



NEWS, ARTICLES AND STORIES
FROM
BAPTIST NZ
APP & WEBSITE

JANUARY -
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2023

This newsletter is a print version of the latest articles published on the Baptist NZ website and app. The app now replaces the *Baptist* magazine and is available to download on Google play and App Store. For those in the Baptist family who prefer to read hardcopy, check out what God is doing in our faith communities in this newsletter, sent bimonthly to churches. If you have email and would like this document to be emailed to you, sign up to our newsletter at baptist.nz



MIKE CRUDGE

Ukraine: One year in

Friday 24 February marked the one-year anniversary of Russia's announcement of a "special military operation" effectively advancing further into Ukraine in a major escalation of the Russo-Ukrainian War that began in 2014. This escalation over the last 12 months has caused tens of thousands of deaths on both sides and instigated the largest refugee crisis in Europe since World War II. More than 8 million Ukrainians have been displaced within their country, and more than 8 million have fled as refugees.

The Baptist World Alliance (BWA) prepared a global prayer service that was broadcast at 3am Saturday 25 Feb (NZDT), and then made available on demand to watch later – see their website at baptistworld.org/ukraine/

During the last European Baptist Federation monthly online prayer gathering for Ukraine, participants heard this update:

The Ukraine Baptist Union has seen over 3000 baptisms in the last 6 months

- They've lost several hundred church buildings in Russian occupied areas
- They are seeing new church plants arising out of Baptist relief work around Ukraine
- There are tens of thousands of extra people in Ukraine Baptist churches compared to 1 year ago
- The Ukraine Baptist Union is now the biggest Aid agency in Ukraine
- The Ukraine Baptist Union's vision is for every Ukraine Baptist church to become a centre of Heat and Hope, shining light in the darkness of the war – and global aid has enabled payment of utility bills and the purchasing of generators for hundreds of churches throughout Ukraine



In this podcast show, Caleb Haurua and his fantastic guests dive into what it means to be a disciple in Aotearoa today. Find Discipleship Aotearoa and other audio resources at baptist.nz/podcasts/

Do you have any stories of gospel renewal in your community?

You can share them by emailing stories@baptist.org.nz

Feedback

If you would like to give feedback on this newsletter, write to our Communications Director at the Baptist Support Centre: **P O Box 12 149, Penrose, Auckland 1642, New Zealand.**

- The Ukraine Baptist Union was the first Baptist Union to offer support after the Turkey and Syria earthquakes
- Poland is seeing many new Ukraine Baptist church plants – at least 4 now officially constituted and others are in the process

For this anniversary, in our times of personal and communal prayer, the European Baptist Federation have crafted a prayer for us (set out below). Perhaps this could be prayed in your Sunday:

Let us pray

Lord God, we come before you again, like we have countless times over the past year, interceding on behalf of our brothers and sisters in Ukraine. Lord, we look back and reflect on a year of pain and grief and loss. We remember and we grieve.

For loved ones who have been killed or gone missing.

For millions who have been displaced from their homes and whose security has been robbed from them.

For families separated and who have not seen loved ones for months.

For churches destroyed, captured by occupying forces, and forced to shut.

For pastors and church members and volunteers who have worked tirelessly to care for those displaced.

For the millions who continue to try and carry on with their lives through the trauma and weight of war.

And for the millions around the world whose lives have been made more difficult and painful as a consequence of the war.

God we cry out to you for mercy, for peace, and for your Spirit to be upon our brothers and sisters in Ukraine. Continue to give them the strength to endure through the end of this conflict.

Lord, we give thanks for the ministry and witness of our brothers and sisters in Ukraine, in the neighbouring countries, and across Europe and Central Asia. We ask that your name continue to be glorified in our actions. We know that you, Lord Jesus, are present in every act of care and mercy and peace. May the world know more of your goodness and saving love through our response to this tragedy.

Lord, we praise you for the thousands who have come to know you in the past year. For the tens of thousands that have come to your Church to seek comfort and who have met you. For those who have been baptised and saved, we praise your name Lord God. We pray that your Kingdom will continue to flourish in Ukraine.

Sovereign God, we pray for the end of this war. Lord, we know our prayers of peace are not lost in the dark. We know that you have heard us and continue to hear us. We trust that you, oh God, will work miracles of peace and justice in Ukraine.

Lord, hear our prayers.

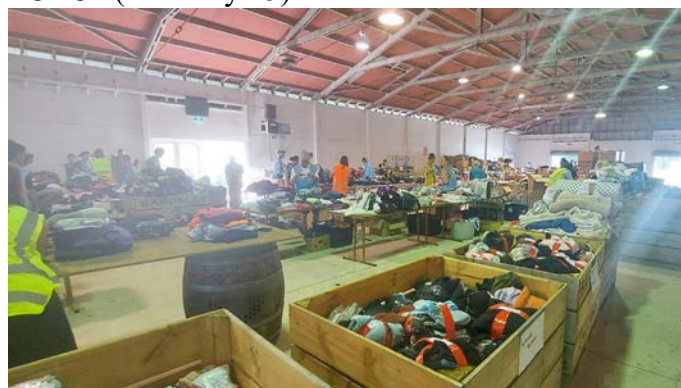
Mike Crudge is Communications Director, Baptist National Support Centre, Auckland, New Zealand.

Photo: Irpin, Kyiv Oblast, Ukraine. 1 April 2022 by Oleksandr Ratushniak / UNDP Ukraine.

From flickr.com Creative Commons.

RETI AH-VOA

Volunteers need: Napier cyclone relief (February 23)



Reti Ah-Voa is the Regional Leader of the Northern Baptist Association.

