

# Whānau Newsletter

Flagstaff Community Church - March 2026



## FLAGSTAFF PICNIC IN THE PARK

@Memorial Gardens  
Playground – Mosgiel



SUNDAY 15 MARCH,  
2026



12 NOON

A GOOD OLD FASHIONED  
PICNIC, WITH MAYBE  
SOMETHING A LITTLE  
EXTRA



## Fun at Whanau Camp!



Flagstaff Community Church and friends St John's Presbyterian Church Arrowtown combined for a Waitangi Weekend Church Whanau Camp @ Camp Columba! Lots of laughs, time together, time with God, special Waitangi Day Service, spills and thrills and weekend already booked for 2027!

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For the first third of my 36 years in parish ministry 'I didn't do Lent'. I had my preaching plan; I didn't use the lectionary either. I always took into account that Easter was a significant weekend with Good Friday and Resurrection Sunday. But looking back, Easter stood on its own as it were from the flow and context of the Scriptural narrative in my preaching plans.

When you read the articles and commentaries on the origin of Lent, two things stand out. The first is the 40-day period of Lent. Moses and Elijah went onto the mountains to fast and pray for 40 days, both receiving "the word of the Lord". Then there was Jesus, who was led into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit for 40 days and nights to be tempted by Satan. He fasted and prayed. The climax of that account is Satan receiving "the word of the Lord". In my spiritual journey, without any claim of receiving a

revelation that changed history, I spent 40 days and 40 nights in the wilds of Fiordland on a solo retreat. Yes, it was life-changing, and the experiences of the Lord are in my soul until this day.

The second aspect that catches my attention is the fasting aspect, not as an act of repentance or anything like that, but an expression of devotion to no one else or anything else like church tradition, but to be centred on Jesus, his devotion to humankind through his crucifixion for the sins of the world on the cross, and his uplifting of those who believe in him through his resurrection.

What to fast with is an interesting question. Have you noticed how Protestants tend to be rather shallow or flippant on this topic? Give up coffee. Give up McDonalds. Good for the health maybe but do those things actually draw you closer to a deeper spiritual understanding of the person of Jesus as he set his path towards the cross. Now that I am much more experienced in ministry, Lent is now a deliberate journey with the faith community I am in looking for inner transformation of mind and soul. Past the intellectual, past academic answers, into the trials and pain of life to find The Healer.

One of the things I discovered in my Fiordland 40-day retreat was that I stepped away from the distractions of life where the static of the world stopped in my mind, and I found the thin place where heaven and earth meet. It actually exists. It is difficult to take a group of people to a place like this, but worth trying through creative interaction in Lenten activities.

Lent is a journey of returning to God. We are prodigals. Prayer, solitude and acts of compassion are the cobblestones of the path we take at Lent. You can discover who you are in Christ and your own humanity as a result. "Dear Lord, be with me today. I don't always know the way. I don't know the words at times. Show me the way."

