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Anglican Women's Studies Centre

## Telling Our Story:

*Celebrating the 40th Anniversary of the Ordination to the Priesthood of Anglican Women of The Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand & Polynesia*

*By Revd Dr Patricia Allan  
Transitional Cathedral, Christchurch  
3rd December 2017*



Photo: Jenny Wilkens

*The 40th Anniversary of Ordination of Women into the Priesthood was celebrated at The Transitional Cathedral in Christchurch on 3rd December 2017. Bishop David Coles gave the blessing for the priests on behalf of Bishop Victoria Matthews who was overseas at the time*

*In the name of God, in whose image  
we are created,*

*In the name of Jesus our brother,  
the light of the world*

*In the name of the Spirit, our wisdom  
and our guide. Amen*

'Just tell the story,' they said, 'because many younger women don't know it'.

So, this is the story of how, after 2000 years, women were admitted to the priesthood of some Christian churches. You are here today because you are part of that story – my



daughters, granddaughters, families, friends and colleagues. Welcome.

'Women make progress over the dead bodies of their sisters', theologian Carter Hayward said. We are here today because they were there, fiercely convinced that to be healthy and whole, society and the Christian Church need the full participation of women, as well as men.

But hey - today is not a wake but a celebration-- 40 years of women ordained as priests in the Anglican Church of Aotearoa /New Zealand. So many memories come flooding back. I could simply reminisce—one of the hazards of old age!

Rather, I invite you to consider some of the significant people and events that have helped to shape our particular story - yours and mine. People's names are important, so I've included quite a few. You will see that the winds of God's Spirit have blown powerfully in our lifetime.

As a city we are justifiably proud of Kate Sheppard and her cohort of feisty women and helpful, powerful men. But did you know that the first woman to preach in our Cathedral in the Square was Maude Royden, a small, fiery English suffragette and campaigner for the ordination of women to the priesthood? She came here 95 years ago, and according to *The Press*, the Cathedral was packed out and her message relayed to many standing outside. She sowed the seed, wrote the preface, if you like, of our story.

Of course, women here were already ministering in all sorts of ways. Bishop Julius had invited Deaconess Edith Mellish from England to develop Deaconess training. In 1895 the now *Community of the Sacred Name*, opened as *Deaconess House* and many faithful deaconesses and sisters have lived out their ministries in Christ's name since then; I think of Nurse Sybil Maude, whose pioneering work with the sick continues to this day; I think of Elizabeth Tipping, the first woman elected to our Synod in 1968 - hard to imagine now. I think of the thousands of loyal members of the Mother's Union and later AAW; I think of the many clergy wives who shared their husband's ministry, often with little recognition or thanks. Today we salute them all.

It needs to be said that from the beginning some women were

opposed to any notion that their sisters could become priests. Even today there are those in our midst who disagree with female priests, let alone female bishops. Many of us could recount stories of how this opposition is played out in subtle and more overt ways. Our own Bishop Victoria knows only too well the power of misogyny. Let's pause to remember our disappointed and frustrated sisters in the Roman Catholic Church and in the Anglican Diocese of Sydney. Let's remember too that in our increasingly conservative Church, our sisters in the GLBT community mostly remain outside the tent.

Within the Anglican Communion, in 1944 Hong Kong, because of the war-time crisis and lack of male priests, one lone woman, Li Tim Oi was ordained extra-canonically (i.e. without the approved regulations). We honour her memory as the first ever Anglican female priest.

Worldwide, in the 1970s, along with the feminist movement, the argument for the ordination of women priests was gathering momentum. Maude Roydon's seed was sprouting. The 1970 and 1973 USA Episcopal Church's General Convention narrowly defeated resolutions on the ordination of women. On July 29, 1974, three brave bishops, claiming that "obedience to the Spirit" justified their action, ordained as priests, eleven women deacons, known as 'The Philadelphia

Eleven'. These irregular ordinations of course caused a great fuss but two years later the legal ordination of female priests became a reality in America. Recently I listened to Carter Hayward, one of the eleven, preaching at their 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration.

But back to our own history. In the late 1950s Archdeacon Sam Woods invited Deaconess Glenys Lewis to come from England to be a chaplain assistant at Christchurch Hospital. Glenys was a trained nurse, midwife then deaconess, head of a Diocesan training centre in Guildford. She arrived in 1960. I remember her well - tall, humorous, strong-minded, smart. After a couple of years at the hospital, she toured the country for 18 months, meeting the bishops and speaking to hundreds on the value of deaconess training. Then in the late 60s she set up a deaconess training programme in Auckland, educating some of the first women to later be ordained as priests. I visited her there and recall her stories of the difficulty in



Photo: Jenny Wilkens

*Revd Dr Patricia Allan tells 'our story' during the Anniversary service.*



getting women into lectures at St Johns College.

