

*In memory of  
Those who have died*



*Conference 2023*



# Contents

Wallis Franklin Browne.....	3
Michael Jackson Campbell.....	5
Herrick Sydney (Syd) Easton.....	7
Robert (Rob) Andrew Ferguson.....	8
Colin Alexander Gibson.....	10
Phyllis Myra Guthardt.....	11
Maurice Kelvin Handisides.....	13
Russell James.....	15
Donald (Ian) MacLeod.....	17
Derek Vernon McNicol.....	18
Leslie Rex Millar .....	20
Barbara Ida Miller-Taylor .....	21
Alifaleti Mone.....	23
Owen Prior.....	25
Sione Tokanauto(Nauto) Taukolo.....	26
Pieter van den Berg .....	28



# *Wallis Franklin Browne*

1940 – 2023

The life of Wallis Franklin Browne makes interesting reading. He was a man of many interests and accomplishments whose very full life had many twists and turns in terms of residency, occupation, hobbies, and well-being.

Wallis was born the third child of Jessie Jean and Wallis Browne and had two older sisters Anne and Gwenda. Throughout his childhood, he lived in Woburn, Lower Hutt, attending Waiwhetu School, Hutt Intermediate and Hut Valley High School. Wallis had many interests including music, reading, cricket, gardening, dancing, and cats, to name a few. During his teenage years Wallis became sergeant of the Boys Brigade (and received a Queens Medal) and was confirmed as an adult member of the Methodist Church.

In 1961 Wallis graduated with a Bachelor of Arts from Victoria University and married Bobby Learmonth. His newly married status prevented Wallis from candidating for the Methodist ministry. However, the Church offered Wallis the position of Home Missionary in Eketahuna, where he was a student pastor to the town church and other small churches in the country district stretching from Masterton to Pahiatua. During this time Wallis' first child Catherine (Kate) was born. Then Wallis provided ministry in South Auckland (Papatoetoe), to a new multi-cultural housing area which included many Samoans. He found this experience was richly rewarding, as did the birth of two sons Grant and Callum in 1964 and 1966 .

In 1969 Wallis was ordained as a Methodist minister at the Dunedin Methodist Conference. Unfortunately, his marriage failed soon afterwards so Wallis moved back to Lower Hutt with Grant and Callum to live with his parents. Grant was enrolled in a deaf unit and it was here that Wallis met teacher Helena Jane Mackay (Jane). They married in 1971 in the Waiwhetu Methodist Church. That same year he became a probation officer and began working out of the Lower Hutt Probation Office. During his time there Wallis and Jane gave birth to Alexander and Susanna. In 1980 Wallis was promoted to District Probation Officer in Nelson where the family flourished. Wallis and Jane started playing bridge and Wallis joined Rotary and became a Marriage Guidance Counsellor.

In 1986 Wallis and Jane were on the move again. Wallis was promoted to District Probation Officer in Lower Hutt, with the second largest office in the country. (sixty staff) He and Jane lived in a number of houses in Wellington City, where Wallis took up tennis and golf in his spare time.

Unfortunately, in 1998 Wallis was made redundant from his Lower Hutt position as District Probation officer. He had by then given twenty seven years of probationary service. Wallis worked for a Christian housing organisation for a year, but finding permanent employment difficult to obtain, he started painting houses to make ends meet. Sadly he and Jane also had to cope with the untimely death of son Grant in October of 1999.

Eventually In 2002, Wallis returned to Methodist parish ministry, for a further eleven years, serving his church in Levin, Blenheim and Rotorua, until he retired in 2013. Wallis and Jane decided to settle back into Nelson where youngest son Alexander now resided. They joined the

Stoke Methodist church where Wallis became a member of the choir as a tenor. His passion for group singing also led him to join various barbershop groups as he had done in most other places in which he had formerly resided.

Sadly, in his last years Wallis developed dementia, and spent four and a half years in special care facilities. This robbed Wallis of his connection with family, church, music groups and playing bridge, all of which he loved so much. However, when given the opportunity, Wallis could still sing perfect harmony to the many songs and hymns he had sung over the years.

Wallis' full and active life came to an end on April 19 this year, in the Ernest Rutherford Retirement Village Hospital, in Stoke Nelson. Wallis was eighty-three. His death was peaceful, which although sad, was in many ways a blessing for Wallis and his family. The funeral service for Wallis was held in the Nelson Tasman Methodist Parish Church in Stoke, Nelson. The service of thanksgiving and celebration featured four hymns as requested by Wallis and began with singing from members of the local Barber shop group.

A well-attended memorial service for Wallis was held later in the former Waiwhetu Methodist Church in Lower Hutt, the church Wallis attended for many years and where he married his second wife Jane.

Rest in peace Wallis.

# *Michael Jackson Campbell*

1924 - 2023

Michael Jackson Campbell died on 11 March 2023 aged 98. For several years he had been the 'father' of the Conference. Michael came to New Zealand in 1959 bringing with him wide experience in Circuit Ministry in England, marked skills in many forms of communication, and capacity for leadership. After a period in the Royal Navy with service in the North Atlantic during World War II, he was accepted as candidate for the Methodist Ministry. He was trained at Richmond College, London, and was ordained in 1950 in Priory Church, Doncaster. He had attended Rydal School and subsequently studied at the universities of Sheffield and London. For twelve years, he served in Circuits under the British Conference with his final appointment there as Superintendent Minister in East Yorkshire.

In 1959 he came to New Zealand and for the next twelve years he worked under the New Zealand Methodist Conference ministering for the first three years in New Plymouth. It was during this period that the St Luke's Church Centre was built. Four years followed as Superintendent Minister at Spreydon in Christchurch and then a further five years in leadership of the Auckland East Circuit at Pakuranga.

Permission was given to him to serve with the Presbyterian Church as its Director of Communication. This involved responsibility for all Radio and Television Broadcasts and Publications. His own special gifts were here given full expression. Over the years he devised and presented more than two hundred television and radio programmes, many of a documentary nature, as well as writing for journals and magazines. To be in a broadcast service over television was to be deeply impressed with his quiet efficiency as he set all participants and congregations, at ease. He enabled the best to come through as an offering of worship. These particular interests brought him onto many related Committees, in England: Christian Citizenship, in New Zealand: The Central Religious Advisory Committee, on the Church Television Commission and the Committee on Broadcasting. He was elected Chairman of the Radio New Zealand Religious Advisory Committee. His work took him beyond New Zealand and he became a member of the World Association for Christian Communication and of Peace, with special interests, the effects of satellite and new technology communication and community information in the Pacific.

