
Nau mai Haere mai
Welcome to Worship



I WILL BUILD MY
CHURCH
MATT 16:18

Pentecost 13

St Andrews Union Church

including
St Francis Lutheran Church Mauriceville West

27 August 2023

A service for the formal closure of St Francis

Nau mai haere mai

Today we acknowledge that God has blessed many ministries in and through St Francis Lutheran Church, Mauriceville. As generations have prayed their prayers and sung the Lord's praise, the Spirit has blessed countless worshippers. Within this congregation, we have celebrated the Lord's Supper and been nurtured in our journey in faith. We have rejoiced here and confessed our faith. We have baptised our children and grandchildren. We have celebrated the lives of those who have gone on before us. We have witnessed vows to love, honour, and cherish one another always. From within this community of faith, many have gone out to serve God in the wider Church and in the world.

The time has come for St Francis to close, and for us to journey in faith in new and unfamiliar ways. We do so with a degree of sadness but also in hope. We do what so many faithful people have done before: we walk with trust and confidence in the Lord of the Church, knowing that God does not abandon us, but leads us always with the Light of his Son, Jesus Christ.

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven

Ecclesiastes 3:1

Words of Welcome

Bruce Farley
Secretary / Treasurer of St Francis

Mark Whitfield
Bishop Emeritus of the Lutheran Church of New Zealand

Remembrance of Baptism

Ki te ingoa o te Matua o te Tamaiti o te Wairua Tapu.
In the Name of the + Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

For everything there is a season, and in every season.

Let us pray. God of love and goodness, your steadfast love sustains us.
You have brought us here, gathered us as a community of faith, and called us to remember that we live and breathe only by the power of your grace in our lives.

Our hearts are full of gratitude for what your heart of love has so generously provided us.

**On this day we look to the future with hope,
opening ourselves to your Spirit at work in our lives.
Be present with us this day, in this time of worship, and always, we pray. Amen.**

A Gathering Song

**What a friend we have in Jesus,
All our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry
Everything to God in prayer!
O what peace we often forfeit,
O what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer.**

Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged;
Take it to the Lord in prayer.
Can we find a friend so faithful
Who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness;
Take it to the Lord in prayer.

Are we weak and heavy laden,
Cumbered with a load of care?
Precious Saviour, still our refuge;
Take it to the Lord in prayer.
Do thy friends despise, forsake thee?
Take it to the Lord in prayer!
In his arms he'll take and shield thee;
Thou wilt find a solace there.

FRIEND
C.C. Converse 1832-1918

Joseph Scriven 1820-1886
LHS-426

The Word of God

Isaiah 43

A reading from Isaiah ...

¹ But now thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob,
he who formed you, O Israel: do not fear, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by name, you are mine.

³ For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour.

⁴ Because you are precious in my sight, and honoured, and I love you

⁵ Do not fear, for I am with you

This is the Word of the Lord:
Thanks be to God.

Speak O Lord

Speak, O Lord, as we come to you to receive the food of your holy Word. Take your truth, plant it deep in us; shape and fashion us in your likeness, that the light of Christ might be seen today in our acts of love and our deeds of faith. Speak, O Lord, and fulfill in us all your purposes, for your glory.

The image shows a musical score for the hymn 'Speak O Lord'. It consists of seven staves of music in a single system, all written on a treble clef with a common time signature (C). The lyrics are printed below the notes. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with some phrases like 'to you' and 'to receive' having a slight melisma. The piece ends with a double bar line.

Speak, O Lord, as we come to You
To receive the food of your holy Word.
Take Your truth, plant it deep in us;
Shape and fashion us in Your likeness,
That the light of Christ might be seen today
In our acts of love and our deeds of faith.
Speak, O Lord, and fulfil in us
All Your purposes, for Your glory.

Matthew 16:13-20

A reading from St Matthew ...

¹³Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” ¹⁴And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” ¹⁵He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” ¹⁶Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” ¹⁷And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. ¹⁸And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. ¹⁹I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” ²⁰Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

This is the Gospel of the Lord:
Praise be to you O Christ.

A Brief Reflection / Meditation

Jesus will build His Church

- ... who do you say that I am?
- ... you are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God
- ... I will build my Church ...



Matthew 16

The Apostle's Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead, and buried.
He descended into hell.

The third day he rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven,
and sits at the right hand of God, the Father almighty,
from thence he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church, the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

Song of the Day

The church's one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord;
She is his new creation by water and the word;
From heaven he came and sought her to be his holy bride;
With his own blood he bought her, and for her life he died.

Elect from every nation yet one o'er all the earth,
Her charter of salvation, one Lord, one faith, one birth;
One holy name she blesses, partakes one holy food,
And to one hope she presses with every grace endued.