*Peter*

**Right Rev Peter Dunn**

*Moderator Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand*

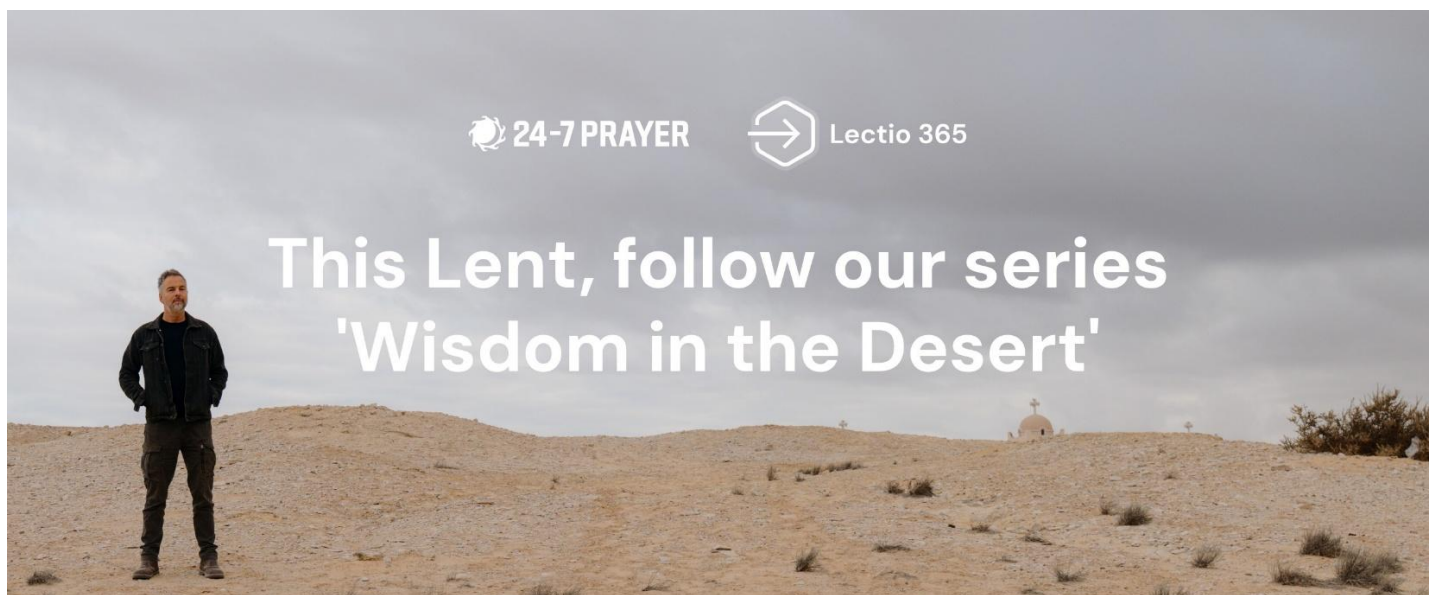
[moderator@presbyterian.org.nz](mailto:moderator@presbyterian.org.nz)

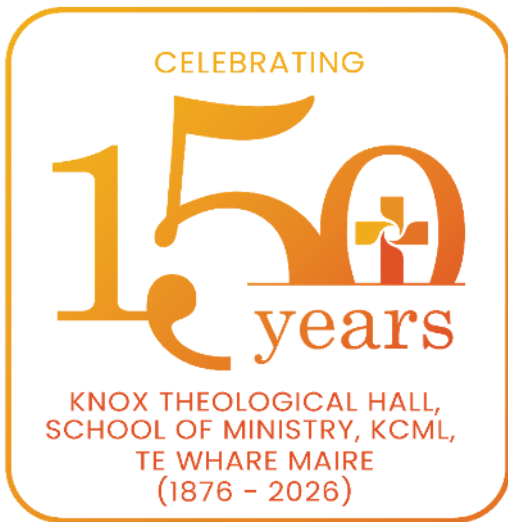
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## **Our Lent Journey – Join in!**

**@ Flagstaff @ 9.30 on Sunday**

Welcome to our Lenten journey in the wilds of faith! Together we are embarking on a life-changing, forty-day journey into the wilderness. Alongside the Bible, we will be diving into the ancient wisdom of the Desert Fathers and Mothers: a radically counter-cultural movement that chose to live, work and pray away from civilised society, in the foreboding desert landscape through the third and fourth centuries AD.





## 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Knox Theological Hall/Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership (Dunedin) Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> – Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2026

This year is the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of theological and ministry training at Knox. There are two main events in Dunedin over the weekend of 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> May:

*Saturday – 2<sup>nd</sup> May, 2pm-4:30pm*

You are invited to come to the Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership/Knox College. There will be guided tours of KCML and Knox College (2pm onwards), afternoon tea (3pm), and a curated time (3:30pm-4:30pm) for people to reminisce about their experiences here.

*Sunday – 3<sup>rd</sup> May, 7pm*

An evening worship service of gratitude and celebration will be held at Knox Presbyterian Church Dunedin followed by a catered supper. The service will be led by Rev Dr Graham Redding and Rev Margaret Garland. Rev Dr Murray Rae will be preaching. The 3<sup>rd</sup> May is 150 years to the day that the first theology professor, William Salmond, was inducted to Knox Theological Hall.

If you have any questions about the weekend events, please contact Rev Dr Geoff New (principal): [geoff@knoxcentre.ac.nz](mailto:geoff@knoxcentre.ac.nz)

## World Day of Prayer New Zealand, 6 March 2026

Observed on the first Friday in March each year, World Day of Prayer is a worldwide movement of informed prayer involving people of many denominations and languages in more than 170 countries. Each year the service is written by women in a different country - programme 2026 is prepared by WDP Committee of Nigeria - who share the hopes and fears, opportunities and needs, of their country. It affirms that informed prayer and prayerful action are inseparable. [See more.](#)



## CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

### EASTER ACTIVITY SHEETS

Explore the Gospel of Luke

Help children discover the Easter story through Scripture-based activities that are fun, interactive, and easy to use. Explore Luke 22–24 through activity sheets including matching Scriptures, Who Am I, word scrambles, fill in the blanks and crosswords.

