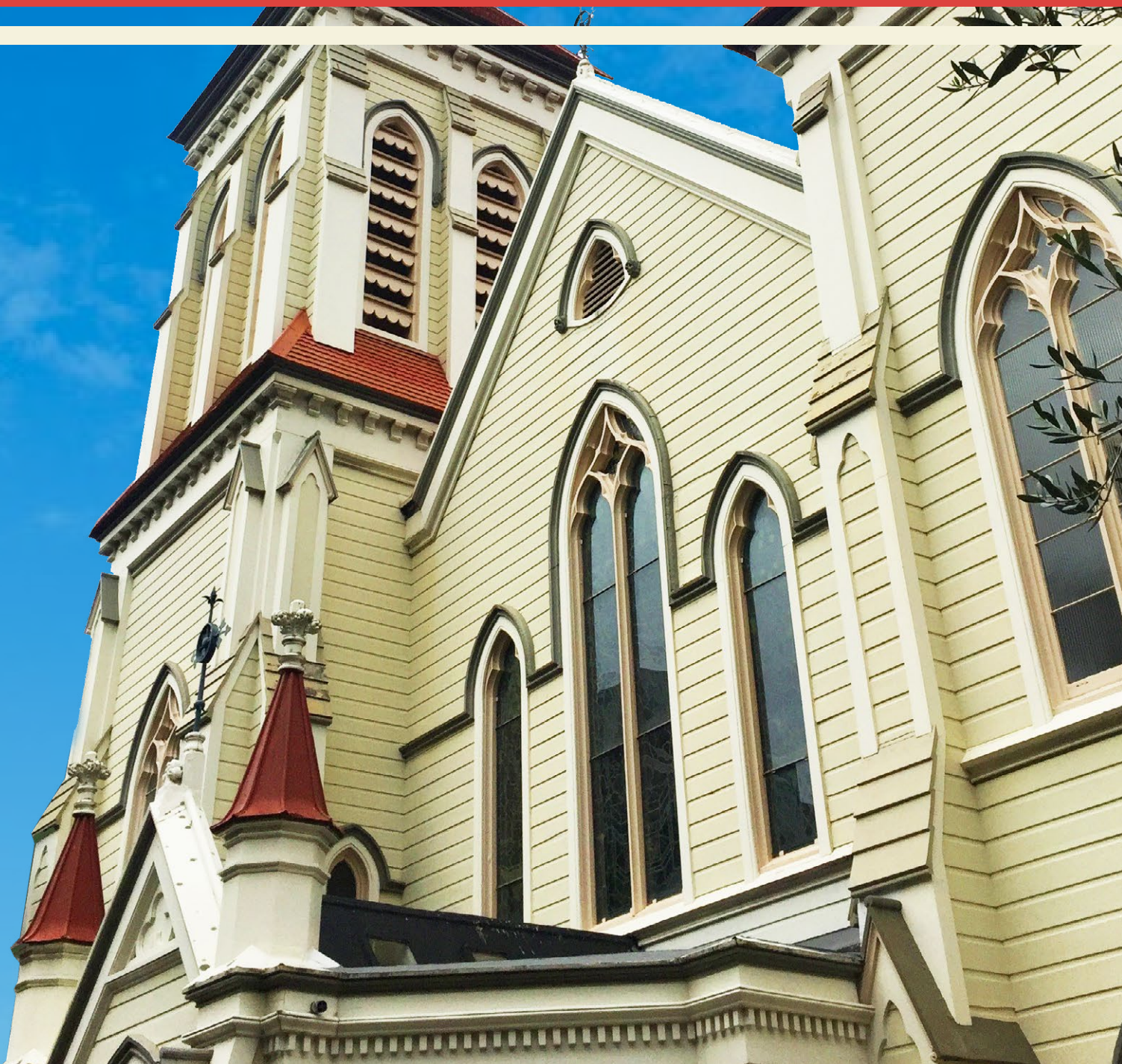


— ST JOHN'S —
IN THE CITY

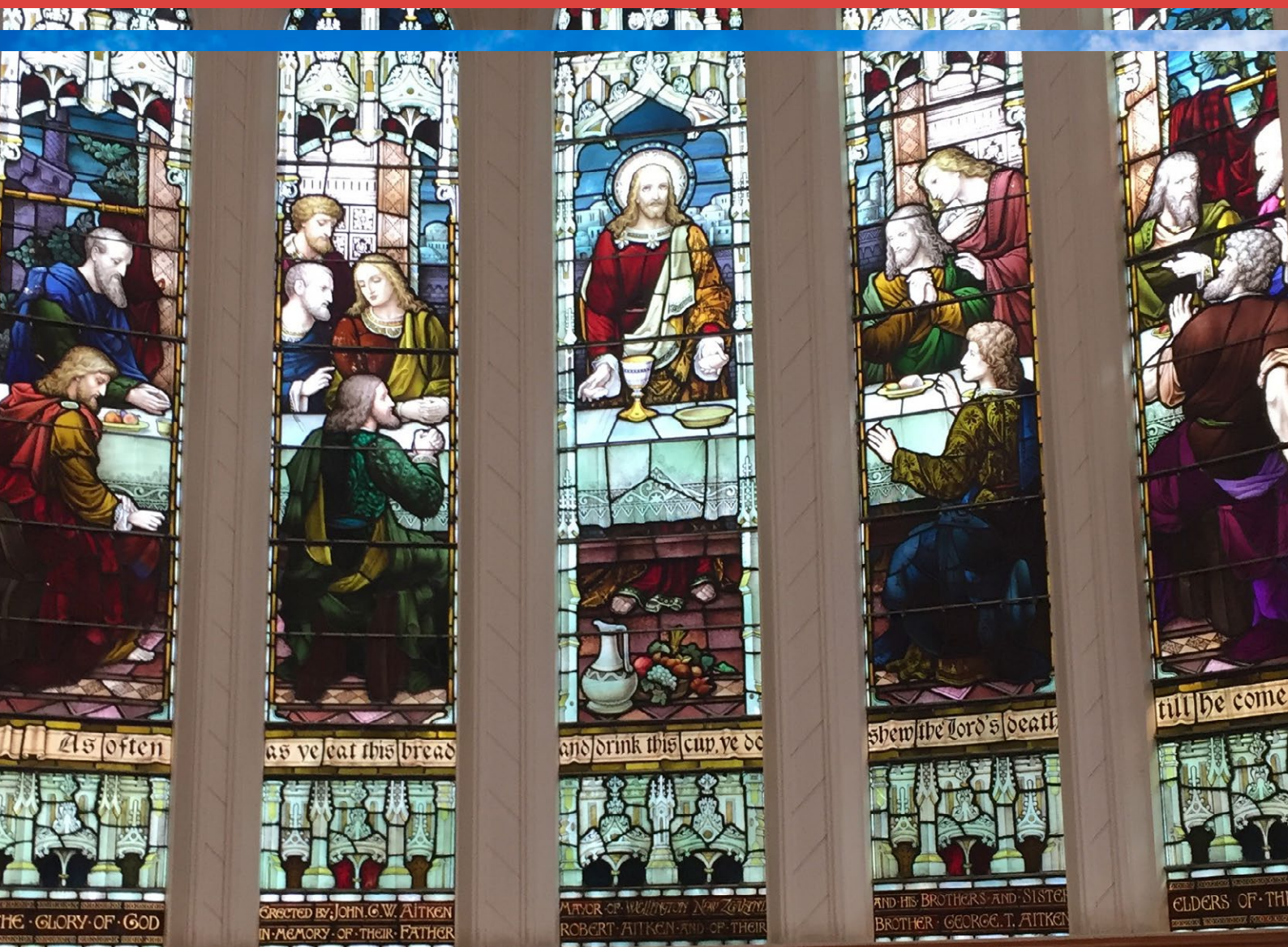
PART OF THE WELLINGTON CITY
COMMUNITY SINCE 1853



AN ICONIC LANDMARK

ST JOHN'S IN THE CITY

ST JOHN'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
170 WILLIS ST
TE ARO
WELLINGTON 6011
NEW ZEALAND



LET'S PRESERVE ST JOHN'S FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

——— WELCOME ———

St John's is part of Wellington City –
it has been for a long time, is now,
and can still be for a long time
to come.