Though with a scornful wonder the world sees her oppressed,
By schisms rent asunder, by heresies distressed,
Yet saints their watch are keeping, their cry goes up, 'How long?'
And soon the night of weeping shall be the morn of song.

Through toil and tribulation and tumult of her war
She waits the consummation of peace for evermore,

**Till with the vision glorious her longing eyes are blessed,
And the great church victorious shall be the church at rest.**

**Yet she on earth has union with God the Three in One,
And mystic sweet communion with those whose rest is won.
O happy ones and holy! Lord, give to us the grace
Like them, the meek and lowly, in heaven to seek your face.**

AURELIA
S.S. Wesley 1810-1876

Samuel John Stone 1839-1900
LHS-191

Prayer



Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus and for all
people according to their needs.

Prayer Response

Let us call out to the Lord:
Lord, have mercy on us.

Concluding Prayer Petition

All these things and whatever else we need on the journey to our
heavenly home,
Grant us, Father, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Rite of Closure

Mark shares the peace

Kia tau tonu te rangimārie o te Ariki ki a koutou.

The peace of Christ be always with you.

And also with you.

Bruce Farley reads the resolution to close St Francis and then says

On behalf of our congregation, I ask you, Bishop Mark, to close St Francis Lutheran Church, Mauriceville West.

Prayer

Father in heaven, we thank you that your word has been proclaimed and your holy sacraments have been administered in St Francis for the past 161 years. Although we now experience sorrow over the closing of our congregation, we pray that you will turn our sorrow into joy. Continue to provide us with your word and sacraments.

Thank you for giving us new opportunities to serve you and to fellowship with others in the life of your Church here at St Andrews. In your mercy, strengthen us and your church everywhere in faith and love, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Bruce hands Mark a selection of congregational documents and says

Receive and preserve these records in which the activities of this congregation are recorded, so that they may serve to keep alive the memory of this congregation and the work of God done in and through it.

Mark closes the congregation

With thanks to God for the work accomplished here, I declare St Francis Lutheran Church closed, in the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit. May the worship and work of its people continue undiminished, empowered by Jesus Christ, the Lord of the church.

Amen.

A time for silence and reflection

Now Thank We All our God

Now thank we all our God
With hearts and hands and voices,
Who wondrous things has done,
In whom the world rejoices;
Who from our mothers' arms
As blest us on our way
With countless gifts of love,
And still is ours today.

O may this bounteous God
Through all our life be near us,
With ever joyful hearts
And blessed peace to cheer us.
Lord, keep us in your grace,
And guide us when perplexed,
And free us from all harm
In this world and the next.

All praise and thanks to God
Who reigns in highest heaven,
To Father and to Son
And Spirit now be given:
The one eternal God,
Whom heaven and earth adore,
Who ever was, is now,
And shall be evermore.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen.

Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look on you with kindness and give you peace.
Amen.

As we step from the edge of morning

As we step from the edge of morning,
Feet can't tell where to take us.
Here's a light that will shine forever,
Here's the light that will guide us.

Jesus, please watch over us;
Jesus, please take care of us.

Trouble comes and we search for safety,
We forget that you hold us.
Fill our minds so that we remember,
Say once more that you love us.

Danger meets us at every moment,
Death is never in hiding.
You are stronger than any danger,
You are stronger than dying.

In your life is the Father's welcome,
In your death there is freedom.
Be our life and our death forever,
Be our new resurrection.

A HISTORY
of the
MAURICEVILLE WEST LUTHERAN CHURCH
prepared by
JOSEPHINE and BRUCE FARLEY

In the 1860's the New Zealand Government under Sir Julius Vogel, introduced an immigration policy to develop the forty-mile bush section of the Wairarapa extending from Kopuaranga to Woodville where the scheme would meet the 70-mile Bush to Napier. It was originally intended that Canadians would undertake this development but when the Canadians abandoned this project Vogel was faced with securing an alternative supply of suitable immigrants to undertake the difficult task of settlement and so it was decided to obtain settlers from Scandinavia.

The first Scandinavian immigrants to the Wairarapa arrived in 1872. These consisted of 8 Norwegian, 7 Danish and 3 Norwegian Swedish families. Later in August the same year 10 Danish families and a number of young men arrived in Wellington after a long tedious journey by sailing ship. A temporary camp was established at Kopuaranga, north of Masterton, for these families to live in.

By agreement an area of 4000 acres was purchased for the settlement of the Scandinavians in the Mauriceville District, and this area was cut into 40-acre sections for which the settlers had to pay one pound per acre. Naturally the new settlers expected the area to be cleared and housed so it was a great shock to find they had to clear their own bush covered land and build their slab huts to live in.

