

This is God's church and the work we do in it is done in loving response to Him. Only God knows the true story of the work in this corner of His vineyard and its true value. He knows what happened in those unrecorded years; He knows all His children, and what ultimately matters is that their names are recorded in His Book of Life.

( 'Introduction' by Patsy Martin, in *Knox Alive, A celebration of 150 years of the Presbyterian Church in the Hutt Valley*. 2002, Knox-St.Columba Presbyterian Church, Lower Hutt.)

## PLANNING YOUR CELEBRATIONS

### 'BUILDING FOR TOMORROW ON YESTERDAY'S HERITAGE'

*The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein. His work is honourable and glorious; and his righteousness endureth forever. He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered...* Psalm 111:2-4

#### FIRST STEPS:

You've decided that the forth-coming anniversary of the parish is worth putting some effort into.

- Allow time for planning. A well-planned celebration may require 12 to 18 months. If a history is to be written allow two years.
- Decide how you will celebrate your upcoming anniversary. This will depend on the congregation's priorities, available funds, a willing team and above all the support of everyone.

#### SPREAD YOUR ENTHUSIASM

- Speak to congregational members you think may be interested
- Prepare a broad outline of ideas and present it to Session or the Parish Council.
- Once approved, Session/Parish Council should suggest any broad limits that are to be placed on the celebrations to enable the planning group undertake their task with as little as tension as possible.
- Appoint a small planning group to develop exactly what the Session/Parish Council want to accomplish. As the planning proceeds it will be important to spread the net broadly across the congregational groups to capture people 's ideas, enthusiasm and support.
- The planning group to report regularly to Session/Parish Council on progress and seek approval for any significant aspect prior to any formalising of planning.

#### SELECTING A PLANNING GROUP:

- Include people on the planning group who have particular strengths that can be used organizing such an event. People who have skills in art and drama or in planning and organizing social events; those who are skilled in catering and planning food; creative people for displays and decorating; the parish archivist or historian; a good motivator and who has a passion for the project.
- It will be important that those on the Committee should be representative of the members of the congregation.
- It is probably wise not to have a large committee, small groups can always be called on to complete a special task.

## PLANNING GROUPS RESPONSIBILITIES

### SCOPE

#### *Dates:*

- Set dates ensuring that they do not clash with significant events such as a large sporting fixtures, school and community programmes or national Church dates such as General Assembly.

#### *Level of celebration:*

- Identify the levels of celebration you would like to undertake. These could range from a worship service to a weekend's activities, to a dinner only, and in some cases over several months. Ensure the level of celebrating will be realistic and the momentum of support will be present throughout the celebrations.
- Consider all members of you congregation in your planning. Children to senior members, men and women, and what about your local parish outreach groups, such as 'Making Music' or 'Indoor Bowls' is their a place for them?

#### *Tip:*

- *Don't plan a big celebration if resources are short. A small event can be just as exciting and memorable as a larger and longer one.*

#### *Define and develop the Theme of your celebration*

- Celebrations should have a purpose. Maintain a balance of emphasis on remembering the past, reflecting on the present and planning the future.
  - Will there be a theme? A successful celebration can tie in with the mission of the parish or future plans.
  - What does the congregation hope to accomplish through the celebration?
  - Choose a slogan or a motto. This captures the congregations imagination

#### *Budget:*

- Important! Set a budget. The one aspect that can dampen a congregation's enthusiasm is discovering that their celebrations are demanding extra from their pockets. Costs may also rise over a couple of years so make allowances.
  - Explore the possibility of raising funds through various Trusts in your district, especially if the writing and publishing of a history is involved.
  - What costs can be recovered through your activities?
  - Is fund raising in order?
  - Look into selling memorabilia.
  - Make use of members talents and skills
- Items you might consider in your budget:
  - facility and equipment rental; decorations (flowers, candles, balloons); lightening, entertainment; administration costs – photocopying, postage; publicity; other expenses including car rental, accommodation for guests, airfares for speakers.

#### *Tip:*

- *Any agreements or contracts with outside organisations such as locations for a dinner, lecture and confirmations of speakers' are formalised in writing.*
- *Once the scoping arrangements for the celebrations are made see them as set in concrete. Changes will add to confusion and jeopardize success.*

#### *Operational Schedules*

- Prepare an overall schedule of tasks to be completed with completion dates. As the celebration draws near have a detailed day-to-day plan for each person involved. It is important that each person involved in the planning can be relied

upon and this can only happen when they are aware of the total task to be undertaken.