There was also long association with the Toc H Movement in which he was appointed visiting Chaplain. He gave leadership as an Associate Fellow of the New Zealand Institute of Management becoming a Lecturer on Industrial Communication. His work involved travelling in many countries.

Michael's roots go deeply into Wesleyan theology and practice expressed in biblical preaching, sacramental worship, and pastoral ministry. He had a love of reading and music. Many appreciated his gifts as raconteur and his sense of humour.

In retirement Michael and Muriel lived at Whangaparaoa where they were an active part of the Manly congregation. Michael strongly advocated for a memorial wall to be added to church as it was 25 kilometres to the nearest cemetery and no reliable public transport it was very difficult for family to visit. When built the memorial garden became a peaceful place of memory. When Muriel was diagnosed with Motor Neuron Disease Michael cared for and supported here. She

died in 1993. In 1994 Michael married Shirley Manson. In 2004 they moved to Whanganui to be closer to family. The Presbyterian Church appointed him as Interim Moderator to the Westmere Presbyterian congregation. Westmere at the time was fragile but through careful work Michael set the church on a solid foundation. He remained a member at Westmere until his death, leading worship for a final time at age 93, when his health declined, and he was no longer able to attend worship. The current Minister at Westmere experienced Michael as a wise and supportive Mentor.

Michael also made strong links with the RSA at Silverdale and Whanganui. He led Anzac Day services in both places, in Whanganui until well into his 90's.

We express our sympathy to Shirley and Michael's children Alistair and Holly, and three grandchildren and five great grandchildren.

Michael had a long and fruitful life, enriched by his strong Christian Faith and expressed in leadership and service.



# *Herrick Sydney (Syd) Easton*

*Died February 2023*

Syd Easton died on Saturday 4 February 2023 when returning towards home after gardening with his wife Audrey and neighbours on the hillside behind their properties. Syd was 76 years old, a fit and active trumper, the current Parish Council Chairperson for Manawatu Rangitikei Methodist Parish, and Lay Preacher. Syd had been Parish Lay representative to 3 Conferences, including Kerikeri 2022.

This sudden death from a heart event was a shock to all, as he was so actively involved in church and community life, his smile, his voice and his so helpful email communications still prompting others into action.

Syd was born in Otaki and grew up on the family dairy farm in Waitarere (just north of Levin). He was Head Boy at Horowhenua College, and Dux two years running.

He was outstanding in Agricultural research at university and was awarded his PhD in France. He was a renowned expert in several fields. He developed pastoral grasses still commonly used in farming.

Syd enjoyed life; he liked classical music, wine and cheese, and made bread and brewed beer. He got immense joy from his family. He met his late wife Pam when he was at university, he was dad of Charlotte (dec'd), Naomi, Mark, Eddie, and a granddad and great-granddad.

Syd re-married, meeting his second wife Audrey when she joined his tramping group.

Over 400 people attended Syd's funeral. Syd was a popular and intelligent leader, an organiser and innovator, wonderful preacher from the heart, thoroughly involved in many projects.

He was passionate about his faith, both in his study of scripture and Christian writings, as well as practically in the warm and humble way he connected with others.

Syd's presence among us is intensely and overwhelmingly missed.



# *Robert (Rob) Andrew Ferguson*

1949 - 2022

Rob was born in Dunedin in 1949 to a widowed mother and was an only child. He grew up in Caversham and attended Kings High School. After leaving school he served as a volunteer teacher in Tonga, with VSA, for a year, teaching English to primary school age children. He then attended Otago University and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree. Then he taught English, French and economics for six years at Menzies College in Wyndham and Opatiki College.

He was accepted for ordained ministry training in 1976 and attended Trinity College in 1977-78 completing a Licentiate in Theology. Later in 1990 he graduated from Massey University with a Master of Arts, his thesis explored the use of English language in contemporary Aotearoa NZ hymns.

During the time of his formal ministry training, he played an important part in re-establishing Methodist Youth Conferences and was a leader in the group of young Aotearoa New Zealand Methodists who attended a South Pacific Youth Convention in Nuku'alofa, Tonga.

Rob's ministries spanned more than forty years and were many and varied. He was stationed to Eltham-Kaponga Co-operating, Palmerston North, Beckenham-Sydenham, St Albans Uniting (Transitional), Malvern Cooperating (Transitional) and Wanganui (Transitional) parishes; and Christchurch Central Parish pioneering the Streets City Chaplaincy. He did a one-year ministry exchange in a United Church of Canada parish in British Columbia. He also served as parish minister at St Ninians Presbyterian in Christchurch for ten years.

Two images come to mind that well reflect the breadth of his vital ministry at the local level. The first is of Rob standing in his gumboots in a milking shed having a deep conversation with a dairy farmer. The second image is of him sitting on a busy central city footpath next to a homeless person listening to their personal story. Deep listening and conversation with people from all walks of life were central to so much of how Rob did ministry.

As a gifted teacher Christian education, lay training and theological and spiritual development were core ministry passions. This led him into serving with Mission Resourcing in an educational ministry role for a number of years in the design and co-facilitation of the Wellspring-TELM programme. As a result of this process over 100 lay people from age 30 something to 70 years plus, were equipped to serve in both Church and wider community with a renewed sense of purpose and energy - from a sense of giftedness rather than duty. This would never have happened without Rob and the Church is still well served by TELMers - some of whom have gone on into ordained ministry - some who have made significant contributions as lay ministers.

A close colleague in the TELM programme says "one cannot separate out 'Rob in Ministry' - because I believe for him it was a way of life, a way of being. His Christian belief, faith and ministry were about respect and care in the whole of life - for creation, for people, an openness to many ways of expressing and modelling the way of Christ. He expressed this in his writing, his photography, in the way he led worship, facilitated meetings and learning events, simply in the way he engaged with people - disagreement wasn't swept aside, but he respected the right of each person to disagree.

Later in his ministry he helped to set up an ecumenical initiative that offered faith development retreats in the Greendale church, in rural Canterbury. A common experience of participants was that through being introduced to new understandings of the bible and theology they could move beyond life-denying faith to a more life-giving one.