St John's is not just a building –
it has always been a community
seeking to care for those in
its neighbourhood.



ST JOHN'S IN THE CITY

The Congregation has provided a faithful witness to God's grace and love in Wellington since 1853. The current St John's Church building dates from 1885 and is an important symbol in Wellington city of that grace and love – a reminder of the love which gave birth to the Bible Class youth movement, Wellington BGI youth programmes, Scots College and Queen Margaret College.

The Church meets in weekly worship as a multicultural Congregation with new forms of mission. We continue to support the BGI, the Downtown Community Ministry, outreach to children, families and youth, and the Café at Dixon St Flats. We provide a community conference centre, and host the Otago University Centre for Theology and Public Issues. We encourage our members to contribute wherever we are in our communities.

One of the reasons we can do this is the generosity of those who built the Church, planting a spiritual presence in the centre of this city and passing on to us an outstanding building, both as an inheritance and a city landmark. This building has a New Zealand Heritage Category 1 listing. Category 1 recognises historic places that

nationally have special or outstanding historical or cultural significance or value. This listing befits St John's importance as a large Church for national gatherings, the funerals of Prime Ministers Peter Fraser and Sir John Marshall and large concerts. Built from kauri and other native timbers, to a design by renowned architect Thomas Turnbull, it would be impossible to replicate today.

However, we know something those who built St John's did not know – the Church cannot withstand major earthquakes. It could move off its foundations, or the steeple could collapse in a large quake. The immediate risk to life is modest but we need to act now for the long term – to both protect human life and to preserve and enhance the building.

Due to the risk, only limited use is currently possible. If we don't act, we face the probability of closing the church building.

We are committed to strengthening the building, and invite you to join with us in this task. By caring for this important part of Wellington's heritage, we are investing in the future of our community, and keeping St John's both as a symbol of hope and a community asset.



A community always seeking to be a witness to grace and love.

ARCHITECTURAL BEAUTY

St John's in the City is an architectural gem in the middle of the city, standing out as one of the significant timber buildings in Wellington. The exterior is kauri and the interior is a mix of kauri, totara and rimu.

Built in 1885, the design was by architect Thomas Turnbull. Turnbull, originally from Glasgow, became a renowned architect in Wellington – the city he adopted and where he died in 1907. He was the first president of the Wellington Association of Architects and a member of the Wellington City Council. “His legacy of fine buildings in Wellington is unmatched by any other nineteenth century architect.” (*Te Ara – the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*.) Turnbull designed other recognisable buildings of significance in Wellington, including the General Assembly (Parliamentary) Library (1899) and the Old Bank Arcade (1889) at the other end of Willis Street.

St John's in the City is the jewel in that crown, celebrated nationally as an example of Gothic style in timber, and included on the *New Zealand Heritage List* as a Category 1 Historic Place.

It is perched on a rise above Willis Street and stands tall in the cityscape with a bell tower of some 45m in height. The interior is rich and warm with the glow of native kauri, providing delightfully mellow acoustics, described as like being inside an acoustic guitar. The natural light beams in through frosted glass, complemented by the stained glass representing biblical scenes, stories and characters.

The St John's in the City congregation bought the land in 1854 and has been planted here ever since. This is the third church building on the site and has been an enduring symbol of the witness of the faith, hope and love lived in the city.



OUR HISTORY

The Free Church Presbyterians first worshipped in Lambton Quay (there is a plaque recognising this in Plimmer Lane still today). When this small congregation called their very first Minister, the Reverend John Moir from the Free Church of Scotland, they made plans for the future. They made the move up Willis Street to a newly-purchased piece of land on the corner with Dixon Street in 1854.

A church building to accommodate two hundred was built in 1856. Although it was twice enlarged, it was recognised as too small to accommodate the growing congregation in the expanding city. In 1875 a larger church building was completed. This second church building was only nine years old when it was destroyed by fire in 1884, along with the adjoining Sunday-School room. A larger church and schoolroom were then planned, incorporating the section occupied by William Spinks, shopkeeper. The present St John's church building was designed by well-known architect Thomas Turnbull and was opened in 1885.

