

St Mary's Anglican Church, Hawera  
Wesley Methodist Church, Hawera  
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  
Robert Gibson Chapel, Manaia



## Being Salt and Light in the New Year

As I write this, in the back of my mind is my sermon for this week. Many of you will be familiar with that 'always in the back of your mind' aspect to preaching. This week I've been reading through Matthew's gospel in preparation to preach on Jesus's words in Matthew 5: "You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world." I find it interesting how Jesus makes these statements - you ARE salt of the earth. Not aspirations but declarations, of who we already are as Christ's followers.

I've been making two loaves of sourdough bread most days lately. (Driven largely by the insatiable demand from our teenage boys... our budget can't keep up with store-bought bread!) so I've intimately experiencing the power of salt.... You only need to forget to put it in once to learn your lesson! Salt works from within. Mixed into dough, it doesn't sit on top announcing its presence—it becomes part of the loaf itself, flavouring and preserving from the inside out. A lamp doesn't strain to shine; it simply burns steadily, illuminating what needs to be seen in any moment. Both images speak to the nature of faithful presence. We are called not to spectacular displays but to the patient, persistent work of being who we are meant to be, exactly where God has placed us.

This is especially meaningful for those of us in rural ministry and smaller parishes. In a world that often measures success by numbers and visibility, it's easy to feel that our work goes unnoticed. We might look at larger churches with their programs and resources and wonder if what we do truly matters. We might grow weary of the same small challenges: aging buildings, tight budgets, the handful of faithful faces in the pews, the slow pace of change.

But salt doesn't need to be seen to do its work. The loaf of bread doesn't applaud the salt that preserves it. The wound doesn't thank the salt that cleanses it. And yet, without salt, everything would spoil or turn bland.

Your ministry—the cup of tea shared with a grieving parishioner, the quiet

prayer offered over someone's anxiety, the stubborn faithfulness of showing up Sunday after Sunday to unlock the church doors—this is salt work. It preserves what is good. It brings flavour to lives that might otherwise feel tasteless. It heals, slowly and surely.

Rural ministry asks us to embrace a different rhythm. We cannot manufacture growth or manufacture moments of transformation. We can only be faithful in the small things, trusting that God works through ordinary acts of love and presence. The shut-in who receives your monthly visit, the young family encouraged by your welcoming smile, the neighbour who finds the church doors open on a difficult day—these are not small things in God's economy.

As we move through this year, I want to encourage you: don't despise the slow work! Don't underestimate the power of showing up, of being present, of remaining faithful when no one is counting or keeping score. And remember, you are salt and light not because of what you achieve but because of whose you are.

You carry with you the light of Christ's presence. The world needs what you offer. Your community needs the steady, unseeing ministry you provide week after week. Christ hasn't placed you where you are by accident. So be salt. Be light. And trust that God is at work through you this year.

With every blessing,

Lance

Archdeacon for Waitotara

**WAITANGI**

**Bi-lingual Service**

**Karakia o ngā tikanga rua**

**5pm, Sunday 8th February**

<b>All Saints Eltham/</b>		<b>Church, Arakamu</b>
<b>Karakia by Waiata Readings</b>		<b>Followed shared kai</b>

Rev Vincent Nuku (Ngāti Ruanui)  
Rev Paul Bowers-Mason

**NAU MAI, HAERE MAI**

*"Mā pango, mā whero,*

For more information Ph: 027 364 9274



# News from around the Archdeaconry

## Holy Trinity, Stratford has been quite busy during the last weeks of 2025.

On the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday in November we hosted the other Parishes in the cluster and invited them to stay for a BBQ lunch as our guests. Our 'guest' preacher was Rev Luca Tovey- Duckworth from Anglican Missions. In an effort to raise some funds for Anglican Missions we sneakily suggested to everyone that admission to the 'free' BBQ lunch would be by a gold coin donation to Anglican Missions! The lunch was a joyous occasion with a constant buzz of conversation and good mixing between the parishes. I think the lunch could also be called a success as a donation of \$300 was raised.



The congregation of Holy Trinity and St Stephen's showed their thoughtfulness at Christmas by generously contributing gifts which were included in the food bank distribution. These gifts were to bring extra joy and cheer to those in our community who are doing it tough. The gifts which were thoughtfully assembled by members of the congregation included toys, edible treats. Thanks to their kindness we have been able to spread some Christmas magic to families and individuals in Stratford. We are proud to be part of a community that supports one another especially at Christmas. Debbie the coordinator reported the gifts were much appreciated.

## The Great Nativity Debate.

For 2,000 years theologians have debated and discussed what really happened in Bethlehem when Jesus was born. We looked at the Biblical story through historical, social, linguistic and architectural perspectives.

A typical family home at the time provided the starting place for our tableau – a picture formed using static people instead of paint. Of the 18 people involved, only 6 knew of their involvement in advance. The remainder were selected from the congregation and invited to take their place in our 'family home'.