His training and teaching ministry was not limited to Aotearoa New Zealand. He was invited to give a presentation on transitional ministry at the United Reformed Church in the UK. He attended and contributed to a Christian Conference of Asia theology workshop in Indonesia and led spirituality tours to Scotland and Japan.

In all these ministries Rob touched the lives of people and encouraged them to believe in themselves, to recognise their God given gifts and use them in a life-enhancing way. Rob believed that we can all make a difference in this world. He was an “ideas” person, a visionary.

Rob also held connexional responsibilities on the Disciplinary Tribunal Panel, the Complaints Review Panel, and served seven years on the Making Disciples Task Group, including two as convenor. He led a connexional review of Overseas Mission; was a member of the Christchurch Mission Board; and served three times as a Synod Superintendent in Manawatu-Hawkes Bay, North Canterbury and more recently up until his terminal illness for the Lower North Island.

In his so-called retirement years, he engaged with the Lower North Island Synod on a project that explored future directions. This led on to him becoming Synod Superintendent. In this role he drew on his ministry insights and gifts: as provocateur, listening, challenging, asking questions, supporting and encouraging often dis-spirited people. The task as he saw it in today’s world, is not to get people back to church, but to allow church to emerge in enlivened ways; to gather stories, retell them, and to ponder their significance for lives of faith. He asked us to open our minds and hearts to new possibilities and understandings, to explore how we can be church in the 21st century.

Rob died in Whanganui on 8th December 2022 surrounded by his family after a short illness. Family was hugely important to Rob. He was married to Dawn for 43 years and he had five children, Michael, Joanne, Fiona, Beth and Megan and ten grandchildren who brought him so much joy.

Rest in peace Rob, we miss you!

## *Colin Alexander Gibson*

1933- 2022

Colin Alexander Gibson was born in 1933 to a Dunedin family and he was to live his long and remarkable life in Dunedin. In 1956 he married Jeanette Jones, and the couple spent a long-married life in their home in Maryhill, Dunedin. They had three children; John, Marcus and Phillipa.

Colin had a long and eminent career teaching and writing about English Literature and of course an illustrious music career that took him way beyond his role of organist and choir director at Mornington to become a renowned hymn writer and composer whose work is played in churches far beyond this country. He is credited with 193 published hymns and other compositions, many of which have been sung all over the world. Colin led workshops and lectured on hymnody in New Zealand, Australia, the USA, the UK, The Philippines, and Japan. He had a fruitful and rewarding collaborative partnership with Shirley Erena Murray.

Colin was an Emeritus Professor of English at Otago University where he taught for 42 years. He was choirmaster and organist of the Mornington Methodist Church for most of his life. He was also a gifted lay preacher, and his services and sermons were always much anticipated in the Dunedin Parish.

His collaborations with Shirley helped set both of them on the international hymn-writing stage.

The home he and Jeanette created together was a place of boundless hospitality and even of refuge. He and Jeanette were passionate in their support of human rights, refugees, and the full inclusion of GLBTIQ people in the life of the Church.

Colin was awarded a New Zealand Order of Merit in 2002.



# *Phyllis Myra Guthardt*

1929 - 2023

Phyllis Guthardt has a unique place in the history of New Zealand Methodism as the first woman of any New Zealand denomination to be ordained.

She was born in Nelson on 1 August 1929 and came under the influence of far-thinking clergy like Ashleigh Petch and Charlie Hailwood. As a teenager she was also exposed to the ideals of the Riverside Community, founded in Motueka in 1941 by Christian pacifists. These were exhilarating influences; as a result the gospel for Phyl was always one of love and liberation.

As a young woman, Phyl wanted to be a teacher but she started work as a secretary so she could care for her mother. She trained at Christchurch Teachers' College and taught in Nelson and Christchurch while undertaking part-time university study. In 1953 she was struck by a "clear and irrevocable" call to ordained ministry, candidating through the Nelson Synod as her local Circuit Superintendent refused to support her.

Phyl trained for ministry at Trinity College, Auckland from 1954 to 1956. She described her years at Trinity as "intellectually stretching, companionable and fun" although "not always simple". She wasn't permitted to live on site and was given a separate study. It was made clear that she was expected to stay quietly in the background. This was advice she followed less and less as her ministry progressed. During this time she completed her BA.

Phyl's first appointment was to Lincoln Road in the Riccarton Circuit. Her ministry was marked by strong Biblical preaching, warm pastoral care and a lively sense of humour. She never took herself too seriously. She was ordained in 1959.

From the start Phyl felt "huge pressure to 'do well' and justify the Church's confidence" in her. A person who delighted in scholarship, she completed an MA in 1959 and a PhD in biblical theology from the University of Cambridge. The Bible was always important to her with its "explosive view of God way out in front ... constantly luring us on to new understandings". For Phyl a literalist view of the Bible diminished its riches.

On her return to New Zealand in 1964 Phyl began pastoral ministry at the Melville Church, Hamilton and as chaplain at Waikato Hospital. Being a young single woman in ministry wasn't easy, but she was "stubbornly determined" and appreciated the support of the community of faith. It was during this period that she experienced a sense of acceptance in ministry and realised she didn't have to struggle so hard anymore.

A term as chaplain at the University of Waikato followed before Phyl was called back to Christchurch in 1976 to take up a position as minister of the Knox Presbyterian Church. Well before the Mutuality of Ministry between our two churches, this was another pioneering appointment and one that Phyl enjoyed greatly. In 1984 she returned to Methodism serving for six years in the Riccarton Parish. She was appointed Te Hāhi's first woman President in 1985.

For more than 30 years Phyl was a regular broadcaster on religious and current affairs on Radio New Zealand. Overseas commitments included serving as a President of the World Methodist Council, as a member of the World Council of Churches' Working Committee on Women,

Church and Society and as a member of the Theological Commission of the Christian Conference of Asia.

In 1986 Phyl was awarded an honorary Doctorate from the University of Waikato. In 1999 she became a Foundation member of the Honorable Order of Jerusalem of the World Methodist Council.

Retirement to Governors Bay in 1990 with her good friend Rev. Canon Clarice Greenslade was the beginning of a new chapter in Phyl's ministry. A member of the Council of the University of Canterbury since 1981, she became Pro-Chancellor in 1992 and was Chancellor from 1998 to 2002. Her inclusive leadership style, hard work, understanding of the university and care for staff and students alike were greatly appreciated and in 2003 the University awarded her an honorary Doctor of Laws.

