

The outer music
Comes from an outer instrument.
The inner music
Comes from the heart.
The name of this inner music
Is oneness with God. *Unknown*



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Parish Magazine: September 2016

Kia Ora, Malo e Lelei, Talofa Lava,
Bula Vinaka, Greetings to one and all!

Exodus 28:3. English Standard Version (ESV)
You shall speak to all the skilful, whom I have filled with a spirit
of skill, that they make Aaron's garments to consecrate him for
my priesthood.



MISSION STATEMENT

“We, the members of the Hutt City Uniting
Congregations parish, covenant to nurture the spiritual
in ourselves and other people and explore new ways of
experiencing and sharing God's love in Christ.”

*Be Welcome...
and Worship
with Us!*

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Flowers in the Church

The "lily of the field" is in all probability the scarlet anemone - one of the commonest and most beautiful flowers in Palestine in Jesus' day. The flowers that adorn our churches today are more than decoration. From earliest Christian times flowers represented the Lord, and are also gifts brought to the Creator out of a sense of appreciation of God's bounty. Their beauty and scent raises the minds and hearts of believers to the beauty of their creator. *Paul Stenhouse*



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Insert
Church Notices.

And some sentences I noted – from all the speakers –

- If Jesus returned today, he would not be a Christian.
- The church has become the compliant acolyte of the empire.
- The Sermon on the Mount contains not a single word on what to believe. The Nicene Creed contains not a single word on what to do.
- It is time for the church to go underground again. Today, the church is weary.
- For ‘the love of God’, resist.
- Politics has been reduced to just economic thinking.
- Robin’s church in Oklahoma enables people or groups to promote ideas re mission, and then facilitates their efforts to see if they work.
- Do not be daunted by the enormity of the world's grief. Do justly now. Love mercy now. Walk humbly now. You are not obligated to complete the work, but neither are you free to abandon it. (The Talmud)
- White middle-class university students in NZ now have less stamina than previously – they can only cope with 1 or 2 stress points before absenteeism starts.

After reading this, and if you are interested further, please do not hesitate to contact me – especially if you are asking about the weekly housegroup.

Neville Price

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The blessing Robin Meyers uses at the Mayflower Congregational UCC Church of Oklahoma City:

“And now may the power of God,
and the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
which really does pass all our understanding,
go with every one of you,
abiding in you, lifting you up, and making you whole.
Go in peace, pray for peace,
wage a little peace
and love one another--
(unison) " Every single other!"

life of their parish. I tried to encourage others locally to learn about what was happening in our country, but it required patience. Now I am fortunate to meet weekly with a group of friends from within the HCUC as we strive to understand the God who continues “to be” within and around us daily and the original teachings of Jesus and the context in which they were first heard. This requires an open, exploring mind. I have found another dimension, constantly changing, to my faith – and feel liberated!

The above title was the theme of the conference I attended, and its stated purpose was to explore together paths of resistance to the idols of ego, orthodoxy, and the political status quo. The speakers included –

- Rev Dr Robin Meyers: a United Church of Christ pastor from Oklahoma City, professor, peace activist, and author of six books about progressive Christianity and American society. His politics are neither left nor right, but rather subversive for the cause of love. He seeks to build not a collection of “believers”, but a Beloved Community devoted to embodying peace and justice in a broken world. He is known for such books as *The Underground Church*, *Saving Jesus from the Church*, and his latest book *Spiritual Defiance*.
- Jo Randerson: playwright and performer and the director of Barbarian Theatre Company which uses drama to frame complex questions and express radical politics. She is recognised as one of NZ’s most original voices.
- Dr Robert Myles: lecturer in Theological and Religious Studies at the University of Auckland. As a non-believer with a deep respect for religion, his research focuses on the convergences between the Bible, politics and culture with a particular interest in radical politics.
- Dr Jim McAloon: teaches history at Victoria University, Wellington. His presentation concentrated on faith and mobilisation in reformist and progressive political campaigns.

Whilst I will remember all the speakers, my best memory is that of Robin Meyers – after Napier, he went onto most of the states in Australia. The titles of his sessions and his Sunday sermon speak for themselves – a number of his presentations are publicly available on the internet –

- “From Galilean Sage to Supernatural Saviour – or how I became a heretic with help from Jesus”
- “Spiritual Defiance – Building a Beloved Community of Resistance”
- “Things aren’t the same in Joppa these days”

Our Parish

St John’s Avalon	577 2533
Stokes Valley Uniting	563 5793
St Marks Wesley	569 6017
St Aidan’s	569 6017
Waiwhetu Uniting	569 6597
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...and our team of Ministers, Supply Ministers, Lay leaders, Administrators, Supporters, Teachers, Council Members and Pastoral Carers.

