



*St John's Church Whangamomona  
1924—2004*

*80th Anniversary Celebration December 5th 2004  
service conducted by*

*Bishop Philip Richardson, Bishop in Taranaki*

**Worship in the Early Days** Visiting Anglican Mission priests and devoted lay readers led worship. Archdeacon Cole visited regularly from 1902 in the first place until the first Home Missioner the Rev'd H Reeve. He led the first officially recorded service on 18 Feb 1906, (attendance 25) and 27 May attendance 30. On 22 July 1906, Mission Priest, the Rev'd Harold Favell, later Vicar of Stratford led 18 in worship. The first baptism and Communion

Service recorded was on 15 Sep 1907. Services were frequently in the evening and in wet weather often no service was held. 17 May 1908- no service- because the notice of the service had gone astray! On 12 Feb 1911 the service was abandoned because of bushfires.

These priests were covering an area from Awakino to Toko, aided by dedicated lay readers who acted in their absence. Sometimes they rode three or four hours between services to find no congregation for either. The services were held in various buildings, private homes, halls, schools, or odd places like No 33 siding at Pohukura or Whanga Tunnel !

#### **The building of the Church**

St John the Evangelist Anglican Church was built in 1924 while it was still part of Taranaki East Parochial District and Auckland Diocese. Mr EB Robertson who farmed at Tahora instigated and donated money to building the church.

**Fund-raising and Building** On 11 January 1920. Mr Harry Bottcher, the Lay Reader officiated at worship when one pound 16 shillings and nine pence was given to the church building fund. Archdeacon Evans laid the foundation stone on 28 September 1924, and the Bishop of Auckland the Rt Rev'd A W Averill dedicated St John's and confirmed one male and 5 female candidates on 13 November 1924. The builders were Messrs Laurie Smith and Alf Dagg, with a youthful Lynn Carver as volunteer assistant. The whole project took under three months and cost 528 pounds, 8 shillings and nine pence

#### **St John the Evangelist Today**

Today St John's is still a regular centre for worship. The first Sunday of the month is Anglican Holy Communion, and the Vineyard Pastor leads worship on the third Sunday. The roof has recently been replaced and most of the exterior painted. Local supporters maintain the grounds. Travellers to Whangamomona are drawn to the church as the Visitors' Book attests. Like her sister church Sacred Heart around the corner, St John's stands as a living centre of worship and a reminder of the faith and hard work of our forbears. We look forward to celebrating the centennial in twenty years.

This account read during the service by Zoe Harris

#### **From the records**

**1950**

**June** Discussions began about joining with eastern Districts. At the October Synod the bill was deferred until the new Bishop was elected.

**1951**

**April 1st** Parish was not in financial position to continue. An annual grant of 150 pounds was to be paid, and an assistant priest to be paid 400 pounds a year plus travel expenses.

**June** Mr Tilley was empowered to make enquiries re the sale of Whangamomona Vicarage .

**July** Cost of removal of Vicarage to Juliet Street, 1200.00

**August** Tenders called for house sale . No offers

**September** Sale put in hands of agents.

**October** a Hawera woman was granted permission to lease at one pound 10 shillings a week but the offer was refused. The church needed painting. Funds of 40 pounds were held by the Ladies Guild. Spouting on house to be renewed.

**November** Insurance raised to 850 pounds for building and 60 for other items

**1952**

**February** Services to be once a month. Harvest Festival

**March** offertory annual income from Whangamomona was 37 pounds 2 shillings Donations & Subs 32 pounds 10 shillings Rent of Vicarage 21 pounds 5 shillings

**May** It was decided that St John's Parish magazines should be bound for the records

**July** Whangamomona house was sold to C W Perrett net 790 pounds Gross funds of sale 800 pounds put into savings to provide residence for assistant priest

#### **Acknowledgements**

Commemorative booklet researched and compiled by Rosemary Macpherson and Rev Pat Scaife, Vicar Holy Trinity, Stratford  
The line drawing of Whangamomona Church - Anna Peat.

## Timeline

### 1900s

Rev'd Cecil Watson Vicar of Holy Trinity Stratford April 1903—March 1908  
Cecil Watson was a young man and he brought with him a young wife and family etc.

### 1907

At about this time a Home Missioner Rev'd H Reeve was appointed by the Bishop of Auckland to serve the districts of East Taranaki

### The 1950's

Until 1950 the districts beyond Tokoi and Huinga were in the Parochial District of Taranaki East—Tahora, Tangarakau, Kohuratahi, Matau Whangamomona, Te Wera, Huiroa, Makahu, Purangi, Pohokura, Tututawa, and Douglas. Now these districts were transferred to the Stratford Parish. In 1951 the Parish Council comprised two representatives from each of the ten new districts, and the four old ones of Huinga, Toko, Midhurst and Cardiff. In June 1951 Mr Tilley empowered to make enquiries re the sale of Whangamomona Vicarage.

### 1960s

During the sixties services continued to be held throughout the far-flung parish, and up to 1968 -69 services were still being held at All Saints Midhurst, St James' Matau and St Peter's Purangi, St John's Whangamomona, Toko Church, Douglas Church, Huinga Village Hall, Tututawa Village Hall, and at Strathmore. However as attendances diminished services at most centres gradually reduced and ceased.

### 1970's

In Feb 1976 the Anglican-Presbyterian Co-operating Parish of Taranaki East was formed from the districts of Matau, Douglas, Purangi, Tututawa, Strathmore and Whangamomona. Toko and Huinga were also for the first time included in East Taranaki. Five Anglican members were appointed to the council of the new parish.

In November 1974 St John 's church Whangamomona celebrated its 50th Jubilee, the organizers of this event were Mrs L Hill and Mrs O Law.

### 1990

The Anglican/Presbyterian Co-operating Parishes agreement of 1976 was Dissolved. The districts of East Taranaki including St John's Whangamomona, St James Matau, and St Peter's Purangi reverted to the Holy Trinity Parish.