In 1993 Phyl was made a DBE (Dame of the British Empire) for "pioneer services to women". This acknowledged her trailblazing contribution to Te Hāhi and her passionate advocacy of the contribution of women within church and society.

Phyl spent the last years of her life at WesleyCare in Christchurch retaining the humour, grace, determination and interest in life which her friends knew well. She died peacefully on 29 June 2023.

As a Hāhi we give thanks to God for a woman who opened the way for other women to follow. As a preacher and pastor, university leader and radio broadcaster, beloved friend and mentor, Phyllis Guthardt touched and inspired many lives drawn on by her vision of a community which is "larger, freeing and more loving".



# *Maurice Kelvin Handisides*

1940 – 2023

On 9 March 2023, Maurice Handisides relocated to his heavenly home. Since 1966, Maurice has been an active part of life at Devonport Methodist. But his Methodist journey did not begin there. Born in Otahuhu in January 1940, Maurice first started attending Sunday School at Otahuhu Methodist Church. When his father returned from overseas service during the Second World War the family moved to Namata Road, One Tree Hill. Shortly afterwards, Maurice's father started a Sunday School at the Methodist Hall in Waitangi Road, Orange (now St Stephen's Methodist Church) with all the family involved. Maurice attended the Sunday School, then Bible Class at Onehunga Methodist, and later taught Sunday School and began training to be a Lay Preacher in that Parish.

His work took him to Pureora Forest, where he taught Sunday School at Te Kuiti Methodist on Sunday mornings and ran a small Sunday School at the Pureora Hall on Sunday afternoons with help from his wife. From there it was a move to Ashhurst in the Manawatu. Maurice was asked to be Sunday School Superintendent at the Ashhurst Methodist Church. And while there he was presented with his Lay Preacher's Certificate on 25th August 1965.

The family moved back to Devonport at Christmas 1966. Maurice was appointed a Parish Steward and was very involved in the building of the current Church Centre which opened in 1970. He was also actively involved with leading Sunday School and Adult Bible Study groups.

At the end of 1972, the old Home and Māori Mission Department had ceased operating and in its place, two new Divisions were established – the Māori Division and the Development Division. Barry Jones was appointed Superintendent of the Development Division and Maurice was part of the initial Board. Barry comments that Maurice made a valuable contribution to the work of that newly established Board.

Along with Val Morrison and Rev Ian Norwell, Maurice was part of the visionary team that, 32 years ago, established the Devonport Methodist Childcare Centre. Maurice was the original Licensee and has served a number of years on the board. He has overseen floods and feasts and festivals. Presented certificates, read stories to children, taught them how to hammer a nail, and played Father Christmas.

He was project manager in 2013/14 for the major upgrade of the centre. He oversaw and coordinated all the building work, including installation of a lift for wheelchair access, commercial kitchen, children's toilets and shower facilities, and a dedicated sleep room. This involved liaising with the Council, Ministry of Education, the staff, the church and the contractors. Maurice passionately believed that the Childcare Centre was an expression of the Parish's mission.

As well as his hands-on involvement in the Childcare Centre, in the Devonport community, there are hundreds of Devonport families who know of Grandad Maurice, a key person in the mainly music team, dancing and singing with babies and toddlers, and befriending parents and caregivers, and becoming a substitute grandfather for many who had family far away.

And if all this wasn't enough in the life of the Devonport Parish, he started the monthly Men's breakfast, gathered men to help refurbish and re-cover the chairs in this church, encouraged the

church to financially assist places like Edgecombe Primary school (after their major floods) as well as some of the local schools so that kids could have opportunities that they wouldn't normally have. Most recently, he spent many hours assisting a refugee family to be accepted in New Zealand as refugees and attain their permanent residency – a task he had done for others as well.

Maurice was passionate about helping others so, besides his involvement in Devonport, he was also involved with several Ecumenical Groups over the years, both locally and at national levels. His contribution to some of those organisations was far-reaching and has ensured the financial longevity for some of them as well as having an active involvement in their mission work.

Maurice's contributions were many, and also included regular lay preaching, often on a monthly basis. This was not just at Devonport but in many other churches and fellowships. Maurice was an engaging speaker, well organised, with sincere faith and a personal touch. He kept up to date with technology, preparing PowerPoint slides and leading the singing with his warm tenor voice.

In 2000 Rev Peter Stead invited Maurice to take some services at the Community Church of St John on Great Barrier Island. About a year later, Peter stepped down from his position as Methodist Representative to the Ministry Team at St Johns. This Team is made up of representatives from each of the Anglican, Catholic, Presbyterian and Methodist Churches. Maurice was appointed to take Peter's place, and continued in this role for 21 years, travelling to Great Barrier Island every two months to take services, visit church members and share with folk in the community.

Maurice continued to serve as a Lay Preacher for nearly 57 years, preaching his last sermon with an oxygen bottle at his side – his final sermon? Heaven.

After Maurice's death in March, Rev Peter Stead wrote: "It was a joy working with him and finding him increasingly acceptable and loved by both the Barrier congregation and the worship leaders of the participating denominations. He was a worthy servant of our NZ Methodist Church, as I am sure several of Pitt Street's ministers and officials would testify. Thank God for such a dedicated, effective and long-serving servant of Jesus Christ."

Rev. Robyn Allen-Goudge, at his funeral, said, "The Methodist Church of New Zealand and the Devonport Church owe a great debt of gratitude to Maurice Handisides. As a visionary leader, lay preacher, administrator and pastor, he has given thousands of voluntary hours of dedicated service to God, to this church, the Devonport community, and the wider community. He was a man with a generous spirit and a great heart."

# *Russell James*

1933 - 2023

Russell was brought up in a strongly Methodist home in South Dunedin. The local church, Crusaders, Christian Endeavour, Pounaweia Keswick Convention and the Evangelical Union at Teachers' College were all part of building strong convictions into his life.

Although Russell entered the Bible Training Institute in 1956 with the intention of being a Christian teacher with Māori people, he came out with a call to Methodist ministry. This has been fulfilled in Taupo, Greenmeadows in Napier, Gore, and at Opawa for his final twenty years.

