

HOUSE OF SARAH

“TRANSFORMING THE LIVES OF THOSE WHO COME SEEKING HELP”

In this issue we are bringing to you stories that show our church's commitment to eliminating violence in our homes and our church. The 2013 Diocesan Synod passed the resolution on zero tolerance of violence which is a very significant event for all of us because it means that we must all – clergy and laity – work together to create a safe church and a safer home.

2015 WOMEN IN MINISTRY PROVINCIAL MEETING VIOLENCE PREVENTION IS OUR CHURCH'S BUSINESS

MEETING STATEMENT

We, The Participants Of The Hui On 'Violence Prevention Is Our Church's Business' Organised By The Anglican Women's Studies Council Held At Vaughan Park Anglican Retreat Centre, Auckland From May 26th – May 28th 2015:

AFFIRM that in working towards transforming unjust structures, violence prevention is our church's business; therefore we recommend:

RECOMMENDATIONS

The implementation and compliance with Motion 19 of General Synod/Te Hinota Whanui 2014 Safe Church Charter and Policy Group at Hui Amorangi/Diocesan level.

1. We recognize that a key responsibility of the church is to the survivors of abuse as outlined in the Anglican Communion Safe Church Charter.
2. Title D Canon 1 – raising awareness of the Canon and in particular education around Title D Canon 1 and Canon 2 at all Church levels
3. Provision of adequate training for appropriate people, clergy and lay to

care, support and refer victims/survivors of violence. The church shall be a strong and consistent advocate for prevention of violence against all people particularly women and children as an Anglican Church initiative or in partnership with others.

4. Each Hui Amorangi/Diocese provides a mechanism to disseminate relevant information resourcing parishes and ministry units to address the issue of violence against all people particularly women and children e.g. Break the Silence, 16 Days of Activism, White Ribbon Campaign, Community Mobilisation.
 5. Each Hui Amorangi/Diocese provides a mechanism to disseminate relevant information resourcing parishes and ministry units to address the issue of violence against all people particularly women and children e.g. Break the Silence, 16 Days of Activism, White Ribbon Campaign, Community Mobilisation.
- The meeting was facilitated by the House of Sarah.





Women of Suva/Ovalau

On June 16 – 18, 2015, 20 Sera Carers from the Suva & Ovalau 14 parishes attended their first training. Sera Carers are the first points of contact in the parishes and have been chosen to offer referral assistance to those in need especially in domestic violence. Apart from learning about the work of the police, medical services, social welfare department they were also introduced to a new understanding of Biblical passages that affirm that women and men are created equal in the eyes of God. “I am so glad to know this as it gives me a new way of looking at things in the church and at home” said Vilisi Latianara. “Too often we have been given an interpretation of the scriptures that does not support the dignity and wholesomeness of God’s creation of women and men in His image.” Other topics covered include the Diocese’s commitment to a safe church following the passing of the resolution on zero tolerance of violence in our church, homes, schools and communities at the 2013 Diocesan Synod; Canon 1 Title D on Ministry Standards; human rights, gender equality and gender based violence.



Women of Viti Levu West

Between 7 – 8 July 2015 Nai Cokanasiga and Ema Asioli visited Nadralla in the Sigatoka valley and St Christopher’s in Nadi. The Sera Carers congregated at these locations for a follow-up to the workshop in March. “The purpose is to hear their experiences and especially whether any of the knowledge we passed on to them in March had been useful,” said Nai Cokanasiga. “Referral work is very important but if Sera Carers are to be useful, they must have the confidence of the women and the community. And so we have to build support in the parishes,” continued Nai. Ema Asioli conducted Bible study which was very helpful and empowering. Ema has a Certificate in Theology from the Pacific Theological College.



Mrs. Ema Asioli

VISITATION AND BUILDING CONFIDENCE

Regular visitation to parishes from the House of Sarah and executives of the AAW have begun. Explaining the purpose Tania Ah Kee said, “the common request from women in the parishes is for more visitations from HoS and updating them on the work and services provided. At the same time we also talk about challenges faced and affecting the Association of Anglican Women.” The first visit took place on Saturday 19 September at St Matthew’s Church in Nabua. The Suva - Ovalau AAW President, May Koi, Sr.

Doreen Anaiasi, Tupou Vere and Tania Ah Kee met with nineteen women. Information shared was on the status of violence against women in Fiji and the rest of Pacific; Sister Doreen talked about the Christian Care Centre, a refuge for women in Solomon Islands; services undertaken by the HoS. Similar visits were made to St Michael and All Angels, St John, Wailoku and St Bartholomew in Caubati, Sunday. Future visits are planned to take place at St Athanasius, Tamavua-i-wai and Church of the Holy Family, Waidradra.

