

News from the
Somervell
Community

June 2015

Flame Newsletter

Our Mission

....where faith inspires life. . .

Flame

is produced for the friends and
parishioners of
Somervell Presbyterian Church

497 Remuera Road
Auckland, New Zealand
Parish Office:
Telephone 09 524 5379

church@somervell.org.nz

PRAYER



28th June — 3rd July

The Labyrinth Prayer Walk will be open during the day from 9am — 2pm each day except Monday. You are welcome to call in and experience this ancient form of prayer.

To learn more, read the Q&A article inside or come along on Sunday, 28th.

Other articles in this issue include:

Our Labyrinth Experience	pg. 2
Vanuatu Revisited	pg. 4
Prayer is Hope in Action	pg. 6
Uplands Kindergarten Update	pg. 8

Our Labyrinth Experience

On Saturday the 27th of June a keen group of people are going to create a labyrinth on the floor of the church. In keeping with a great website tradition, here are some frequently asked questions and the answers.

Q What is a Labyrinth?

A Labyrinth is a simple maze-like design drawn on the ground or a floor. It has an entry and an exit and a pathway that you walk on to complete the labyrinth. Unlike a maze you do not have to guess your way round; the labyrinth has a set path.

Q What design will our labyrinth have and what will it be made of?

A Our labyrinth will be a simplified circular design taken from Chartres Cathedral France, and it will be laid out in over 400 small stones. We are borrowing the stones from St Matthew-in-the-City.

Q How does one walk a Labyrinth?

A Labyrinths have a set “path”. Starting with the entrance you follow the path and it will take you by a gentle circular route to the centre of the circle. Here you can pause, then by the same pathway you walk out. Walking is the easy bit, because as you walk, in silence and in a prayerful manner, you can allow God to speak to you in the walking, or you can speak to God. Some have said that the best ideas come to us as we walk.

Q I'm not sure what to “pray” as I walk, will there be any suggestions?

A Yes, we will produce a little booklet of suggested ways of doing the prayer walk, and this would be helpful to read before doing the walk.



An outdoor labyrinth in Bristol, England

Q How long does it take?

A It will take you as long as it takes to walk round the path. Our labyrinth will be 9.2 meters across, with 5 inner circles, and a large middle circle. Each of the five circles will get smaller towards the middle, so the distance in not large. Once in the middle you can sit and pray or think and then when you are ready walk out.

Q Are there rules for walking the labyrinth?

A There are no rules, but there are some suggestions for walking so that everyone can take part. Generally Labyrinths are walked in silence, so don't talk with others once they have started. Many people when walking indoor labyrinths take their shoes off and walk in socks, just to keep the noise down. Because the way in and the way out are the same path, please step aside and let others

past as you walk. Don't spend too much time in the middle, as it can become congested. Enjoy. It is only rumour that you have to do it on your knees.

Q Can children walk the labyrinth

A Yes and we are developing material to help them walk the labyrinth. We hope that people of all ages will give this ancient prayer style a go.

Q Where did they come from?

A They have been around since the early Roman times, and there have been many different designs. They are linked with Mazes, but Labyrinths are not Mazes. Labyrinths have always been linked with spirituality and prayer. It seems that ancient people understood the beauty of "walked meditation" and the idea that prayer does not need to be done standing or sitting still. In the Middle Ages they were incorporated into the design of some of the great cathedrals, most notably Chartres Cathedral. It is the most famous. But there was also a tradition of "turf" Labyrinths set up outside parish churches, some of which are still in existence today. Tradition has it that as the great pilgrimage route to Jerusalem became too dangerous for ordinary folk to travel, other pilgrimage routes were developed and they often ended with people walking a Labyrinth at the end of their pilgrimage.

Q Are there other Labyrinths in New Zealand?

A Yes, there are at least three in Auckland, and St Matthew-in-the-City sets theirs up each Lent.

Q How will we create our Labyrinth?

A We will take the pews out of the central section of the church, and then carefully roll up the central carpet. Then we will use a

marked rope fixed to a central point to mark out the labyrinth on the floor using chalk. (Yes I have checked, and the floor will be fine!) Next we will carefully draw in the circles and the turning points. Once that is done we will place the stones down.