[Download Now](#)

Lent Resources for all ages are also now available FREE from [Free Easter Resources | Bible Society New Zealand](#)

Leith ~ Highgate ~ Flagstaff

# JUNIOR YOUTH FRIDAY FUN

Years 7 - 10 Fortnightly Friday nights  
(Term 1: 13/2, 27/2, 13/3, 27/3)  
From 6 - 8 pm for dinner & games  
Cost \$5

267 Malvern Street, Leith valley  
See your youth pastor for more details  
Or Lucy (022 074 5491).  
Scan the QR code to join the parent  
WhatsApp group



Greeting's ISLANDS

## Kia Tipu – Scripture Union’s Children’s Ministry Conferences 2026.

Our vision is to see thriving Children’s Ministry across Aotearoa New Zealand and Children’s Ministry Leaders who feel nourished and equipped to help children and families grow in their faith.

This is a great opportunity for you to connect with other Children’s and Families Ministry leaders from across a range of churches —sharing ideas, being encouraged, and learning together. Come along and be inspired by people who are just as passionate about growing children’s faith as you are. Don’t miss this opportunity!

### SAVE THE DATE

**Christchurch** – Saturday 23 May, 2026 – St Alban’s Baptist Church

**Auckland** – Saturday 6 June, 2026 – Mt Albert

Baptist Church

**Wellington** – Saturday 20 June, 2026 – St Ninian’s Uniting Church, Karori

**Taupō** – Saturday 8 August, 2026 – Taupō Baptist Church

**Whanganui** - Saturday 12 September - Whanganui Central Baptist Church



For more information check out [sunz.org.nz](https://sunz.org.nz)



**Messy**  
Church

**NZ Masterclass**

**2026**

Join us and Messy Churches from across Aotearoa NZ for our 2026 Masterclasses.

Held 4 times a year on a Tuesday via zoom at **1pm and 7pm.**

**10 MARCH**

**12 MAY**

**25 AUGUST**

**27 OCTOBER**

To register, email  
[jocelyn@messychurch.nz](mailto:jocelyn@messychurch.nz)

Please indicate which  
time Zoom session you  
are attending  
on your registration  
email.

[www.messychurch.nz](http://www.messychurch.nz)



## **Key Leaders Retreat 11–14 September 2026, Queenstown**

In 2026, Presbyterian Youth Ministry's national youth leaders and young adults conference Connect takes a break (now running every second year). Instead, we're inviting those who lead youth ministries in our parishes to gather for a [Key Leaders Retreat](#) in Queenstown. This will be a rich time of refreshment, encouragement, connection, and practical equipping for those carrying

the responsibility of leading youth ministry. Please encourage your key leaders to prioritise this opportunity.

### **PCANZ Safety WOF Training**

If you have children's or youth leaders needing to complete their WOF training, invite them to join our online sessions:

- Thursday 5 March, 7-9pm - Session 1: Intro & Ethical Practice
- Thursday 12 March, 7-8.30pm - Session 2: Health and Safety
- Thursday 19 March, 7-9pm - Session 3: Safe recruitment and responding to abuse

If these dates don't suit, you can easily run the training in your own church using the free videos and manuals available [here](#).

### **Child Protection Officer Training**

Child Protection Officers are invited to an optional dedicated training session: Thursday 26 March, 7-8:30pm. Register [here](#) for the WOF training and select the CPO option.

### **Year 11-13 Students Bicultural Discipleship Camp**

#### **Te Rangatahi Noho Marae, 30 May-1 June (King's Birthday Weekend) Ohope Marae.**

We warmly invite Year 11–13 students to join us for two days of fun, food, faith, and leadership development in a marae setting. This immersive experience explores:

- Tikanga Māori
- The emergence of Christianity among Māori
- How Te Ao Māori and Christian faith can be woven together
- The partnership between the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand and Te Aka Puahou
- The Treaty of Waitangi
- Leadership principles from Te Ao Māori

This camp has had a profound impact on students in previous years. Please consider encouraging your senior youth to be part of it. See more information [here](#).

## OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN



1 Chronicles

1 Ngā Whakapapa

LET THE WORD OF GOD THRIVE

**Tukuna kia puāwai te Kupu a te Atua**

Connect with God through this inspiring Māori/English bilingual Bible

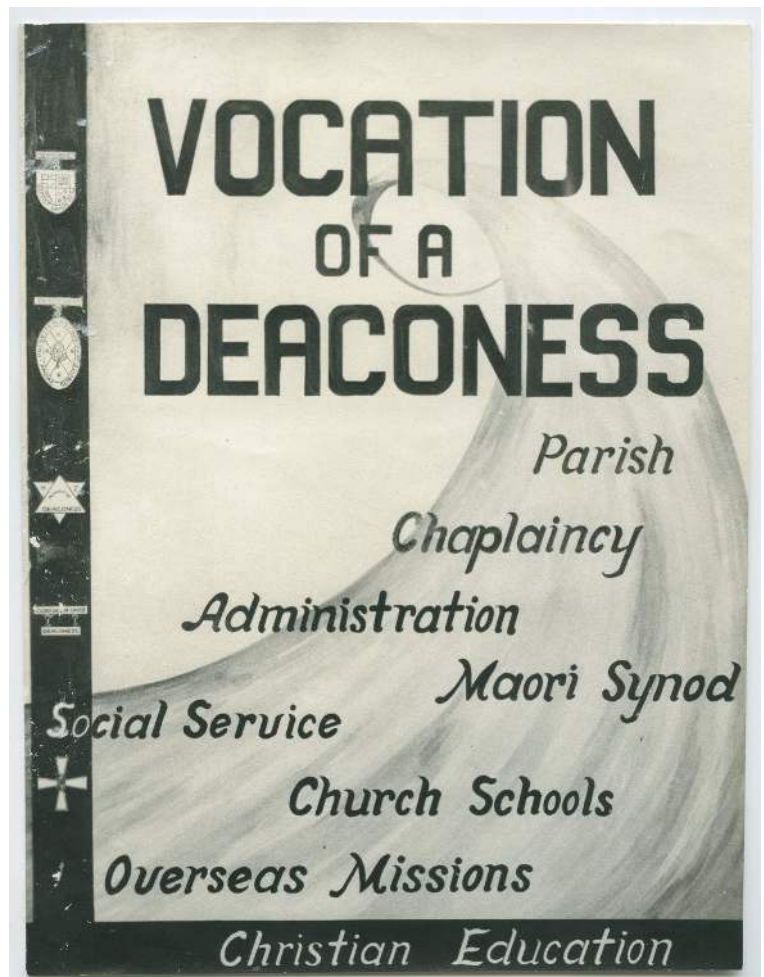
**BUY NOW**

### Rachel Tombs

will give a talk about her work on the Deaconess Collection at Presbyterian Archives, at 5:30 pm Thursday 21 May in the KCML Seminar Room at Knox College in Dunedin

The Deaconess Collection is world-renowned and has been designated as a UNESCO Memory of the World collection. For more information, click [here](#).

*This is an event of the Presbyterian Research Centre*





You are hereby invited to attend a **combined Synod AGM and Presbytery Gathering on 17-18 April 2025** at the Wanaka Presbyterian Church (94 Tenby Street, Wanaka) from 12 noon - 9.00pm on Friday and 9.00am to 3.00pm on Saturday. This promises to be a fantastic weekend in the life of Southern Presbyterians, including afternoon workshops, dinner, worship, teaching, a Communion Service, business sessions, morning tea, and lunch - as we follow the theme “**Equipping the whole people of God for Mission and Ministry**”.

The **online registration form** can be accessed here: <https://forms.gle/kRdP6WHmty4smnov5>. **Registrations close on Tuesday, 31 March 2026.**

## Reading Group



Join a group of peers engaging with Dr Christa McKirland’s important book, *A Theology of Authority: Rethinking Leadership in the Church*. Is authority reserved for those with a specific calling to leadership? Who holds power in the church? *A Theology of Authority* expands our understanding of authority, recognizing the Spirit's enablement of each member to fulfil their calling to spiritual maturity. **Who is this for?** Anyone in the PCANZ

- This will run for about six weeks (we’ll negotiate options around the beginning of Easter).
- Please be prepared to commit to the whole time so that the group can benefit from this continuity.

Christa is currently dean of faculty and lecturer in systematic theology at Carey Baptist College. A **book grant of 50% off** the book price is available (please purchase from competitive price-points e.g. Amazon.au or Blackwells), or \$50, whichever is least. Please respond to [Andrew Nicol](#) to register your interest.



