



The monthly newsletter of St. Andrew's, Brighton-le-Sands Uniting Church

Volume 1 Issue 7: November 2020

*We reach up to God, reach in
to one another and reach out
to the community*

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What does the future of the church look like?



What extraordinary times we are living through!

On this morning's news was a report that Pope Francis had stated that gay couples should be able to have formalised relationships because they, like everyone else, were entitled to the blessings of family life. In a Church in which gay relationships have been denigrated and demonised, and gay people excluded from the Mass, it was an extraordinary statement. It reminds us that things can and do – and must – change in the Church.

Without doubt, the global Coronavirus pandemic will bring changes to the Church, though what they will *be* is not necessarily as clear as the fact that they will *happen*. Futurologists have a very poor track record. They make their money pontificating about the future, but are rarely still around when a very different future from that the one predicted eventually emerges.

I am no seer, and certainly lay no claim to prescience about the future of the Church. Indeed, at strategic planning meetings over the years, I have always been the one to state candidly that I am not the one to know what the future looks like. But even to me it is clear that there will be changes wrought by Covid.

Consider these observations.

Many congregations have been unable or unwilling to meet physically for many months. That has had a number of significant effects which are unlikely simply to recede when the pandemic is over. First, congregations have discovered and embraced

new technologies for meeting. Zoom and its competitors have facilitated gatherings week by week, with all or most of the elements of a traditional worship service. Some congregants have joined in enthusiastically, some have been defeated by the technology, while others pine for physical services to recommence. So what will emerge at the end?

At the same time, some folk have got out of the habit of heading off to church on Sunday morning. It's just so easy to sit at home and have a similar experience. So will it be possible, and will it be desirable, to abandon completely the on-line model? What would be the cost?

On the other hand, there are people who, deprived of their local worship services, have become adventurous in their on-line attendance. Lauris and I know a couple who began "attending" their daughter's church in the United States. Another couple we know spoke about surfing around, looking for good preaching. Living in Canberra, they ended up worshipping with a Lutheran congregation in the Barossa Valley. Good worship and good preaching on-line have created a supermarket of choices which people will be loath to forgo. If the preaching at the local church is mediocre (in your opinion), yet you can have the world's best (again in your opinion) on-line, why would you abandon the on-line option just because the pandemic has passed?

There are grave dangers in all this, of course. While the "consumer is king" model has driven our society for many years and offers us a plethora of choices, it has also nurtured a very "me-oriented" society. The Church cannot afford to be like that. If we all just choose a congregation where the preaching, music and style are just what we want, we will never be challenged, and very little is likely ever to be asked of us. Church ought not to be a comfortable place to be; the gospel *should* move us out of our comfort zone. The Church should not be "all about me".

And what does all this mean for evangelism and the mission work of the Church. Many mission activities are local. Local congregations provide food pantries, free meals, op shops, community gardens and the like. How could that work if members are geographically dispersed, possibly over the entire globe? And would anything emerge that was of commensurate value to

local communities?

All this should be at the forefront of the thinking of church councils. No one should be under any illusion that, once the pandemic subsides, everything will simply go back to what we used to think of as "normal". Chances are that some congregations who were already struggling will simply die. So forward-thinking congregations need to plan how to retain members, and bring back those who have strayed elsewhere. Quality worship, quality preaching, quality music and a strong and practical sense of mission will be key. The reassurance which a loving and welcoming community brings will be at the heart of those congregations which survive. That will tax the resources and the motivation of all congregations, but the prize would be that the Church could emerge stronger and more resilient than ever.

The good news is that we are not on our own in this struggle. The Holy Spirit is with us to guide and support us. Our most powerful force is prayer. And we must also avoid being simply afraid of change simply because it *is* change. Change is never easy, but it is inevitable. Over twenty centuries, the Church has changed in countless ways. The only change of which we should be afraid is anything that shifts the Church's focus away from the gospel of Jesus Christ. While that is our focus, no matter what the Church might come to look like, we cannot go too far wrong.