*Memorial Labyrinth in Christchurch, New Zealand.
Made from the rubble of St Luke's Church
to remember the 185 lives lost in the
February 2011 earthquake.*



The Labyrinth at Chartres Cathedral
France

Vanuatu rediscovered : Vanuatu has been in the news lately with the devastation of Cyclone Pam and there are calls for money aid to help the recovery. I went there (then called the New Hebrides) in 1967 for 1 year as a volunteer radio technician. I was soon doing a wide range of things and recall even teaching English and mathematics at a school for one day. The letter below was recently rediscovered.

Box 150, Port Vila
New Hebrides.

22nd April, 1968.

Dear Friends

This letter is for everyone who has not yet received a letter from me, I will give a quick summary of activities here since my arrival.

The main task of servicing the radio transmitters and receivers on Presbyterian Mission stations throughout the New Hebrides was completed around September last year. Rather sooner than I anticipated due to good transport connections and the sets being in quite good shape. Approximately a fortnight spent on each station living with the missionaries – they are mostly school teachers or medical people with about eight clerical fellows who are “jacks of all trades”. I have naturally been involved in a large amount of travel and have been the total length of the New Hebrides and stayed for a period on most of the islands. Although the group extends only about 300 miles there is a great variety of sights from extremely dense bush and volcanoes to low lying coral islands surrounded by reefs containing thousands of shells. I have had a very good look at these attractions and have some good photographs for the record. By some good fortune I had one of my photographs of a volcano selected for insertion in an American magazine. I say good fortune because the cheque I have been sent for only one 35mm slide is just about that.

A while back the generator plant at Tangoa Training Institute was struck with lightning and was damaged. Tangoa is only 20 miles along a good road so I went out on my Vespa scooter and stayed several days on the job. It takes a little time to switch your thinking and make the change from servicing microscopic transistor circuits to 28 kilowatt diesel generators.

I had a trip down to Vila last month travelling by trading ship. I called in at Vaemali Hospital for a few hours and was also able to see the mission station on Tongoa for the first time. I stayed in Vila for a fortnight living on the small Island in the harbour on which is situated the transit hostel and Paton Memorial Hospital. I repaired electrical wiring out at Ulei District School one night, travelling out the 20 odd miles on the mission scooter. Coming back in the dark was highlighted by upending myself, tool bag and scooter into a river.

One Sunday afternoon I drove a Landrover full of friends around Efate Island, a distance of about 80 miles. We stopped at Forraie (*sic*) for a quick look at the manganese mine and then on to Onesua over the roughest section of road. We got bogged down in one spot and

discovered that the four wheel drive arrangement was out of commission. I was forced to demonstrate with success what a Taranaki farmer does in such circumstances. I know that I have gained much by coming here.

The church in Luganville held a bazaar the following week so I flew back to Santo to help in the organisation. Several days before the bazaar two young ladies and a newly appointed N.Z. carpenter arrived in Santo and took up residence at my house. We all had a great time and along with the pleasant company found much pleasure in home cooking indulgence. Normally I practically live on rice.

The bazaar was a fair success considering the very bad weather that we had. Activities like a bazaar are rather infrequent in this town and such an event provides a great opportunity for a church to display the life it contains. Enthusiastic spirits were high, everybody enjoyed the day and sufficient profit was made for the church to finance its projects.

I am to leave Santo within a fortnight to commence the journey that will terminate in New Zealand in June. I have made some very close Christian friendships here and it will be a rather sorrowful departure from this place – my home since last October. If the present plans go through I will be departing the New Hebrides from Vila on May 21st for Noumea and Australia and should land in New Zealand around the 10th of June.

Thanks for the many letters, thoughts and prayers that have been given to me. I have found that many friendships have been strengthened through correspondence and people whom I hardly know personally at home have shown great interest in my work here. Strengthened too is my belief and faith in the life giving power of Jesus Christ. Christ said to the disheartened fishermen who had toiled all day and gained nothing “launch out into the deep and let down your net”. This they did and in so doing gained much. I know that I have gained much by coming here.