The star of the show was undoubtedly our angel- played by Ruth Roberts who crouched down in the pulpit, emerging to the sound of an angelic trumpet, speaking and disappearing again. Through different translations of Aramaic

words and the reminder of the status of Joseph a more realistic interpretation was revealed.

The focus of our tableau was not the truth of the scene, but the pronouncement of the angel – ‘Fear not, for I bring you glad tidings of great joy which shall be to all people for unto you is born this day a Saviour who is Christ our Lord’.

A big thank you to all involved with special thanks to Rev Kim, Carolyn and Paul (home owners), Karen and Mike (Mary and Joseph) and Mary - typecast as the midwife and Ruth (angel).



(editor's note: there is a Youtube clip of this tableau on our [website](#))

 **The Salvation Army**   
Te Ope Whakaora 19-23 Regent St, Hāwera Te Ope Whakaora

**Saturday March 21<sup>st</sup>**  
9am-2pm  
**MARKET DAY**

**Food**  
**Furniture**  
**Clothes**

**Books**  
**Arts and Crafts**

**Stalls available - \$10 per table**  
Email [tim.malton@salvationarmy.org.nz](mailto:tim.malton@salvationarmy.org.nz)  
for registration of interest

## **Lent and Easter Services**

### **Ash Wednesday 18 February**

**11am—St George's Patea**

**7pm—St Mary's, Hawera**

**7pm—Holy Trinity, Stratford**

**Imposition of Ashes will be included in services after this date at**

**10am Thursday 19 Feb—St Mary's, Hawera**

**10am Sunday 22 Feb—Good Shepherd, Waverley**

### **Palm Sunday 29 March**

**10am—All Saints', Eltham—Cluster Service for Stratford, Eltham and Kaponga.**

**10am—The Wave, Opunake—Opunake Combined Churches Service**

**10am—St Mary's, Hawera**

**10am—Good Shepherd, Waverley**

### **Good Friday 3 April**

**Walk of Witness (starting details and route to be finalised)**

**8:30am—Eltham**

**9am—Opunake (start at Cenotaph, finish at Catholic church)**

**9:30am—Stratford**

**9:30am—Hawera**

### **Easter Day Sunday 5 April**

**Normal Sunday services**



*Wesley Hawera*

Celebrating 150 Years  
1876-2026



We will be celebrating the church's history and the people who have contributed 13<sup>th</sup> September 2026  
To register your interest email [office@wesleyhawera.co.nz](mailto:office@wesleyhawera.co.nz)

### Mid-Week Services Roster

<b>Wednesdays</b>	
All Saints, Eltham	10am 11 March
Holy Trinity, Stratford	10am 25 March
<b>Thursdays</b>	
St Mary's, Hawera	10am

## March 2026 Sunday Services Roster

	Sunday 1 March Lent 2	Sunday 8 March Lent 3	Sunday 15 March Lent 4	Sunday 22 March Lent 5	Sunday 29 March Palm Sunday
Holy Trinity, Stratford <b>10:30am</b>	Morning Prayer	P Bowers-Mason HC	Morning Prayer	T Harrison HC	Cluster Service All Saints' Eltham 10am P Bowers-Mason
All Saints, Eltham <b>9am</b>	W Bowers-Mason HC	P Bowers-Mason HC	Morning Prayer	T Harrison HC	
Manaia Methodist <b>10am</b>			W Bowers-Mason		
Kaponga Community Church <b>10:30am</b>	P Bowers-Mason HC	Own Arrangements	Own Arrangements	Own Arrangements	
St Barnabas Opunake <b>9am</b> <b>New Service Time</b>	P Bowers-Mason HC	I Sargent HC	P Bowers-Mason HC	Morning Prayer	Opunake Combined Churches Service at The Wave Church, Opunake <b>10am</b>
St Mary's, Hawera <b>10am</b>	<b>8am</b> P Scaife HC <b>10am</b> TBC	To Wesley	<b>10am</b> B Gibbs HC	To Wesley	B Gibbs
Wesley Methodist <b>10am</b>	To St Mary's	Methodist Minister	To St Mary's	Methodist Minister	To St Mary's
St Georges, Patea <b>10am</b>	R Smith				To Waverley
Church of Good Shep, Waverley <b>10am</b>		R Smith		B Gibbs	R Smith

## Contact Us

If you have news to share please contact us.

Archdeaconry of Waitotara

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## Contact details for the Central & South Missioners

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

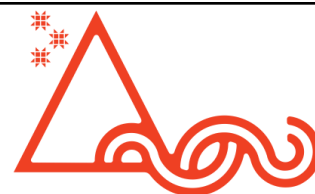
[Anglican taonga](#)

**anglicantaonga**   
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](http://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,  
[www.anglicanswaitotara.org.nz](http://www.anglicanswaitotara.org.nz)