When the Scandinavian Camp at Kopuaranga was vacated in 1873-1874 the immigrants moved out on foot to these sections of land in the bush which had been allocated to them. Roads had been surveyed but were as yet still unformed or cleared of bush. One of these roads leading from the main Masterton-Eketahuna road line led up the valley of the Mangapakihi Stream, the valley in which the Lutheran Church was to stand.

At the head of the valley this road divided into two branches, the right-hand branch climbing over the hills to the north, now known as the North Hill, led to the sections reserved for the Norwegian immigrants. While the left-hand branch, now known as the West Road, gave access to the remainder of the settlement and was settled by a predominantly Danish population.

This road junction became a convenient spot to establish the nucleus of the settlement. As years passed a school, general store, blacksmith shop, dairy factory and church were established and became known as Mauriceville West.

In 1878, five years later, the settlement was electrified by the unexpected news “a Danish Minister has arrived.” From up and down the valley men, women and children thronged to meet him. The newcomer was Pastor George Sass, a Lutheran Minister who had been in charge of a Scandinavian congregation in Queensland and left there to seek out and minister to his countrymen in New Zealand.

The starting point for Sass’s ministry to the 7000 Lutherans dispersed over the great area between New Plymouth, Napier and Wellington had been Norsewood. From here he had travelled on foot and horseback southward through the great forest of the 70-mile bush, struggling through swollen streams and over muddy tracks, visiting and ministering in lonely camps and villages until at last he reached Mauriceville West.

Here in this tall black robed Pastor the people felt that a part of old Denmark had come to them, handsome and robust, young Sass fitted in well into a background of the rugged bush settlements. He brought with him the religious comfort of the old church and restored spiritual devotion of the people.

Sass later recorded: “the rumours of my arrival went from one settlement to the next and regardless of what day in the week it happened to be when I arrived at a place, the settlers crowded to the meeting in numbers defying the capacity of any private home. It was a strange sight toward evening to see men and women turning up, each armed with a candle in a broken bottle, so that after the service they might find their way back over the muddy track.”

The first visits of Pastor Sass so stimulated the Mauriceville West folk that their immediate thought was for a church of their own. Such was their poverty however that it was 1882 before their desires began to take form.

A meeting was then called, and sufficient money gathered from their scanty resources to justify the commencement of the building. The site was donated by Lars Neilson on rising ground opposite the school and here the church was built. Logs were donated, a waterwheel set up to drive the small sawmill, and voluntary labour did the rest. The church with a seating capacity of 150 was dedicated by Pastor Sass on the 24 August 1884.

The interior was severely plain. There was a row of long wooden pews on either side of the aisle, the men sitting on one side, the women and children on the other. Above the altar was a framed print of the painting by Danish artist Carl Heinrich Bloch, depicting Christ standing with his hand on the head of a child – a very Nordic child with blue eyes and yellow hair. It includes an inscription in Danish, “whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it” (Mark 10:15 and Luke 18:17).

This was presented by Niels Nielsen and the original can be seen today in the Frederiksborg Castle in Denmark.

The church became the social centre of the community, hosting the festivals such as Christmas and the Christmas tree prize giving and the great annual Lutheran celebration of Confirmation day. Pastor Sass served the Mauriceville West congregation until he was called to serve the Palmerston North settlers in 1886.

The cemetery was dedicated on the 27 November 1887, this was donated by Hedvig Christensen.

The first burial was on the 18 April 1888. There is a recording of one man who committed suicide, so he was buried after sunset and was brought over the back fence.

The Lutherans of Mauriceville West were not to be blessed with pastoral care by resident Pastors, principally being served from various parishes of the Manawatu and Wellington Districts to this day.

There were two exceptions. In 1911 Pastor D.G.M Bach was called from the United States to serve the congregation. He remained until 1916, when he departed to the mission fields of Japan, this being the end of regular weekly services at Mauriceville West.

Then in 1990 Pastor Robert Paterson, a Specific Ministry Pastor, and his wife Eunice were called from Adelaide, Australia and lived at Mauriceville West. He was a retired school principal supported by LCNZ in ministry to the area. Unfortunately, in 1992 it was deemed unsustainable in such an isolated rural location and the mission was concluded.

A 1936 meeting of the Mauriceville West Lutheran Church Committee and Congregation elected to amalgamate the Church and Cemetery under one Board of Trustees to be named the Mauriceville Lutheran Church and Burial Ground Trust Board.

This Trust Board remained the guardian of the church and burial ground until recently. It is worth noting here that this trust body remained separate from the Wairarapa Lutheran congregation, though it has mostly always comprised of members of the congregation.

The original church was a stately building with a steeple. However, no renovation work was done on it for years and eventually for safety reasons the bell was removed from the steeple. In many sections the timber had rotted, and the building was very draughty. In the winter of 1955 services were being held in the homes of members.