Let's be proud that just a year after the USA and Canada, our General Synod agreed to the ordination of women as priests, thanks in part to Glenys Lewis insisting that women received the same deacon ordination as men. On Dec 3rd, 1977 - 40 years ago today - Deaconesses Jean Brookes, Wendy Cranston and Heather Brunton were ordained priests in Auckland by Bishop Eric Gowing, whilst that same weekend in the Waikato, Bishop Paul Reeves (later Archbishop and Governor General) ordained Cherie Baker and Rosemary Russell. The Ordination of the first Maori female priest, Puti Murray followed the next year. In our own Diocese, the first women ordained as priests were Deacons Carole Graham and Margaret Woods on 24<sup>th</sup> February 1978, whilst two days later Bishop Alan Pyatt also ordained Deaconesses Glenys Lewis and Melva Finney. All these women and the bishops who ordained them were our pioneers.

But what happened then? Very slowly women were accepted here into parish ministries, encouraged by the outstanding example of Carole Graham, our first female vicar who is with us today. Margaret Woods became a mover and shaker at Bishop Julius Hall and our first female Archdeacon. Her teaching on baptism being inauguration into the priesthood of all believers, with children at baptism becoming full members of the Church, remains a lasting legacy. However, many women, including me, took up non-stipended positions - in other words voluntary labour. Theological and ministry training became pressing issues. For me, as a mother of four young children on the West Coast, shifting to St Johns Theological College in Auckland was out of the question. Later, some male clergy accused us of 'slipping in the back door'. Actually, the kitchen table is not a bad place to do theology.

The 1980s were years of consolidation. We are indebted to a small group of stropy Auckland women, clergy and lay, who included Susan Adams, Joan Cook and Rosemary Neave. Rosemary, its great to have you with us here today. In the early 80s they formed a Friday lunch group, who met fortnightly until 2000, to strategize on how women could not only be priests but also obtain positions on the various influential Church Boards. In 1984, Anglican women from around the country met at a conference at Camp Morley. Some formed a caucus with the mandate to seek election onto boards such as St Johns Theological College and so

gained access to Trust funds for women's theological education and development. A parallel development was Theology by Extension, employing Anna Gilkison to encourage groups of women around the country to study theology. In 1987 the very influential Women's Resource Centre was set up, employing Rosemary Neave until 2000. Structural analysis and feminist ideology proved a heady mix as we grappled with their relevance to our Christian journey.

In Christchurch, Ceridwyn Coles and Jenny Dawson initiated a group called AWESOME -- Anglican Women Exploring Spirituality On Monday Evenings - a group that still gathers regularly. Their initial concern was for inclusive language in our liturgies and so many wonderful worship experiences followed. Jenny was appointed as a member the Prayer Book Commission. A real sadness is that thirty years later, we are still, in our worship services, often presented with an all-male God and encouraged to sing hymns that still name us women as men or brothers. We see very little of the



Photos: Jenny Wilkens

*Top: A candle decorated by Elizabeth Kimberley was lit in memory of those women priests who have died. Those gathered lit small candles from this flame as they processed out at the end of the service. Above: Revd Helen Roud, Vicar-General of the Diocese of Christchurch & AWSC tikanga Pakeha Co-Councillor, lighting her candle. In the background is Patricia Allan and Peg Riley who was the celebrant.*

amazing creativity in worship that women brought in those early years.

In Auckland, the Friday group recognised that women were being ordained all around the country, often in very isolated



situations, with little opportunity or indeed finance to network. They set about rectifying this. Hilary Barlow, Robbie Cave and I were invited to be on the planning group for the only ever Ordained Women's Conference held in Hamilton 1989, with around a hundred women priests attending. What an extraordinary experience this was, influencing our corporate journey ever since.

I want to briefly mention two outcomes of this Conference. Claire Brown and a small group from Dunedin came in search of a person they could nominate as Bishop of Dunedin. They chose Penny Jamieson. In 1990 we became the first Province in the Anglican Communion to elect a Diocesan female bishop. What an awe inspiring and hopeful service in Dunedin Cathedral. Since then of course we had our own amazing synod in 2008, with a woman, Victoria Matthews, elected as bishop - something I never imagined I would see in my lifetime. Since then we have had two further women welcomed to the Episcopate, Helen-Ann Hartley and Eleanor Sanderson. I need to remind you however that all these wonderful people have come from overseas, which must raise some disturbing questions for us all.

The second result of the 1989 Conference was the eruption of our very own Harvey Weinstein scandal. In the agreed media release from the Conference, amongst the list of workshops, was Lois Warburton's on 'sexual harassment', which was becoming a talked about issue in society. The Dominion pulled this out, with the front-page headline, 'Laying on of hands irks women priests'. You can only imagine the fallout in a Church totally unprepared for this crisis, with little understanding and no protocols in place. The complainants were of course blamed; as their advocate I was accused of leading a witch-hunt. Notice the language! It certainly didn't do our careers any good! Today I pay tribute to those incredibly courageous women who dared to speak out and to Bishop David Coles,

who for years had to negotiate the ensuing storm. You have all made the church a safer place for everyone, though the stain remains.

