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# Leaders Like Lydia

The gathering of women leaders at our recent three tikanga women's retreat at Vaughan Park was full of creativity, prayer, conversations, laughter and inspirational sharing with one another.

Lydia was our inspiration. Our Bible Study on the first evening based on Acts 16: 11-15, led by The Reverend Erice Fairbrother, offered an exegetical approach to understanding Lydia as a leader in her context. She was a business woman, who specialised in selling purple cloth. She was educated, skilled and was well respected in her occupation. She was also a woman of prayer, and one of her main ministries was offering hospitality. She hosted Paul and his team

when they were in the city of Thyatira, Lydia's home town. Lydia was a woman of influence, and showed traits of strength and determination as a leader. She was creative and imaginative.

As with Lydia, we too are called to use our creativity and our gifts in our ministries. As educated and skilled women we too have opportunities in our lives and in our church to influence positively and offer generous hospitality. As we gathered, as three tikanga, I was very conscious of our collective wisdom, prayerful presence and huge leadership capacity. Like Lydia we need to continue to encourage others in their faith, and always be looking for new opportunities to offer hospitality and to welcome and embrace new ideas. It requires strength, determination and imagination as we journey in ministry together.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to our recent hui; a place of retreat, reflection, creativity, and conversation. I am so grateful and in awe of all women, like Lydia, who give so much to church, whanau and community. Kia ora.

*Carole Hughes  
Convenor, Women Studies Council*



**Leaders Like Lydia** was a three day residential hui in the form of an artistic theological retreat—integrating art practice and theology. It was an ideal opportunity for Anglican women to give theological expression and explore understandings of God in ministry through the arts. The hui integrated bible studies, nga Raranga (flax weaving), siapo (fabric printmaking) and word weaving and participants took part in their nominated art practice which were offered in a one day workshop before their experiences were then shared with the larger group.

*"Creativity is about thinking in your head and taking this out of your head and putting it into your hands, so we can put it into the hands of others"*

*Revd Mere Wallace*

### Revd Eleanor Lane, Tikanga Pakeha, Auckland

The email came. I had been advised that I was definitely accepted for the *Leaders Like Lydia Hui*. Yahoo Jubilation!

Arriving in sunshine, it was so beautiful at Vaughan Park with the sea and lush green of the hillsides around (fast disappearing with 2000 houses in a new development). My husband retreated in the car and I was left feeling a little bereft. Then the Fijian ladies arrived and we all met them. I found they were in Carmichael House with me. Wandered around and discovered where things were. Saw a few people I knew and things started looking up. We had one of those 'getting to know you' and mixing up sessions. Everyone was wearing something purple as requested and I marvelled at the novel ways this was achieved....purple eye shadow, purple finger nails, purple jandals, purple feathers, a hat, scarf or two. (I was feeling smug. I had a purple nightie but not too many saw that one.) We had been given a talk about mugs and how different they were. We were asked to choose one (in our heads) and to contemplate why that mug/cup was our choice. We had some time for contemplation in the afternoon and I thought a walk on the beach would be good and some of the Fijian women thought so too. All ready to go and I mentioned raincoats. What...No raincoats or umbrellas! We looked out to see RAIN pelting down where before there had been sunshine. In fact we had a vivid thunderstorm. So... Carmichael residents got together and made a hot

drink and sat in our cosy common-room and talked over which of the mugs we had liked and why. By the time all six or so of us had had a turn; we set out to get to know each other a bit more, as women do.



Top: Eleanor Lane proudly showing off her anchor.



Left: Joan Fanshawe, Sharon Marr & Lyndsey Ison.