In 1960 Russell married Ivy Rowse. Their marriage was a real partnership. Ivy fully supported Russell in being aware of people's needs, offering a cheerful word, and providing an open home where many were helped. Their family is Andrew, Ruth, David and Elizabeth, now with spouses, children, and grandchildren.

A stressful time in ministry led to a search for a deeper experience of the Holy Spirit. When discovered, this added a whole new dimension to life and ministry. In particular it bore fruit as Russell and the Opawa church grew in worship, small group ministry, evangelism, commitment to world missions, and creative ministries to the community. Under their leadership Opawa became a beacon of hope in demonstrating the power of the Charismatic Renewal both within the Methodist Church and the wider Christian church scene.

Cameos from ministry include 100-120 children in school holiday Happy Hours at Taupo, lying under woolsheds shovelling sheep manure for fund raising at Greenmeadows, trying to develop a unique Sunday night youth ministry called "The Move" in Gore and seeing God at work in transforming lives at Opawa. Russell brought to ministry a deep love of the Lord, a warmth for people, a welcoming smile and a firm conviction to proclaim Biblical truth. Along with this was a desire to conciliate, find common ground, and maintain dialogue where there are differences of opinion. Seeking to see the good in everyone was a strength of Russell's. Churches where he has ministered grew. Russell and Ivy's energy and enthusiasm were an important factor. Their commitment to discerning the call of God in working with 'those who needed them most' meant that Opawa was a congregation heavily involved in transformative ministries within the wider community.

At 59 Russell suffered a serious stroke which precipitated his retirement earlier than originally planned. He and Ivy remained on at Opawa and supported the ministry through some dark times that followed as the church continued to struggle with the human sexuality debate. Ivy's sudden death in late August 2012 ended a 52 year partnership. While retired, both she and Russell had continued in ministry with the people of Opawa and more broadly. Russell continued with his interests, many contacts and friendships, and commitments right through to the end. One of the citywide ministries that Russell was a key leader in was 'Operation Friendship' - a ministry with university students of other nations - giving them a place of warm connection and belonging in Kiwi culture. Many deep friendships developed through this ministry. This reflected Russell and Ivy's commitment to overseas mission - a hall mark of their ministries. Of special joy to Russell was his children and grandchildren - demonstrated in the consistent and intentional way he spent time with each of them on an ongoing basis. Each were convinced that they were Russell's favourite. And they were. Russell died just short of his 90th

birthday, just short of his 50th year of ministry with the people of Opawa. Well done and thank you, good and faithful servant.

# *Donald (Ian) MacLeod*

1945 - 2023

Ian passed away on August 6th, 2023. He is survived by his wife Gladys, son Hamish, daughter Michelle and son-in-law Jason, and two grandchildren Oliver and Noah.

Ian and Gladys met at Trinity College where Gladys was undertaking deaconess training. Gladys was Ian's support and champion during his ministry.

He was one of those pastors who had a gentle and thoughtful presence which meant he excelled in Hospital and Rest Home chaplaincies – a ministry he embraced in his later ministry years.

He found joy in Preaching and Pastoral care throughout his lengthy ministry. His leadership of worship relaxed, dignified and thoughtful. He is remembered with affection by parishioners of his former parishes and those for whom he offered comfort and compassion.

Ian served in four parishes over 19 years, before resigning for health reasons in 1990 – Bluff (3 years), Inglewood (6 years), Motueka (5 years) and Waihi/Paeroa/Coromandel (5 years).

After a break of three years, he was invited to be part-time Presbyterian at Waimate Methodist, and his work there indicated that he could resume full-time ministry. He was received back into Full Connexion and stationed at Wainoni in Christchurch. After a few months of supply ministry in the Dunedin Parish, Ian was appointed to the Rangiora-Woodend Parish.

Over the years Ian was involved in the planning and setting up of two cooperative ventures – the Bluff-Greenhills-Stewart Island Co-operating Parish, and the Motueka-Moutere Hills Regional Co-operating Parish.

After 1990 Ian took the opportunity for further study and training. He and Gladys bought their own home in Timaru, and there Ian trained for hospital chaplaincy, did a year-long University of Otago course in social work, and completed a Certificate in Business Computing. He achieved some distinction in each of these courses. He loved technology and was quite skilled – even writing a computer program to teach his children math!

In 2008 he was appointed to a chaplaincy position in Timaru, where he divided his time equally between the Timaru Hospital and three Presbyterian Support aged care homes. From 2012 to 2018 Ian worked part-time - available on call and as a locum chaplain at the hospital, and as a volunteer chaplain to aged care homes.

Ian was a family man who adored his wife, children, and grandchildren. Loved to go camping and tramping with them. He had a great sense of humour. The family tell the story of those who after enjoying the MacLeod hospitality would respond with “thanks for having me”, Ian would always respond with “Thank you for being had”. “Thank you for being had” Ian. As church we are grateful for Ian's years of ministry and service.



# *Derek Vernon McNicol*

1934 – 2023

Derek's journey began in an unlikely way. He never stepped inside a church growing up, yet when he was seventeen a single sermon by Bruce Gordon changed the course of his life forever. That one sermon sparked a conversion within Derek that led him on a journey of service and ministry. From that moment on Derek dedicated himself wholeheartedly to God's work.

Derek's intelligence and organisational skills made him invaluable to the church in Wellington. He eagerly volunteered for any job the church needed done. While working in advertising and marketing, he offered lay ministry at Shirley and Johnsonville churches. His interests included Christian education, social justice, and leadership development. The church's superintendent, Jack Penman, recognised Derek's potential and encouraged him to study for confirmation as a minister.

Barbara, Derek's wife, recalls the life-changing phone call when Derek shared his new calling. Though it required study in Auckland and church work away from home Derek, then in his mid-40s, embraced this spiritual awakening with joy and gladness.

Derek's ministry spanned over four decades. He graduated from Trinity College and then served as a minister at Ngaio Union Church. His roles there included representing the Methodist Church in international affairs, peace-making efforts, communications, and editing the "Focus" magazine for four years. In 1990 he led a parish group of 13 people to Germany to study issues related to justice, peace, and the environment.

From 1992 to 1998 Derek served as minister at St John's Methodist Church in Nelson. Derek and St Johns formed a sister-church relationship with Durham Street Methodist in Christchurch, exchanging visits and occasions with them and having close involvement with Methodist Mission Christchurch. Barbara McNicol was their representative and a Board member.

