

ARCHDEACONRY OF WAITOTARA

ISSUE 39

MARCH 2025

It's hard to believe that this Sunday is the first Sunday in Lent! It felt like Christmas was just last week!

As we enter the season of Lent, we are invited into a time of reflection, repentance, and renewal. These forty days call us to turn our hearts toward God, mirroring Jesus' time in the wilderness, where He fasted, prayed, and resisted temptation. It is a sacred journey—one that challenges us to examine our lives with honesty and humility, drawing closer to Christ in the process.

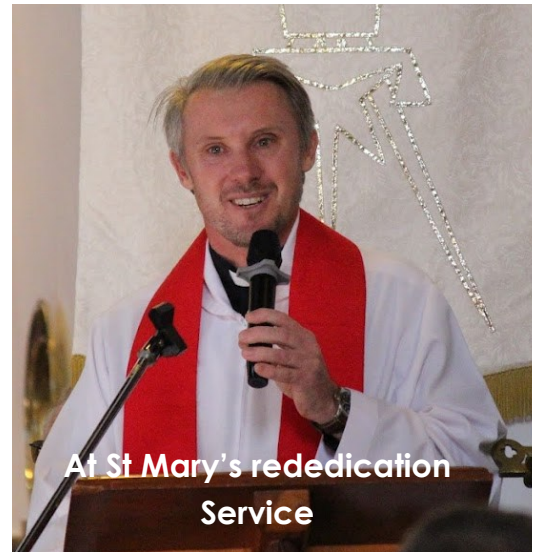
Lent has deep historical roots in the Christian faith.

The practice dates back to the early Church, when believers would prepare for Easter through prayer and fasting. By the fourth century, the forty-day Lenten season became widely observed, inspired by the forty days Jesus spent in the desert. Over time, it developed into a period of spiritual discipline, reminding Christians of their dependence on God. Today, while customs may vary, the heart of Lent remains the same: a call to repentance, renewal, and deeper communion with God.

This season is not simply about giving something up; it is about giving our spiritual life a special focus for a season - in the hope that new life will spring up in us and shape the rest of our year ahead. Many of us choose to fast from certain foods, social media, or other distractions, and it's not so much about giving something up, as it is about the 'choice'. As our mind turns to our addiction to coffee, chocolate, or Netflix (speaking for myself entirely!), we are reminded that what our soul craves most is intimacy with the true source of life. *"On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink." (John 7:37)* Lent is also an invitation to try - maybe even for the first time - practices that draw us closer to God. Committing to daily prayer, reading Scripture more intentionally, or engaging in acts of

service are ways we can respond to God's call during this time. Through fasting, we learn discipline. Through prayer, we deepen our relationship with God. Through good deeds, we share Christ's love with those in need.

In our modern world, where distractions are endless and busyness often takes priority, Lent reminds us to pause. It calls us to silence the noise and listen for God's voice. It is a time to



St Mary's Anglican Church, Hawera
Wesley Methodist Church, Hawera
St Luke's Co-operating Church, Patea
St George's Anglican Church, Patea
Church of the Good Shepherd, Waverley
Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Stratford
All Saints' Anglican Church, Eltham
St Barnabas' Anglican Church, Opunake
St John's Community Church, Kaponga

realign our hearts with what truly matters—to seek God in the stillness, to reflect on our faith, and to embrace the grace of transformation.

But Lent is not only a solemn time—it is also a season of hope. We do not walk these forty days alone; we walk toward the promise of resurrection. Each sacrifice, each prayer, and each act of love prepares us for the joy of Easter morning. God is always at work within us, drawing us closer, renewing our spirits, and reminding us that His mercy is new every day.

Last month we also had the excitement that came with the rededication of St Mary's Hawera. It was wonderful to celebrate this significant milestone with so many from the Hawera community. As Bishop Philip in his sermon called us to reflect on the way our churches hold our history, tell our stories and mark so many of life's milestones. In this is an inherent challenge—we also have to embrace the dichotomy that the Church has ultimately never been about walls, bricks, or mortar! While this new space is a blessing—providing a place for worship, fellowship, and ministry—our true calling has always been to make disciples and share the love of Christ with the world. Throughout history, the Church has gathered in simple homes, open fields, underground catacombs, and yes, even grand cathedrals, yet its mission has never changed. Jesus commissioned us not to build structures, but to build people—to teach, serve, and spread the Good News. My prayer is that the newly rededicated St Mary's will truly be a springboard for our mission, that the hard work and dedication of this work with bricks and mortar (and a lot of ColourSteel!) will enable a new season of the gospel flourishing in the Hawera community. So as we dedicate this space, let us also rededicate ourselves to the work of Christ. May this be a house of prayer, a refuge for the weary, and a launching point for ministry beyond these walls.

May this Lent be a time of grace for each of us. May we find strength in our struggles, peace in our prayers, and renewal in our spirits. And may we emerge from these forty days with hearts made new, ready to rejoice in the victory of Christ.