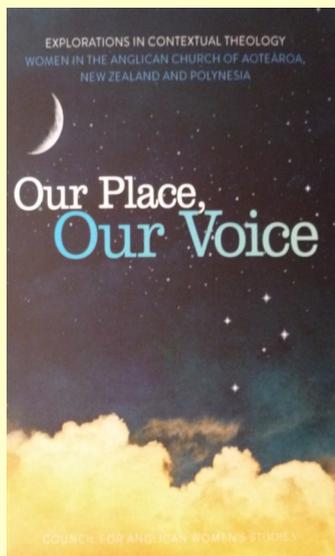
Below: Jacynthia Murphy, Marie Collin, Liz Greville & Eleanor Lane



Meals were simply delicious and plentiful. It must have been the sea air and all the talk but we got quite hungry. Sitting at the round tables with an extra chair or two, it was great to be part of such a big gang and the buzz at meal times showed that we didn't need any more introductions.

We had devotions each day. I marvelled at the way the guitar was passed around and the tikanga Maori women played. I think it was Jacynthia who played before one of the Eucharist services in the chapel. She sang and played very quietly. It was so beautiful. I didn't know whether it was better to sing too or just listen. I shall treasure that memory of her quiet singing. In the evenings we had a sing-along and it didn't matter if you didn't know the words from the Maori Hymnbook. It was so good just to be part of it and try to join in. Music was very much a part of each day. So often we would be doing something and someone would suddenly sing and we'd all join in and laugh and joke. How wonderful life was! On our last day we had a group photo and someone started singing. It was one of my favourite hymns because you can change the words easily... (We are Marching). We are Purple in the sight of God,...and other similar verses, accompanied by clapping and yahoing.

I was in the Raranga class (flax weaving,) with Mere Wallace and others. The room we were in overlooked the hillside and beach. We saw those who took their dogs or themselves for walks on the beach and when the heavy rain squalls came they scuttled like ants, for shelter. Mere suggested we put our bibles away and looked at the scenery and see God there. She suggested



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# "THE ROGUE..."

The instructions from the Kaiako were quite clear,  
"remove this piece, fold this way, and weave through here"  
However as much as I tried and tried,  
"It's just was not working out right," I cried  
With love and patience, she showed me again  
And a brand new friend, said for her it was the same  
So together we persevered and with such delight,  
We managed between us to actually get it right.  
Just when we thought that we had it all sorted  
Along came our rogue piece, and the horror reported  
Alas, says our kaiako, don't be dismayed  
Even God's "best laid plans" can go astray!  
Let our rogue piece reminds us of what was to be perfection,  
But somehow moved in its own way,  
and with little detection  
The Holy Spirit will do the same  
And moves us in many directions  
Our Gracious God accepts a change  
And our Lord Jesus Christ died for all our imperfections.

Revd Marie Collin, Tikanga Maori, Wairarapa

# Just 11 Wooden Pieces...

Just 11 wooden pieces

Lying against each other

Words of pain and grief

Etched on one.

Just 11 wooden pieces

Lying against each other.

Sharp definitions, rough ends.

She picks up two,

places them down ..... and builds

two by two

four by four

six by six.

Just 11 wooden pieces

Reconstructed, recreated.

Top of the pile lies

Words of pain and grief

Supported by

**Just 5 wooden pillars**

Revd Jan Olsen, Tikanga Pakeha, Warkworth

Continued from Page 2

that we all spoke about what we could see and how we saw God outside. It was a different concept; I hadn't tried putting this into words although I have often thought quietly to myself about God in the world around me. Mere showed us what she wanted us to do and told us how to gather the harakeke leaves. In a fine spell we slipped outside and cut our flax leaves and brought our hoard inside. Vaughan Park was well endowed with a variety of harakeke. There were the Phormium tenax plants (good stiff ones for making anchors) across the road and the Phormium cookianum hybrids in the grounds. These last ones were pretty pinks, golds and greens, very

suitable for roses. First we all wove an 'anchor' and then I struggled to make the apparently simple little flowers that looked like roses. It was a case of try, try, and try again and the dumb stuff went haywire. Ema, Mere and others all helped and pointed out remedies. If it hadn't been for Marie having 'Rogue flax' I would have given up in despair. Mere insisted that nothing was wrong, it was just different. Hmmm! Well I did get a few presentable things that were almost a rose and it was great fun. The rose that looked



*Rika Werner during the Siapo workshop*

more like a chrysanthemum was too much! It definitely had a 'virus' and was discarded in the bin. However in the

evening we had to teach others who had been in other groups, how to weave the things we had made. That was funny too. At the very end of the evening we had a song to practice. I was so tired I really wanted to fall into bed but we practiced our

song. The Fijian ladies had made an English adaptation which fitted the tune of Isa Lei. This was sung on the last day, firstly in Fijian, very weird Fijian (in my case.) and then English, which made it overly long.



