

News from the Somervell Community

March 2014

ame Newsletter

Our Mission

....where faith inspires life. . .

Flame

is produced for the friends and
parishioners of
Somervell Presbyterian Church

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Som Youth Begin With Style.

Our Youth Ministry has started with lots of enthusiasm and also some fresh faces this year. We now have over 20 young people involved with Som Youth, as well as 5 leaders. Three new Leaders have joined the team this year, and we hope that other people will give leadership a try as the year progresses. The Leadership team for this year is: Matt Ensor, Jane McEwan, Roger Windle, Heather Laxon and Bonnie Robinson.

"We have a great bunch of young people, and committed leaders, let us support them in every way we can,"enthuses Rev.Brett Johnstone.



Some of the Som Youth!

Join us for Easter 2014.

Palm Sunday Family Service April 13th: 10am

Good Friday Stations and Reflections: 9:30am

Good Friday Walk of Witness: 11am from St Chad's

Easter Sunday Celebration and Communion: 10am.



What will 2014 bring? What are your plans, hopes or dreams for this year? Do any of your plans involve deepening your faith, or becoming more involved in Somervell? I hope they do. In all the years that I have been involved in church life I have come to realise that churches can only progress or make an impact on the world if they have committed people. Not just committed to the church, but committed to expanding and exploring their own faith.

Yet that call to commitment and effort can sometimes be daunting and even exhausting. Church life can be seen as an endless round of activity, yet another group to belong to, another committee to join, another youth group lesson or Sunday School activity to plan. Sometimes we do this and yet our effort and activity seem not to make an impact. This can be disheartening.

Paul in writing to the Corinthians uses the metaphor of planting and watering to talk about the church. To me the image is one of shared activity. We are not responsible for the whole. Rather we are responsible for the bit that we do, and to do it well. What I ask is that you choose a bit to do, and to do that well. The whole will look after itself, because the whole belongs to God and is God's work in the world.

The South American Bishop Oscar Romano has said this:

It helps us now and then to step back, and take the long view. The Kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is even beyond our vision. We accomplish in our life time only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work. Nothing we do is complete, which is another way of saying that the Kingdom always lies beyond us. No statement says all that could be said. No prayer fully expresses our faith. No confession brings perfection. No pastoral visit brings wholeness. No programme accomplishes the church's mission. No set of goals and objectives includes everything. This is what we are about. We plant the seeds that one day will grow. We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise. We lay foundations that will need further development. We provide yeast that produces effects far beyond our capabilities. We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of freedom in that. This enables us to do something, and do it very well. It may be incomplete, a set along the way, an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest. We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker. We are workers, not master builders, ministers, not Messiahs. We are prophets of a future not our own. Amen.

For those who are committed to Somervell I encourage you this year in your work, for those yet to find your place here I encourage you to get involved, because as Paul writes in Corinthians, it is a task we share together. Together we can, with God's help, make this place hum with the life and love of God.

May faith inspire your life.

Blessings. **Brett.**



LISTEN. PRAY. ACT. LPA.

What is LPA?

LPA is a new part of our morning worship. Over the coming year on selected Sundays we will listen to a short presentation which will then lead into our prayers for others. The short presentations will be about a wide range of issues. Some will come from Somervell's life as a congregation, some will come from our national church calendar, some will be national or international awareness days.

I am keen for members of the congregation to read through the LPA topics listed below and choose one (or more) that you are passionate about, know about or would like to know about and then let me know (always a good move!) so I can book you in. You can also suggest topics as well.

Listen. Pray.

Once you have selected your "day" your next task is to learn more about it, write a short presentation, and then write the prayers for others that go with it. Remember that the presentation is not an appeal for money.

This is open to anyone – children, youth, men women, old, not so old, every one.

The last letter A, is for ACT. This is for all of us. What we do is up to us, but remember we will have already acted, we will have prayed.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Brett

PS Read Tim Watkin's LPA on Waitangi Day.