Spanning all these years there has been a faith community on this site in the city, standing as a tangible witness to the faith, hope and love shared with those around them as a positive influence in the community. This enduring presence in the city has been possible as the commitment has been passed on to the succeeding generations.

There have been celebrated leaders of St John's in the City, who have inspired the church and city alike.

Thomas McKenzie, an elder of St John's, local politician and servant of the common good in Wellington. McKenzie arrived in Wellington in February 1840, on the fourth settler ship *Adelaide*, aged 12, and his welcome to the new colony was a rude one. He was one of the first two Pakeha to sleep ashore at Pipitea, where the new city was to be moved from flood-prone Petone. Unwittingly bedding down in a *tapu* house, McKenzie was challenged by Maori chief Te Rira Porutu, wielding a mere. His life was saved only because Porutu's daughter-in-law, Ruhia, cast her cloak on him, rendering him *tapu*.

McKenzie went on to co-found the *Independent* newspaper, eventually taking over as sole owner. He served as a Wellington City Council member from 1881 to 1887, and it was for his community works that he was most celebrated.

In its obituary, *The Evening Post* called McKenzie "a tireless worker for the community".

"He truly earned his title of 'Father of Wellington', for he fathered many enterprises for the common good." When McKenzie died in 1911 the cloak of Ruhia was laid over his casket (see the picture below).



Original church building, 1856.



J G W Aitken, an elder at St John's and the first layman Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in New Zealand. He was mayor of Wellington City. The three stained-glass windows at the northern end of the building, depicting the parable of the Good Samaritan, are a memorial to Aitken, who died in 1921.

Sir George Troup, an elder at St John's, a pioneer of youth ministry, and founder of the Bible class movement. He was also mayor of Wellington City. He designed significant public buildings, including the Dunedin Railway Station. He epitomised the sense of duty to God and community that has been expressed by St John's for generations.

Sir John Marshall, is best known as a long-serving Cabinet Minister for 20 of the 23 years from 1949 to 1972 and then as Prime Minister in 1972. Prior to his political career he studied law, became a Major in the Army over World War Two and practised as a Barrister. From the 1930's he played a prominent part in St John's as a Bible Class leader and an Elder from 1950, remaining active in the St John's Session until his death in 1988. One of the rooms in the Church now being strengthened is named after him as the Marshall Room, renovated with a large thanksgiving gift by him to celebrate his time in the Church.

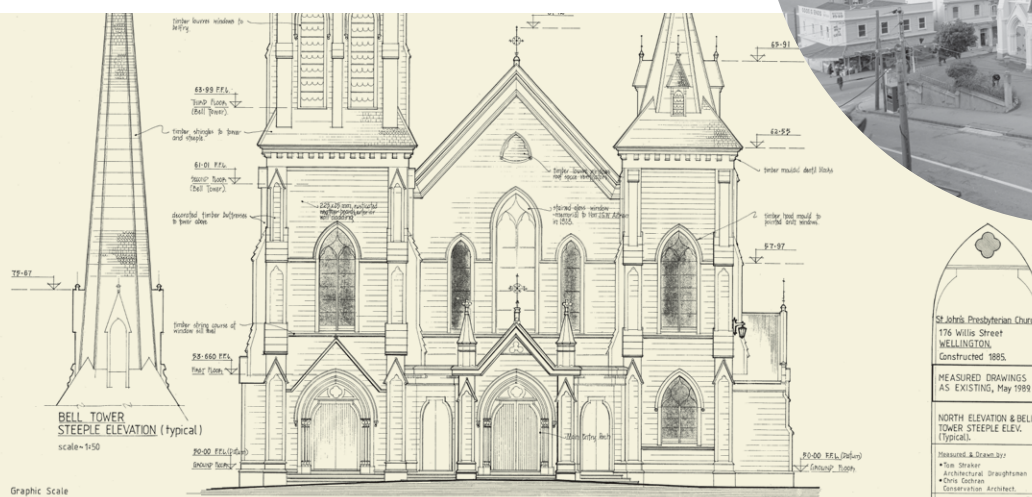
The strengthening project is the congregation's response in the present, knowing our history and preparing for the future.



