

The old . . .



The original church, the main body of which still forms a part of the church.

Patea church celebrates centenary this weekend

More than 200 visitors are expected to attend the centenary celebrations of Knox Presbyterian Church in Patea, this coming weekend.

The programme for the celebration includes registrations on Saturday morning at the church, welcome and roll call at the church hall at 1 p.m. followed by photographs and afternoon tea, and a service for the unveiling of the centennial plaque at 3.30 p.m. This will be performed by the Very Rev W. B. Watt BA, who was Moderator of the General Assembly last year, and who originates from the Patea district at Kakarama.

On Saturday there is to be a centennial dinner at the Patea High School Hall, the cutting of the centennial cake, and time for socialising afterwards.

On Sunday morning at 11 a.m. a church service will be held at the school, followed by luncheon to conclude the celebrations.

Church union was first suggested in 1919, and a ballot produced 43 votes for, and four against. However, it was not until June, 1961, that a co-operating parish between Presbyterian and Methodist denominations was formed in Patea.

The Methodist part of the congregation celebrated its centenary in July, 1974.

Beginnings

Although a Wesleyan mission was established at Patea in 1842, continuing until 1853, various denomina-

tions had representatives passing through the South Taranaki area from the late 1830s. It was not until 1871 that Anglican and Roman Catholic parishes were set up at Patea.

Both Methodist and Presbyterian denominations were organised with resident ministers as Carlyle (Patea) early in 1874.

The Presbyterian minister was the Rev Neil McCallum, who had been invited to visit the district by the Rev John Elmslie, Wanganui, when they met at the General Assembly of the church in Auckland in 1873.

The Methodist church at Carlyle (now the Maori Methodist Centre) was built in 1875, and the Carlyle Presbyterian church was built in 1879. Before that, services had been held in the courthouse, the town hall, or even the Anglican church. His parish extended from Kai Iwi to Waipi north of Hawera, and he covered it all once a fortnight on horseback.

In 1874 all river ferries had been replaced by bridges and a regular coach service was running, but it would be another five years before the railway came.

There were six preaching stations in the parish. Maxwellton (Maxwell) Waitoa (Waverley), Carlyle (Patea), Kakarama, Manutahi and Hawera. Each had its own church committee and each contributed independently to the minister's stipend, about 200 pounds (\$400) a year.

A new manse had been built at Waverley and at the end of September 1875, Mr McCallum went there to live, working from Waverley until his resignation in early April 1876.

By October the Presbyterians of the district were making earnest efforts to obtain a resident Minister for that part of the district between and including Patea and Hawera. The district had been found too large, so it had been divided. Land for a church and manse was secured in Patea late in 1876.

After Mr McCallum's departure the vacancy was temporarily filled by the Rev Martin. In November 1877, the Rev James Torry who had arrived from Scotland that year, was called to the parish. However by that time had its Presbyterian church, built in 1877, and Mr Torry serviced Patea from Hawera.

A building fund for the Patea church was opened in November 1878, and by mid-1879, the church was under construction. It was opened on November 2, 1879, by the Rev James Treadwell, Wanganui. Built by contractor Mr D. M. Warren, it cost 430 pounds (\$860).

By action of the Presbytery, Patea was disassociated from Hawera in December 1881, and Maniaia added to Hawera. In the absence of supply for Patea however, Mr Torry continued his usual rounds for another nine months. In September 1882, the Rev Alexander Thompson arrived from Scotland and relieved Mr Torry of Patea.

His three year ministry was a popular one, but there was a long vacancy before he was replaced by the Rev Alex Thomson (same name, different spelling) in November 1887, who served the parish until May 1890.

A combined committee and congregational meeting at Kakarama in June discussed the matter of pay-

ing Mr Thomson, Mr Hopkirk for seven weeks of the pulpit, and the question of supply in the future.

It was agreed nothing could be done with regard to further payment to Mr Thomson, but it was decided to pay Mr Hopkirk 16 guineas (\$34.20). Patea paying half and Kakarama paying half.

A timely stimulus to church finance came with an offer from Mr Donald Coutts at the October 1890 special meeting of managers, to reduce the church debt by 50 pounds (\$100) if another 50 pounds were raised.

Canvass

A canvass of the district by the moderator, the Rev J. McDonald, Waverley, resulted in promises of 136 pounds.

There had been some discussion about making seats in the church free, but in June 1892 it was decided that prices should be as previously, ten shillings (\$1) per year for a single seat.

Mr Bates who had been supplying the pulpit at Patea went on his way, and the Rev A. M. Beattie MA took the parish in early 1893. He had been Moderator of the General Assembly in 1889.

It was during his five years in the town that organised women's involvement in the work of the Presbyterian church started in Patea, and the church debt was finally wiped off.

Minutes for the committee's annual meeting in 1899 were made up from rough notes left by the secretary, Mr G. K. Kells, before his departure to the South African war.

September 1904 saw the church again without a minister but later that month Mr Rule was appointed on the basis that the parish would pay one pound a month rent allowance until the manse was built.

From January 1906 Patea had its own session and in January 1907, the name "Knox Church" makes its first appearance in the records of the church. It was not until 1923 that the parish became a "sanctioned charge" with the Rev J. A. Brown as moderator.

"An excellent new hall" was reported at Knox by the Presbytery visitation in July 1936, but the session meeting of June, 1937, opposed a "smell" that women be admitted to eldership, except in the case of deaconesses working in Maori mission fields.

A fine new manse was dedicated in August 1958.

At the annual meeting of the session in 1968, three proposals for renewing the church was considered, shif-

ting it eight metres towards Egmont St and building a new porch, the same with the new vestry instead of a porch, and adding a new porch without moving the church. The first course was eventually followed, and the new porch was dedicated in December 1971.

More recently the sanctuary of the church has been updated, and a new pulpit, communion table and organ installed.

The present minister of the co-operating parish, the Rev M. A. Aitken who was inducted to the charge in August 1973, is shortly to leave Patea. He will be followed by Miss Moe Letson, a final year student at Knox Theological Hall, Dunedin, who will be student supply in the parish.

Appointed

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Knox Church, Patea, as

Americans urged to cast their votes

By NZPA staff correspondent
Max Lambert

Washington. "Be a believer. Get the fever. Get out and vote."

That's what signs on the backs of buses in the American capital urge. Similar messages have sprouted everywhere across the nation in a probably vain attempt to bolster the voter turnout in today's mid-term elections.

More than 155 million Americans are eligible to cast ballots but most predictions are that only a third of that number will bother to vote.

Some observers forecast that close to 40% will go to the polls, others believe the figure will be closer to 35%, even 33%.

In 1974, the last non-presidential election year, the turnout was 36%, the smallest since 1946 when

higher voter turnout and unstable government.

But there's an apparent "bo-hum" attitude on the part of large numbers of potential voters to many battles for national offices. Apathy, disillusionment or whatever will cause better than one in two Americans to stay home today.

Pollsters and political analysts suggest millions of

Americans think it doesn't matter any more who's elected. Vast numbers apparently believe neither party nor any politician can do anything about the problems in life.

And increasingly voters perceive little difference between Democrats and Republicans on their handling of major issues.

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