The Rānui Baptist Community Care team has this week been redeployed to Napier to help the Civil Defence efforts following Cyclone Gabrielle. Elesha Thomas (Manager) and Leao Tildsley (Coordinator) with a few others from their team arrived in Hawke's Bay on Sunday 19 February.

On Monday they set up a Community Response Centre out of Bay Baptist Church (81 Gloucester Street, Napier) and then in the afternoon were setting up the Civil Defence Army distribution Centre at the Tomoana Showgrounds. These are big operations.

Volunteer help needed

There is an immediate need for big diggers and experienced operators willing to donate their time, as well as folk experienced in logistics, and people experienced in managing/leading teams. To offer your time as a volunteer please email manager@careranui.org.nz if you know of someone who could help, please pass this on to them.

Donated goods needed

Goods are being transported to the Hawke's Bay from Auckland by truck, the next one leaves Rānui tomorrow (Friday 24 February).

The items MOST IN NEED are:

Gumboots, spades, PPE gear, large pots, bags for

people to pack stuff in, like fabric shopping bags or backpacks or large nylon zip up bags, farming goods: fence posts, waratahs, battery electric fence units, wire tape, pig tails, radios for on farm comms (walkie talkies), generators, culverts, big diggers and animal health products.

Financial gifts

We are still encouraging gifts of money as this allows the Care teams to respond to the changing local needs, and to meet the costs of freighting supplies to Napier with restricted road access.

If you would like to give money to the relief efforts in the cyclone damaged Hawke's Bay here are two Baptist options managing fundraising:

>Rānui Baptist Community Care

12- 3039-0195267-04

email adminsupport@careranui.org.nz

>Lower North Island Baptist Association

03-0502-0169949-000

email admin@wba.org.nz.

Please reference payments "Cyclone relief", and if you would like a donation receipt email your reference details to the corresponding address above.

Pray

Please be in prayer for the Rānui Baptist Community Care team and the wider Hawke's Bay community.

Pray for unity between those coming to help with the relief effort and those in the community.

Pray for energy and patience and grace – there are many weary people who are exhausted.

Pray for hope to be held despite the devastation many have experienced.

Pray for volunteers to respond to the call.

Photo supplied: Rānui Baptist Community Care

CHARIS FOTHERINGHAM

Cyclone Gabrielle: Update from Hawke's Bay Baptist churches

(February 16)



Here's what we've heard from churches within the Bay of Plenty & Eastland Baptist Association concerning Cyclone Gabrielle's impact.

Village Baptist Church (Havelock North)

The church building got some flooding, including the septic system and pump shed. There is no church this Sunday until we can ensure that any contamination issues are resolved. – Pastor Cameron Jones.

Gill Stewart, Administrator at Village Baptist Church:

"The loss of lives is the hardest thing, and the pain of loss for our community, homes, and businesses. Ps. Cameron has been amazing, cutting his sabbatical short to connect with and pastorally care for members of our church family. No cell phones or internet in lots of areas means that we are making door-to-door visits. We have a skip arriving today and will start the process of mitigating further loss. Insurance claim in process. Through the storm, God has been present, our church family are resilient because of our love and care for each other, not just in the good times. We value your prayers."

Flaxmere Baptist Church (Hastings)

We are doing ok. Impacts are secondary ones, e.g., people having displaced relatives staying with them. The total impact on Hawkes Bay will be major and long-lasting. Nothing is needed at the moment, but there may be something later. – Pastor Andrew Reyngoud.

Hastings Baptist Church

Church buildings had a few leaks but all good. Some of our people were precautionarily evacuated but are back home safe. A number have been without power, but that's progressively coming back. So all up, Hastings Baptist people are doing ok. – Pastor Paul Davison.

Pray: Over 10,000 people have been displaced within the Eastland region. Please continue praying for our faith communities as they recover and support those impacted, as well as for the wider region and the recovery efforts.

Perhaps we could set aside some time in our Sunday gatherings to pray together through the devastation of the last week due to Cyclone Gabrielle.

Give: Donations towards a relief fund can be given to the following account managed by the Lower North Island Baptist Association: 03-0502-0169949-000

Include "Cyclone Relief" in the reference.

If you require a receipt please

email admin@wba.org.nz with your donation reference details.

Image supplied: Village Baptist Church building during flood.

ALAN JAMIESON
Rodney Macann (1942-2023)



Alan Jamieson is the Director of Arotahi (NZBMS) and once co-pastored with Rodney Macann. On behalf of the Baptist Churches of New Zealand, Alan gave a tribute at Rodney's funeral service on 30 January 2023 in Wellington. This is a transcript of that tribute.

Lorna, Rachel, Katharine, Stuart and Robert, I bring Charles Hewlett, our present Baptist Leader's care, prayers, and love for you. As all of us here present, we hope that our words, presence, and prayers will support you and hold you in this time.

Kia ora. I met Rodney in 1997. He came to talk to me about a job at Wellington Central Baptist Church, where he was the Senior Pastor. I immediately thought I liked this man, and I respected this man. Twenty-five years later, my appreciation and respect are only growing. In that conversation, he asked me, what sort of music do you like? I said Joey Cocker, Eric Clapton, Leonard Cohen. He didn't seem to know them, so I said do you like music? I mentioned that because Rodney obviously was a global-class, world-class singer. But he was more than that. He was always bio-vocational and had that rare extraordinary ability to be world-class in both.

Rodney started pastoring by training at Spurgeon's College in London for three years alongside his music career. In 1990 he came to

Wellington with Lorna and the family and became Pastor at Wellington Central Baptist Church for 16 years through to 2006. All through that time, he was a pastor and musician. But he was more than that. He took on the job of the Wellington Baptist Regional Consultant from 2003 to 2013. He was in charge of the whole region as well as the church, as well as singing. Then in 2005, he was our National President. So he cut the cakes and the ribbons and did all that presidential stuff – probably ate the cakes. Then he became our Baptist National Leader from 2007 to 2011. He did it all.