1940s



1970s



OUR PLAN

There is a good plan for the work. Engineers from Dunning Thornton have prepared a design to strengthen the building to 70%NBS (IL2) (New Building Standard) - which will take the Church beyond its earthquake prone status and provide a level of safety that balances cost and risk.

We also have the commitment of another well-known and experienced Wellington firm, L.T. McGuinness. They recently completed the strengthening work at St Mary of the Angels nearby.

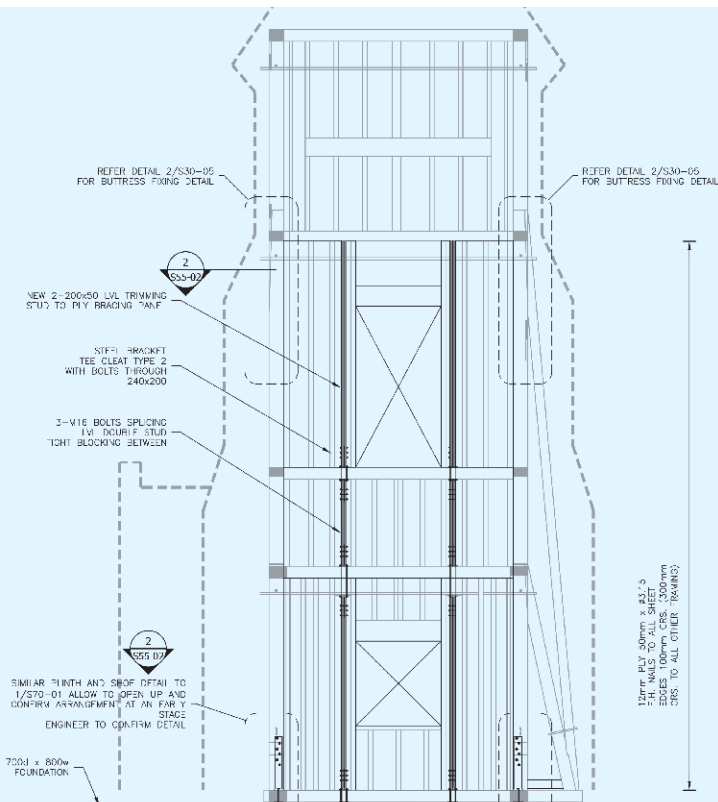
The strengthening work consists of new reinforced concrete foundation piles, cross-tied under the building, with side-wall buttresses made more robust by the improvement of connections, including new connections to the

foundation. New bracing elements at the ends of the church and ply bracing to the main towers will be installed.

In areas which require ply lining - namely the two towers and the vestry and choir rooms at the southern end of the building - careful removal, numbering, storage and reinstatement of the existing kauri match-lining interior cladding will be necessary in order to minimise the disruption to the building aesthetics and original design.

The church will be available for Sunday worship throughout, as there is very limited work required in the main worship space.

St John's can now start this strengthening work but we need your help to pay for it. Strengthening St John's will cost \$4.2 million.



Much of the work is under the floor.