I look forward to seeing you again soon.

Yours sincerely, David Wards



Prayer is Hope in Action

We are part way through our series on prayer in church. The series is building up to our Labyrinth Prayer walk on Sunday 28th. I look forward to setting up the Labyrinth in Church for that Sunday and to having the Labyrinth in Church for the following week. I write about what Labyrinths are elsewhere in this Flame.

Prayer is very much at the heart of the Christian experience and it is something that is both very personal to us all, and therefore not easy to talk about, and something that is part of our corporate life as a worshipping congregation and consequently almost too easy to talk about.

Over the first three Sundays of the series, I have looked at prayer from three different angles. Each topic has implications for our personal prayers and our church prayers.

When I thought carefully about the question 'why do we pray?' it seemed to me that almost always the motivation for prayer came out of a realisation that the world was not as it should be. This understanding it seemed to me formed the basis of our prayers of praise, confession, and our prayers for others and so on. Prayer puts forward an ideal world, and speaks to God about that world, and as we meditate on that world we come to the fact that the world as we experience it is not ideal, and we seek some change. I suggested that the key change was within, that we change. We become the more peaceful person in search of peace, or the support person for someone unwell and so on.

Yet this is not wholly adequate, for when we see abuse or injustice, or the evils of warfare which are global in scale, our conversations with God seek for God to intervene and for some sort of change to come about. What we are seeking here is for the good that is God to prevail in the world. We are the agents of that good. Often what I think we suffer from is a short term view of the

world, and we fail to see that hope is a long term view. To hope for global peace, or an end to child abuse and so on is sometimes seen as ignorantly optimistic, but if we see decades of social change we can see an improvement in child welfare or an improvement in the way nations solve conflict. There will always be reversals, but we should not give up hope.

Prayer then is about not giving up, but always keeping that perfect world (God's world or justice) in mind and remaining hopeful.

I used the psalms to flesh out an idea that prayer has a sort of three stage cycle, based on Walter Brueggemann's way of dividing many of the psalms into three groups. He called them Psalms of Orientation, disorientation and new or reorientation. Put simply Brueggemann sees in some Psalms a confident view of the world, then some psalms reflect a loss of confidence and a further group of psalms that reflect a renewed understanding of the world, or faith that incorporates a healthy response to challenge.

I saw in this three part structure how our prayers are sometimes structured: a strong start: God you can do anything; a difficult middle when hurt and reversal knock us back, and God doesn't respond to us as we would like, and then a mature resolution, that sees God not as a cosmic Father Christmas, but rather as a companion and friend on the road. Psalm 23 was an excellent example of a prayer of reorientation.

Prayer ultimately is an exercise in hope, we look forward together with God for a better world, we work for that world alongside God, we recognise that we are agents for change and actors in our own prayers, and that prayer is a way of us understanding our role. Prayer also taps into the unknown, God is always bigger and different from what I or anyone can describe. This is the unknown bit of hope.

Brett

Avalon Hostel Fundraising Raffle

Tickets \$3 each or 2 for \$5

All funds raised will be donated to Avalon Girls Hostel in India to support this mission project.

Tickets available from Heather Laxon and Sharon Sweeney Lauder.

Raffle closes 10am 28th June and will be drawn after the morning service.



bread smart box, chopping board and U-series bread knife



cheese smart box, chopping board and U-series cheese knife



Fusion Maker plus U-Series Chef's Knife



Compact Cookware Frypan (2.5L), Removable Handle and KP Tools Serving Spoon



Turbo Chef and bonus Apple Keeper

11 prizes in total to be won.

