

The History of the Church



Fundraising began for the present church in 1972/73, various event were organised including a music hall evening along with wine and cheese, which proved to be a very social event bringing parish, family and friends together.

In April 1975 the original church hall was moved to the rear of the property, during this process the hall became stuck in the mud over the winter/spring period. During this time the hall could not be used. St. Philip's Anglican Church kindly allowed us the use of their church. To mark the opening of the new church St. Philip's Church presented St. Francis Xavier with a ciborium, this was presented to Father McHale by Reverend Ray Ladd in November 1975, and is still used with pride and thanks today.

The final touches to the church were made or donated by many parishioners this included all the nationalities to reflect the mix of cultures who had settled in the valley over the years. Father Jim Davis carved a portrait of St. Francis Xavier out of Totara along with the Stations of the Cross, a Maori motif was painted by Sharon Kelly, a Celtic design was sent by Deidre O'Donell from Ireland to Jan Gilbert for the church. The tabernacle was designed as a Pataka this was a Dutch/Swiss construction, the pearl inlay was by Peato Perez a Tokelaun, Paua and Greenstone ornamentation was supplied by the Tokelaun parishioners, Father Davis carved Maori panels and made a Celtic cross from Connemara marble, the woven veil made for the outside was made by the Maori community, these and many more works were completed for the parish by the able assistance of many parishioners.

Archbishop Delargey, Bishop of Wellington dedicated and blesses the new church on the 30th November 1975. Some of the Parish priests include Father McHale whose Silver Jubilee was celebrated with Mass in the community hall followed by a function at the Stokes Valley Motor Lodge in 1974. Father Owen Dolan was Parish priest from 1978 to 1980 after arriving back in New Zealand after serving five years as a missionary in Arequipa, Peru. Father Ray Stachurski had been a chaplain in Malaysia and Vietnam during the war. Father Joe Keegan fondly known as the "Harley Davidson" riding priest, had a serious motor bike accident while serving as our Parish Priest he believed that the prayers and support of the parish helped him pull through.

The History of the Carvings and Statues

ST FRANCIS XAVIER



The wood for this was donated and prepared for use by Bill Hiscock. Carl McCann did the initial research and due to his diligence the present carving is based on a portrait by a Japanese artist, which hangs in the museum in Japan. Patricia Bourke did the actual drawing on wood before the carving commenced. Deirdre O'Donnell forwarded the Celtic design transfers from Dublin. Janet Gilbert applied these to the wood before carving commenced on them. Denis Kane was of great assistance in sanding the completed work before varnishing. Gary Simpson donated the paua shell squares. Sharon Kelly designed and executed the Kowhaiwhai pattern. Fr Jim Davis did the actual carving, executed the celtic design, carved the Maori surface decoration and applied the finishing touches. This project took about six months to complete.

ALTAR



The main altar was designed by Fr. H. McHale P. P.

It was built and denoted by Bill Hiscock.

It was used for the first time at Fr. McHales' Silver Jubilee Mass in the Community Centre, Stokes Valley on the 19th June 1974, having just been completed the day before.

It was then stored in the old church hall and not used again until the 22nd November 1975 when it was reassembled and used for the open-air televised Mass at the Lower Hutt Recreation grounds on the 23 November 1975.

It was then installed in the new Church ready for the official opening on the 30th November 1975.

THE TABERNACLE



Looking around at New Zealand Churches, most of them, with the exception of those around Taupo and Rotorua, could be anywhere in the world. To make our Church in Stokes Valley more distinctive and “New Zealand” in style, it was decided to investigate the possibility of building a special tabernacle. Parishioners of various nationalities and cultures were approached and asked their advice and assistance.

As a result the finished article has the following story attached to it:

Commencing at the foot of the tabernacle, the base was made and donated by a Swiss member of our “family” John Scherrer.

The wood for the solid post and the rest of the tabernacle was donated by a Dutch member of the community Henry Hendriks.