HCUC Rap Song

CHORUS

Do U C what I C?
When the Saviour of the world, he rescued me:
and he planted me @ H C U C, I C, we C;
Jesus, Jesus, sets me free!

VERSE 1

When I was just a little kid,
my mother took me from my crib:
she dressed me up – she wiped my nose –
she even cleaned between my toes!
She took me to this happy place,
where people sang and people prayed:
as I grew up, it was just so cool,
when I joined in the Sunday School! Yeah!

VERSE 2

At H C U C life is great,
with Jesus friends – awesome mates:
they lift me up when I feel down
and point my feet to Holy Ground.
there's so much joy that I've found here,
so much hope dispels my fear:
so much love's been shown to me –
I praise God for this family! Yeah!

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FAITH makes all things POSSIBLE.
HOPE makes all things WORK.
LOVE makes all things BEAUTIFUL.
Maureen, Wainuiomata.



Progressive Spirituality – “Faith as Resistance to Ego, Orthodoxy and Empire”

I want to thank the Waiwhetu Congregational Council for contributing the registration fee that allowed me to attend the second Progressive Spirituality Conference NZ held in Napier over 3 days in May this year. There were over 122 participants present – as well as friends from Uniting, Methodist, Presbyterian, and Anglican Churches, including some who no longer attend church. It was interesting to see the presence of three Methodist Presidents, a Methodist Vice-President, a retired Presbyterian Mission Resource Director, and many active ministers. At least one Roman Catholic non-attendee was also there. This conference was part of an international movement across many denominations.

As Rev. Rex Hunt (Australia) says: A progressive christianity is not new. In one form or another it has been around for three hundred years or so. What is new about its current expression now called ‘Progressive’, is this open and inclusive faith is ‘coming out’ or resurfacing in thousands of congregations in mainline churches around the world as a dynamic grassroots movement.

My personal journey started in the 1960s when, as a young engineer, I grappled with the faith I had grown up with and the scientific/physical world where I was studying and working. Rather than concentrating on specific beliefs, I was more interested in ‘living my faith’ – and I found it was this that enabled others to ask difficult questions, or for assistance. I am not fond of some terms in use today – post-modern, progressive, charismatic, evangelistic, and creedal.

Imagine living before 1500 CE. If you did not believe in the infallibility of the pope, the divine rule of kings, and that the earth revolved around the sun, you would have been labelled a heretic and most likely would have been burned at the stake! Thankfully, ideas gradually changed – sometimes painfully – and today we know popes and kings are human, and that the earth is located in one of the spiral arms of the Milky Way. Here we are part of the Solar System – a group of eight planets, as well as numerous comets and asteroids and dwarf planets which orbit our Sun. According to research, the universe is approximately 13.8 billion years old.

Many people consider we are living in the middle of a reformation, which can be exciting and not always the most comfortable of places to be. About 10 years ago, I found friends in NZ who had discovered this ‘progressive movement’ – and they were excited. They were able to explore and discuss their faith within the

Waiwhetu Uniting, corner of Trafalgar and Grenville St.

Sunday worship 9.30am with a children's programme followed by morning tea and fellowship.

Singing group: Wednesday, 7pm.

Afternoon Fellowship for men and women: Meets every second Thursday of the month at 2pm.

Evening Women's Fellowship: meets every third Wednesday of the month at 7.30 pm.

Men's Bowls: Every second Friday of the month 2pm

Messy Church: Every third Friday of the month 5.30 pm

Playgroup: Thursday 9.30 am to 11.30 am.

Resource Centre: A library of Books, magazines and DVD's for church members.



The Bible contains over 400 references to singing, over 40 to dancing and there are even more about rejoicing ...

We discover two aspects of singing and dancing in the Bible: prepared pieces that were often traditional, as well as *in the moment* worship and rejoicing.

Psalm 149:3: Praise his name with dancing, accompanied by tambourine and harp.

Psalms 9:2: I will be glad and exult in you; I will sing praise to your name, O Most High.

Listen, and for organ music thou wilt ever, as of old, hear the Morning Stars sing together. *Thomas Carlyle*

If God took the trouble to tell us eight hundred times to be glad and rejoice, He must want us to do it—SOME." *Eleanor H. Porter, Pollyanna*

<http://www.literaturepage.com/read/pollyanna.html>

**Faith Hope and Love**

What does 'Faith, hope and Love ' mean to me? Everything!

I was born into a Christian family (Baptist) and the only things we did on Sundays were going to morning worship, afternoon Sunday School and evening worship.