Rodney was world-class as a pastor and a pastoral leader. What I mean by world-class, I mean he cared for people. He was a genuine pastor who saw those who were at the bottom, in need and struggling, and moved towards them with care and compassion. He moved easily among many different groups and sectors of society. He was a leader. I spoke to various people last week about Rodney's leadership. One of the people, Jill, who worked with him in the Baptist office, said, "he was the man of the day, totally right for the job, the right person, exactly who the union needed at the time".

He was a spiritual giant in my eyes. So calm and capable, so caring. I have great respect for him. He was very wise and a very Godly man.

So he cared, but he also had foresight. In Rodney's time leading at Wellington Central Baptist Church, he was in charge of leading the church's redevelopment. He had the foresight to buy a car park seven or eight storeys high in the middle of Wellington city and then to build a group of flats on top of that car park.

Not only did he have foresight, but he also had courage. I remember once there was a doctor in the city here who cared for people living rough. Rodney had the idea that it would be good to buy a house and set up a clinic for this person. And so, with four other people, he bought a house. Then he went to the church meeting and said, well, maybe the church would like to buy the house off the people who had purchased it (in the hope that the church would buy it), and they agreed. They did up the house so that it would be as beautiful a clinic as any in Karori, Remuera, Cashmere, or anywhere else, and it still continues today.

Rodney had courage in another setting, maybe much more than I would ever have. At Wellington Central Baptist Church, there were organ pipes at the front of the church. The church organ had been replaced by an electric one many years ago, but the pipes remained. Rodney, with great foresight, saw that the church could use the space to create a couple

of meeting rooms. So seeing with foresight and vision that forgiveness was easier to receive than permission, he decided that four of us would go early one Saturday morning and gut the pipes. We'd empty the area behind where the pipe organ was and dump the lot before anyone found out. The other accomplices are here today – they can verify it. Rodney stood up the next Sunday morning with a great gaping hole behind him and said, some of you might notice that the pipes have gone. We want to start creating some meeting rooms and greater spaces for the church, so we thought we'd get underway. I know the pipes are really important to some of you, so we've kept a few small ones so you can take one home as a memento. Courageous leadership. More courage than I think I would have.

Rodney and I met for coffee last November, and like always, the conversation was about many things. One thing was his enjoyment of his time in different leadership roles in the Baptist movement and how much he valued that time. He valued the contribution he could bring but also what he gained from that time. The other thing he talked about was family. Always family. He was immensely proud of his kids and the different journeys they've gone on. In his bigness and generosity, he never judged them. He just said I'm learning from my kids. The other thing that stood out in that conversation was his bigness towards me. See, technically, he was my boss for three years, then he gave me the reigns, and I was his boss for six years. I don't know anyone else who could do that as well as he did, with great generosity and great bigness of heart.

We talked about a book, and we talked about writing, about what happens in a church that no one could ever believe, and the funny stories that will never get written. We decided it couldn't get written for a few more decades yet. But Rodney would have had a few entries in that book. It's been mentioned here today about him playing in John the Baptist. Rodney decided one day that it would be a good idea for the children's talk, to bring in the head they'd made of his head and show the kids, to the horror of one pre-schooler who ran off terrified.

Rodney came back from summer holiday one day, and he said he had booked the campsite, but he hadn't taken too much notice where it had said "clothes optional". He'd taken a teenage family member with him who wasn't keen to go to the tennis court.

See, Rodney was really human, he was down to earth and he was willing to take a joke on himself. And he was the same in his faith. I read an article last week about how he described the decision to

move away from the opera in Europe to Wellington Central Baptist Church. He said: "it just seemed like the right thing to do, and in my Christian faith, if something seems like the right thing to do, well you should follow it." That's who he was.

One story to finish. When Rodney came from the UK to New Zealand, he wasn't sure how you do funerals in New Zealand so he asked one of the staff members, who was there then, and it wasn't me. The person said in New Zealand, at the end of the funeral, you lead the family down to the crematorium, where all the action happens. So Rodney did it. He led the family down the tunnel to where the crematorium was, to the horror of the crematorium staff, who quickly ushered the family out a side exit. He told that story. You may think that's not a great story to tell here. I tell it for two reasons. One, I spoke with the sister of the man who had died there. Thirty-four years later, do you know what stood out to her? Not that they were led down to the crematorium, but Rodney's tremendous care, his love and his compassion.

The other reason I mention this story is that Rodney wasn't scared of dying. He knew where he was going. He lived a good life, a full life. But he knew this life was mortal and perishable, and there was more to come. I remember him coming back from Waikanae one weekend and talking about how beautiful the beach was. How he sat at the family dinner and watched his adult kids talking, and how much he delighted in just watching them interact. He was angry that this life had to end, and then he said it must be so good in the next one.

Rodney knew the perishableness, the mortality of this life. But he held onto the hope of what is to come. He said as an opera singer or as a preacher, he was just the middle man who opened up and made available the score or the text. On podium or pulpit, through sermon or song, he wanted to be faithful to the composer and to open up what they intended. His life and words opened up his deep belief that this life is not all, that one day God will dwell with his people, and there will be no more grieving, no more pain, no more tears. God will say the old has passed and make everything new.

Image from Rodney Macann's funeral video recording

CHRIS BERRY

The next property in our college's unfolding story

For some years, our theological and pastoral leadership training college, Carey Baptist College,

has been exploring how it might invest or develop its campus at 473/475 Great South Road, Penrose (Auckland). The primary objective is to generate significant new income streams to support the ongoing work of Carey in training leaders for our faith communities. It has become apparent, over time, that the best course of action is to sell the current campus and move to another site.