FABRIC ART LESSON AT KORO GATHERING

During the September monthly koro/community gathering the House of Sarah invited the Diocesan community to practical lessons on fabric art and tie and dye. The facilitators were Ethel Suri (Coordinator for Women at the Pacific Conference of Churches) and Sister Doreen Anaiasi (Christian Care Centre, Solomon Islands). Ms. Suri encouraged participants to use natural resources and dyes as a practical way of using eco-friendly materials rather than depending on synthetic products. Synthetic dyeing procedures are costly especially in small Pacific island countries, hard to find and can produce pollutants". Sister Doreen who used to manage the

Christian Care Centre, a women's refuge in Guadalcanal Island, Solomon Islands shared that fabric art has proven to be popular amongst victims/survivors of violence against women and their children at CCC. Malinda Railala said, "The training made me think of ways to use natural imprints like leaves and consider natural dyes that can be used for tie and dye".



WELCOMING NEW STAFF

MILIANA FONG joined the House of Sarah in January 2015 as the liaison person and secretariat of the Christian Network – *Talanoa*. The Christian Network – *Talanoa* is an alliance of ecumenical partners and individuals who come together monthly to share information and take collaborative actions to address violence against women. Beginning in 2013 the network has been producing liturgical materials for Break the Silence Sunday, organised ecumenical interactive Bible studies and prayers for the 16 days of activism against gender based violence campaign from 25 November to 10 December. Miliana was a nursing sister for over 34 years; President of the Association of Anglican Women from 2010 to 2013. In 2014 she graduated with a Bachelor of Divinity degree from the Pacific Theological College.



TUPOU VERE joined in July 2015 as the Gender Specialist – Ending Violence Against Women (EVAW). Tupou comes with a wealth of experience in the area of gender equality and women's empowerment, human rights, trade justice, disarmament, decolonisation, environment sustainability having worked at the Young Women's Christian Association, World YWCA office in the Pacific, Fiji government Ministry for Women, Pacific Concerns Resource Centre and UN Women multi-country office based in Fiji. She graduated from the University of the South Pacific with a Bachelor Arts (Sociology and Administration). Tupou is a Sunday school teacher at the Wesley church at Butt Street, Suva.

SUVA CLERGY WORKSHOP

"SAFE CHURCH AND ZERO TOLERANCE ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN"

Twelve clergy from the Suva & Ovalau parishes gathered at St Matthew's Church, Suva from 21-23 July 2015. Topics covered included equal and respectful relationship, interface between the Bible and human rights, Biblical teachings on household codes, Safe Church and Canon 1 Title D on Maintenance of Standards. In her opening remarks, The Reverend Sereima Lomaloma reminded the participants of the commitment that the Diocese had made in eliminating violence against women and children in the church,

in our homes, schools and communities. “Your role as clergy is to preach against violence from the pulpit and include teachings of the dignity of all of God’s creation and equality of women and men in the eyes of God.” She added that pre-marital counselling must include lessons that domestic violence is not acceptable. The Reverend Dr. Cliff Bird clarified the connection between the Christian faith and human rights and responsibilities and the Bible. Particular areas discussed include: dispelling the myth of inequality between men and women, equal and respectful relationship and the Bible. Tupou Vere, spoke on human rights clarifying the 30 articles of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. Ms. Shamima Ali, Co-coordinator for the Fiji Women’s Crisis Centre spoke on Gender Based Violence and Mrs. Sera Bird who conducted a brief session on ‘doing Bible Studies’ contributed to the overall success of the workshop on gender based violence.

MRS MARGARET SENTAMU

On 7th August the House of Sarah hosted Margaret Sentamu to a lunch in Suva. She was accompanying the Archbishop of York, Most Reverend Dr. John Sentamu visiting the Diocese. In her remarks to the Management Committee, Mrs. Sentamu affirmed the importance of what the House of Sarah is doing within the wider Anglican community and especially its partnership with ecumenical groups. But she also stressed that the children and youths must not be forgotten. Primary prevention starts with children and youths. Mrs. Sentamu was later joined for lunch by Archbishop John Sentamu and Archbishop Winston Halapua.



AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT’S DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE (DFAT)

In July this year the House of Sarah (HoS) received \$F135, 000 from DFAT through its *Pacific Women* programme. The support is aimed at supporting the church’s work to end violence against women and children in Fiji. The Reverend Sereima Lomaloma, (a Trustee and Chairperson of the Management Committee) said. “DFAT’s grant is timely in light of our growing outreach work in the Anglican community and collaborative efforts with other ecumenical partners. This would contribute to institutional strengthening of the HoS and also ensure that our programmes are informed by the international discourse on human rights and gender equality principles.” The Most Reverend Dr. Winston Halapua, Head of the Anglican Diocese of Polynesia said, “The churches’ network and outreach is extensive and far-reaching on the lives, experiences, values, practices, language including behaviour of children, young people, women and men. Actions taken by churches such as those through the House of Sarah aimed at ending domestic violence, sexual offences, bullying, harassment, and any kind of violence and abuse faced by women and children in the country have been boosted through this generous grant from the Australian Government. These forms of violence are criminal acts against humanity and a violation of the human rights of women and children.” The Australian Government is pleased to provide this grant to House of Sarah through our *Pacific Women* program. The House of Sarah is a great example of the church showing leadership in addressing the issue of violence against women and girls in Fiji. We hope that this grant will help to further enhance the already good work they are doing,” said James O’Brien, acting Counsellor Fiji and Tuvalu, DFAT.