The Handel Consort & Quire presents Lest We Forget

with readings from
Raymond Hawthorne



with music by Stanford, Lassus, Pearsall, Handl, Whitacre and Purcell

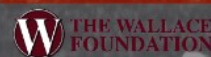
5pm Saturday 4th July

Pitt St Methodist Church
Auckland Central

5pm Sunday 5th July

St Andrew's Church
Queen St, Pukekohe

Admission by donation (suggested \$20)



Spanz

Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand

WINTER 2015 / ISSUE 62

Supporting
Cyclone
Devastated
Vanuatu

www.presbyterian.org.nz



This update is intended to give the members of our churches a broad overview of what is currently happening in Global Mission. I hope you enjoy catching up on all the news – and even more. I hope it motivates your or your congregation to make contact and explore how you can become part of the exciting vision to grow global followers of Jesus. There is still heaps to do! Phil King Global Mission Coordinator



THE IMPACT OF CYCLONE PAM

PCANZ affirms that the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu (PCV) is our primary mission partner and the extent of work we are involved in there testifies to this. Before Cyclone Pam hit on March 13th, we were working together in many effective ways. We have a long history of partnership with the PCV and the scale and scope of our involvement was increasing in 2015. Much of that changed when the devastating cyclone tore through Vanuatu, causing damage on a scale not seen before. The PCV are now committed to a long-term recovery for their church and nation, and as a key partner we will walk beside them through this challenging journey. Immediately after the cyclone hit, Moderator Andrew Norton launched a cyclone appeal to raise funds for the PCV. The appeal funds are contributing towards several rebuild projects. In April, Andrew visited Vanuatu

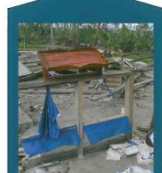
with Global Mission Coordinator Phil King to pay a visit of solidarity and pastoral support. They saw first-hand the incredible damage that Cyclone Pam had wrought on Vanuatu, and learnt of the challenge that lies before PCV. Our support will be vital to the PCV as they restore their churches, schools, and ministries in this time of recovery.

By the end of April the Moderator's Appeal had raised almost \$100,000 for the PCV, a fantastic effort which is testimony to the special partnership between our two churches. The first distribution of funds was for re-roofing classrooms at Onesua College, and the rebuilding of churches and pastor's houses on Efate Island. The appeal funds will continue to be distributed as projects are managed. The task of rebuilding so many damaged buildings is massive, and so will take a long time.

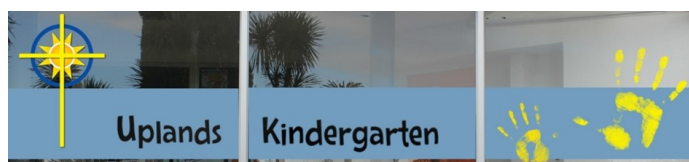
Read more inside ...



TENIS CHURCH AT ISANGEL ON TANNA ISLAND IS ONE OF MANY CHURCHES THAT HAVE BEEN COMPLETELY DESTROYED



The latest issue of Spanz is available for collection in the Church foyer and includes a Global Mission Update featuring articles on Vanuatu and India.



Update

This has been an eventful year for Uplands which began with a significant drop in the roll after the Christmas break. We are very lucky to have strong support from our teaching team who agreed to reduce hours through term two while we recovered numbers and performed an operational and strategic review. We worked with Session to manage the revenue impact for Somervell and successfully returned to profitability in term two.

In term one we committed an additional \$1750 to advertising, including new signage that you will have seen around Somervell, newspaper, online and primary school advertising, community noticeboards and brochure drops. Additionally the 45 year celebration rallied our existing support base for word-of-mouth referrals, and together these efforts contributed to a steady roll increase that provided significant new enrolments and revenue which well outweighed the marketing investment. With a history of waiting lists, marketing has not previously been a strength but is now a requirement that can also provide a significant return.



Our goal is not just to return to our previous position by the end of the year, but to establish a stronger operation and strengthen our annual return to Somervell. The review was already being planned in late 2014 and focused on

establishing our brand and place in the market within an industry that has been undergoing considerable change due to shifts in government policies and a significant growth in full-time day care providers. We performed significant local market and competitor review and this not only clarified the market needs and our competitor offerings but also helped identify our specific branding points of difference. We are for example the only local Christian kindergarten that actively promotes our faith and values.