Blessings on your Lenten journey.

Lance Pilbrow

Archdeacon for Waitotara



Service of re-Dedication St Mary's, Hawera

Thursday 13 February. What a great day!

The doors opened at 4:30pm, we fired up the BBQ for a sausage sizzle, poured many glasses of punch, displayed countless items of history, and mingled with the wider Hawera community, Anglicans from far and wide, parishioners past and present. There were great conversations, hugs and a few happy tears.

Bishop Philip, supported by Archdeacon Lance, Missioners Paul and Brendan and clergy from around the region lead a packed church in a Service of Re-dedication. Gladys Armstrong (QSM) played the organ accompanying us in well known hymns "For all the Saints", Make me an Instrument of your Peace, and "Be Thou my Vision" as well as providing background music. Thank you so much Gladys!



A new stained-glass window donated in memory of Brian and Rosemary Barkla was also blessed/dedicated by Bishop Philip. The designer Richard Landers and the artist Zita Clinckemaillie as well as several members of the Barkla family were in attendance.

After the service, a generous supper spread, with wine (red, white, pink and bubbly!!) was served. South Taranaki District Mayor, Phil Nixon, gave a great speech recognising the work that has been accomplished, Rev Brendan Gibbs thanked all involved in the preparation for the day. Gladys Armstrong and



Bryan Morris as the oldest members of St Mary's congregation were asked to cut a very tasty celebration cake (baked by Bruce Neilson and decorated by Katrina Bates). St Mary's also celebrates 145 years as a Parish this year.

The crowd slowly dissipated as the sun set, leaving a few of the hard workers relaxing and chatting, making sure there were no half-empty bottles of wine leftover!!

Hawera Vestry would like to offer a huge thank you to all those who helped prepare, clean, arrange the beautiful flowers, take photos (Krystina Wymark, Karen Christian) serve on the night and clean up the next day.

Also, thank you to all who attended.

You helped to make this event memorable.





Quiet Mornings and Days with Heather in Taranaki 2025

A sacred time of silence for prayer and reflection with music, scripture, and creativity


Saturday 5 April 9:30am—1pm at St Mary's, Hawera

“Listening to God in Lent”

Bring your Bible, writing materials, your journal and perhaps a cushion or / and blanket for comfort. Refreshments are provided. Koha is welcomed in assisting to meet costs. A variety of resources is always available.

For further information contact Heather Lofthouse Spiritual Director / SGM Supervisor on 021 617894 or email heather1349@gmail.com

The Minstrels (Paul and Wynne Bowers-Mason)
perform “The Songs of the Seekers”
3pm, Saturday 5 April
Koha
(fundraising for new sound system)
Door sales only



Mid-Week Services Roster

Wednesdays	
All Saints, Eltham	10am 9 April—W Bowers-Mason
Holy Trinity, Stratford	10am 23 April—W Bowers-Mason
Thursdays	
St Mary's, Hawera	10am each Thursday



Holy Week and Easter Services are still being finalized. Services will be advertised in April's newsletter, in the weekly pew sheet and on our website

www.anglicanswaitotara.org.nz .

April 2025 Sunday Services Roster

	Sunday 6 April Lent 5	Sunday 13 April Palm Sunday	Sunday 20 April Easter Day	Sunday 27 April Easter 2
Holy Trinity, Stratford 10:30am	Morning Prayer	P Bowers-Mason HC	P Bowers-Mason HC	Morning Prayer
All Saints, Eltham 9am	W Bowers-Mason HC	P Bowers-Mason HC	P Bowers-Mason HC	Morning Prayer
Manaia Methodist 10am			W Bowers-Mason	
Kaponga Community Church 10:30am	P Bowers-Mason HC	L Pilbrow	M Lemanu	C Hunn
St Barnabas Opunake 10am	Own Arrangements	Own Arrangements	Own Arrangements	Own Arrangements
St Mary's, Hawera 10am	8am P Scaife HC 10am B Gibbs HC	To Wesley	10am B Gibbs	To Wesley
Wesley Methodist 10am	To St Mary's	Methodist Minister	To St Mary's	M Lemanu C
St Luke's, Patea 10am		To Waverley	T Anaru	To Waverley
St Georges, Patea 10am		To Waverley		To Waverley
Church of Good Shep, Waverley 10am		R Smith C		B Gibbs

Contact Us

If you have news to share please contact us.

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Keep up to date with news around New Zealand and the world.

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TELLING THE STORIES OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH IN AOTEAROA, NZ AND POLYNESIA

The Anglican Diocese of Waikato and Taranaki has a monthly e-magazine. Usually there is a short video message from Bishop Phillip, notices of upcoming events and how to register for them. Well worth a look. You can find it at

www.waikatotarangi.org.nz

You can also find the link to daily zoom prayers.



You can now watch recent sermons from Rev Paul Bowers-Mason, Ven Lance Pilbrow

www.anglicanswaitotara.org.nz