Presbyterian Church  
of Aotearoa New Zealand

## GA Emissions Reductions Workgroup

### Goodbye, classic kiwi summer

This year, most of us feel robbed of summer. For many, this has simply meant less days at the beach. But for others, this summer has brought hardship, tragedy, and even the loss of loved ones.

Up and down the country, it has been “a parade of weather disasters”. From a [recent story](#) in *The Spinoff*, “the catastrophes have been both random and regular.” Tornadoes in Manawatū, landslides in Bay of Plenty, flooding in Warkworth and Banks Peninsula.

As the reality of climate change sets in, these extreme weather events will become more frequent and intense. We will oscillate between long, dry, summers bringing drought and life-threatening heat, and summers like the one we just had: wet, wild, and windy. The “classic kiwi summer” will become a myth.

When the [Emissions Reduction Workgroup](#) was formed by the General Assembly in 2022, we were tasked with focussing on climate change mitigation - helping churches to reduce their impact on the environment. That is still the focus. Mitigation continues to be vitally important. Two degrees of warming is vastly different from 3 degrees. We are all responsible to do what we can.

However, we also need to consider climate change adaptation: supporting one another to adapt to the realities of an increasingly volatile climate.

Often *adaptation* and *mitigation* go hand-in-hand. For instance, St Heliers Presbyterian Church in Auckland recently installed solar panels and battery power. Alongside reducing the church’s carbon footprint, the solar also increases its resilience in the event of civil emergency. St Heliers is now a ‘Community Emergency Hub’.

If you don’t know where to begin with climate adaptation, the Interchurch Bioethics Council NZ released this [excellent document](#) last year. You may like to go through it with your church council or board of managers.

Rev Dr Jordan Redding

[Convenor of the General Assembly Emissions Reductions Workgroup](#)



## OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE



### PSO Support Centre Moray Place (next to First Church)

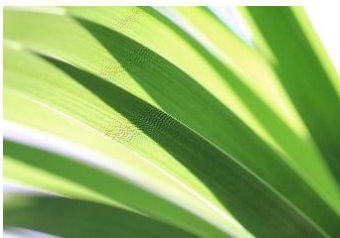


NOTE: our Food bank is now located on Level 3 , come up the driveway nearest the Support Centre and there are 3 visitors parks - one is only for 5 minutes. There is sign directing people with drop offs to the area behind the building.

The foodbank is very grateful for donations of school lunch ingredients, toiletries and fruit and vege surplus from home gardens. Thank you!

Check out our website for current volunteering opportunities! [Volunteering | Tūao » Presbyterian Support Otago](#)

## REGULAR MONTHLY NOTICES AND CONTACTS



**Green Fingers:** We are currently restoring our awa next to the church. This little creek is showing signs of life and is breathing again, and some native birds are showing up. There are a few folks who meet for a couple of hours on a Monday and potter away at planting, trapping pests, removing, weeding, etc. Occasionally we have a project in which everyone is invited including our local school. If you want to join us ring Neil Brown 027 435 4672.

**Recycling @ Flagstaff:** Bring your plastic milk and cream bottle tops, Tetrapaks (rinsed, flattened, slit open on three sides) and clean glass or plastic jars (any size, must have lids and no need to remove labels) to church. There are collection containers at the back of the church under the resources table. If in doubt, bring them along! For a comprehensive and (relatively) up-to-date list of recyclable items and where to drop them off, refer to this link <https://www.northeastvalley.org/your-community/valley-voice/july-2024>;

**Mission Membership:** There are a number of people who have moved from the original place where they were baptised and made a confession of faith, and who now make Flagstaff Community Church the place they live out their faith. To arrange an appointment to explore fully the implications of becoming a committed member of our congregation please contact Brendon McRae 027 356 9200.

**Sunday Sermon:** If you would like a copy of the speaker's message from Sunday, then please email Brendon on [brendon@churchatflagstaff.co.nz](mailto:brendon@churchatflagstaff.co.nz) and a copy will be sent to you.

**Pastoral Visit:** If you would like a pastoral visit from someone from within the pastoral team or the minister, please ring elder Sarah Barton 021 385905.