My mum and auntie went to women's groups during the week and mum, auntie and uncle were back at the church hall on Thursday evenings for the Sunday School choir practice. In my child-like mind, I thought that everyone else was doing the same.

When I arrived in NZ about 6 months after our marriage, I was looking for a church to attend. We were in rental flats in Wellington for a few months, firstly in Brooklyn and then Berhampore. Fortunately, both suburbs had a Baptist church within walking distance and both churches made me feel welcome.

Eventually, we settled in Wainuiomata and I noticed a Baptist church along the main road, quite a long way from our home. The only problem was that we didn't have a car in those days and the Sunday bus times were very sparse and didn't fit in with the church service times. It took 40 minutes to walk one way and I remember pushing my baby daughter in the pram. I got soaked! Unfortunately I became what my mother would have called a "fair weather Christian", only turning up to church in good weather. It didn't sit well with me. I wanted to become a church member somewhere and be settled. A neighbour suggested St Stephen's, well within walking distance. It was a Methodist, Presbyterian, Congregational mix and seemed the closest thing, worship-wise, to what I'd been used to all my life.

On the first Sunday, everyone was very friendly, kind and helpful and made me feel right at home and, wow, what enthusiastic singers they all were. They nearly raised the roof!! On the second Sunday, I was invited to join the church choir, which I did. I have now clocked up nearly 43 years as a church member at "Steve's Place", praise God.

As I look back over my life, the most important thing to me is that I was brought up with Christian values and it doesn't get any better than that. I count myself very fortunate indeed. "Faith, hope and love, all three, but the greatest of these is LOVE". 1 Corinthians 13:13

From Maureen, St Stephen's, Wainuiomata.

WELCOME TO OUR PARISH!**St. Marks Wesley Multicultural Church, 58 Woburn Rd, Lower Hutt.**

Sunday Services 10:15am. Holy Communion, 1st Sunday of the month.

Samoan Service 12. noon

Tongan Service 12. Noon

Women's Afternoon Fellowship: 1.30pm every FIRST Tuesday of the month.

St Marks Wesley Uniting, Tongan Congregation, September 2016**Psalms 47:6 "Make music to praise God; Play Music for him"****Malo e Lelei and greetings to you all,**

I hope everyone is keeping warm during this cold winter season. Meanwhile during the month of June to August, the Tongan Congregation have been busy having band lessons every Wednesday evening and Sunday afternoon, learning to play new instruments like ukulele, guitar, electric guitar, bass and key board.

This project is for all ages; it has been a great experience especially being new beginners. Hopefully in the near future we will be able to perform live in front of people, such as, the Tongan Hiva Faka-lotu (Christian songs/hymns) that we have learnt to play.



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Stokes Valley Uniting Church, 346 Stokes Valley Rd.

Sunday Worship 9:30am followed by morning tea and fellowship.

Cafe service: Every fifth Sunday 9:30am

Communion: First Sunday in the month.

Kids' Ministry: Every Sunday at 9.30am

Youth Programme 13yrs plus: Every Sunday after morning service

Mainly Music 5yrs under: Every Tuesday at 9.30am during the school term.

Friendship Group: Every second Tuesday of the Month 2pm.

Afternoon Fellowship: Every third Thursday in the month 1pm.

Praying out loud. "Does anyone have a prayer request?" our youth leader asked. I slumped down in my seat. I dreaded praying with the entire group. Even though everyone was nice, I just didn't feel comfortable praying out loud with a bunch of people. It was weird to me and I didn't want to speak up. I was sure I'd totally mess up and say the wrong thing.

Our youth leader said, "I'll open, and you all can pray when you are ready."

We didn't pray in any kind of order. People prayed whenever they felt it was right. The worst part for me was the silence between each prayer. After our youth leader prayed, no one said a word. My stomach did a flip-flop. I held my breath and counted the seconds. I couldn't help but wonder what everyone else was thinking. I hoped they weren't waiting for me to pray.

Finally, after what seemed like an eternity, the girl next to me prayed. And then someone else went. And another. Although I liked youth group and kept going back, I always felt like an outsider when we prayed. It seemed like everyone but me knew exactly what to say. The youth leader said 'Prayer is not about us. It is about God'. For some reason, that really hit me. When it came time to pray that evening, I still didn't pray out loud. But instead of worrying about what other people were thinking, I tried my best to concentrate on God and to listen. Over time, I started to make some good friends at youth group. I didn't feel as self-conscious when we prayed. Then one night, I just blurted out a prayer for a girl whose mother was sick. I hadn't planned on it, but for some reason I just had the courage to pray. I didn't say anything earth-shattering. But no one laughed at me or said anything about it. After that, I prayed out loud more often. Each time I did it, it got a little easier. While I know prayer doesn't magically make my problems disappear, I know that when I put my trust in God he'll always take care of me. *Unknown.*

St. John's Avalon, 986 High Street, Avalon.

