



METHODIST MISSION AND ECUMENICAL NEWSLETTER - December 2021

A Prayer for Advent ...

God of new beginnings, who seeks to be present in our very lives and world: we bring our swords that they may be changed to ploughshares; we wait on your Spirit that we might learn your wisdom and understanding; we rejoice at the blossoms that burst forth in our wilderness; and we watch for the signs that remind us that you are with us. O come, Emmanuel. Amen.

SOLOMON ISLANDS: a call for prayer in the current disturbances



Under the gun ... Solomon Islands security forces deploy to Honiara's streets after violence broke out last week

Pray for the Solomons

Regional churches have been asked to pray for the Solomon Islands after violent protests and looting erupted there last week.

Australia has deployed troops and police to Honiara to assist local law enforcement agencies which are trying to restore law and order.

Pacific Conference of Churches General Secretary, Reverend James Bhagwan, wrote to Solomon Islands church leaders to seek their support in the restoration of calm.

He said the churches would be instrumental in urging the people to remain at home, follow the rule of law and refrain from violence and looting.

Much of last week's looting and burning of shops was believed to be opportunistic. Bhagwan said recent events showed that there continued to be underlying problems with reconciliation after the violence and upheaval of 2000 between tribal groups.

"It is important for the churches to take a lead role in encouraging discussions on unresolved issues so that the country can return to peace," he said.

"The PCC will continue to support local churches to create safe spaces for women and children in a programme due to start early next year.

"At the same time we call on the government and traditional leaders to take every possible step to renew the reconciliation and peacebuilding process."

Pacific church leaders are expected to discuss the Solomon Islands issue when they meet next week.



Our family

The Pacific Conference of Churches' has three members in the Solomon Islands.

Its largest member is the Anglican Church of Melanesia which is an influential institution at all levels of society.

Other members are the United Church of the Solomon Islands, based in Munda and the Solomon Islands Christian Association.

SASAMUGGA HOSPITAL: mini appeal update

In the October newsletter, we invited assistance for a mini-appeal for Sasamugga Hospital. Part of the appeal was for fuel for the hospital boat which is to be used in a series of satellite clinic visits during Covid vaccination programme. Further, the hospital has requested medical equipment in the form of two electronic blood pressure monitoring machines and nebulisers.

Thank you to Whangaparaoa Methodist Parish, Auckland Central Methodist Parish, the National Executive of the NZ Methodist Women's Fellowship, and three personal donors who have contributed directly to this appeal. MME has already forwarded funds to cover the fuel costs that were requested, and the further funds are going to assist with sourcing the medical equipment.

Further donations for Sasamugga Hospital are welcome still. To make a donation, please deposit to the Connexion's MM&E account: **02-0800-0766004-03** and note "MME fuel" as a reference. To advise payment and arrange a receipt, send an email to mm-e@methodist.org.nz

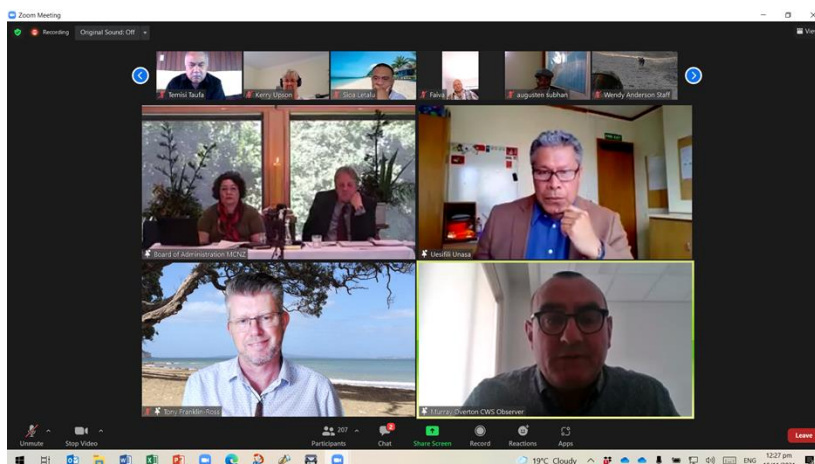
THANK YOU TO REV UESIFILI UNASA – retiring from Board Chairperson

The Mission & Ecumenical Board records its gratitude and thanks to Rev Uesifili Unasa, who completes sixteen years as a Board member including serving six years as Chairperson. The Board wishes him well in his new role as Synod Superintendent of the Auckland Synod. The Board welcomes Jackie McGeorge into the role of Chairperson.



Uesifili introducing the work of Methodist Mission & Ecumenical to Conference 2021

Conference a was very different experience with it being held entirely on Zoom. The pre-recorded Mission & Ecumenical Report to Methodist Conference 2021 was presented by the Chair Uesifili and acting Director Tony. Conference was also an opportunity to formerly introduce to the Connexion the new National Director of Christian World Service, Murray Overton.