So, what is our story since then, for the last 25 years? Many facets. Bishops of our three-tikanga church have ordained over 500 women priests, exercising the ministry of Christ in a huge variety of locations - small and scattered rural congregations, large city churches, cathedrals; counselling practices, hospitals, schools, universities, hostels, prisons.

In Christchurch we have a female bishop, Victoria (who is overseas and so not able to be with us today); we have welcomed and farewelled our first woman dean, Lynda Patterson; we have lived through major earthquakes and all their aftermath. Yes, God has travelled with us. But some would suggest that we are living in the final chapter of the story; some would suggest we have really got sucked back into the patriarchal model of church, in spite of all our efforts to resist. Some would suggest that we women are simply nursing a dying institution, preparing, as it were, the burial spices.

But, my sisters and brothers, we are people of the resurrection... aren't we? As we look back over these 40 years we realise how far we have come. Thanks be to God. Perhaps we are now in uncertain liminal time, betwixt and between, waiting for that which is yet to be. All our dreams of a wide-open and inclusive church, vibrantly creative, deeply nurturing and sustaining have not yet been realised.

However, we are also an Advent people - with all the hope and anticipation of new birth that this season is about. I suggest that we women are good at watching and waiting, midwifing, then gently tending new life. Let us dare to believe that our creative God is still active in our midst, shaping our stories within the timeless story of the babe in the stable, the One who is the light of the world. May it be so.



Above Left: St John's Parish in Otumoetai, Diocese of Waiapu, celebrated the 40th Anniversary of Ordination of Women to the Priesthood on Sunday, 10th December 2017. Revd Julie Guest, Bay of Plenty Regional Dean Revd Adrienne Bruce, Revd Debbie Garret and Revd Isobel Mordecai celebrated the service.

Photos: Allan Hough



# 40 years of Storytelling

## A reflection on tikanga Maori wahine ordination journey

By Revd Jenny Quince

St Mary’s Holy Trinity Auckland, 3rd December 2017

*While in Tonga with the Anglican Women’s Studies Centre Council in July 2017, it was decided to research names of ordained women in New Zealand and Polynesia. Since then, Revd Jenny Quince, AWSC Link Representative of Te Taitokerau has found more than 800 names for ordained women and with still more to add from across the three tikanga!*

*This research is “a work in progress” and she has the only copy at present due to the complexity of the task. For example, many women were ordained under their maiden name originally, then their name changed when they have married. Some are now divorced and reverted to their maiden name while some others have remarried and changed their name yet again. She also found that some women have decided they don’t like their Christian name and have started using their second name – or a new name altogether! Very confusing and a real challenge for any researcher when there are three names listed in the Clerical Directory over different years and only relating to one person!*

*The task has been complicated further because many women do not have their name registered in the Clerical Directory. This task should be a huge wake up call for Administrators to update their lists regularly so the life and contributions of women in ministry are recorded accurately for all time.*

*Despite being incomplete it was decided to put all the names collected from the past and present on the altar for a special blessing during the Anniversary service and to vow to keep on researching.*



Photo: Jessica Hughes

*Reverends Jacynthia Murphy & Jenny Quince from Te Tai Tokerau Hui Amorangi lead the three tikanga procession out of St Mary’s at Holy Trinity in Auckland at the Service celebrating 40 years of Women’s Ordination*

When we first started researching just how many women had been priested in Aotearoa and Polynesia we were overwhelmed by the numbers presented. We also thought about privacy issues surrounding this kaupapa and have decided to put all the names collected so far on the Altar, to bless them and to make it “a work in progress.” Many Diocese kept good records and others not so good. This has been a huge learning

curve for us because I have over 800 names so far.

In 1963 Deaconess Glenys Lewis was commissioned to travel around New Zealand to spread the news of the ministries open to women in the Anglican Church. The 1976 General Synod votes to admit women to the Priesthood. Appeals are lodged and dismissed right up to when the “Famous Five” are priested in 1977.

Previously women who wanted to do theological training were forced to go overseas or do a correspondence course from Australia. It was noted that the idea of women being resident in a “man’s” theological college in this period was ridiculous, especially because it was not until 1963 that a woman was even permitted into the

college refectory for an official meal. Therefore, a separate training institute (they said) was required. Which was why in 1966, *The Deaconess House* was opened and in 1970, it finally moved into an annex at St John’s Theological College. Many Vocational deacons chose not to be priested but they have been ordained into God’s service and we should recognise them for the huge contribution they made.



