

Festival 2017

Waikanae

This year's Festival was the third to be held at Waikanae's El Rancho Christian Holiday Park, on the lovely Kapiti Coast, about an hour north of Wellington. All the members were able to stay together in the accommodation complex, only a brief walk from the Hall where services were held and the Dining Room where three meals were served each day.

The Festival ran from Wednesday 11th October until Sunday 15th. Attendance on the first three days was around 30, but this swelled to over 50 with the arrival of around two dozen Filipino members from Masterton for the weekend.



Phil Baldwin demonstrates "putting on love"



The programme began with a praise, worship and communion service on Wednesday morning. In the afternoon service Dennis Gordon outlined our calling as Kings and Priests in God's Temple throughout five acts of the drama of history. Reflecting the Festival theme of "Drawing Closer, Looking Forward", other sermon topics included Phil Baldwin's exposition of Colossians 3:1-17 as a springboard for going deeper in the Christian life, and Rex Morgan on Psalm 45 and the royal wedding of Christ and His bride. Brian

Barnes encouraged us to trust in God no matter what happens in our lives, and Manny Ornejas discussed the way God works as a farmer, sowing, pruning and harvesting the seeds in our lives. Dennis Richards concluded the Festival with a sermon on youth leadership, challenging the youth to be leaders now, rather than waiting for the future.

Maureen MacDonald presented a series of videos by Elijah House directors Mark and Maureen Sanford on the topic of "Healing the

Hearts of our Children". Dagmar Barnes hosted an informative and searching Quiz Night. Another evening featured a screening of the recently released movie, "The Shack". A highly entertaining Family Night coordinated by Les Evans saw us playing a variety of interesting games and activities, including valiant efforts to suck up dried peas with straws, and a

hilarious soccer game which involved using straws to blow ping pong balls across a table. An afternoon set aside for Orienteering was affected by the weather, so we went Ten Pin Bowling in Paraparaumu instead, with over 40 players piling into 8 bowling lanes and having a great deal of fun.



The weather was changeable, with some brilliantly sunny days and one or two days of rain. The El Rancho meals were up to their usual excellent standard, and the delicious daily suppers provided by Brenda and the ladies were once again a real treat. After five days of inspiring and enjoyable services and activities, a whole lot of really happy campers said their goodbyes, already eagerly looking forward to our next time together!

Vanuatu

45 members and families met October 5-12 in our church building at Rory, Malekula for Festival 2017. Sermons were given by Rex Morgan, William Davies, Billy and Marius Taren, and a number of other local members delivered sermonettes and led worship. Beautiful fresh flowers were arranged delightfully in the hall every day.



The church building had been badly damaged in the April 2016 earthquake, but we were able to use it. Les and Kaye Evans will be travelling to Vanuatu in April next year to do some repair and strengthening work on the building.

The weather was fine and sunny, with temperatures reaching 30 degrees each day. This part of Malekula is once again very dry with rain badly needed by the members, who are all subsistence farmers. Just before the festival a new 6,000 litre water tank, financed by the NZ churches, was delivered to the property, doubling the water storage capacity. There has been no rain to fill the tank, but a water supply from a nearby dam is made available for a few minutes each morning, and this will gradually fill the tanks. It is illegal to use this water



New water tank

on the gardens, so the members ask that we please pray for rain in the area.

Prayers are also requested for the sale of William Davies' farm. William is now 79 years old and would like to sell his large rural property and move to a smaller place in town, but it has been on the market a couple of years with no buyer yet. Another elderly member, Johnny Rouclily, told me that although he doesn't know the day or year of his birth, he recalls that his parents were

cannibals living in the bush during the time when there were no clothes, shops or roads.

The church provided funds so the members could eat a hearty meal together on three days during the Festival. Another day, Marius Taren provided large helpings of coconut cake for everyone. The cake had been freshly baked in his outdoor wood-fired oven. On a couple of afternoons the youth group presented dances.



Cake coming out of the oven



I read out a letter from the Church at Mt Wilhelm, PNG, and passed on a gift of two colourful bilum bags (hand-made string bags) from the PNG brethren. These had been sent by Mark Latham, who had attended the Rory festival last year. Nathalie Rouclily wrote a reply letter conveying our greetings to the PNG church.

This year's Festival was

coordinated by Marius and Elvise Taren, who are going to travel to Fiji next February for a month of ministerial training with Isei and Va Colati.

I only stopped very briefly in Port Vila, but was able to see John Davies and Eveline Kanas, both of whom are doing well. As always, the festival was a very productive time of inspiring worship and fellowship, enabling God's people to grow closer both to one another and to our great and loving God.

– Rex Morgan



Marius Taren and family