In August 2021 the Carey Board approved the constitution of a property working group to consider options and navigate the best way forward. This group includes representatives of the Carey Board, and the senior leadership of both Carey and the National Support Centre. This initiative has the support of both Assembly Council and Arotahi (NZBMS).

In 2022 the property working group met with CBRE Ltd, a commercial real estate business, to discuss the possible sale of 473 and 475 Great South Road, and future purchase of a property to meet the space needs of Carey, the National Support Centre and Arotahi, but also to provide a substantial financial return to meet Carey's future needs.

The process of marketing the existing site and searching for a new location will begin in February 2023. It is likely that when we sell, we will take a two-year lease back from the new owners to give opportunity to identify a new site and complete any fit-out that might be required.

Reflecting on this project, Grant Harris, Chair of the Carey Board, says, "Carey is coming up to its 100th anniversary. We're so grateful for the generations that have enabled the College to be in the position that it is in today, and as a governance team we're seeking to be faithful in our stewardship for the next generation of leaders that will train through Carey, in what will be a different environment to what we know today. Our hope is to be able to resource that training the best we can. This will flow directly to the health of the churches we serve."

The current property is jointly owned by Carey and the Baptist Union of New Zealand. The Baptist National Support Centre and Arotahi are both co-

located with Carey on the site. We believe it is in the best interests of all three groups to remain co-located on the same site, enabling stronger relationship, clearer communication, and better stewardship of our collective resources.

Charles Hewlett, our National Leader says: "John Tucker and the Carey team play such a crucial role in helping Baptist faith communities to thrive. I really encourage people to pray for this important and exciting initiative."

Alan Jamieson, Director of Arotahi, writes: "Our team is spread throughout many communities of the world, and our small team in Tāmaki Makaurau is excited to continue being part of the community with Carey and the Baptist Support Centre. Wherever we are, we will continue focussing on hand-carved mission for all NZ Baptists!"

The Principal of Carey, John Tucker explains the rationale for this move: "Over the last few years we have seen massive changes in the way our churches access Carey's ministry training and theological formation. We've also witnessed the ongoing secularisation of New Zealand, with major implications for the funding of a college like Carey. This once-in-a-generation move has the potential to generate significant future funding for Carey and extend its ministry among the churches we serve."

The current site of Carey was formally opened in June 1994 after moving from Victoria Avenue, Remuera where the college had been located since 1954. This next step is another property change in the unfolding story of our college and focus on training and formation.

A project of this size will require financial support from within the Baptist family of churches. If you would like to explore how you might contribute, or if you have any questions about this project, please email me: chris.berry@carey.ac.nz or phone +64 9 525 4017.

CHARIS FOTHERINGHAM

Responding to the Turkey-Syria earthquakes (February 9)

Here's what's happening in Turkey and Syria, with updates and response resources from the Baptist World Alliance.

Several nations and organisations are mobilising to rescue and support the millions of people affected by the 7.8 magnitude Turkey-Syria earthquake on Monday, 6 February.

Three days after the earthquake and significant aftershocks, the death toll is close to 12,000. The World Health Organisation warned that the disaster

could impact 23 million people and casualties surpass 20,000.



A pastor in Antakya, Turkey, says "Everything is gone, the church is collapsed, my house is gone, we don't have anything. People are cold and hungry and outside. There is crying and screaming everywhere. Many are under the collapsed buildings. The help is not here yet" (Barnabas Aid, 2023).

A winter storm hindered rescuers, and survivors face below freezing temperatures. Over 380,000 people are sheltering in hotels, shopping malls, stadiums, mosques, community centres and trains.

"It is incredibly cold in Syria right now. We are extremely concerned that many people... could still be trapped under rubble. Others are still homeless and making do with what they can, including sleeping in cars", says Kathryn Achilles, Advocacy Media and Communications Director for Save the Children Syria (Save the Children, 2023).

Before the earthquake, northern Syria had already experienced the collapse of its infrastructure and essential services under conflict, the collapse of the economy and, more recently, a severe cholera outbreak.

Aleppo was hard hit by the aerial bombings during Russian-Syrian offences against rebel-held areas, leaving fragile buildings. The Monday earthquakes have significantly damaged the Aleppo Baptist church. Baptist World Aid is collaborating with the European Baptist Federation for more details on current needs. Difficulties in cross-border aid flow into Syria remain, and Turkey is trying to open two more border gates.

Turkey's Gaziantep province was the most severely shaken by the earthquake, with the epicentre located 26 kilometres east of Nurdağı city. Turkey's disaster management agency is dealing with over 11,342 reports of collapsed buildings.

The Turkish Baptist Alliance describes the impact on our Baptist family in Adana in this update:

"Our country is in great shock. Many buildings are damaged. People left their homes and their cities. There are a lot of traffic jams and it is very

cold. It is snowing in most of the cities. This week the weather will be below 0 Celsius. The roads are also seriously damaged. This makes the search and rescue more difficult. The next 72 hours only professional search and rescue teams are allowed to go to the earthquake area. Thanks to the Lord, our Baptist churches and the members are all well. Adana is among the affected cities. 15 buildings collapsed and many were damaged. It is not clear if the building where the church is meeting is damaged or not. Two neighbouring buildings collapsed to where the pastor of the Adana Baptist Church and General Secretary of our Union and his family are living. The church members of Adana Baptist Church are all fine. They are waiting in cars and parks. The hometown of Abdullah Ergüven, Pastor of Istanbul Baptist Church, is Kahramanmaraş. He has relatives and friends who are affected. He wants to go there but the roads and airports are closed at the moment. We once again are blessed to have you as our family. Thank you for your messages, prayers, and support. Please pray for our country and for the ones who lost their dear ones" (Baptist World Alliance, 2023).