Alan Harper OAM

Background and history of St Andrew's

Part 5



Images courtesy of the State Library of NSW



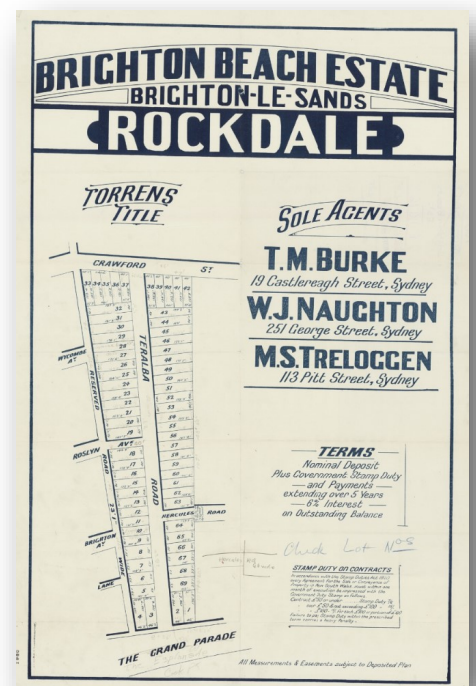
Church beginnings in Brighton-Le-Sands

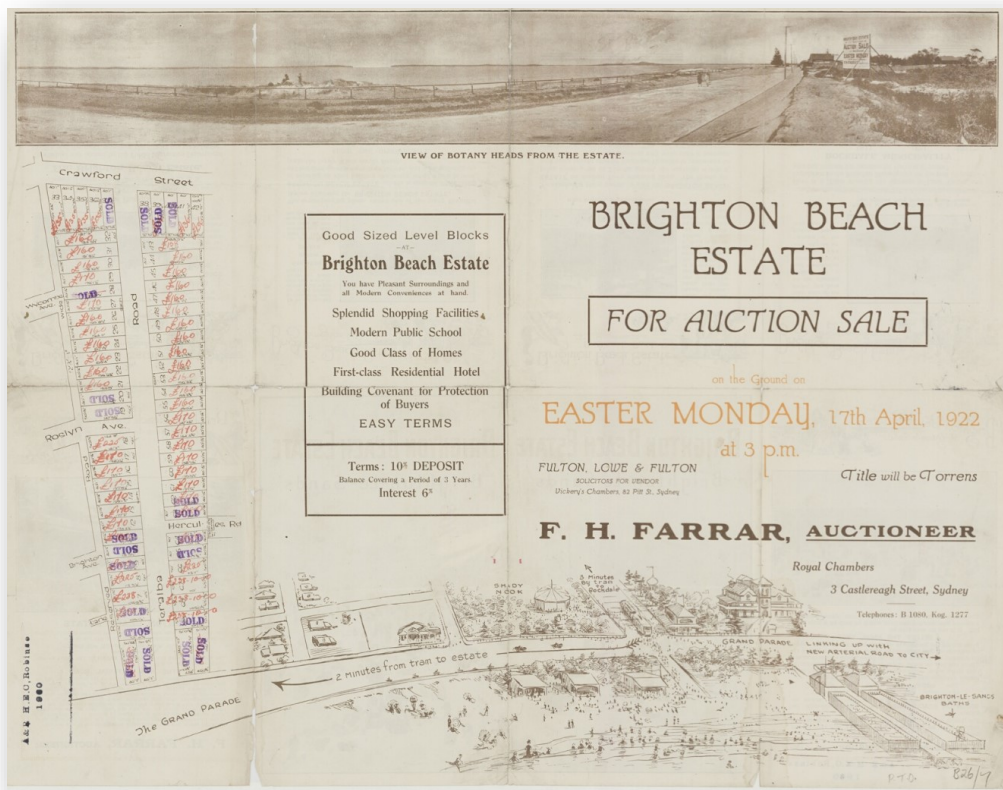
Last month I was thinking out loud as to whether St. Andrew's was the first church in Brighton-Le-Sands, so I have now explored that thought.

The area now known as Brighton-Le-Sands was subdivided much later than the areas further inland. The very first subdivisions at Lady Robinson's beach were not until early 1886.

The subdivision that includes the present site in King's Road (originally owned by the Methodist Church) was not subdivided until 1908.

The subdivision of Teralba Road, the site of the first church, was in 1922.