At about the same time Derek established a yearly "Wesley Lecture". The series began with a packed-out church eager to listen to, and talk with, Lloyd Geering. Theologians from the British "Sea of Faith" and the USA "Jesus Seminar", notably John Dominic Crossan, followed.

Derek started spirited conversations in the Fellowship room at St Johns Hall, asking parish members to invite a non-church friend to conversation and dinner. As the numbers grew, Derek decided to move the concept into a down-town public space, and two parish members (Penelope Kempthorne and Janice Gill) joined him to form Spirited Conversations at Yaza Cafe. Well-known New Zealanders were invited to speak, eat and talk; the cafe overflowed with locals eager to participate. It was Derek's leadership that gave the oomph to the organisation, and he continued to chair the group for more than fifteen years. Derek's work bridged the gap between church and the secular world. These were times of spiritual growth and religious knowledge; Derek's ministry at St Johns Nelson made a rich difference to many lives.

True to his calling, Derek was always available to those who needed him. In the middle of the night, those in need knew they could call on Derek, and he would rush to their side with care and compassion. During this time, he also served as superintendent of the Nelson-Marlborough-West Coast district synod.

Derek retired at the 1998 Conference, having left a profound impact on all those he served.

His ministry demonstrated the breadth of his interests from parish work to leadership at regional and international levels. His passion for social justice and outreach complemented his role as a spiritual leader. He continued to read theology and embrace new thought, without fear, well into older age. He was indeed a pilgrim.

Derek lived a life of selfless service, inspired by a single moment that awakened his spirit. In doing so he found his true purpose and brought light to the lives of countless others along the way. Derek's journey reminds us that it is never too late to answer our calling. Let us celebrate his life, grateful for the gift he was.

Rest in peace, Derek.



# *Leslie Rex Millar*

1932 - 2023

Rex Millar died at the age of 91, on 3 April 2023, at Edale Rest Home, just a block away from his long-term home in Armagh Street, Marton.

Rex has been a Lay Preacher in Marton for just short of 70 years (from when he was just 21).

He was born in Manaia on Easter Saturday, 26 March 1932. Rex was Dux at Hawera High School. In the early 1950s when he went to Auckland University to do his B.Sc. he lived at Trinity College and became a Lay Preacher then. He met Noelene when he was at university, and they married in 1957 and initially lived in Auckland, where Katherine and David were born, and moved to Marton in 1962, where Jennifer was born. Apart from a short term stay in Palmerston North, Marton became their lifetime home.

Rex was a Secondary School Teacher at Rangitikei College (Marton) for about 3 decades, and the school became renowned for its excellence in Physics. As well as being an innovative and well-liked teacher, he taught that people should live life to good standards. He said that as a teacher his hidden curriculum had been to teach the decencies of life. Rex became Head Examiner, setting and marking examination papers for School Certificate and heading meetings for the scaling of marks. After retiring he continued in relief teaching.

He and Noelene enjoyed overseas travel, going to Australia, Europe, Canada, Alaska and USA.

At home Rex was an outdoors person, a trumper, a gardener, a traveller, a tinkerer. He didn't watch TV!

In the Methodist Church he was a Lay Preacher and an organiser. He preached in many places including Marton, Wellington, Wanganui and Palmerston North. He was involved in Synod and we believe he was the Conference Lay Rep for Marton Parish.

The Methodists, through their lay preaching system, straddled the many small parishes in the Manawatu and Rangitikei area, and laid the foundations for discussing becoming one big regional Methodist Parish. In the 1990s it was Rex Millar who headed bringing more formality to Lay Preaching in the area, encouraging training and being recognised with Lay Preacher Certificates. Rex led the ceremony where many received their certificates.

In Marton it was Rex who organised things. The deteriorating old Methodist church on Wellington Road got a congregation of about 6 people in the 1990s. When Rex organised them to sell the church, they moved to the brass band hall and there the congregations grew to 26! No-one had wanted to be involved in the maintenance of an old church. But Rex was at the heart of the Marton Methodist church through all its phases, and was the Marton Methodist known throughout the North Island, from Taranaki to Taranaki Street, from the big city of Auckland to the tiny village of Waituna West.

In hospital for his 91st birthday, Rex said he had lived 'a cracking life!'

Rex, teacher, preacher, husband of the late Noelene, is survived by his sister Rell, his children Katherine, David and Jennifer, and 9 grandchildren.



# *Barbara Ida Miller-Taylor*

1931 – 2022

Barbara Ida Miller was the eldest of four children born into a farming family with strong Methodist commitment. Her education was Ramarama Primary and Pukekohe High Schools. The Miller family moved to farm near Warkworth and for several years Barbara worked within the family farming interests.

District wise she took opportunity for involvement with the Mahurangi circuit, giving strong leadership in Bible Class, camping, lay preaching and commencing the Girls Brigade Company, and also the Crusader Group for girls at Warkworth High.

Barbara was feeling a definite call to full time service in some area of Christian work. This prompted her to attend Bible Training Institute from 1958 to 1959. During this time her early contacts were made with the Methodist Māori Mission, Te Ataahua Centre, in Airedale Street, Auckland which led her to a two year appointment as a Deaconess Supply in Northern Wairoa, the Dargaville area.

Those 2 years working with Methodist Māori Mission under the guidance and mana of Rev Eruera Te Tuhi, were confirmation that there was a place for full time work through the Deaconess order. Training at Deaconess House in Christchurch followed, then stationing to Northern Wairoa and then in 1966 she was appointed to Hokianga Tai Tokerau for 12 years where she lived in the Deaconess Cottage.

The years in the north brought a special contact with Māori families, the privileges of sharing joys and sorrows with a very strong special emphasis on youth work, through Sunday Schools, Bible in schools, clubs and as a leader of the team section of Boys Brigade for 9 years in Kaikohe Te Roopu Wahine and the needs of women have always held a high priority. The sharing and learning experiences with women were precious and treasured.

In 1978 Barbara moved to Te Rohe o Tamaki being ordained as a presbyter in 1979. She has worked consistently and solidly for 10 years in Tamaki. Being in Tamaki saw Barbara engaging in the whole role as co-ordinator of the circuit. In part, it meant a weekly chaplaincy role at Seamer House, bicultural joint working committees, Poari of Te Taha Māori, consultancy committee for Wesley College, member of the Development Division, President and Secretary of Deaconess Association for 3 years. A very important and caring part was Corresponding Secretary for Conference for 6 years prior to retirement in 1988.