Sunday School: 10.am Service: 11:00am -Mainly in Tongan

Communion: Every second Sunday of each Month.

Tongan Language Prayers and Bible Classes: Every Wednesday 7pm.

Club Work: (10 to 17 years) 2nd & 4th Sundays, 2-4pm (ON HOLD until June)

Anyone between the ages of 10 - 17 (from outside St John's) is welcome to join us.

Women's Fellowship: 3rd Saturday in the month

Choir practice: Saturday evenings.

Photos from our recent combined service led by our children.



St Aidan's, Corner Poto Road and Stratton St. Normandale.

Regular Sunday Worship 9:00am: followed by morning tea and fellowship. Children's programme for pre-school up to college age students. On the first Sunday of the month, our service is a Café Service. It begins at 10am

Messy Church: Every third Sunday in the month commencing 4pm

Open Door (for seniors): meets fortnightly on Fridays for midday lunch and Fellowship. Transport available.

Mainly Music: 9.30 - 10am, Thursday (term time) followed by morning tea and a playgroup until 11am.

Dramatic Faith: The relationship between theatre and church is long standing. Jesus uses a theatre term (hypocrites = stage actor) to accuse the scribes and Pharisees that he describes as whitewashed tombstones. That's because in his day, actors wore masks to represent the character they played. It was a good image to describe people who pretended to be one thing while really being another. The theatre was not seen as a great place for following the sort of moral qualities the apostles insisted on.

After a while, the theatre began to be used by Christians as a way of proclaiming the gospel. In churches our liturgy recreated a wider story about the place the congregation had in the world.

This is the drama of the local church – taking the everyday elements of our lives and placing them in a greater narrative about God's purpose for all humanity. *Unknown.*

Dance: Dancing is bigger than the physical body. When you extend your arm, it doesn't stop at the end of your fingers, because you're dancing bigger than that. You're dancing spirit. *Judith Jamison*



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Psalms 33:3 “Sing a new song to him. Play beautifully and joyfully on stringed instruments”.

What is happening next?

On the 4th-10th of September 2016 we had Tonga Language Week / Uike Kātoanga'i 'o e Lea Faka-Tonga. The theme for this year was 'Fakakoloa 'a Aotearoa 'aki 'a e Loto'i Tonga' (Enriching Aotearoa with the Tongan Spirit). We were part of this event (more next newsletter). We are also planning to play a few songs that we have learnt over the past few weeks at the 'Sepitema' (Women Roll Call), this is an annual event that Tongan Women celebrate on the last Sunday of this month.

Job well done to Kalisi Lea (Tutor) and Thank you to Koliniusi Fatai (Manager) and Melelua Latu (Coordinator) for making this happen.

*Ilisapesi Fifita
St Marks Wesley Uniting
Tongan Congregation*



St Stephen's, Main Rd, Wainuiomata.

Our Sunday morning worship is at 10am followed by fellowship in the hall. Holy Communion Service is followed by lunch on the 2nd Sunday of each month, and we have morning tea after the church services on the other Sundays. The Tongan Language Bible Group meets every 3rd Saturday and the Tongan Language Service is held on the 3rd Sunday of each month at 11.30am. Church Council Meeting is on the 4th Sunday after church. Prayer Group meets on Tuesdays at 9.30am in St. Stephen's Chapel, and the Bible Study Group meets there each fortnight at 7.30pm. Our Mission Outreach is at Wesleyhaven in Naenae on the first Thursday of each month at 10.30am, and our Opportunity Shop hours are on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays between 1 and 3pm, and on Thursday mornings when the Arthritis Group meets in the hall. Church choir practice is at 9.30am each Sunday morning. Visitors are always welcome, and our Mission is to commit ourselves to make the good news of Jesus Christ real in our community.

If music is played, immediately the heart of the music enters into my heart, or my heart enters into the music. When we hear soulful music, or when we play a soulful piece of music, we feel it from the soles of our feet to the crown of our head. Soulful and spiritual music really helps us; it feeds our inner life. Music has tremendous power. A mother feeds her child whenever the child is hungry. Similarly, we have to feed the soul. When a singer sings spiritual songs, they live the song that they sing. When we sing, or play an instrument we think of both the body of the song and the soul of the song. The body of the song is each word. We have to know the meaning of the song well. We believe it and share it. At that time, those who are listening are bound to feel the soul inside the music. They may not even hear the words; they will only see the soul inside the song. They will see it in our faces. At that time, they do not see anything but the soul. *Unknown*



Combined Children's Service at Waiwhetu