In 1990 Dr Penny Jamieson was ordained Bishop of Dunedin – the first woman Diocesan Bishop in the World. Her life was made very unpleasant by many of her peers, you might be interested to read her autobiography. There are so many stories that could be told but I decided that I would try to narrow it down and try to give an insight into what it was like for our women in ministry.



Photo: Jessica Hughes

The first Maori woman Deaconed according to Bishop George Connor was in 1933 and the first woman Deaconed by Te Pihopatanga O Aotearoa was the Revd Emmeline Taukamo, of the Huata Whanau. The first Maori woman Priested by Te Pihopatanga O Aotearoa was the Revd Jane Hanna in 1987 at Manutuke. On 6<sup>th</sup> May 1998 a celebration service was held for the ministry of women especially honouring our first Anglican Maori Woman Priest, The Rev Puti Hopaea Murray on her 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of being Priested. Three years earlier Revd Diane Tana was ordained in the Methodist Church.

Revd Puti was ordained in 1978, just five months after the "Famous Five" of 1977 – Reverend's Jean Brookes, Heather Brunton, Wendy Cranston, Rosemary Russell and Cherie Baker. Revd Canon John Tamahori delivered the Kauwhau at the Celebration Service in 1998. He chose The Gospel of Luke and spoke about 'The Boy Jesus in the Temple' focussing on "Why are you searching for me? You knew I had to be in my Father's house". And he also chose to speak about "The Good Shepherd" from John's Gospel. The Good Shepherd is the one who comes in through the gate for all to see. He calls the sheep by name and they know his voice. They will never follow a stranger because they do not recognise a stranger's voice. They believe him when he says "I have come that they may have life and have it to the full. I lay down my life for my sheep."

Two very appropriate readings when related to Revd Puti who spoke in Te Reo Maori and made it her business to know those coming through the door or simply standing at the door.

Canon John goes on to say that the Church must continue to

go on to support Revd Puti and others because their cause is right. He quotes from an interview he read about Nelson Mandela when he was posed the question: 'How were you able to stand being in prison so long?' And his answer was, 'Because I believe my cause was morally right'. That, says Canon John is the same with women's ministry. The cause is morally and theologically right, and the Church must continue with the truth to support women in ministry. He said he liked to see women coming in bringing a warmth, the sense of motherhood coming in by way of the priesthood, bringing the light of wholeness.

Revd Puti was a very strong advocate for whanau especially women and children. She was well known as being able to make men tremble in their boots! She never backed down and, in my opinion, no one has ever surpassed her passion or action for God or his people when Church social issues have arisen. She often challenged the Church hierarchy - in private or in public, it didn't matter to her, all by herself if need be, especially when she was wanting money to feed, clothe and house the needy.

She fought long and hard for the rights of Maori to be recognised – one of her greatest achievements was helping to establish the Maori arm for Anglican Social Services – *Te Whare Ruruahu o Meri*. She wasn't just a 'Prayer' she was a 'Doer'. When she found that she needed to further her studies in social work in the Church she decided to go to St John's Theological College. Eventually she approached Revd Canon John Tamahori to talk about her wish to become a priest. He told her to go see the Bishop with his blessing!

*The Revd Jenny Quince at the lectern*

Photo: Jessica Hughes

In the mid 1970's Komiti Tumuaki at Otiria vigorously debated the Ordination of Women, and I mean "vigorously". Some priests, all male of course, were furious that things were already in place without their knowledge and they wanted the proceedings stopped. 'They' also were told to go see the Bish-



op! Some male dissenters said they would never take communion from a woman (unfortunately, there are still places where this is true even today), - never from a pregnant woman - never from a menstruating woman.

Archbishop John Patterson former head of the Anglican Church in New Zealand and Polynesia, recalled Revd Puti’s ordination, ... “when I was working at Queen Victoria School I was able to say to those I was working with. look at this example - Maori women can do anything”.

Revd Puti paid a huge price on behalf of all Maori women in ministry and in the community. She refused to accept second best and instilled in those of us who knew her a sense of pride, dignity and a warrior disposition. I remember 18 years ago as a Deacon, a woman priest was administering the Body of Christ and I was offering the Chalice. A kaumatua kneeling at the altar rail deliberately knocked the wafers out of the

Bishop George Connor told me about a Maori woman who was ostracised by her iwi because she wanted to be a priest. She was told to go somewhere else to be ordained because she would never be allowed to minister at home, in either the local churches or on the Marae - simply because she was a woman! This was ten years after the first women were ordained as priests! In 1987 Revd Jane Hanna was the first Maori woman ordained by Te Pihopatanga o Aotearoa.