The Baptist World Aid has partnered with Hungarian Baptist Aid, quickly joining the global effort to provide immediate help. Baptists in Aotearoa can also act to support our family and their communities in Turkey and Syria.

What a powerful thing it is to pray. If you feel upset that the only thing you can do in these crises is pray, I've been told it is the best thing you can do!

The Baptist World Alliance has provided a 'Pray for Syria & Turkey' prayer guide which you can open in the link below.

There is also the option to donate towards rescue efforts at baptistworld.org/syria-and-turkey/ where you can read more information on how Baptists are responding.

Image sourced from Baptist World Alliance.

RETI AH-VOA

Prayer update: Auckland floods and extreme weather event (February 3)

Reti Ah-Voa is the Regional Leader of the Northern Baptist Association.

As I write this it is raining again, with more wet weather forecasted to continue. I worry for our worst hit families and churches. At the same time I am grateful to the many who have made themselves available to help. Countless generous people mobilising to offer aid and support.

At the forefront of the Auckland response have

been Rānui Baptist Church's Community Care, Glen Eden Baptist Church's Vision West, and Kumeū Response Team lead by Andie Davies, co-pastor Kumeū Baptist church. As well as the church families themselves across the city and particularly Windsor Park Baptist Church in their wider community.

The Northern Baptist Association are working to assist our local churches where needed and where we are able. A number of people have had to be evacuated from their homes; some of them red stickered and unliveable, some have lost everything inside, and some are not insured. A number of families have been relocated and may need housing. The worst hit Baptist community is Windsor Park Baptist Church, with some families losing all of their furniture/possessions and many with significant flood damage to their homes.



Te Atatū Baptist Church, Windsor Park Baptist Church, and Balmoral Baptist Centre are the worst hit church buildings.

Queries, help needed, and support offered:

An email address has been set up for queries. If you need help or would like to offer gestures of support, please email: floodsupport@northernbaptist.nz

Fundraising gifts/donations:

The needs are changing rapidly on the ground, so we are recommending that the best form of support is financial donations. This enables local leaders to respond efficiently and effectively. Flood relief funds can be directed to us, or to churches/organisations directly:

- > Northern Baptist Association:
02-0264-0226011-01
- > Windsor Park Baptist Church:
02-0120-0110554-01
- > Te Atatū Baptist Church:
12-3071-0237324-00
- > Rānui Baptist Community Care:
12- 3039-0195267-04
- > Vision West:
12-3252-0048346-52

Reference: "Flood Relief" and also who is sending it – "name of church group", "family", "individual",

or "other source". Please email the church or organisation you donate to, if you would like to receive a tax deductible receipt.

The Northern Baptist Association will ensure any funds we receive are distributed to those either flood-damaged or offering flood relief.

There are 3 phases to the aftermath of the flooding. 1: Immediate safety, 2: Clean up, and 3: Restoration.

Many who were severely impacted are now out of phase 1 and are in phase 2, with some who were effected in a minor way now in phase 3. However, those significantly impacted will not be able to enter phase 3 until they either return to their homes or are given temporary or alternative accommodation. There is need at every phase, both financial, prayerful, and also practical. At every phase, your help is needed and appreciated.

Pray and give

Please pray for all who have experienced loss during this event - loss of life, homes, and treasured possessions. Pray for those mourning and grieving. Pray for help to come swiftly and comprehensively.

Pray for those who are providing emergency response or care. May they have the tools and resources to meet the needs of those who seek their shelter and awahi. May they too be replenished in energy and passion as they respond to the needs around them 24/7, (all day, every day).

Please pray that many in our wider Baptist whānau will reach out to give relief to our communities in need.

Please bring these things to our God together during your Sunday church gatherings. Thank you!

Photo: supplied, Te Atatū Baptist Church stripped out main auditorium.

HELEN BRERETON

Waitangi Day commemorated at Nelson Baptist Church



Helen Brereton is Transition Pastor at Nelson Baptist Church. Last week in a newsletter to pastors and chaplains, Charles Hewlett, Baptist National

Leader, asked how local churches and ministries commemorated Waitangi Day. Here is Helen's response:

As well as the surprise of visitors from Malaysia and Samoa, we were blessed to have the Chin Glory Evangelical Church youth music team lead us in sung praise at our Waitangi Sunday service. This group of high school and tertiary students lead us in worship every six to eight weeks, learning new songs in English for our sake. They are so generous to us, and we are very blessed indeed!

The first song they led this morning was the National Anthem. My heart was so full, seeing 1.5-2nd generation new New Zealanders leading our older New Zealand congregation in the te reo Māori and English verses of God Defend New Zealand. The final song they led us in was Revelation Song, so we got to experience a pre-taste of heaven where all tongues will sing praises to the King of kings.

During our prayer time, in addition to prayers of thanksgiving and petition, we prayed for our Christian brothers and sisters facing persecution in Somalia. We lamented our nation's failure to fully uphold the commitments and promised hope of the 1840 covenant between settlers and tangata whenua. We imagined what Aotearoa New Zealand might have been like today if we had been faithful covenant keepers. Perhaps we might now all be bilingual, and there would be no suspiciousness when te reo Māori was spoken in our worship services (oh, imagine how wondrous that would be!).

Then we reflected on the role of whakapapa and knowing who and whose we are as te whānau o te Atua (the family of God)—resting in 2 Corinthians 3:12-18, the wondrous news that God's glory has been fully revealed in Ihu Karaiti (Jesus). Te Wairua Tapu's (The Holy Spirit's) ongoing mahi (work) means the veil obscuring God's glory is lifted off all who call Jesus Lord, hallelujah!