This is in contrast to Rockdale, at the other end of Saywell's Steam Tram line. Rocky Point Road (as the Princes Highway was originally known) was marked out to Rocky Point originally by convict labour (1838-1840). But the 'proper road' was not completed until the 1860s. In the 1850s and 1860s "significant churches" were established. The first permanent settler in Kogarah arrived in the early 1850s. (G Darby. Rocky Point Road. The first 50 years 1839-1889. <http://stgeorgehistsoc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/History-of-Rocky-Point-Road1.pdf>). Rockdale railway station opened in 1884. (<https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/heritageapp/ViewHeritageItemDetails.aspx?ID=5012210>). Thomas Saywell opened his tramway in 1885 (<http://home.kooee.com.au/ajl/cp/history.htm>) but this was used by people visiting Lady Robinson's Beach rather than to service people living there.

Not surprisingly, the Brighton churches developed as outreaches of the older churches inland. There is evidence that the church members looked down on the upstarts from the area and they were referred to as "the beach people" and there was some friction. The following is an amalgam of three sources as well as the St Andrew's document referred to last month: AH. Beckett. 1987. *History of St. Mark's Church, Brighton-le-Sands*. AM Towey. 1987. *The Parish of St. Thomas More, Brighton-Le-Sands: golden jubilee 1937-1987*. RW Rathbone. 2000. *Brighton-Le-Sands the suburb that grew from the sand hills*.

Originally, I was interested in establishing which was the first

church building in Brighton-Le-Sands, but I came to remember that a church is not just or even the building, the history is richer than that.

St.Mark's Anglican Church

In October 1910, Rev A Noble Burton was the curate at St. John's Rockdale and running a Sunday School and some services in weighing in room at Moorefields Racecourse (when the school of the same name still stands). That is strictly not Brighton. On 3rd July 1911 they rented a hall at the beach for the Sunday School for 6 pence per week. There are references in the St. John's records to "the beach area". In 1912 an "Advisory committee of the beach people" was formed. In May 1912, Thomas Saywell (who was actually a Congregationalist) offered land for £1 but this was later "stood down". Services took place in Thomas Saywell's home or in the hotel premises. In June 1913 a Miss Paterson was appointed as a Parochial Visitor to the beach area. On 23rd September 1912, there was a promise of land in Gordon Street and an estimate of £150 to build a church. Gordon Street was considered unsuitable due to its proximity to a macaroni factory and the present site in Trafalgar Street was bought. In 1914 a weatherboard hall was erected where the present Rectory stands, 20' x 30' (6 m x 9 m) for £63/12/11. This was extended by 20' in October 1921 and referred to as a Mission Hall where services and Sunday School took place. In 1923 there was recorded a complaint that they

were not getting enough of the Curate's time. The hall was extended again in 1926 and in 1928 they began plans to build a brick church. On 1st October 1937, the provisional Parochial District of St. Mark's was declared extending from the Cook's River to the north, Barton Street to the south and Scarborough Park and West Botany Street to the west. On 13th October 1937 the first Curate in Charge was appointed. The first Rectory was at 78 Crawford Road but this was later moved to Bruce Street. The foundation stone of the current church was laid on 15th October 1938 and the church was dedicated on 12 January 1939. The Parish was declared in November 1945. The old hall was demolished in 1974.

St Thomas More Catholic Church

From 1918 to 1928 the area came under the Parish Mission of St. Joseph's, Rockdale. From It then seems to have come under the Kogarah Parish of St. Patrick's. From 14 July 1931, services were carried out at a side altar in the picture theatre (which had also been used by St. Andrew's when the first church blew down in 1925). In June 1939, the first Church was built. Father McGann lived at 39 Gordon Street. In 1951, the first brick church was built in Francis Avenue. With an additional floor added, it is now St. Thomas More Primary School. In have to admit that I have walked past that building for 35 years and never spotted that it was, clearly, built in two stages!!!! The foundation stone of the present church was laid on 9th August 1962 and the church dedicated in 1964.

Congregational Church

In the early 1920s there were services on the beach, in particular. These lapsed for a while but in 1923 regular services began as a branch of the Rockdale church. In October 1926 the foundation stone was laid at the site in Moate Avenue (originally called The Avenue). The church was closed in 1977 at the time of the formation of The Uniting Church but the land went to the continuing Congregational Church.

So, who was first????

That seems to set St. Andrew's as the oldest existing church building in Brighton, but the original St. Andrew's was preceded by St. Mark's Mission Hall.