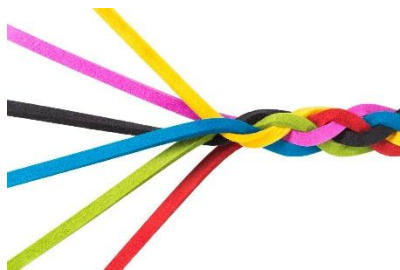
**Flagstaff Prayer Time:** Sharing life, ministry and prayer together. Everyone welcome. Every Tuesday 9 – 10 am in church foyer. Join us as we share and celebrate stories of God's action amongst us and pray for one another and discern God's leading into the future.



**Interested in studying Theology?** The Theology Programme at the University of Otago offers a wide range of papers and qualifications, all available via distance learning. Some papers are taught via videoconferences, others include teaching days in Wellington, while a few involve week-long intensives. For further information go to [www.otago.ac.nz/theology](http://www.otago.ac.nz/theology). or phone 0800 80 80 98 or 03 479 8639.

**Life Groups:** Life Groups @Flagstaff are a vital part of who we are as a community of faith as we seek to grow in Jesus. Not only do we explore the messages God has for us from the Bible, but we also have the opportunity to connect with others and experience a place where no-one stands alone. If you would like to join one of our weekly groups, please contact Sarah Barton 021 385905.

**Discipleship Groups:** which focus on study and prayer. Wednesday 1.30 p.m. Contact Sarah 021 385905.



**Community Facing Groups:** Where the focus is on friendship around a common interest. These groups are welcoming and may centre on an activity, a hobby, a talent, a life stage, a project or service. Groups include, Steady as you Go, Hire a Helper, Community Garden, Women's Coffee Group @ Coffee Culture (Held 1st Tuesday of the month at 7.30 pm), Green Fingers, Walking Groups and more! If you would like to join a group, start a group or find out more information then please contact Brendon on 027 356 9200.

**Tithing/Giving:** There are many ways we can support the activity of God in our church, community and world. Two ways of making your church offerings.

1. Use internet banking to make direct credits or automatic payments to the Flagstaff Community Church. Westpac bank # 03-0903-0192517-03. Please include your name for reference or if you use Envelopes use your Envelope reference/number.
2. Join the envelope system by contacting Alison Jenkin (Wakari) 021 1052 320. You will receive a set of personally numbered envelopes. This can be placed in the kete/basket at the foyer entrance anytime during Sunday Worship.

If you give to special appeals or missions, you can ensure your donation goes to that particular mission by writing the name of the appeal or special purpose when you make the internet payment or when you put your number or name and address on an envelope.

**Flagstaff Community Church Services 9.30am**  
**(Communion 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of each month)**

**Contacts:**

**Prayer Chain:** Sarah Barton 021 385905

**Pastoral Care:** Sarah Barton 021 385905

**Envelope System:** Alison Jenkin 021 1052320

**Technical Equipment:** Andrew Sims [andrewcarolynsims@gmail.com](mailto:andrewcarolynsims@gmail.com);

**Church Newsletter:** Lisa Wells [office@churchatflagstaff.co.nz](mailto:office@churchatflagstaff.co.nz);



**Kaumātua - Elders**

**Parish Clerk:** Sarah Barton [parishclerk@churchatflagstaff.co.nz](mailto:parishclerk@churchatflagstaff.co.nz)

**Presbytery Elder:** Don Lind [donovan.lind@gmail.com](mailto:donovan.lind@gmail.com)

Beth Scarlet [raybethscarlet@yahoo.com](mailto:raybethscarlet@yahoo.com)

Vanessa Gordon: [ness.gordon@gmail.com](mailto:ness.gordon@gmail.com)

Tim Mephram: [rautakiadvice@gmail.com](mailto:rautakiadvice@gmail.com)

Gary Dent: [gary.dent7@gmail.com](mailto:gary.dent7@gmail.com)

Andrew Sims: [andrewcarolynsims@gmail.com](mailto:andrewcarolynsims@gmail.com)

**Child Protection Officer:** Jane Davis [edlumic@icloud.com](mailto:edlumic@icloud.com)

**Health and Safety Officer:** Hamish Cartwright [cartwright012@gmail.com](mailto:cartwright012@gmail.com)

**Minister:** Rev Brendon McRae

Phone: 027 356 9200

[brendon@churchatflagstaff.co.nz](mailto:brendon@churchatflagstaff.co.nz)

**Parish Contact details:**

Administrator: Lisa Wells

[office@churchatflagstaff.co.nz](mailto:office@churchatflagstaff.co.nz)

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Facebook: [www.facebook.com/churchatflagstaff](http://www.facebook.com/churchatflagstaff)