She was on the Committee of Ministry, the Faith and Order and a member of the National Executive of M.W.F 1977-78.

Retirement from parish ministry drew to a close a ministry in an area of work initially foreign and vital, yet enveloping and intimate, warm and deeply understanding.

In 1987 Barbara bought her home in Snell's Beach and had women with special needs stay with her. As a Supernumerary Presbyter she was involved in the Mahurangi Parish plus Methodist Women's Fellowship (District and Local).

She attended the Snell's Beach Church. And was a signatory to the Shared Use Agreement with the Anglican Church who then held an Anglican service once a month.

A special time since retirement has been her ministry during summer months at Stewart Island where she met up with Phil Taylor. They married in 2006, the final chapter of a life of love and service Barbara died on 19th December 2022.

From all in Te Taha Māori: Ma te atua koe hei tiaki, hei  
manaaki, mana koe e horahia tana korowai ki runga i a koe i enei ra,  
tai me ki te wa. Kia whakakororiatia te Matua, te Tama, 100 te  
Wairua Tapu; ko te ritenga ia te tirnatanga, a tenei ano inaianei  
a ka mau tonu iho ake ake, ake,

# *Alifaleti Mone*

1938 – 2023

Feleti, as most would call him was born on 12 September 1938 as the eldest son of 10 children to the late Rev Tevita Mone snr and 'Emelī Lātū Mone. He was named after the late Rev Dr, Harold Alfred Wood a former principal of Tupou College.

In 1941, Tevita became a candidate for the ministry and a probationer volunteer for missionary service in Papua Niu Guinea. Latu and Feleti (who was very young at the time) travelled with Tevita. In 1952, Feleti became a student of Tupou College and continued his education at Teachers College in the late 1950's.

In 1968, he married 'Eita Mone and they had three children 'Ofa, Tevita and Nunia. In the early 70's Feleti graduated with a Bachelor in Divinity from the Pacific Theological College in Suva, Fiji. A peak in his education capability was when he graduated with a Doctor of Divinity from Claremont School of Theology, Claremont, California, USA in 1979.

In 1988, he was seconded to become the Parish Superintendent of Auckland Manukau Tongan Parish, Methodist Church of New Zealand. He is remembered about his tenacity, drive and passion to read the Tongan bible collectively as a parish, cover to cover, and was celebrated after it took 4 – 5 years for everyone to finish reading it. The Free Wesleyan Church conference elected him to become the General Secretary and in 1998 he became the President of the church.

He was a remarkable individual, a true servant of God, and a pillar of his community. He was a man whose life exemplified unwavering faith, deep knowledge, and tireless dedication to his calling. As we reflect on his legacy, we celebrate the profound impact he had as a theologian, educator, librarian, missionary, and church leader, particularly during his tenure as the President of the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga.

Rev. Dr. Mone was a God-fearing man who embodied the essence of spiritual devotion and integrity. His commitment to his faith was evident in every aspect of his life, and he continually inspired others through his unwavering belief in the power of God's love and grace. Whether he was leading congregations, mentoring aspiring theologians, or engaging in theological discourse, he remained steadfast in his pursuit of deepening the understanding of God's Word.

As an educator, Rev. Dr. Mone played a crucial role in shaping the minds and hearts of countless individuals. His passion for learning was infectious, and he encouraged others to seek wisdom and knowledge with an open heart and an inquisitive mind. Through his teaching, he instilled a love for theological exploration, nurturing future leaders to carry the torch of faith and enlightenment.

In his role as the President of the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga, Rev. Dr. Mone demonstrated exceptional leadership and an unwavering commitment to the values he held dear. Under his guidance, the church flourished, and he shepherded the church with humility, grace, and compassion. He exemplified the essence of a true spiritual shepherd, always guiding his flock with love and wisdom.

Rev. Dr. 'Alifaleti Malakai Mone has left an indelible mark on the hearts and minds of those who were fortunate enough to have crossed paths with him.

Feleti received his heavenly calling on Friday 7 July 2023, at 83 years of age. He is survived by his three children, 5 grandchildren and one great grandson.

## *Owen Prior*

*Died - 2023*

Dr Owen Prior got excited about most things. He loved life, family, friends, medicine, Masterton, his Methodist faith and singing. He took life by the scruff of the neck and lived it fully for over 95 years.

Following in his father Norman's footsteps, Owen became a doctor. Born and raised in Masterton, this was the location for practicing his medicine over many years and his involvement with the Methodist Church.

Owen was involved in the community in many and varied ways. He wanted to see things get done and to ensure things "improved". Organisations like the Wairarapa Community Action Programme (which morphed into REAP), Masterton Trust Lands Trust, Masterton Hospital, Wairarapa Hospital Board, St John Ambulance (awarded him a Fellow), the Ararangi Outdoor Education camp – they all enjoyed the benefit of Owen's service.

A member of the Wesley Methodist Church in Masterton he was instrumental in forming the St Luke's Union Parish between Wesley Methodist and Knox Presbyterian. He served on the Parish Council, on the property committee, he sang in the choir, he attended Synod and Conference.

In the mid-70s when the Wesley Methodist Church was made redundant and McDonald's was eyeing up the site, Owen encouraged the building to be moved and it became part of the Wairarapa Arts centre, later Aratoi, another institution, he greatly supported. Education and the arts were the foundation of many of his interests, along with religion. Owen joined the Explorations Group in Masterton to discuss Christianity and the Bible within a modern-day context.

One of the roles Owen took on from his father was as medical advisor to the Methodist Children's Home in Masterton. Owen continued this caring role until 1978 when the home closed. He then was instrumental in establishing the Masterton Christian Childcare Centre which is based at the former St Lukes Union Parish, now Crossway Union Parish.

Owen served the connexion using his considerable governance skills. For fifty years he was a member of the Wellington Methodist Charitable Trust Board, including seven years as chairperson.

People were Owen's priority. Many people benefited from Owen's care. His care of people came in many forms. He was a man who left Masterton a better place for his involvement.

Owen died at Lansdowne Park on 17 August 2023. He is survived by his two daughters, Anna and Jane, seven grandchildren and 10 great grandchildren.