*Neighbours Day
Oxford Trail Walk
ANZAC Day, 100 Yrs WW1
Mothers Day
International Women's Day
Fairtrade fortnight
World Vision 40Hr Famine
Week of Prayer for Children at risk.*



LPA for Waitangi Day 2014.

So Brett has had the idea, that he introduced last week, about using a part of some services this year to reflect on issues outside of our immediate kith and kin... to try to use this time to look outside our own bubble to the concerns of others. And just to torment me, he's asked me to go first... and not to talk about something easy, something that most of us know little about – like leprosy in modern times. No, Brett has asked me to talk about something we all know a lot about... and have firm opinions on. The Treaty of Waitangi.

It is of course Waitangi Day this week – the 174th anniversary of New Zealand's founding document. There is endless debate over the English and Maori versions, the intentions of those involved, and the way the treaty has been honoured or dishonoured in the generations since. I don't want to dwell on that debate, because it really is endless. Not that that's a bad thing. A nation wrestling with itself is a nation that's growing up and refusing to stand still. But it's not what these spots are about.

Instead I want to remember that at the heart of the treaty lies a promise and a commitment to justice. Britain in 1840 could have done without another colony. It was stretched as it was and was about to have the first opium war with China... Sure, it had trade interests to protect in this part of the world and financial incentives, it didn't want other countries claiming New Zealand and wanted to remain the world's dominant power. So there were many self-serving motivations at play, and on the Maori side as well.

But as we know, British interest was in a treaty with New Zealanders – and at that time "New Zealander" essentially meant Maori. There were just 2000 settlers, perhaps 120,000 Maori – but British interest in a treaty was also motivated by a concern for the lawlessness of its subjects migrating here and its sense of duty towards the indigenous population. These were not illiberal times in the old world – thanks to William Wilberforce and friends Britain had in 1833 abolished slavery throughout the empire, the same year it sent its first representative, James Busby, to New Zealand. As for Maori, they too had a sense of duty to care for the visitors in their land; the concept of manaakitanga, which encompasses

hospitality, kindness and a respect for someone else's life and experiences.

William Hobson arrived to negotiate a treaty in 1840 with very clear – and noble – instructions from the Colonial Office. We don't often hear them these days, but these are Hobson's orders from his boss, Lord Normanby:

All dealings with the Aborigines for their Lands must be conducted on the same principles of sincerity, justice, and good faith as must govern your transactions with them for the recognition of Her Majesty's Sovereignty in the Islands. Nor is this all. They must not be permitted to enter into any Contracts in which they might be ignorant and unintentional authors of injuries to themselves. You will not, for example, purchase from them any Territory the retention of which by them would be essential, or highly conducive, to their own comfort, safety or subsistence. The acquisition of Land by the Crown for the future Settlement of British Subjects must be confined to such Districts as the Natives can alienate without distress or serious inconvenience to themselves. To secure the observance of this rule will be one of the first duties of their official protector.

So whatever is said about how those instructions played out, there was a hunger for justice at the start of the treaty process... as there still is today.

Many New Zealand governments since 1840 failed to honour the promises made in the treaty, but in 1990 we began making reparation for that. As of last year 63 settlements to a value of \$1.4 billion dollars had been made. Again, how you view those numbers is up to you. But what's undeniable is that we have on one hand avoided the civil wars that have plagued other colonies and on the other avoided the worst abuses of racism.

So as we turn our minds to Waitangi Day this week, let's salute the call for justice and good faith that sits at its heart. And with that in mind, let's now turn to our prayers for others, with a special focus on Aotearoa New Zealand.

Teach us again Father that whatever our culture or tikanga, we are all your children, your tamariki.

Blessed are your children, Lord

For theirs is the kingdom of heaven

God who moves the continents, we pray blessings too for the newer arrivals in this land – those who choose to come in hope and excitement and those poor in spirit who come because they have nowhere else to go. May we open our hearts to offer the hospitality – the manaakitanga – Jesus offered those who came to him seeking refuge.