I remember on the day of my ordination along with Revd Maude Vini and Revd Miriama Solomon, we were still preparing the kai half an hour before the service - we were literally running into the church to get ready. We didn’t even know we were supposed to be still on retreat – we had gone off on different retreats a week earlier and then came back to help with the preparations - we didn’t have time for ‘that sort of thing’, we were just happy that our iwi had agreed to tautoko us and we were determined to make it happen! Poor God – I



Left: *Heads bowed in prayer in three tikanga unity for women in ministry both past and present.* Right: *Outside Holy Trinity Cathedral after celebrating 40 years of the ordination of women to the Priesthood—3rd December 2017*

Photos: Jessica Hughes

priest’s hand all over the floor. I just turned to him and said, “Uncle, you knew before you got to the altar rail that two women were serving, if you do that again I will pour the Chalice over your head!” He never did it again and we both served him happily for many years.

Dame Joan Metge in her book “In and Out of Touch” published in 1986, says that values are changing at a speed that we never thought possible. There is great uncertainty and it comes about when Maori get caught in the conflict between old and new, between Maori and Pakeha practices and values. There was and still is a minefield of challenges.

**One challenge was and still is - a woman priest on a Marae. Revd Puti taught me that when I have my collar on, I am neither a man nor a woman, I am a Priest!**

would hate to think what he must have thought!!!! We three were very fortunate to have had Bishop Waiohau Rui Te Haara deacon us and Bishop Te Kitohi Pikaahu priest us.

As Maori we are taught that we never stand alone, we represent our close whanau, our extended whanau, and our church on many levels. And yet as Maori women desiring to become ministers we have had to straddle two worlds’ as well. About six years ago *Kahui Wahine* presented a motion at Te Runanganui Maori Synod to consider equally a woman being nominated as the next Maori Bishop. That motion was signed and presented by:

*Revd Helen Gray, wife of the then Bishop of Te Waipounamu Bishop John Gray, Mrs Mihi Turei, the wife of the then Archbishop of Aotearoa Brown Turei, Mrs Lynnore Pikaahu the wife of Bishop Te Kitohi Pikaahu, Mrs Kamaana Katene, the wife of Bishop Rahu Katene, and Mrs Lor-*



*raine Walters, the wife of Bishop Muru Walters.*

We don’t have a Maori Woman Bishop yet, but we will have one day!

We have some very powerful, courageous and passionate women within our Church structures working patiently and diligently to further the vision shared by women across the Three Tikanga of the Anglican Church. Gender balance is an issue today and women need to be alert when positions are

available that they too are worthy of filling the gap. So, let’s not forget the contribution of all women in their field of ministry.

**E hara taku toa, he takitahi, he toa takitini**

*My success should not be bestowed on me alone, as it was not individual success, but success of a collective.*

# We Are Not Just One Story But Many Stories of the journey for ordained women in tikanga Pacifica



*By Revd Brenda Reed*

*St Mary’s Holy Trinity, Auckland*

The first ordained woman in the Tikanga was Sister Betty Slader who was from England and worked in the General hospital and was recruited by the Diocese of Polynesia as a Nurse evangelist in 1961. She was instrumental in the establishment of St Christopher’s Home for Children and was ordained in 1985.

Nine years later the second woman priest was ordained - Susan Mary Halapua in 1994. In 1985, the first Indigenous woman priest Sereima Lomaloma (Fiji) was ordained, followed by Toemu Fineanganofa (Tonga), Caroline Amy Chambers (Fiji) and Elenoa Mancini (Tonga) in Auckland 2004.

*Revd Brenda Reed at the lectern during the Three Tikanga celebration at St Mary’s Holy Trinity in Auckland on 3rd December 2017* Photo: Jessica Hughes

A recent Colloquium on the twenty-five years anniversary of our Three Tikanga Constitution highlighted there is not much information exchange or shared knowledge across the three Tikanga at parish level, so I will give a brief outline of our diocese to set the scene.

Tikanga Polynesia consists of four Nations: Fiji, Tonga, American Samoa and Samoa (Western) connected by the moana (the Pacific Ocean). Most of the Anglicans in the Pacific are in Fiji (2 Bishoprics and 1 Archdeaconsy), Tonga (1 Bishopric), American Samoa (2 Parishes- Laulii and Vaitogi) and Samoa (1 Parish: All Saints). There is also an Archdeaconsy in New Zealand with two Tongan, two Samoan, one Indo-Fijian, and one Fijian Parish in Auckland and one Tongan parish in Christchurch. Communication difficulties regarding travel and getting Visas are often a challenge.

To date thirty-seven women have been ordained in the Diocese of Polynesia. Five have passed away.

	RIP	CURRENT
FIJI	4	14
TONGA	1	6
AMERICAN SAMOA	0	3
SAMOA	0	4
NEW ZEALAND & AUSTRALIA	0	5





### Women’s Ordination in Polynesia Occurred in Two Waves

The first during Archbishop Jabez Bryce’s time where seven women who were ordained and held specific positions or roles in the Diocese in the Administration/Management area. Two women clergy held vital positions within the Diocese after ordination- One became the Diocesan Secretary and the other the Principal of John the Baptist Theological College in Suva. The first Tongan woman priest was active in the building up of the Church and pastoral care in Tonga. Archdeacon Taimalelagi Tuatagaloa Fagamalama, the first Samoan woman priest, was ordained in New Zealand in 2009 after returning from her post as the Anglican Communion Observer to the United Nations in New York.