BOSSEY ECUMENICAL INSTITUTE: CELEBRATING 75 YEARS

The World Council of Churches (WCC) executive committee, students, WCC staff, and friends gathered on 13 November to pray and sing together in celebration of the 75th anniversary of the Bossey Ecumenical Institute.

At a celebration following the service, WCC acting general secretary and director of the Ecumenical Institute Bossey Rev. Prof. Dr Ioan Sauca offered words of warm welcome, thanking students and staff from past and present for Bossey's one-of-a-kind ecumenical learning through intercultural dialogue.



A part of the World Council of Churches and attached to the University of Geneva, the Ecumenical Institute offers three distinct study programmes at a graduate level. The content of the teaching is focused on the challenges for the churches in the 21st century and the responses given through the modern ecumenical movement. The methodology is a combination of academic teaching and experiential learning. Of its longstanding signature graduate programme, NZ Methodist alumni are Rev's Stuart Grant, past MME Secretary John Roberts, current MME acting Director Tony Franklin-Ross; and past Director Prince Devanandan also whilst previously with the Anglican Church of Sri Lanka. A number of NZ Methodists have attended various short programmes organised by Bossey.

For more information on Bossey, see <https://www.oikoumene.org/what-we-do/the-ecumenical-institute-bossey>



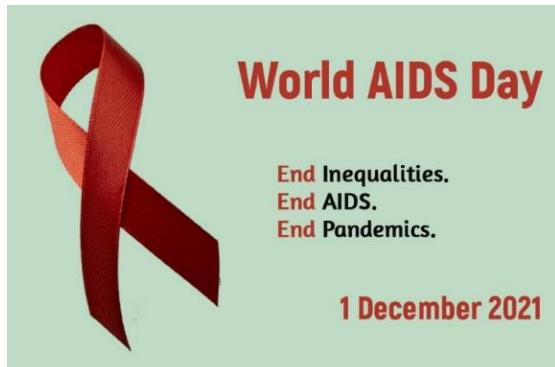
Democratic People's Republic of Korea (NORTH KOREA)

Rev Richard Lawrence and Rev Dr Stuart Vogel produced a short 25 minute video service to bring the health needs of the people of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) into the worship life of our churches and Christian communities. Though set for Christ the King Sunday (Sunday 21 November 2021), you will find it helpful in the Advent call for hope, peace, joy and love – please use it for personal or family worship and reflection.

The special focus of the service is on the situation in North Korea which sufferers of infectious diseases, such as tuberculosis are facing. They are highly vulnerable at this time and need our prayers. The service can be accessed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8QQzBfVKgGk>

1st DECEMBER World AIDS Day

More than 680,000 people died from AIDS-related illnesses in 2020, and 36.3 million have lost their lives since the beginning of the AIDS pandemic in the 1980s. An estimated 38 million people worldwide are living with HIV/AIDS, with 5.8 million in the Asia-Pacific region.



On the occasion of World AIDS Day, which falls on 1 December each year, the Christian Conference of Asia General Secretary Dr Mathews George Chunakara observed, "Without bold action against inequalities, the world risks missing the target to end AIDS by 2030, alongside the objective of ending the prolonged COVID-19 pandemic and spiraling social and economic crises." Dr Mathews George Chunakara also called upon Asian churches to "walk hand-in-hand with all stakeholders and revive national and regional

networks to commit in action, promote inclusive social and economic growth, and eliminate discriminatory laws, policies, and practices in order to ensure equal opportunities and reduce inequalities". For further information on this statement, see <https://www.cca.org.hk/news-and-events/cca-encourages-bold-action-against-inequalities-to-end-aids-on-world-aids-day-2021/>

The World Council of Churches similarly made the invitation "On World AIDS Day, pray to overcome inequalities with justice and love". Entrenched inequalities could lead to 7.7 million more AIDS-related deaths during this decade, if decisive steps are not taken. "God, we are reminded of the cost of inaction and neglect," was shared in a liturgy used for World AIDS Day 2021. For further information and a link to the liturgy, visit <https://www.oikoumene.org/news/on-world-aids-day-pray-to-overcome-inequalities-with-justice-and-love>

1st DECEMBER West Papua

1 December marks West Papua Independence Day, this year marking the sixtieth anniversary of the day the West Papuans first raised their new flag, the Morning Star, as the symbol of their forthcoming independence from Dutch colonial rule.



In West Papua, people mark Independence Day in a variety of ways, including peaceful gatherings to fly the Morning Star - despite the threat of arrest and violence. In previous years, the Indonesian military and police have responded with increased violent oppression around this day, arresting and killing those they perceive as pro-independence activists. West Papua Independence Day was marked by solidarity events around the world, including here in Aotearoa New Zealand.

MISSION AND ECUMENICAL BOARD

Methodist Church of New Zealand

Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa

[Acting] Director: Rev. Tony Franklin-Ross

Postal: 20a Georgina Street, Freemans Bay, Auckland 1011

Phone: 021-481 816 (Mobile)

E-mail: mm-e@methodist.org.nz

www.methodist.org.nz/mission_and_ecumenical