The post was inlaid in Tiwha “Father of Pearl” by Peato Perez who is from Tokelau.

The Paua was donated by Garry Simpson, a New Zealander who also had the greenstone cut to the correct shape for the tabernacle base. He also donated the greenstone key. Akenehe Niko and Melehete Tuilava who are Tokelauns did the weaving for the inside of the tabernacle.

Jan Gilbert who is English made and donated the inside floor covering and inside curtains. The tabernacle itself was cut, assembled and varnished by Bill Gilbert who is also English.

THE ORGAN

The organ was bought on the 23 December 1973. This was a gift from a couple within the Parish who wish to remain anonymous.

THE PRIE-DIEUS

The wood for three of these was donated by John Scherrer. This was cut, shaped and assembled by Joe Lannigan, then all were then upholstered by Jack Burt (Sr). The materials for the upholstery work were donated by John Burns – a local upholsterer.

THE SOUND SYSTEM

The Youth Forum organised a mini gala. The proceeds from this were used to buy the sound system in early 1974. It was installed in the new Church by Denis Kane the week prior to the opening 30 November 1975.

SIDE ALTAR

The side altar was made and donated by Bill Hiscock as a token of thanksgiving when his daughter entered the order.

With the advent of the Vatican Council and Liturgical Reform the altar was redesigned and converted for “Mass facing the people” by Peter Zwart.

A couple of weeks prior to the opening of the new Church it was redesigned to accommodate a crib and also change back to its original form to act as “Altar of Repose”. This work was done by Bill Hiscock and Fr. Jim Davis. It was then given a ‘face-lift’, sanded down and re-varnished by Peter Van Schaik, Gary Simpson, Mark Falleni and Pat Brosnan. The Tabernacle and side shelves were screwed back into position by John Burt and John Scherrer.

The side altar was converted into a semi-permanent crib by Bill Hiscock and Father Jim Davis. The wood for the inside lining was donated by Bill Hiscock and draw-knifed by Father Jim Davis. The wood for the outside frame was left overs from the beams and sarking of the new church and adzed by Fr Jim Davis. The paua shell set in resin was donated by Gary Simpson. The letters were designed by Jeanette Russell and cut out by Mark Falleni and also set into the wood. The wood was sanded down by the following members of the youth forum.

T. Burt, C. Candy, R. Marwick, J. Mooney, V. Adamson, E. Adamson, F. Knight, M. Knight, M. McCann, M. Jackson, B. McCann, P. Wood, C. Alford, M. Van Schaik, G. Hoffman, L. Marino, J. MacNeil, P. MacNeil, S. Manville, T. Scherrer, P. Kelley, R. Metson and M. Wogan.

The stain for the wood was donated by Peter Van Schaik. It was given it’s final coat of stain by Peter Van Schaik and Fr Jim Davis. The lighting was installed by Denis Kane.

The figures for the crib were made and assembled by Leigh Penman. The wood for these was donated by Bill Hiscock, Leigh Penman and Father Jim Davis. The crooks for the shepherds and the halo for the child Jesus were donated by G. Heberley. Initial research for the shape of the figures was done by Sr Margaret, Presentation Sisters, Taita. The final coats of varnish were applied by Father Jim Davis.

SANTURY LAMP STAND & PASCAL CANDLE STAND



These were made from “Kanava” (*Kanava wood (Cordia subcordata) is almost always used for canoe building*) wood specially imported from Tokelau by Joe Perez. The wood was cut and assembled by Bill Hiscock and he also donated the wood for the base of each. Bill became seriously ill at this stage of the work and so the base for each was assembled by John Scherrer. Pat Brosnan put the two pieces together and varnished them. Denis Kane did the electrical wiring for the Sanctuary lamp. Peato Perez inlaid the work with Tiwha (*Decorate carving with paua shell*) shell. The design on the Sanctuary lamp stand represents the ten commandments with the Trinity represented by the cross and two small pieces of Tiwha shell.