Although the first ordination was 32 years ago, there is a long gap since then to the next round of ordinations. The second wave of women to be ordained was under Archbishop Winston Halapua, beginning with one priest and two deacons ordained at his first Synod in 2011. Since then, thirty-two have been ordained making the ministry of ordained women in the Diocese of Polynesia a very young one with around 81% of women priests with only six years and less experience in the Ministry.

full-time priest. The Diocese doesn’t have funds to pay for more than one full-time position per parish so the possibility for women to work in full-time Ministry is further decreased. People in the community are still getting used to having women priests as the first ordained group worked outside of parish ministry.

It is always important to remember that there are differences in each nation in the Diocese which also determines the style of ministry and emphasis.

In Fiji, they have the “House of Sarah” and activities around domestic and sexual violence and trauma are highlighted.

Tonga has many small islands that are low lying Atolls which makes Climate Change a priority subject in Tonga. Climate change is a church-wide concern for the diocese.

In Samoa, only the Anglican Church has ordained woman priests. There are no women priests in the other mainline denominations like the Congregation and Methodist Churches. The Methodist Church has women priests in Fiji and Tonga. Women priests in both Samoa’s challenge the status quo just by being present in community activities. There is only one Anglican Parish in Apia, in the Urban area. The clergy of All Saints, Apia are developing their ‘Urban Aiga Ministry.’



Left: Reverends Sarah Stevens-Cross, Maria Knight & Litimai Sanegar co-celebrate in this three tikanga service. Right: Reverends Moana Knight, Litimai Sanegar & Ellen Bernstein offer communion at St Mary’s Holy Trinity.

Photo: Jessica Hughes

### Some Issues

Most of the women are worker priests or non-stipendiary. The women are currently employed in secular jobs or have retired. Very few women are full time priests looking after parishes. They are assisting the full time male priests in the parish with Sunday services and with pastoral care. One young woman priest from Fiji said, “the men look after the money side of the Church and the women attend to the pastoral duties.” There is still an “opinion” that the community prefers a ‘male’

Women in Polynesia are being raised up to assist in God’s work in whatever way they can and wherever they are called. We look to our sisters in Tikanga Maori and Tikanga Pakeha who have led the way on this journey to be guiding lights and we honour you all today.

The last 40 years has been a great achievement for women in the priesthood across the globe. We must continue to hold on to the hope that God is faithful, who has called us all into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord (1 Corinthians 1:9).



It is also important to always be mindful for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable (*Romans 11:29*).

We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose (*Romans 8:28*) and we hold this promise close as we embark on the

next 40 years. It is fitting that we are celebrating our 40 years of Women Ordination on the first Sunday of Advent. We will always hold on to the Hope of Jesus coming and the many gifts he brings for us with the birth of the baby Jesus.

## Sermon: 40th Anniversary of the Ordination of Women to the Priesthood

By Revd Dr Helen Jacobi

St Mary’s Holy Trinity, Auckland—3rd December 2017

Acts 16:12-15, 40

Luke 23:54-24:10

Lydia was an independent business woman and the head of her household. She had become a “worshipper of God”, a Gentile follower of the Jewish way. She had gathered women for prayer by the river – was this because they were at risk of persecution in the town? Was it because the river was a natural place for women to gather for washing maybe?

Paul arrives in their midst, Lydia is ready to hear the good news of Jesus and she and her household are baptised. She responds to the call of God on her life immediately. No hesitation; no interviews and examining chaplain’s reports; no spiritual autobiographies and theology textbooks.

Lydia is baptised and straight away begins her ministry – she invites Paul and his companions to stay in her home. As a significant business woman (a seller of purple cloth) she would have had a reasonably sized house with slaves to serve the guests; and enough space for it not to be a scandal that she was inviting a man to stay<sup>1</sup>.

Since no husband is mentioned Lydia would have been the person to host at meals; to break the bread and share the bread with guests. Once Paul taught her the words that Jesus spoke at the last supper she would have no doubt repeated them as she hosted her guests and broke bread with them<sup>2</sup>.

Lydia is not only the first convert in Europe, she is the first woman we know of who may have presided at a eucharist. The women at the tomb begin with service. They have come to care for the body of their beloved rabbi. Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the “other” women bring spices and tears. They are terrified and amazed to see the body gone and the angels who bring resurrection news.



Revd Dr Helen Jacobi at the lectern at St Mary’s Holy Trinity.