And knowing that you reach out to bless those who mourn and are persecuted, we think today of the roughly 10 million refugees who wake this morning with no home and little hope. Especially we think of the 2 million refugees from war-torn Syria and beg you to send us the peacemakers we need at this time.

L.P.A. for Sunday 2 March

Tertiary Chaplaincy Awareness Week : March 2nd – 9th 2014

The Aotearoa New Zealand Tertiary Chaplaincy Association (ANZTCA) has declared a Tertiary Chaplaincy Awareness Week for New Zealand for March 2 – 9 this year.

ANZTCA was established in 1999 as a professional association for those involved in Chaplaincy on New Zealand University and Institute of Technology campuses. Currently there are around 60 members engaged on campuses throughout the country. These members are Chaplains or Associates to Chaplaincy Teams and come from a wide variety of Christian communities and ethnicities. Most of the members are part-time in their roles and most of them are volunteers who willingly give their time to support students pastorally

For more information check out the website : www.anztca.net.nz and the Facebook Group ; Aotearoa New Zealand Tertiary Chaplaincy Association.

Chaplaincy to Tertiary students began in New Zealand through the appointment of College / Hostel Chaplains to the student accommodation provided by Anglican, Presbyterian, Catholic, Brethren, Baptist when our University first began. In 2013 we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the first University Chaplain by the University of Otago. 2014 is the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Maclaurin Chaplaincy at the University of Auckland.

Ricky Waters is the only Tertiary Chaplain employed by the Institutions upon which he works – Massey University (Albany), Unitec Institute of Technology, Manukau Institute of Technology. He has had these Co-ordinating Chaplain roles since the year 2000. Other Tertiary Institutions are now paying a levy towards the cost of Chaplaincy to the employing Ecumenical Trusts and also providing Office space on the campus

The Ecumenical nature of the Chaplaincy means the ANZTCA sees our Chaplaincy Teams not as representatives of the church on campus but rather as the flesh – hands & feet - of Christ. (Currently AUT in Auckland also has volunteer Muslim and Buddhist Chaplains who have a different focus to their work on campus).

We are there to be available to all and every student (or staff) regardless of their professed faith / belief / spirituality to provide a listening ear, compassionate wisdom, pastoral support to assist them in being successful in their quest to obtain a Tertiary qualification. We also firmly believe we are able to help them develop life skills and to find a place to discuss the hard questions.

There isn't an average day but in the course of any one week the Chaplaincy Team (at least on the campus where I work) would engage with a significant number of students who are struggling to find a balance between study,

work, family, and other time commitments. We would meet a number who have deep questions of life (often precipitated by such traumatic – at least to them – event) and need someone to validate these questions. We would meet a number who are wanting to connect with others of similar faiths / beliefs and to grow in their own religious literacy. We might meet some who are desperate and depressed; some who want to celebrate; some who are lonely / lost; some who are afraid ; some who are unable to provide for their family.

We run a range of activities and events to connect students to each other, to life, to God, to themselves. On Facebook you could check out the group 'Chaplaincy@Unitec' or the page 'Massey University Albany Chaplaincy' to see some of these.

We are always looking for ways in which local churches can partner with the Chaplaincy Teams and if you would like to be involved please meet with Ricky for a chat.

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Somervell farewells Rebecca

We farewelled Rebecca Connor, who ended her Ministry Internship, at a shared lunch after church in November last year.

We gave her an All Black stole, an all white stole and a lovely chalice. Many nice things were said about her by a range of speakers and we wished her well for her future in Ministry.



Conversation Classes at Somervell.

Towards the middle of last year it was decided to close our last remaining Conversation Class. We made this decision based on the falling numbers of students interested in our informal style of teaching English. When these classes were started there were very few English-as-a-second-language classes, now there are many, both formal and informal. Thanks to the many people who have given time, patience and skill, to this mission of Somervell. I especially want to thank Jill Ensor and Ana Squire who kept the class going these last few years. We also remember Bill Bryan and Beryl Howie who were strong supporters of the class. Jane Prichard has penned these early memories of the founding of the Conversation Class.