The shelves for the flowers on either side of the tabernacle were donated and installed by John Scherrer. The vases for these were picked and donated by his wife Theresa Scherrer.

CARVINGS



The carvings in oak of the Sacred Heart and Madonna and Child were done by A. Schroeder.

These were donated to the Parish by the Heythuysen family, the Martens family and Matthew Martens. They were brought to New Zealand by the Ramakers family.

THE LECTURNS



The three small lecterns were made and donated by Bill Hiscock.

The two large lecturns; the wood for these was donated by the Knox and Creighton families. The first one was made by Brent Rea to a detailed design drawn by Bill Gilbert. It was varnished by Ray Falleni. The Maori woven panel on the front was drawn by Roland Anderson. It was woven by Daphne Pewhairangi and her two daughters Kathleen Anderson and Ramona Pewhairangi who also donated the materials.

As the scriptures will be read from this lectern, the dove on the Maori panel shows that they are the inspired word of God. At the bottom left hand corner there is the traditional “Poutama”, which is the stairways to heaven – the three steps represent the three wise men, the twelve steps represent the twelve apostles, the fourteen steps represent the fourteen stations of the cross. This “Poutama” is like a quick rule of thumb which we glean from the scriptures, or like a mini Bible in signs.

This lectern was first used at the Community Centre 19 June 1974 on the occasion of Father H. McHale’s Silver Jubilee Mass.

The second lectern was also made by Brent Rea. Both of these lecterns were slightly altered on the front by John Scherrer so that the Maori woven panels could be properly attached. They were given final coats of varnish by Pat Brosnan and Peter Van Schaik. Christian art has for centuries seen the four winged creatures of Ezechial’s vision (Ezech 1 v.10) as symbols of the four evangelists. The man is Mathew whose Gospel opens with the human genealogy of Christ. The lion is Mark whose opening verses speak of the Baptist as the “voice of me crying in the desert; the ox is Luke who begins his Gospel with an account of Lachariah’s sacrifice in the temple; the eagle is John whose whole Gospel soars to heavenly heights in speaking of the divinity of Christ.

The two-edged sword down the centre of this panel refers to the passage in Hebrews 4 V.12, “The word of God is living and effective and sharper than any two-edged sword. It penetrates to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow and discerns the thoughts and intentions of the heart”.

CRUCIFIX



When the Dominican Sisters closed their Priory in Dunedin they donated our Parish Church their crucifix which had been carved in wood in Oberammergau.

As it was one of the Sisters treasures they asked that the crucifix be placed in the Church only.

The crucifix was in need of restoration and this was done by Sister Mary of the Little Company of Mary.

STATUE OF OUR LADY OF FATIMA & ST. JOSEPH



The Dominican Sisters of Dunedin gave our Parish Church their statue of Our Lady of Fatima which had been carved in wood by Guilherme F. Thedim, of Matosinhos, Portugal in 1930.

The statue was in need of repair and repainting and this was done by Sister Mary of the Little Company of March.