Photo: Jessica Hughes

They hasten to tell the apostles – and our reading today stopped short of the next verse “But these words seemed to them (the men) an idle tale, and they did not believe them.” (Lk24:11). These women are the first of women or men to share the good news of resurrection and they are, like women down the centuries, dismissed for telling idle tales. Like Lydia though, they do not hesitate to act, to serve, to minister, to preach.

As we celebrate 40 years of women in the priesthood of our church we look back over 2000 years of women serving and ministering and leading. Much of that history is buried and lost, but these snippets of information can paint a broader picture if we choose to look. So it is important that we gather today to tell stories, to remember, so our piece of the story is not lost. The story is of the lay women who worked for so long towards ordination and then the shorter story of the last 40 years.



In preparation for today our clergy team of women at St Matthew-in-the-City gathered to share our stories. From Jean Brookes in 1977 to Linda Murphy in 2010 we have seven stories of diaconal and priestly ministry. We talked about what we recalled from our ordination services – the weight of the hands, many of us said; or their heat. Jean was asked by a senior clergy man on the day of her ordination – what did she experience – the heaviness of the hands seemed to satisfy him that yes this was a real experience of the Holy Spirit. Since I was 6 months pregnant on the day of my deaconing and was prone to fainting when pregnant I only remembered the mantra in my head – do not faint!

We also spoke of the call to ministry often being to roles other than the traditional priest in a parish role. Called to community ministries; social service; counselling; and how ill equipped our church is to understand and support those ministries.

We have monitored over the years the appointment of women to the roles of vicar, archdeacon, dean and bishop. And we still need to be vigilant and encourage the leadership of women in these roles.

Many women feel called to the “other” roles of chaplaincy, community work and development, education. And these roles are never seen as “important” as the institutional roles. The hundreds and hundreds of women in non-stipendiary roles are also undertaking community facing ministry.

Has the church changed we asked, as a result of 40 years of women being ordained? Well the church has changed because the world has changed. The way women see themselves within the church has changed. I am reminded every time I appear at an ecumenical service in a Roman Catholic Church robed, and am swamped by women afterwards wanting to talk, that the symbolism of a woman at the altar is very important. We have inclusive language and more female imagery for God, in theory anyway. We are still though having

motions at Synods to ensure proper representation of women on commissions and committees; Polynesia has led the way by having 50% of synod delegates having to be women.

I discovered a file in my office this week that I had forgotten about, labelled women's ordination. And in it I found a few articles and sermons most of which I have no memory of writing! Quite a few were from 2002 and 2003 for the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. I asked the same questions then about change.

I said “in 1977 the driving force for women's ordination was not to change the church but a desire for justice, equality and inclusion. With the leadership of women came issues of inclusive language in worship, and a desire to explore different, less hierarchical models of leadership.”<sup>3</sup> And I said we have remodeled our provincial structures, and gained our 3 tikanga, but what about our diocesan and parish structures?

15 years on I repeat the same questions. As women who lead our church, to where are we leading it? Are we still propping up the status quo with our 1000s of voluntary hours of unpaid work; which is harder to say no to now because we are ordained. Or are we like Lydia and Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary, refusing to be constricted by any boundaries and any who might consider our words to be an idle tale.

Where are we leading our church to? The future is very unclear for the church; if we only look at statistics we could safely say that our granddaughters will have no church to belong to. Lydia and Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary were not priests and preachers of an institution, they were followers and then leaders in the way of Jesus. Maybe in the next 40 years we might be forced to figure out how we can really follow and lead in their footsteps.

<sup>1</sup> Ben Witherington *Women in the Earliest Churches* p147-9

<sup>2</sup> J Ellen Nunnally *Foremothers* p126-9

<sup>3</sup> “Celebrating 25 Years”; article in Taonga?

#### SYMPOSIUM ANNOUNCEMENT:

## WHAKAWHITI KORERO: Conversations Between Theology & Social Vocation

1—2 October 2018 / Auckland (Venue yet to be Determined)

Laidlaw College believes that a strong theological vision sustains the exercise of social vocation and in turn is enhanced by the concerns of social vocation. Faith and theology can hold a significant place in the lives of those whose vocation is strongly connected with people, families and communities.

**CALL FOR PAPERS:** An invitation to interested theologians, practitioners and academics to put this date in their diaries, and also to submit abstracts for papers relevant to the theme of the symposium. In this cross-disciplinary and cross-practice conversation we do not expect all papers to expertise on all sides of the conversation but we hope for papers that will offer insight into potential integration. Papers could relate to, but not be limited to, the following themes: Hospitality / Power / Agency / Personhood / Wellness / Ethics / Theodicy / Forgiveness / Creation / Christology / Restorative Practices / Reconciliation as a vocational disposition / Inclusive Practices / Bicultural Practices / Grief & Loss.