- A detailed schedule for the actual day of event with times allocated for each task and the name of the person who it is delegated to.
- Plan for progress reports to all sections of your congregation throughout your planning.

*Tip:*

- *Begin promoting your celebration to your congregation long before the events take place so they can organize their calendars to keep the dates free.*

*Tip:* from Anderson's Bay 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee

Registrations - The circulation and collation of the registrations was a significant part of the total organisation and I wish to especially thank Dave and Margaret Corson for all their hard work. Initially 1000 pink registration forms were circulated from November '87 onwards. These forms sought an initial registration and copies were placed in our local 'Beacon' along with a covering article. By the end of March 214 families had registered. Advertisements were placed in Crosslink and the O.D.T.

A second registration form (buff coloured) was circulated at the end of April asking people to indicate which functions they would be attending as well as taking orders for the Church History and inviting contributions towards the Jubilee Fund - 189 families returned their forms. A further notice outlining the programme in more detail was distributed just prior to the Jubilee. Name tags were printed and Daphne Clark and Beth Harris kindly offered to help in the preparation of these.

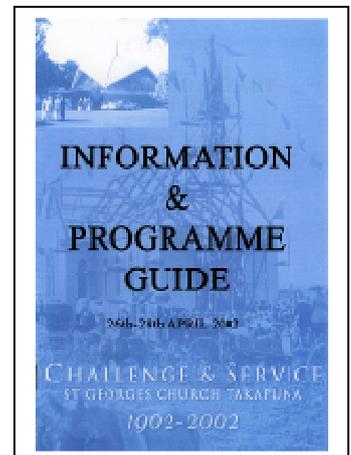
As members will appreciate it was no small task organising all the registrations, advertising the event, co-ordinating and collating forms, money, name tags as well as distributing books, 1st day covers etc. etc.

*Tip:*

- *Put together a Registration Pack that could include:*
  - *A Programme Guide*
  - *A Name Badge*
  - *A souvenir pen and note pad*
  - *A 'parking ticket' if this is required*
  - *A list of people participating*
  - *A map if required*

*Tip:*

- *Use the Name Badge with coloured dots or letters to cover entry to various paid activities.*



#### COLLECTING RECORDS, PHOTOGRAPHS AND EPHEMERA

- A Congregation anniversary is an opportunity to gather in all the parish records and archives. Records that have been lying around the church buildings, or sitting in an obscure corner in a private home or even in the garage can be brought together. Have a 'scavenger hunt'.
  - Places to look – basements, filing cabinets, in suitcases, in the ceiling or attic, locked cupboards, under the stage, even under the church; watch out for the silverfish and mouse droppings!
  - Contact previous chairpersons and secretaries, inactive members may have the very thing you are looking for.
  - Share the treasures that are located with the congregation each Sunday, this creates considerable awareness and interest.

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- Has the Parish a set of newsletters and Annual Reports? It will amaze you how many copies members hold onto if any are missing. These newsletters can give insight into changing patterns of worship and the types of music used at different periods
- Call in old photographs that tell of the life of the congregation – picnics, camps, galas or fairs, youth activities, worship, floral work, women’s activities, Sunday School and Bible Class photos, social gatherings, past celebrations to just mention a few possibilities. Wedding pictures often show changes in the interior and exterior of the church building. *Don’t forget to find out as many names as possible, the date and the event!*
- Ephemera such as baptism, cradle roll, Sunday School attendance, church worship certificates, Temperance Membership cards are interesting to place on display. Programmes, tickets, memorabilia, badges and cups, Sunday School and Busy Bee Missionary projects are some other examples.
- If you are receiving loans for displaying it will be important to retain a detailed list of the material you have received, with name, address, item/s and description, and also note any damage. Date when the item is returned to the owner.
- If there is not a parish Archivist this may be the time to appoint one and a team of helpers. The Archives can provide guidelines to assist you in organizing your material initially.

First Church, Dunedin Bazaar, February 1889



“Remember that your spiritual ancestors were once your age. Your descendants will want to know everything about how you lived and how God answered your prayers. If you leave them a good record of your life as a servant of God they will not need to do as much digging as you have had to do. However, they will write your history in their own way. Every generation re-writes history according to their own ideas. You can never discover the absolute truth about your ancestors. You can only interpret their life using the tools you have.