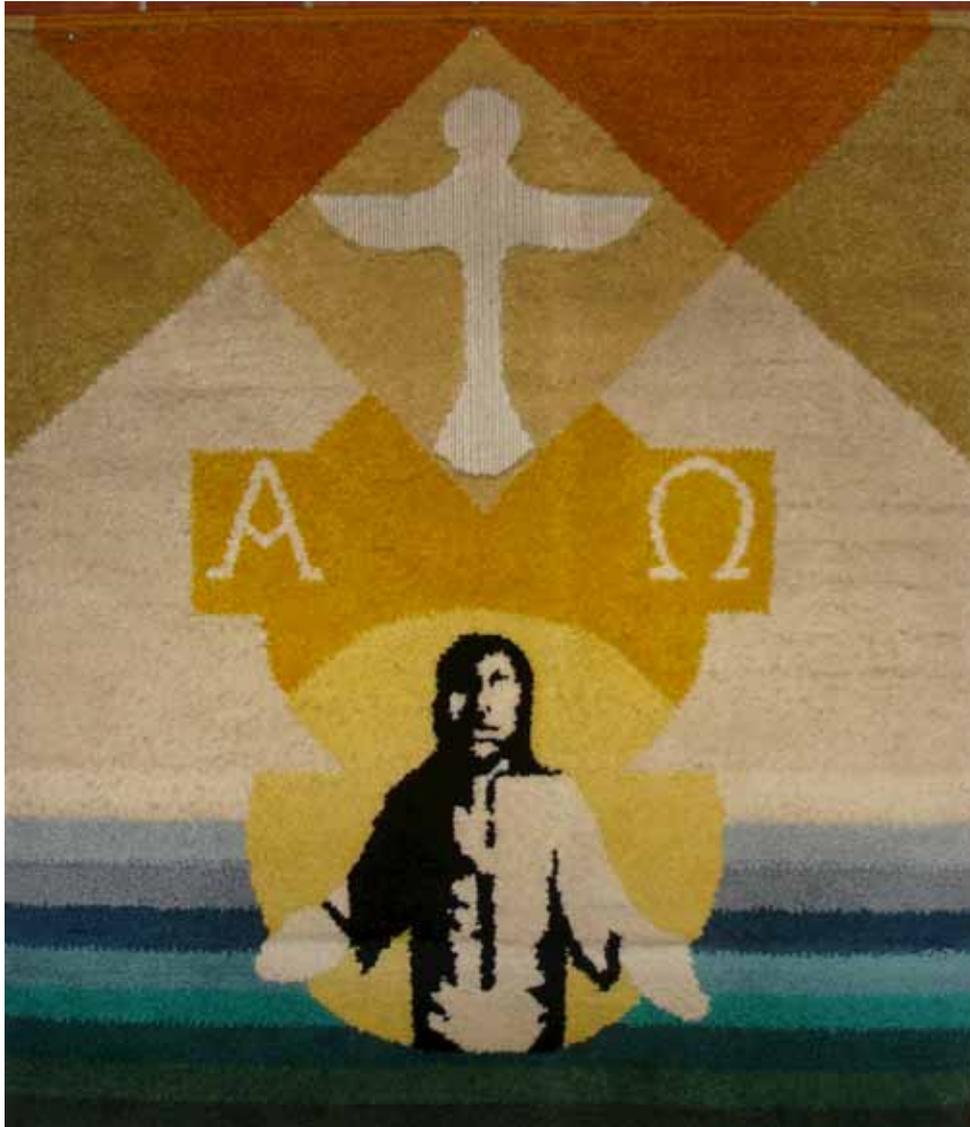
As the statue had been treasured by the Sisters, they asked that it be placed in the Church only.

BAPTISMAL FONT



This was made and donated by John Scherrer. The bowl in the font itself was designed, potted and donated by Ivan Gannaway.

THE WALL HANGING OF THE 'BAPTISM OF CHRIST IN THE JORDAN'



The design for this wall hanging was done by Nicholas Bengree under the direction of Fr Jim Davis. After the initial sketch and drawing had been completed Nicholas Bengree then 'blew up' the design to the required size and drew it on the canvas.

The canvas itself was donated and sewn together by Githa Falleni.

Evelyn Boyle provided a donation from which the carpet hooks and needles were bought. Linda and Gordon Holmes provided all the wool required to complete the entire project. Mark Falleni made temporary 'holding frame' while the Holy Spirit was being sewn into place. This particular feature was done entirely by Githa Falleni.

The design itself represents the scriptural passage from Mark 1 vv9-11 – the Baptism of Christ in the Jordan, where the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove, descended on him and the voice from the Father (represented by the Alpha and Omega) saying:

“This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.”

Linda Holmes helped choose the final colours. Peg Scullian taught the technique of rug making.