Dr Beryl Howie, Bill Bryan and Ana Squire with student.

.....in All Black Style



Background to the Start-Up of Conversation Classes at Somervell:

Early in 1990 the Rev Stuart Vogel visited Somervell for a Service to talk about how relationships were growing in the Presbyterian Church with new New Zealanders arriving from Asia. He also brought an invitation for us to begin an English conversation class for a group newly arrived from Taiwan. Since this would be a completely different form of outreach for Somervell people, those approached were nervous of taking up the challenge. As it seemed a mission with much merit I offered to begin a class and Barbara McKenzie agreed to help.

A group of more than 20 came immediately to join the class on Wednesday and Friday mornings, with 20 more soon coming as well. Such large numbers demanded that we find extra help. Margery Dwerryhouse, Berta Raines and then Maude Turner, were our first assistants. The teaching of English came very much through talking together about culture and customs in New Zealand and Taiwan. We all agreed that we learned as much from our students as they learned from us. A good deal of learning came through the many visits we made to places of interest such as the Parnell Rose Gardens, the Auckland Museum and Winter Gardens, and Mission Bay.

New friendships were formed. These new relationships were particularly significant for those attending the classes as they knew no one in New Zealand when they first arrived. Learning to greet neighbours was very important as well as knowing the words to make themselves understood in shops. Reading from the Bible was a favourite activity with the Minister regularly joining the class to talk about the Christian faith and to discuss a Bible passage. Morning tea brought the whole group together for fellowship and laughter. Firm friendships were fostered as we often entertained members from the group in our homes.

In 1991 the well-established Conversation Classes became the outreach activity underpinning the Open Church Programme. There was never a shortage of Somervell members willing to help with the classes which soon attracted new New Zealanders from Korea, Hong Kong, China, Europe and South America. Many from the classes later went on to find employment or to gain formal qualifications in English language.

The classes continued for 23 years until they came to an end in mid-2013.

Jane Prichard, Chair, Somervell Open Church Committee 1991-1994



Rebecca's Farewell Service



Church of North India Joins the Fight For Dalit Christian Rights

The Church of North India (CNI) is advocating strongly for the rights of Dalit Christians and Muslims. They strive to overturn the Presidential Order of 1950 which denies equal rights to Christians and Muslims of Dalit origin on the basis of religion.

In December the CNI along with other organisations organized a peaceful rally to promote the rights of Dalit Christians and Muslims. The rally was on December 11.



Mr. Alwan Masih, General Secretary of the CNI Synod, whom Phil King and I met last year on our visit to India, was one of the rally leaders.

The Church leaders along with hundreds of the people from the Dalit community and supporters were silently marching towards the Parliament House when police intervened with water cannons and the protesters were charged.



The crowd comprised top church leaderships, bishops, priests, and nuns. Mr. Alwan Masih, along with Archbishop Anil JT Couto, and many other bishops and pastors were detained and taken to police station. They were released late in the evening.

Due in part to the seniority of the persons arrested, members of the core committee were able to meet with the Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh on 12 December. The delegation included Archbishop Couto, Mr Alwan Masih and other high profile Christian and Muslim leaders.

A memorandum requesting speedy redress to this religious discrimination was given to the Prime Minister. In particular they requested that the Supreme Court be queried as to the 9 year delay in hearing petitions against the Presidential decree. The Prime Minister undertook to put the matter before the Cabinet Committee for decision and action.



Somervell's Avalon project helps Dalit Christian families who are seeking education for their children. Avalon hostel provides boarding accommodation for young women from minority groups so they can access higher education not available in their home villages. So far we have raised over NZ\$2000 for the project with more fundraising activities planned for later in the year.

Brian Rowley

Som Youth End of year Barbeque 2013



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Somervell Presbyterian

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