Other interesting trivia

Clouston Memorial Presbyterian Church

Last month, I was also perplexed by the reference to the Church in Arncliffe being on the corner of Rocky Point Road and Stony Creek Road. The problem has been solved by Charles Schofield, who has been, like Pam, at St. Andrew's all his life. I was able to confirm from a street directory It was actually on the south east corner of Rocky Point Road (as Princes Highway was called) and Wickham Street. It was built as a branch (1905) of the Bexley church (1901)



From RW Rathbone. 1997. *A Village called Arncliffe.*

“Plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose.” Charles de Gaulle

As well as the attitudes of the inland church people to the “beach people” having some modern echoes, in the St. Thomas More history is an eye witness account of the early years that shows that other things have not changed in 100 years.

“The Peace celebrated in 1919 – delayed a year because of a world wide epidemic of pneumonic influenza – was a memorable occasion. During the influenza epidemic when all wore face masks, when schools were closed, when gatherings in public halls and the like were discouraged, Father Hyland arranged for Mass to be celebrated in the Presbytery grounds at Rockdale whenever possible to minimize the risk of infection.”

Samaritan’s Purse Christmas Boxes



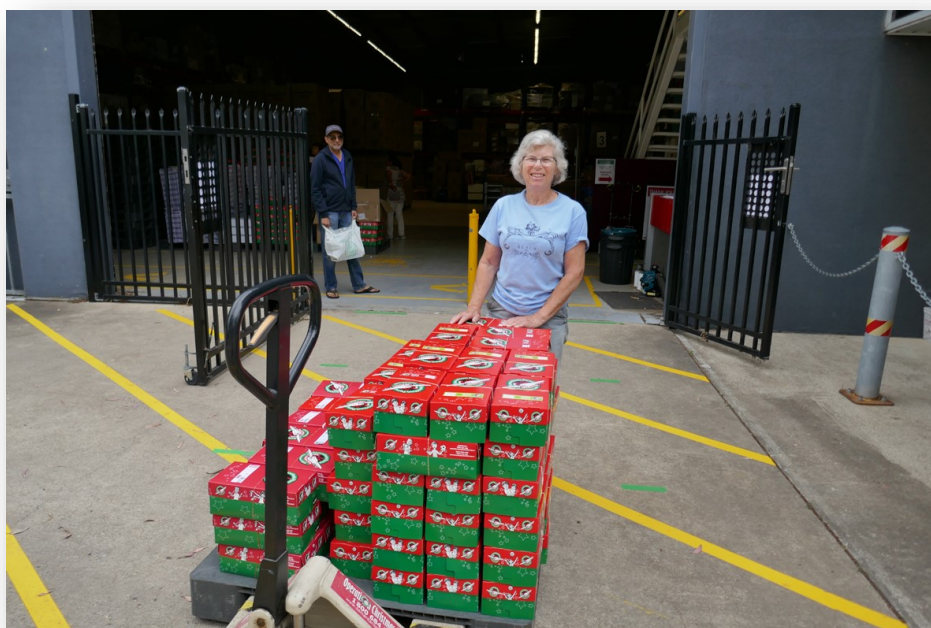
The seventy-five boxes we packed have now been taken to the depot where they will be checked and sent off in a container to one of four countries. Due to Corona virus, some of the usual Asian/Pacific countries are unable to receive boxes this year. Fiji and Cambodia are two of our usual countries, but this year boxes are being sent to Madagascar and Malawi.

Craig Jennings at the depot is very encouraging about the response to the boxes this year, despite Corona virus. NSW will be collecting boxes from Victoria, Queensland and the ACT so that they all will be sent from the one depot.

Please continue to pray for this outreach, these four countries and the children who will receive the gifts.

Thank you again for your contributions for postage, not only from our church but also from Kogarah Uniting Church members and Church Council and individuals who support the work of the Craft Group each year.

Alison



WHITE SUNDAY

I would like to convey a special thanks to the Ramsgate Uniting Church Youth Group (GLEE) and also to the Rockdale Presbyterian Church Youth Group. In addition, I must thanked the parents and also the St Andrews Brighton Uniting Church Sunday school teachers, for making their time available to attend the rehearsals.