The entire project from the time the first stitch was put in took approximately six weeks.

The following people worked on the project:

Nicholas Bengree, Fr Jim Davis Linda Holmes, Peg Scullion, Marie Knox, Kath Bengree, Cynthia Simpson, Thereas Scherrer, Maria Knight, Cath Grant, Trish Coupe, Margaret Bentley, Angela Capes, Adrienne Zuppicich, Celine Ryan, Louise Ryan, Tom Ryan, Ann Heythusen, Moira & Maureen Mee, Monica McCann, Jeanette Russell, Mark & Githa Falleni, Nicola & Jan Gilbert, Claude Berecz, Maureen Wagg, Kathleen & Joyce Rose, Pat O’Grady, Christine & Shona McGirr, Colleen & Lynda Coleman, Nan O’Neil, Rikki, Anton, Paul, Judy Van Dorrestein, Rangi McAlister, Maureen Wharton, Lois Wogan, Pat Alford, Lorraine Staples, Norma Harris, Pauline Fowler & Anita McLaughlan.

THE PRESIDENTIAL CHAIR



This chair and four smaller ones to match were made and donated by Kerry Burt. The padding and upholstery of the presidential chair was done by Jack Burt (Sr.) The carving on the presidential chair was done by Fr Jim Davis. All were sanded and varnished by Peter Van Schaik, Pat Brosnan and Gary Simpson.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS





Mai Doherty donated the Celtic Cross, she lives in Londonderry, Northern Ireland.

Fr Davis donated the greenstone, carved the decorative Maori panels on the front of the tabernacle, cut and inlaid the paua and also inlaid the greenstone and celtic cross in marble.

Daphne Pewhairangi and her daughter Kathleen Anderson wove the tabernacle veil for the outside, representing the Maori Community.

The whole concept of this tabernacle is based on the pataka of Maori culture. The pataka is the Maori food store. Here we use it as a tabernacle to house Christ who is the food of our souls.

The twelve inlaid pieces of Tiwaha (which is a shell used in Tokelau on very special occasions) six on each side of the post, represent the twelve Apostles. The three centre “stars” of Tiwaha represent the three atoll islands known as the Tokelaus:- Nukunonu, Fakaofu and Atafu, showing how the Tokelau people came to New Zealand to find a new way of life; this they did through Christ and the Apostles, Christ being represented by the host and chalice inlaid in Tiwaha.

Moving to the top of the tabernacle we see twelve holes – six on each side. These again represent the twelve Apostles. The diamond notch carving represents all the people who were brought into the Church through the Apostles and Passion and Death of Christ on the Cross, represented by the Celtic Cross in marble at the apex.

The uprights or “Amo” of any Maori meeting house always told the ancestry of the person to whom the place belonged. Seeing as Christ will live in the tabernacle, his ancestry is the Alpha and the Omega —the beginning and the end, inlaid in the amo in paua shell. Also as Christ lives in the tabernacle the Trinity must also be present and is represented by the traditional idea of three equal circles, here done in the greenstone – to represent the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Inside there are five crosses incorporated into the Tokelau weaving – each cross standing for a letter of the word ALOHA which means love and God is love.

The black edging along both sides of the tabernacle veil represent sin in the world. The green cross is the traditional colour of mourning. The red background shows how Christ shed his blood for the redemption of the world and the two white Kotuku feathers symbolise the peace that Christ’s redemption brings to the world.

PRESENTATION

The tabernacle was presented to Father H. McHale on the Wednesday before Easter Sunday 1973 to be used in the new Church in Stokes Valley. The tabernacle was used for the first time on Holy Thursday as the Tabernacle of Repose 1973. It was used again for the same purpose in 1974. It was taken to the Community Centre on 19 June 1974 for Father McHale’s Jubilee Mass. From then it was used in the oratory in the back room of the Presbytery while the new Church was being built.

It took almost two and a half years to complete the tabernacle.