This freedom in Christ equips us as Baptists to be faithful covenant keepers, be they covenants of membership, marriage, parenting or nationhood. We Baptists are he iwi kawenata tatou (we are a covenanting people), after all.

We finished our service with communion, feasting at te tēpu o te Reme a te Atua e waha atu nei i ngā hara o te Ao (the table of the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world). And imagining the sumptuous food we will get to feast on as we sit kanohi ki te kanohi (face to face) with Jesus. For me, it will be a fresh fruit salad with luscious berries, juicy mangoes and stone fruit of all kinds. What dish do you hope to enjoy at His table?

We finished with "Take my life and let it be", and I pray that our heart's song "Take our love oh Lord we pour - at Your feet, its treasure store - Take us all, and we will be ever, only, all for Thee" was a sweet sound in our good God's ears.

Thanks for the opportunity to celebrate with you the sheer joy of Nelson Baptist's worship this morning.

Photo supplied: Chin Glory Evangelical Church youth music team leading singing at Nelson Baptist Church on 5 February 2023.

SANDRA GORDON

From charity to dignity



Sandra Gordon, Associate Pastor at Caversham Baptist Church, shares how God inspired her church to transform how they serve the families in their community.

A single street separates our church from Carisbrook Primary School in Dunedin. God has literally placed Caversham Baptist Church directly across the road from a low-decile primary school filled with families in need of the love of his people.

What started out as simply sharing our car park with parents for school drop off and pick up has now become a close working relationship. We support families in need and even fill positions at the school with passionate members of our church: from board members, a receptionist, a caretaker, to even the school's new principal.

At Christmas, our church took on the massive task of sourcing stock for food parcels for 100 of the school's families. The hampers were hoped to ease the financial pressures around Christmas, as many families rely on the school's free breakfast and lunch programmes which are closed during the summer holidays.

Our church called out for donations, and we were overwhelmed by the response from local businesses and church members. We managed to obtain \$17,000, which meant each family took home a box filled generously with meat, fresh produce,

pantry staples and seasonal sweet treats.

However, we were challenged to adapt our plans a few days before handing out the parcels in what could best be described as a God-inspired moment.

We had come across Otago University's report: *Paying with Dignity: The Human Cost of Food Charity*. The research by Dr Katharine Cresswell Riol and Jonathan Robinson on behalf of Kiwi churches and faith-based groups caused us to reconsider how we were best serving the families God had placed in front of us.

The report argued that while food banks play an important role in feeding the hungry, they can contribute to the stigma of those in impoverished situations. It also questioned whether food banks are simply a bandaid that looks past the shortcomings of social welfare in our country.

After reading this report, we began to rethink our process of giving out the Christmas food hampers to ensure our recipients maintained their God-given dignity.

Time was not on our side, but we managed to come up with a few things to minimise feelings of being disrespected:

Firstly, we gave vouchers to the school's Deputy Principal to give to whoever he decided needed a parcel. He knew the families well and had a relationship with them; we didn't. We didn't need to check off names and addresses from a list, and this meant people could anonymously receive the parcels.

Secondly, we dressed up with Santa hats and decorated the church hall completed with Christmas music to make the pick-up area festive, fun and lighthearted.

From there, we put the bags for each parcel on a trolley for each recipient and directed them to tables labelled 'SWAP IT/ADD IT'. This invited them to swap anything they wouldn't use for something they would, acknowledging different people have different needs and preferences.

The team moved away to allow the recipients to help themselves in their own time. We also ensured a table had plenty of vegetarian and halal options to cater to various cultures and religions.

We are very grateful for the report and how it informed our practice, even at the eleventh hour! It was a start, and we plan to modify things further next year to make the experience even more positive for the recipients.

In 2022, the Otago & Southland Baptist Association Hui challenged us to get our imaginations working and maximise the opportunities at our doorstep. The National Baptist

leaders shared how they had the vision of 'Every New Zealand Baptist Church committed to a people and place, in a relationship of mutual gospel renewal'.

This vision has given us the words to articulate what God is leading us to do. We are committing to the people he has placed in front of us that they might "learn, receive, give, teach, and be transformed".

In the case of us here at Caversham Baptist, this is a primary school - and we are excited to see God continue to nudge us towards a relationship of mutual gospel renewal.

Photo: Supplied by Sandra Gordon

CLAYTON RIDDLE

Exciting opportunities with partnership



Clayton Riddle, Lead Pastor at Northpoint Baptist Church, New Plymouth, shares the joyful outcome of partnering with Kāinga Ora Homes and Communities.

It's always exciting when an unexpected opportunity comes. Northpoint Baptist is situated in the suburb of Bell Block, New Plymouth. Bell Block has its fair share of challenges. Kāinga Ora reached out to us to see if we could support an event they were planning for a local street. They were planning a bin day, where they bring in half a dozen skip bins and do a clean-up in the street. This street has several Government houses in it. The invite to us was to see if we could come in and run some kids' activities in the street from 2:30-4:30 pm as the kids wander home from school. For us, it was a no-brainer, and we were in. After two false starts due to weather, we finally ended up with a crew of half a dozen people cooking a bbq, playing street soccer, chalk-drawing, and chatting with whānau and tamariki.

I don't know how many snags we went through, but there was about half an hour when we struggled to keep up with demand. Some of the kids were back three or four times for another one. I am sure the

kids would have played until dark if we had let them. I think Nate, our youth pastor, was grateful that we were packing up the cones after an hour and a half of street soccer.

All I did was cook the BBQ and hand out the sausages, but as we were packing up and getting ready to leave, we were getting hugs from the children, who were very keen for us to return. As I reflect on that opportunity, it was a joy and blessing to partner and share in a community event that worked for the common good.