Abstracts should be submitted no later than **15 May 2018** and should be no more than **350 words** with a short biography of the presenter(s). Abstracts should be sent to Tim Meadowcroft [tmeadowcroft@laidlaw.ac.nz](mailto:tmeadowcroft@laidlaw.ac.nz) or Lisa Spriggins [lspriggins@laidlaw.ac.nz](mailto:lspriggins@laidlaw.ac.nz)



Pew Sheet Extract:

# Just One More Page ...

By Canon Sue Pickering

Taranaki Cathedral Church of St Mary, New Plymouth

3rd December 2017

## One more page ...

The ordination of the first women to the priesthood 40 years ago in New Zealand is unlikely to make the national news, even though lesser moments in our public life such as the unfortunate death of 'First Cat' Paddles, 'went viral'!

But ***we are*** celebrating today, not with champagne and balloons or a big party but with a quieter acknowledgement of the role of ordained women – priests AND deacons – in the life of the church and the community; women who have served in New Zealand since 1977, as Anglican congregational priests, regional archdeacons and bishops, pastoral carers, chaplains, theological educators, role models, and agents of change for the bringing in of God's kingdom of justice and peace. They have followed Jesus, experiencing outright rudeness and condemnation from some, and smiling support from others as they sought to live out their vocations in the Anglican church.

It was only in 1994 that the Church of England began to ordain women priests. In 1995, and recently priested, I travelled with my husband and son to the UK to study. I too experienced some of that mixed response, but the positive far outweighed the negative. One day I found myself in an ancient church in Kent facilitating a quiet day for a group of women from the church we'd joined in Canterbury. It was a calm, simple space – with a slab of stone for an altar, mediaeval wall paintings and a tablet listing the names of the vicars – all men – who had served there since the early 1100's. As we gathered in the sanctuary to share holy communion I was conscious that we were making history. Without fanfare or fireworks, a new work of God was beginning.

Someone later showed me the booklet accompanying that first service of ordination of women to the priesthood in the UK; there was a page giving the story of each of those women – over thirty of them – outlining their pathway to this moment of deeper commitment and acknowledgement of their call to priestly ministry.

## And then there was one more page ...

This page was written to honour all those unnamed women who had experienced a call to serve God as priests but who had died before such a call was recognised by the institutional church; women who were unable to be fully what God had called them to be, because the climate of society and the church was not yet 'right'. The 'breakthrough moment' had not yet come.

## One more page ...

Let's take this a step further. Let's remember ***all*** people, women ***and*** men, whose potential has not been realised, who've not been able to express their God-given skills and talents, whose vocations have been denied. Let's remember all those who have had to work and live according to the prejudices, and narrow-mindedness of people who wield power without compassion, and those who have been constrained by local customs or gender-based codes of behaviour.

Which leads us to the question: '***How is this relevant to me, now?***'

Two thoughts:

- † Maybe reading this has reminded you that there are things ***you'd*** like to do, choices you'd like to make which you've not been able to for whatever reason. Perhaps it's time to do a bit of a life review and let God show you what is really important at this stage of your life. Often it will have something to do with love: loving yourself and loving others.
- † Maybe you know someone – a family member, colleague or friend – who is struggling to find or follow their vocation. Perhaps you can be a safe place where they can tell their story, share their dreams and frustrations and know that they are held in your love even as they find their way forward. For the path God calls them to is 'where their deep joy and the needs of the world converge.' [Buechner]

Yes, we celebrate today but we are also called to be part of spreading the good news of Jesus who says to all people, 'I have come that you may have life; life in all its fullness'. [John 10.10]



## Anglican Women's Studies Centre (AWSC)

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The Centre for Anglican Women's Studies, commonly known as the Anglican Women's Studies Centre was set up to serve and to advance the interests and needs of the women of this Church particularly those undertaking Theological training.

The Link Representatives from each Diocese and Hui Amorangi have been chosen for their leadership ability to identify, gather, facilitate, resource and encourage women in their educational preparation for ministry whether lay or ordained. It is hoped that the Anglican Women's Studies Centre can continue to enjoy the support of each Diocese and Hui Amorangi in this endeavour.

The issue of increasing numbers of women in representative positions across the councils and committees of the Church is seen as a high priority and the practice of intentional mentoring by those already in national and international representative roles is seen as a good way to expose women of this Church to fulfil their potential as leaders.

Ensuring that women's voices and stories are heard now and in the future is also one of our continued aims whether it be by traditional methods of publication or using more contemporary technologies like web publication. We remain optimistic that through continued support, the needs of women throughout this Province will be valued and recognized.

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**EDITORIAL DISCLAIMER:** The Anglican Women's Studies Centre is committed to encouraging and enabling women's voices and perspectives from across the diversity of the Church to be shared more widely. We acknowledge that women's experiences of church differ considerably and that resultant theological perspectives also differ considerably. In general, the AWSC does not exercise editorial control, rather we welcome as many voices as are willing to contribute.