A South Pacific tradition, celebrated in Samoa, American Samoa, Tonga, and Tokelau. White Sunday, in the Samoan language literally translate to, “Aso Sa Pa’epa’e”. Aso Sa meaning Sunday, and Pa’epa’e meaning white. The origin of this tradition dates back to the arrival of Christianity in Samoa, through the London Missionary Society (LMS). Some people believe it began as an agricultural tradition that started during planting and harvesting season. Most people held the belief that this tradition started as a way to commemorate the survival of the people from European diseases.

Others assert that the holiday coincides with a family celebration that became widespread in the 1920s in commemoration of Samoans who succumbed to [the influenza epidemic of 1919](#); this epidemic, introduced through the ambivalence of the [New Zealand colonial administration](#), took the lives of 1/5 to 1/4 of the Samoan population, many of them children.

However, White Sunday was originally practiced by The Congregational Christian Church in Samoa (CCCS) in 1898 (while called the London Missionary Society-LMS). During its annual Confer-

ence in May 1898 it was resolved to set up a special Sunday for children. It was originally celebrated on the 3rd Sunday of June, then it was moved to the 3rd Sunday of October as per the international Sunday School conference in Rome 1909, before it was again moved to the 2nd Sunday in October. The last change of dates is believed to be influenced by Mothers’ Day being on the 2nd Sunday in May, and Fathers’ Day being on the 2nd Sunday in August.

It is the special Sunday where the service is from the mouth of the babes. The day is for parents and communities to acknowledge and celebrate childhood by hosting special programs during church. It is a time to get together with brothers, sisters and even cousins to lead services which include scriptural recitations, biblical story re-enactments, and creative dance performances. Children receive gifts (often new clothing and/or school supplies) on White Sunday and are allowed privileges normally reserved for elders, such as being the first to be served food at family mealtime.

In Samoa, White Sunday is also called “Lotu Tamaiti”, which translate to “Children’s Service’ or “Children’s Day”.

It has been a challenging year due to Covid-19. So the numbers were limited for this indoor service. I counted 35 who attended, with some sitting outside or in the back room. The number could have easily reached 60 or more, having to decline requests from family and friends to attend.

This year, it was a beautiful day, and the white dresses, leis and ‘pales’ (floral crown) were a standout.

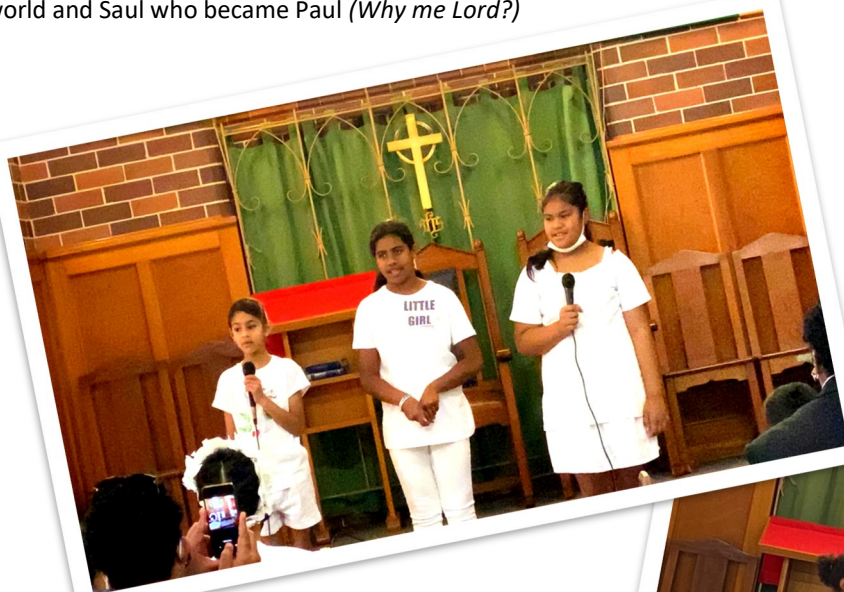


**The producers, directors,
musicians, soloists, and cast**

A great service was witnessed by the congregation and parents. The children played the musical instruments which included the piano, violin, saxophone, and bass guitar. The children sang together and some sang solo parts. The music ranges from traditional favourites like “Great is Thy Faithfulness”, to modern songs like “Our God is an Awesome God”. It even included two of the gospel music hits, “You Raise me up” by Josh Groban and “You Say” by Lauren Daigle.

Some of the children recited Psalms and verses from the bible. Others sang a variety of songs.