# *Sione Tokanauto (Nauto) Taukolo*

1959 – 2023

Rev Sione Tokanauto Taukolo was born on the 30th October 1959 at Vaiola Hospital, Nukualofa Tongatapu. Sione is the 3rd eldest child of Father Viliami Tuli Kihe Hakau Taukolo from Fākakai and Kolo Falahola (Ofu) Vava'u and Mother Luseane Elisepa Tule Palu from Houma & Vaotu'u who was dux of Kuini Salote College. Sione's parents were both teachers who taught at the Government schools. They were blessed with 5 children (4 Boys and 1 Girl), the eldest Siaso Aloha Taukolo (deceased), second eldest Viliami Palu Taukolo who currently resides in the United States of America. Rev Sione Tokanauto Taukolo (deceased) is the 3rd eldest, followed by Maamaloa Taukolo and the youngest of the children is Sela Tulua Lui the only girl in the family.

Sione Tokanauto Taukolo attended Primary school at Ofu, Vava'u from 1965 – 1970 then moved to Siuilikutapu Mailefihi college from 1971 -1975 where he was school Dux in 1975 and successfully passed the local qualification exam known as the Maamaloa exams. In 1976-1978 Sione moved to Tonga to continue his higher education at Tupou High School before completing his secondary school education at the Tonga College (Atele) in 1979 where his father was one of the old boys and scholars of the college.

In 1980 Sione started his working career at the Tonga Power board before moving to the Government Publishing then migrating to NZ in 1982 where he met and married his wife Toilea he Kakala Lutua 'o Haveluliku & Kolovai Tongatapu in 1983. Sione and Toilea were blessed with 5 beautiful children. The eldest child is Tamale Diploma Taukolo followed by Fine Hehenga 'i Morobe Palu Taukolo, Vilimahe Kelepulu o Fangauta Lutua Taukolo, Maata Teresa Tokilupe Taukolo and the youngest is Misinale Lesoni Latukefu Lutua Taukolo.

To support his family in NZ, Sione continued to work in the publishing industry and drove taxi as his secondary job from 1985 -1999 before he was diagnosed with Kidney failure in. Sione started regular dialysis treatment from 1999 to 2003 until a matching kidney was found and Sione had a kidney transplant operation which enabled Sione to go back to work.

## **Church Life**

After arriving in 1982 to NZ Sione joined the Onehunga Tongan Methodist Congregation under the Auckland Manukau Tongan Parish in 1983 where he became a certified lay preacher, the choir master, assistant church secretary and Wesley Class Leader. Sione also became president of the mission arm of the local congregation Feohianga Alonga ia Kalaisi before he started his journey become and ordained presbyter of the NZ Methodist Church of NZ.

## **Ministry Journey**

From 2009 – 2011 as part of his journey to be to ordination Sione completed a Diploma in Bible Studies at Laidlaw College in the Tongan Language before continuing to complete his Diploma in Bible Studies in the English Language. After completing his diploma he continued in 2013 - 2014 to complete a Bachelor of Ministry.

In 2017 Sione was accepted into Trinity College to start formally start his ministry training where in 2018 he started his placement at the Ponsonby Tongan Fellowship under Rev Siutasia

Tukutau before moving to the Dominion Tongan Methodist Church for his 2nd year placement under Rev Vaikoloa Kilikiti.

2020 Sione was stationed by the NZ Methodist Church to the Epsom Tongan Methodist Church as a Probationer where he was stationed for 2 years until his ordination in 2021. During this time Sione was able to complete his Diploma in Pastoral Care from Trinity College where he was recognised as top student of his year. After being ordained in 2021 Sione continue his ministry as the Presbyter for the Epsom Tongan Methodist Church.

Sione was not able to fully exercise his ministry due to the limitation from Covid-19 Pandemic and was slowly rebuilding his ministry post covid. On the 15th February 2023 Sione went to Auckland Hospital as he was not feeling well. Sione was admitted to Hospital and later on the 21st February 2023 at 4.30am surrounded by his family Rev Sione Tokanauto Taukolo peacefully passed away.

Rev Sione Tokanauto Taukolo was farewelled by hi family and the Epsom Tongan Methodist Church, Auckland Manukau Tongan Parish and Vahefonua Tonga o Aotearoa on the 27th February at the Epsom Church before being laid to hi final resting place at the Waikaraka Cemetry. Rev Sione Tokanauto Taukolo is survived by hi loving wife Toilea he Kakala Lutua Taukolo, 5 childres and 15 grandchildren.

Rev Sione Tokanauto Taukolo's favorite hymn is hymn 520 from the Free Wesleyan of Tonga Hymn book

'Ei ai ha hu i he matapa,

Te ke 'i ai? Pe te u 'i ai?

Faifai 'o a'u he maloloanga,

te kei ai? pe te u iai?

Faifai 'o taka he kolo tapu,

Hu'i mahafu, 'o tuku 'ae tau.

Nofo 'o fakafe'ao he hau.

Te ke i ai? Pe te u 'i ai?

Rev Sione Tokanauto Taukolo's favorite Bible Verse i. **Fakaha : 22 : 14** Monu'iaa ka ko kinautolu oku fo honau kofu, koe'uhi ke nau fa'iteliha ki he akau 'oe moui pea ke nau hu 'I he ngaahi matapa ki he kolo. **Revelations : 22 : 14** "Blessed are those who wash their robes. They will have the right to come to the tree of life. They will be allowed to go through the gates into the city.

## *Pieter van den Berg*

*Died – 2022*

Pieter van den Berg served on the Methodist Publishing Board from 2005 to 2018.

An immigrant from the Netherlands, Pieter lived in Christchurch and had a long career in the printing industry. In the early 2000s he volunteered to serve as a business mentor for a programme run by the Christchurch City Council. The programme paired him with Paul Titus, who was a freelance reporter for Crosslink and later Touchstone newspapers.

After Paul became editor of Touchstone, the Methodist Publishing Board was searching for input from people with experience outside of Te Hāhi Weteriana. Pieter accepted the invitation to join and provided valuable input when significant changes were made to Touchstone, including the move to free distribution. During part of his tenure on MPB, Peter also served as advertising manager for Touchstone.

The Church gives thanks for his enthusiasm, skill, and service.

Pieter passed away in December 2022.