The conversation with Kāinga Ora continues, and they seem pleased to partner with us in serving the community. We are happy to partner with them and aim to do another BBQ and games, with Kāinga Ora supplying the food. It will be exciting to see where this leads. We are already talking to some of the families in the street to see if they want to be part of helping on the day so we can empower, engage and encourage this community.

Photo: Supplied by Clayton Riddle

ANDREW BALDWIN Clean-up Sunday



Andrew Baldwin, Interim Pastor at Petone Baptist Church, shares a different way of rocking up to church and demonstrating God's love for the world.

On a sunny Sunday in January, around 50 people from Petone Baptist Church gathered at the church building at the usual service time of 10 am. But they weren't dressed in their Sunday best. Instead, they were equipped with sunhats, gloves and rubbish bags. All set to leave the building to pick up rubbish along the street outside the church and at the nearby local beach.

Church member and event coordinator Andrea Bolton explains what they were up to:

"Our aim was to pick up large and small pieces of rubbish – especially all the tiny bits of plastic, paper, bottle tops, broken glass and other rubbish that present a serious danger to our local birds, small animals, waterways and aquatic life."

"It's also good to remind people they can play their part in caring for our world just by picking up rubbish, individually or as part of a larger event." The group picked up six large full rubbish bags, numerous plastic cans and bottles for recycling, and a third of a bucket of broken glass and sharp objects.

Interim Pastor Andrew Baldwin says, "As a church, we want to be connected with our local neighbourhood, so when Andrea approached me with the idea of doing a street clean-up, I was keen to get in behind it."

"Picking up rubbish is one small way that we can remind ourselves, as well as telling the people around us, that the world is important to us because the world is important to God."

"It's a small act that helps to let people know that they live in a world that is created by God, loved by God and is being rescued by God."

The church partnered with the Hutt City Council, who provided rubbish bags and took the rubbish away the next day, and the Petone Beach Clean Up Crew, who provided hi-vis vests, grabbers and gloves.

"Building these sorts of connections with other groups in the community was an added bonus of this event," says Andrew.

"We hope we will be able to build on these connections with similar sorts of events in the future."

Image supplied by Andrew Baldwin

KEITH HARRINGTON 7 keys to surviving and thriving in ministry



Keith Harrington, Lead Pastor at Invercargill Central Baptist Church, shares seven tips for longevity in ministry.

I am in big trouble after my joke at the Baptist National Hui (2022) mocking Carey Baptist College. Our National Leader, Charles Hewlett, has suggested I consider church planting at Scott Base. Arotahi General Director, Alan Jamieson, is sending me mission opportunities in Outer Mongolia. John

Tucker, the Principal of Carey Baptist College, threatens to deregister me :) So, to be clear, I think Carey gives brilliant pastoral training. BUT it is the practices we adopt once in ministry that are the ones that will determine if we survive and thrive.

Soon after starting ministry, I became aware of the high attrition rate among pastors and so sought not to become another casualty. After being honoured for 30 years of service at the 2022 National Hui, here are my top seven keys to longevity (none are original)...

1. Have a clear sense of call. That is, you are convinced that God has put you into ministry and into that particular church. I would have resigned many times over without this deep assurance. Church members can and do behave appallingly. If we know God has placed us here and we are ultimately serving Him, not the church, then we will hang in there. This does not minimize the pain and cost of ministry but places it in context. After all, we serve a God who suffers.

2. Keep your relationship with God as number one. For 30 years, the first 60 minutes of my day have been spent not in the office but in a designated quiet space. Over the years, this place has changed, but it is often an upper room in the church where I am not interrupted. Here I worship, pray, yell, cry, journal and read the Word. I read the Word, not to get devotional or sermon material. I read it for myself. It is very easy for our spiritual life to get confused with our ministry life. When this happens, we will burn out spiritually. However, while not the motivation, insights for church work often come from this time. Ministry comes from the overflow of my walk with God.

3. Keep a Sabbath. Despite this being a Biblical principle, I am amazed at the number of ministers who do not take a Sabbath. I have felt their scorn at my lack of zeal, but when I reflect back, most are no longer in ministry. You will only survive ministry with one to two days off. Many years ago, I changed my day off to a Friday so that I mostly get two days off. This arrangement meant I had to get more organised earlier in the week and not be afraid to disappoint people by saying no.

4. Take care of your emotional health. About 15 years ago, I ended up seriously depressed and in hospital. You can't be spiritually healthy unless you are emotionally healthy. I had totally ignored this part of my life and only focused on spiritual issues.

We all come with baggage. In hindsight, I needed to be far more proactive in working on this area with skilled professionals. Failure to address our baggage will come back to bite us in the long haul.

5. Develop interests outside of ministry. I have noticed many ministry colleagues have no life outside of ministry. We all need to find things outside ministry and church that energize and restore us. Over the years, table tennis, DIY, model railways and tennis have all done this for me. The bonus is that it gives me good contact with the wider community, so like our congregations, I, too, can grapple with how to share my faith in a secular world.

6. Have a mentor or spiritual director or both with whom you are totally honest. I am grateful for those who have given me input over the years. The value of such a person is directly related to how open we are with them. We need someone we can share doubts, temptations, and pain with, but if pride keeps us from being transparent, they will be of little help. Also, seek out people from whom you can learn and grow in particular areas. Most people are more than willing to help us if we ask.

7. Last but not least - marry well (unless you are called to be single). I had to go to Australia to do this. I have not always prioritized my marriage as I should have, but I know I couldn't have made this journey without Ros supporting me and believing in me. It is easy for spouses and family to feel they come second to the church and resent its place in our lives. Spouses often see the church's impact on us and have no place to take this pain. A strong supportive spouse is crucial, but it is easy to take this for granted rather than be proactive.