*The most vocal & fun group photo shop ever— Between the dancing & singing, young Elizabeth Barrie in the spirit of Lydia keeps everyone entertained!*

On our last day, all three classes came together where our work was duly admired and we all had a chance to hear and see what others had achieved. The Siapo class had made lovely printed cloth and the Word weavers showed their skill too. The Word Weavers later joined their work into our last Eucharist service for the Hui.

Lynne Frith was around from time to time....eavesdropping as she said and with a camera too. It was a case of

sometimes she was there and then you looked again and she was gone. I wasn't really aware of her so I hope I never said anything I would regret when struggling with that rogue flax!

All too soon, all our good friends were packed up and off to the Airport or wherever and the marvellous Hui was over. Avila kindly took me home instead of me having to catch the bus. Thank you to all those who worked so hard to make this a memorable time.

*Revd Rika Werner, Tikanga Pakeha, Auckland*

These three days gave me the inspiration to write this article. Writing is not my medium. I am a "chatterer". Arriving at this beautiful setting, sea in front of me and beautiful cliffs and trees on the right with the sun on my face just blow away reality. Then this nice voice, a women walking pass. "Welcome and there is reception". Arriving at reception, hearing the buzzing of women talking and catching up on everyone's news. I don't know anybody and carefully take a step into the lounge. Warmth and greetings engulf me. "I arrived". Three days of training, meditation, thinking and talking about God, what is happening in our lives and then the creative workshops that became an potpourri of feelings "ha" experiences and fun. Women are wonderful creatures; the world can't do without them. In three days they created a world of images. Is that an example of what Lydia and the women did next to the River? Blow my mind.

*Revd Hélène Young, Tikanga Pakeha, Waikato & Taranaki*

Many marvellous women wearing various hues of purple from

*Continued from Page 5*

clothing, to fascinators, to hair, meeting in the wonderful environs of Vaughan park. A warm welcome for all and an outline of the course plus a study on Lydia the seller of purple cloth. For me it was a relaxed few days with time to ponder and pray, time to create and clear the head, time to catch up and meet others. The coming together of the three tikanga made for a gentle, flowing mix with much song and praise and play. The separate activities of word weaving, flax weaving and siapo came together on the last day reflecting some deep moments of insight and fun moments. It was a mixture of freedom and focus, time with and without. The small chapel was full to overflowing for morning prayer, the final Eucharist was moving. Some left thinking of ways to improve, ways to move forward and with a sense of relaxation and ability to explore different mediums as an exercise of prayer, praise and productivity. I loved the 'best' cloth being the wipe rag in siapo, the anchor for the flowers in flax and the coffee as our new communion all linked by relationships, good food, coffee and wine! What more could we ask for!



*Hélène Young & Cecelia Rooderkerk hold up Clare Barrie's Siapo during the Plenary Session on our final morning while Annette Cater, Anna Lindsey, Brenda Sio & Catherine White look on.*



*Erice Fairbrother leads members of the Word Weaving workshop including Catherine White,*