This led to discussion on whether something should be done about the church. The building was in too bad a state for repair. They decided to build a new one on the 17 February 1957. Most of the material was donated by Harold Mortensen and the work of demolition and the rebuilding was largely done on a voluntary basis. The cost of the building was fully subscribed by the opening date and the new church was dedicated on the 22 December 1957.

To maintain the link with the first church, the altar, the picture of Christ and the little child, the altar rails, organ, old sacred vessels and bell were incorporated in the new structure. The whole project was financed by the local members only 17 souls. Plaques of recognition were placed on some of the pews by descendants of pioneer families.

The Lutheran congregational members of Mauriceville West appear to have been known simply as the Lutherans of Wairarapa. In 1978 they adopted a new Congregational Constitution and named their group the “Nicholai Grundtvig Lutheran Church.” Nicholai Grundtvig (1783-1872) had been a Danish pastor, author, poet, philosopher, historian, teacher and politician and his name was selected because of the link this displayed to their rich Danish heritage.

However, at the Annual General Meeting in 1980, and following advice from Lutheran Church of New Zealand, the name was changed to ‘St Francis Lutheran Church’, being seen as more readily identifiable with an English-speaking community.

With the passage of years, the population of Mauriceville West dwindled until hardly any of the original families remained.

By 1984, 100 years following the building of the first church, services were being conducted twice per month, with attendance maintained at an average of 16 members. A Women’s Fellowship Group was still very active, and Sunday school was part of the service. Members were also engaged in the ‘Religion in Schools’ programme at the Mauriceville School.

By the start of 21st century, there were no Lutherans resident at Mauriceville West, and though service attendance was still in the mid-teens, members were travelling out to the church for a single Pastor led monthly service, supplemented by a second Lay led service.

Today the congregation consists of just 6 members. A worshipping fellowship has been established with the St Andrews Union Church in Greytown.

The Lutheran cemetery site at Mauriceville West was transferred into the ownership of the Masterton District Council in May 2023 to ensure ongoing guardianship of this important part of Scandinavian history in New Zealand. It will remain open to the public for future burials. As part of this process the 1957 built Church building had previously been deconsecrated in 2019 and removed. Wairarapa Lutherans will partner with Friends of Mauriceville Inc and the Masterton District Council to further develop the cemetery site with a suitable monument to make information and history available to visitors.

Acknowledgements:

Forest Homes by G. C. Petersen
Souvenir Programme from Scandinavian Settlers Memorial Unveiling 1974
Mauriceville West Lutheran Church 1884-1984 Centennial Souvenir Booklet
(Editor Stuart Clausen)

PASTORS WHO SERVED MAURICEVILLE WEST LUTHERAN CHURCH

1878-1886	Pastor George Sass
1887-1897	Pastor Mads Christensen
1911-1916	Pastor Bach. Periodic visits were made by Pastor Mads Christensen
1928-1950	Pastor Ansgar Christensen took over from his father and served from his Palmerston North parish
1933-1934	Pastor Lohe, a young minister from Australia, served the area from his base in Dannevirke
1950-1959	Pastor Eric Blaess
1959-1962	Pastor R. Schmaal visited from his Halcombe Parish
1962-1966	Pastor Maurice R.R. Heidrich, stationed at Dannevirke, served the Hawkes Bay – Wairarapa Parish
1967	Pastor Don W. Heyne served the district from Wellington
1968-1973	Pastor Robert Strelan, stationed at Marton
1974-1978	Pastor Byron G. Klein, also working from Marton
1978-1980	Pastor Robert Wiebusch, working from Wellington
1979-1983	Pastor Ken Jaworski, stationed at Lower Hutt
1980	Pastor Wiebusch and Ross Janetzki Associate Pastor, Wellington parish
1984-1989	Pastor Lionel R. Rohrlach, stationed at Lower Hutt
1989-1990	Pastor Rodney Beh, Palmerston North Parish, assisted by lay readers
1990-1992	Pastor Robert Paterson, a Specific Ministry Pastor based at Mauriceville West. He and his wife Eunice appear to be the only Pastor ever to reside at Mauriceville West.
1992-1996	Pastor Rodney Beh, Palmerston North Parish
1992-2000	Pastor Mark Lieschke, Palmerston North Parish
1996-2004	Pastor Steen Olsen, Palmerston North Parish Also supported by Pastor David Lipsys, Palmerston North Parish
2004-2014	Pastor Mark Whitfield, Wellington Parish
2014-2022	Pastor Jim Pietsch, Wellington Parish



**LUTHERAN
CHURCH**

OF NEW ZEALAND
Te Hahi Rātana o Aotearoa

where love comes to life