We so need people who stay in ministry for the long haul and who can be fathers in the faith to the next generation. I believe each of these seven things are essential to achieving this and we neglect any of them at our peril.

Getting to know...Rachel Murray



In this column, we discover more about our Baptist whānau, meeting someone in our team of 40,000 each post. This week we are getting to know Rachel Murray, Regional Leader of the Otago & Southland Baptist Association.

What is something you think everyone should experience at least once in their life?

See something of your own country if possible. Get out of your own town/city/region – go to another island. Get off the main roads, and check out where that gravel road goes.

If you could be a pro at any one thing, what would it be?

Travel – just to get out there and see and experience different things.

What is a random interest that has completely nothing to do with your study or work?

Genealogy. I did my DNA test some years ago (with some scepticism, but it does actually work!), and the resulting connections have been fascinating. There's something quite special and important about identifying links and understanding your whakapapa. Learning the stories of your family history and the experiences and situations that shaped ancestors and, thus, current generations.

What is the oddest fact you know?

Gorse seeds can lie dormant for decades and often require trauma (like fire) to germinate (Is that odd? Dunno but it is a fact!). Also, if you pluck very young soft gorse seedlings from the wild and replant/repot where you want them, you can recreate wild conditions to do whatever experiments you need to in order to learn better how to kill them! I know - I did it for seven years!

What is the most boring thing you've ever done?

Checking thousands of Prayer & Self Denial receptacles for live insects before they were released to churches because they had not been fumigated on arrival as planned. Yes, we did find live foreign

spiders and bugs. No, I didn't do it all alone – we commandeered student help – but still!

What is your favourite way of connecting with God?

Out amongst nature – particularly where there is water. Mind you, urban people-watching can also generate some interesting dialogue with God!

Can you describe a significant moment when you experienced God's love?

Twenty-four years ago, in South India (I was there on a nine-month short-term mission experience). All water supply to my home had dried up for weeks, animal carcasses had been discovered in my water tank, and other options were limited. At the same time, spiritual oppression was very real with the students I was working with under attack. Whilst the challenges of each situation did not resolve themselves quickly, I had a deep sense of God's presence and love. I knew without a doubt that he had it all under control, which enabled me to release the stress of it all. And incredibly, I never got sick from the water issues!

What is your favourite thing about the neighbourhood where you live?

The people – friendly, supportive, down-to-earth, no-nonsense kind of folk – Christians and non-Christians alike (even a number of Baptists around me!). The view across Dunedin Harbour isn't bad either! But I have to move. Praying the next location is as good.

What do you love most about being Baptist?

The legacy of faith that we have. The fact that we are a connected body of churches that can and should draw on the support of each other. Our collegiality. The experience and wisdom to learn from those that have gone before. As a child in a Baptist church, I recall being in awe of some of our mission workers and pastors that I heard speak. Years later, those same people became colleagues and friends.



Pass newsletter on
or recycle

CHARLES HEWLETT

Youth Catalyst



During discussion at our recent National Hui held at Bethlehem Baptist Church (3-5 Nov 2022) there was an impassioned plea from our people for there to be greater leadership and communication around Baptist Youth Ministries. A few weeks later a group gathered to discern how the future might be different. This started the search for a Youth Catalyst:

It is exciting to announce that **Ethan Miller** has been appointed to the role of Youth Catalyst for the Baptist Churches of New Zealand, commencing in March 2023. This is a significant appointment for our collective of faith communities and we give thanks to God for his faithfulness to us. Ethan has been involved in youth ministry for 13 years, working across intermediates, youth and young adults. He interned at Hillsborough Baptist Church while completing a degree in Applied Theology and a diploma in Youth Pastoral Leadership at Carey Baptist College. Over the last 8 years Ethan has served in a variety of pastoral roles at Eastview Baptist Church (in Botany Downs, East Auckland) and Windsor Park Baptist Church (Mairangi Bay, North Shore Auckland). He has also been a 24-7 team youth worker and team leader at various high schools. Ethan is well connected within our wider whānau of churches, having participated in various Baptist events, camps, training and most recently an elected member on our Assembly Council.

Ethan will work closely with our national and regional leadership to help us ensure Baptist Youth Ministries (BYM) thrives. He will support and resource our local faith communities through the articulation of a compelling and shared vision for BYM in New Zealand, the development of a 3-5 year strategic plan, and the building of a robust framework and structure for seeing this vision achieved.

Ethan writes: “New Zealand Baptists have a rich history of outreach and ministry to young people in

Aotearoa. We are blessed with incredible people who are committed to seeing young people experience the transforming love of Christ. I am looking forward to supporting and journeying with youth workers, pastors, churches and all those who are eager to see the future generations come to know Jesus and participate within His mission.” Ethan lives in the Auckland suburb of Glenfield and attends Windsor Park Baptist Church. We are looking forward to having Ethan as part of our team and we look expectantly to God as we desire to serve the church in Aotearoa New Zealand and beyond.

Join me in prayer

Dear Lord,

We want to see Baptist faith communities bringing gospel renewal to the lives of young people in the contexts of which they serve.

We want to see young people being disciplined to fall more in love with Jesus, his Word, and his mission—understanding the relevance of the gospel in their lives and world.

We want Baptist Youth Ministries to be a place that Baptist youth pastors, leaders and workers across Aotearoa New Zealand are keen to be a part of—their source of vision, resourcing and support. Their place of identity, their tribe of belonging.

We are a movement that is passionate about young people. Lord, we know that Ethan shares this same passion deeply.

God, we ask you to resource Ethan with all that he needs for this calling. Show us how we can best support him. And speak to our faith communities in this important space Lord—help us to thrive! Amen.

God is good!

Charles Hewlett is the National Leader of the Baptist Churches of New Zealand.

Photo: Supplied by Ethan Miller.