## Musings on a Vaughan Park hedge during Pentecost 2013

Gentle breeze  
softly shifting the tips  
of the pale green fresh young leaves  
of the untrimmed hedge.  
Filtering down  
to the full dark green leaves of maturity,  
disturbed by the more vigorous movement  
of youth.  
Concerned to protect those tender, vulnerable shoots  
exposed to the potential storms of their lives,

by  
**Catharine White,**  
**Tikanga Pakeha,**  
**Waiapu**

shredding,  
bruising,  
minusing their futures.  
Gentle rain falling dampening our fires  
nurturing and growing the seeds  
cooling the air and refreshing, reviving.  
Praying for the blessing of a ray of sunshine  
to warm, relax, to stretch arms upwards,  
to grow, to expand, to dance, to weave, to mature,  
Concerned to protect the new, tender, vulnerable shoots.  
Pass through us  
gentle, tender, nurturing, pulsating, throbbing, troubling,  
disturbing, soothing, freshening, firing, enlightening, inspiring,  
encouraging, protecting, growing, changing, challenging  
Freeing us  
To weave and dance to your call  
With passion and excitement.

Wooden sticks  
 relatively uniform  
 lay tumbled  
 on a table.  
 Jutting at odd angles  
 roughly hewn  
 resting  
 on rolling silk cloth,  
 slightly precarious  
 messy,  
 unrestrained.

I saw delightful disorder  
 firewood perhaps?  
 And thought,  
 I'm ready, light me,  
 let me burn.

You saw chaos  
 disorder,  
 messiness.

Hands itched  
 to re-arrange,  
 re-order  
 re-create. laid out.  
 Carefully selected  
 were re-laid.  
 Something new emerged.  
 More structured,  
 secure.  
 An edifice,  
 carefully balanced,  
 more stable  
 definitely tidier.

I wondered,  
 do we seek to contain  
 confine  
 re-order  
 Spirit  
 as she moves  
 within,  
 around,  
 amongst us?  
 Try to make her fit  
 our human structures  
 need for order,  
 for tidiness?.

# Wooden Sticks

By Revd Gayanne Frater,  
 Tikanga Pakeha, Auckland



# Rain

By Leanne Edwards,  
Tikanga Polynesia, Fiji



*Leanne Edwards  
leading us in song  
with Elizabeth Barrie*

O' how your tears come down on me!  
Like rain from burdened clouds  
your tears come rolling down.  
You O' Lord created all things  
and it is no wonder you share the tears,  
tears of sorrow on us sinners.  
May the rain, your rain cleanse  
us and renew our lives to the glory of your  
name.

Rain on me O' Lord  
and let your love be poured into the ground.  
For when I walk upon your creation,  
I may feel your sorrow.  
For when I walk upon your creation,  
I may embrace your love.

Rain on me O' Lord  
and fill my cup with joy.  
For when I drink with you  
I may share your love with others.

For when I drink with you  
I know that you O' Lord  
Are the very reason I am alive today!!

Rain! Rain! Rain on me O' Lord!



## The Centre for Anglican Women's Studies

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The Centre for Anglican Women's Studies, commonly known as the **Women's Studies Centre** was set up to serve and to advance the interests and needs of the women of this Church particularly those undertaking Theological training.

The Link Representatives from each Diocese and Hui Amorangi have been chosen for their leadership ability to identify, gather, facilitate, resource and encourage women in their educational preparation for ministry whether lay or ordained. It is hoped that the Women's Studies Centre can continue to enjoy the support of each Diocese and Hui Amorangi in this endeavour.

The issue of increasing numbers of women in representative positions across the councils and committees of the Church is seen as a high priority and the practice of intentional mentoring by those already in national and international representative roles is seen as a good way to expose women of this church to fulfill their potential as leaders.

Ensuring that women's voices and stories are heard now and in the future is also one of our continued aims whether it be by traditional methods of publication or using more contemporary technologies like website publication. We remain optimistic that through continued support, the needs of women throughout this Province will be valued and recognized.



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- *No current appointment—Contact Mere Wallace (see above)*

**EDITORIAL DISCLAIMER:** *The Women's Studies Centre is committed to encouraging and enabling women's voices and perspectives from across the diversity of the Church to be shared more widely. We acknowledge that women's experiences of church differ considerably and that resultant theological perspectives also differ considerably. In general the WSC does not exercise editorial control, rather we welcome as many voices as are willing to contribute.*