A number of positives have been clarified about Uplands performance in the market including the very high percentage of enquiries and visits to the centre that result in new enrolments. Existing families are one hundred percent sold on what we do and are strong supporters, however we are not getting our message across adequately to attract new families. We were handicapped in a few ways that are now being addressed: we currently don't offer a place for under 4 year olds in the afternoon and we are closed during term breaks.

So the result of our review has been a number of changes for Uplands that are largely to be implemented at the end of the current term:

- A change to opening hours with an earlier opening time of 8:30
- A full day operating model for 3 year olds
- A holiday programme commencing July, opening for an additional 8 weeks per year

We will protect some of our current strengths and offerings such as retaining and developing our 4 year olds Transition to School curriculum including creation of a dedicated new space. We also offer younger children a morning session only option as they transition into Kindy life.

Once the operational changes are in place we are ready to accelerate marketing based on our branding outcomes. Good messaging starts with defining the qualities of our actual service and we have identified our substantial points of difference as 'foundations' of Uplands that set us apart from others. These strengths have been developed as a tagline that will be consistently used across all communications, materials and contacts.

Faith

Learning

Life

Our website is our shop window to prospective customers who typically review our centre on-line before deciding to make contact. It had not been materially upgraded since its initial 2008 build and redevelopment is now underway to incorporate the new offerings and branding. This allows us to develop our brand and selling proposition ongoing at low cost and will be the anchor point for all other marketing activity and contact. We look forward to showing you this new window into Uplands which will be ready in August. As well as stepping up our advertising channels, we will be visiting playgroups, community groups and other churches in our area to share the good news about Uplands.



But our journey doesn't end here. There will be further work this year looking at additional improvements in 2016.

Our thanks go to the Uplands Management Committee of volunteers of whom we have asked a lot during this time: Elliott Kernohan has admirably led the strategic review; Eleanor Black has brought her skills to bear to drive the marketing effort and website redesign; Mary Ann Goodfellow continues to provide invaluable financial support as well as a recent transition to a new staff payroll system; our parent rep Anneliese Wolcke has invested a lot of time in our market and competitor analysis, and we really appreciate the financial support Brian Rowley has provided as a connection to session. Again our heartfelt thanks to the many others from Somervell who continue to provide support to the kindy, families and teachers.

However we would be nothing without our great and loyal teaching team of Jenn, Tash and Nicola who have been led through the current changes by our wonderful Head Teacher Michele. As a congregation we can be proud of this team and we owe them a debt of gratitude for their outreach and commitment to our local community, to Uplands and in turn, to Somervell.

Martin Lauder



There was lots of activity at Uplands this week as new photos were taken for their website relaunch.

THANK YOU for your ACTS OF SERVICE



There was a great turnout of folk to help plant out the area behind the church by the car park on Sunday 14th June.

After the ordination of Anne Anandarajah, and the induction of Anne and Ricky Waters to Session, and the sharing of communion, we donned our gumboots and gloves and took up our spades.

The children from Uplands helped out too by 'replanting' some of our efforts during the week. They thought it was lots of fun and were very pleased to have been able to help.

Others, who are less green fingered amongst us, donned rubber gloves and gave some neglected areas of the building a bit of a spring clean. This too is very much an act of service and much appreciated.



Somervell Presbyterian

He Somervell's Contacts

Minister:

Rev. Brett Johnstone 524 5379

brettjohnstone@somervell.org.nz

Session Clerk

Andrew Laxon 846 5046

ahlaxon@actrix.co.nz

Pastoral Activities Co-ordinator

Christine Clark 529 0057

Church Administrator

Tsana Plessius 524 5379

Children's Ministry Co-ordinator

Kaila Pettigrove 528 4923

Administration Assistant & Envelope Secretary

Sharon Sweeney Lauder 524 5379

Som Youth Co-ordinator

Matt Ensor 585 0614

Prayer Chain

Aileen Stead 418 1578

Uplands Kindergarten

Michele Morrissey-Brown 5245839

Flame Newsletter

Robert Tingey

(Layout & Photography) 575 2352

robert@tingeys.com

WEB SITE: www.somervell.org.nz

