at North Haven hospice last Friday. A celebration of Merv's life will be held at Central this Friday at 11am. Merv and Edna were married for 69 years and have three married children. Please hold Edna and the family in your prayers at this time.

"Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints" Psalm 116:15

## Spiritual Direction- Sacred Space

As a recently qualified spiritual director I love sharing with people about the gift of spiritual direction. Unlike the name suggests, spiritual direction is not about 'directing' or advising a person in their spiritual life, but about coming alongside to listen to your sacred stories and notice with you where God is present in your everyday living.

*'Spiritual direction is the ministry of presence and attentiveness'* -Margaret Guenther

Whether you're struggling with prayer, are entering a new season in your spiritual journey or would simply like to deepen your relationship with God, spiritual direction is a sacred space where the highs, lows and all the inbetweens of the spiritual life are welcome. My role as a director is to be fully present to your journey through attentive listening, to help you notice the presence of God through creating space and invitation, to be a companion on the road as you process and open up to what God is doing through careful questions.

In partnership with Hope church, I'm pleased to invite members of Hope who would like to try spiritual direction to have their first 3 sessions at no cost.

Naomi Holt  
02040169811  
naomi.f.holt@gmail.com

## Girls Brigade Movie Night Fundraiser

Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> October 5-30-8-30pm at Hope Church , Hunt Street.

Invite your family and friends

See attached poster

## Updated phone numbers and email addresses for the latest phone book attached

## Classical Music Concert

Many of you will remember Brendon Tong who used to be part of the Contemporary Service along with his wife Helen and son Kelvin.

Brendon is putting on a free concert, October 7 at 2pm at St John's Church, 147 Kamo Road.

Brendon,baritone, accompanied by Heather Gleeson, piano, will sing traditional German and Italian songs,numbers from the shows,and a little look at opera and oratorio. All welcome

## Blessing

Over the past few weeks, I've been using Romans 15:13 as a benediction/blessing at the end of our services. Trevor came into my office one morning and shared it with me at a time that I really needed to be reminded of God's presence and care, so I am sharing it with you today... Also, it fits very much with our name as HopeWhangarei. So

*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*

*Nā, mā te Atua, nāna nei te tūmanako, e whakakī koutou ki te hari katoa, ki te rangimārie, i runga i te whakapono, kia hua ai tō koutou tūmanako, i runga i te kaha o te Wairua Tapu.*

## Howard Carter

**SENIOR MINISTER**

**HOPEWHANGAREI**

October 3<sup>rd</sup> 2023

PS:- I was out at Ruakaka estuary on Monday. It was great to see the Tuturiwhatu (NZ Dotterels) nesting on the sand bar, and the Kuaka (Bar-tailed Godwits) in great numbers on the mudflat in the middle of the estuary (to far away to get good photos). Also to see the Kahurihuri (pied shags) gathering on the edge of the fast flowing river mouth. I managed to get a photo of one taking flight. As it hopped, skipped and jumped across the current.