The plays were modern adaption of the disciple’s uncertainty about who Jesus was (*Who am I?*) and the stories of Mary the lady of the world and Saul who became Paul (*Why me Lord?*)



Singing ‘You Say’ by Lauren Daigle - Harseerat, Mae & Sara-Belle (left)

Levinia and Komiti in *Who am I?* (below)



Arinona (piano) & Marques (bass guitar) with soloists Markenzy & Grandby – *Why me Lord?*

There was even a dance in the program curtesy of the GLEE youth from Ramsgate Uniting. Even the Sunday school teachers and helpers joined in the singing, which was enthusiastic, but with restraint.



The dance *Jerusalem* led by GLEE

Brighton's version of the 3 Tenors
– Charles, Ese, & Afa



As promised, afterwards at lunch, the children were served first and also enjoy some of their treats like KFC, Krespe crème doughnuts, Cornetto ice-creams, and coke, amongst the healthy food.

The lunch. Notice the contrast between Krespe crème doghnuts and fresh fruit platter at the top

To see the children playing and socialising together from 3 youth groups, and enjoying lunch together is what the whole day and experience is about. Children from one youth group threaten to come back next year, while the children from the other youth group assumed that this is a weekly service and ask their parents to comeback the following Sunday. The life and vitality shown by the children and parents and the approval and appreciation of the congregation for this special service, confirms that the spirit is working within the church and within each and everyone of us. For this, Praise and Glory be to God.

So until White Sunday 2021.....STAY HEALTHY AND BE SAFE

Ese Enari

Our Outreach

St Andrew's supports these activities, in particular

COOK MOOREFIELD COMBINED CHURCHES CHRISTIAN EDUCATION BOARD

Supporting Nick's ministry at these schools. Financial donations (tax deductible) to Alison.

NICK'S BREAKFAST CLUB AT JAMES COOK HIGH

(Please bring cereals (not Weetbix) and long-life milk.

THE KOGARAH STOREHOUSE FOOD MINISTRY

The Storehouse is distributing food parcels on Wednesdays and still needs food donations.

<http://www.kogarahstorehouse.org.au/>

To keep you abreast of what is happening, our Winter edition of the Kogarah Storehouse newsletter, *Storehouse Seasons*, can be found at <https://www.kogarahstorehouse.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Newsletter-Winter-2020.pdf>. Some hard copies are available in the vestry during October.



LACLA-LET THE AFRICAN CHILDREN LEARN ASSOCIATION

Carry on collecting your 5 cent pieces for donation. Or, in these days of contact-less payments, leave a donation.



SAMARITAN'S PURSE OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

<https://www.samaritanspurse.org.au/get-involved/ways-to-give/>



ACT FOR PEACE CHRISTMAS BOWL

<https://www.actforpeace.org.au/Learn/Why-we-are-here>



Prayer Points

The mission and ministry of our congregation.

Worship leaders, preachers, musicians, readers, helpers, leaders, followers.

Those affected by COVID-19, their carers and families. Those who have lost loved ones.

Those still feeling the effects of the bushfire and floods.

Those who are sick, sad or lonely

The people of Beirut.

Our own people especially Carolyn and Dennis Gates, Ruth Bird and the Gaitau family.

To raise up people to work within St. Andrew's.

Alan and Lauris Harper.

If you need pastoral care or know of someone needing pastoral care, please see the contact details in the side panel on the first page. If you wish an addition to this list, please contact Stephen Dain.

November Roster

Please arrange substitutes when you are not able to do your allocated time.

Date Nov	Colour	Preacher & Worship Leader	Musician	Bible Reader	Welcomers	Projector	Open close + Communion	Morning tea	God's Gang
01 All Saints		Bruce Wyndham	Alison & Marques	Carolyn	Charles/ Harry/Dennis	Ese	Dennis & Enari Family	Pam & Charles	Shirley & Terangi
08		Bruce Hanna	Alison & Arinona	Arinona		Gordon		Alison & Stephen	Children in church
15		John Pritchard	Alison & Komiti	Pam		Komiti		Terangi & Carolyn	Shirley & helper
22		HC Rev Dr Hawea Jackson	Alison & Arinona	Alison		Stephen & Dennis		Shirley & Talafo	Charles & Pam
29		Alan Harper	Alison & Marques	Mere		Shirley		Esi & Komiti	Shirley & helper