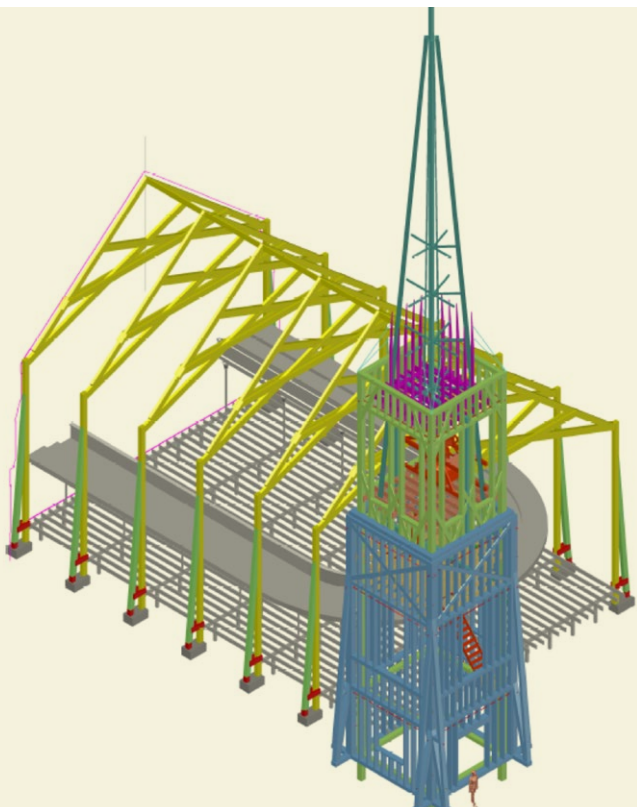
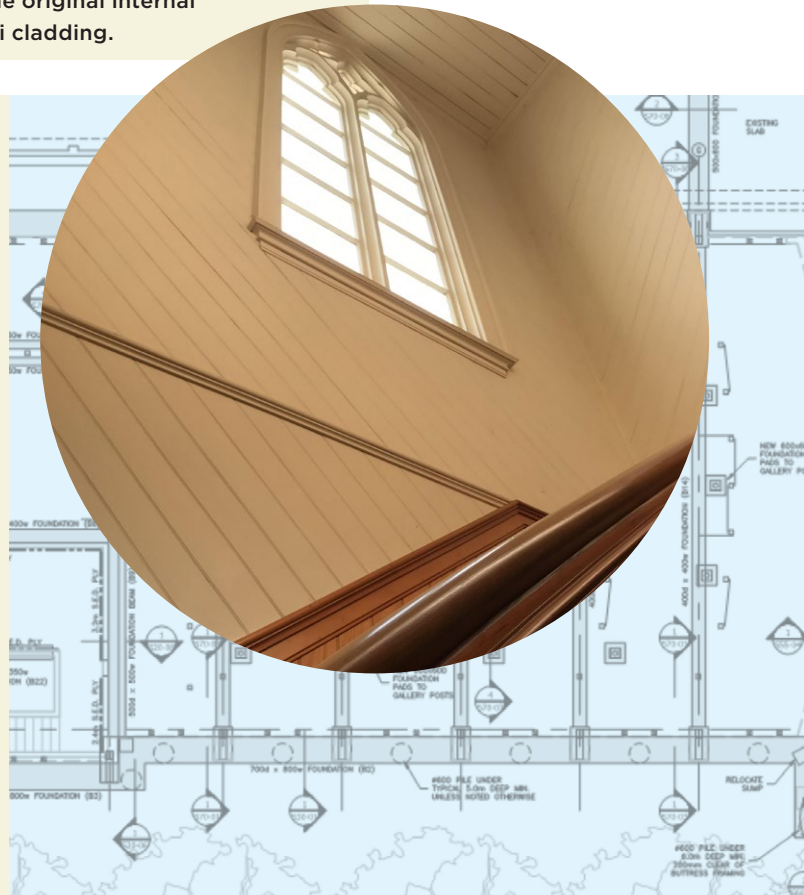
We have some resources we can call on. But we can't afford to both continue our work in the community and strengthen the Church.

St John's members have not been asked to contribute to a big building project for over a generation and neither has the wider community. We have helped others with their building projects, including Knox Waitara, St Peter's, St Mary of the Angels and St Andrew's on The Terrace.

Now we must seek financial support so that St John's Mission and the heritage Church building and precinct at the corner of Willis and Dixon Streets can continue to serve Wellington for future generations.



Removal, bracing behind and reinstatement of the original internal kauri cladding.



The project has multiple components to achieve the overall improvement to the building's strength.



“St John’s in the City is an enduring witness to the hope of the church community in Wellington City. As well as being a community of hope, it is a community of generosity. Those who have gone before us put down roots in the form of a beautiful building that reflects the creative beauty gifted by God. We now have the opportunity to put those roots down deeper – to strengthen the building for seismic events, and recommit to our spiritual witness in the midst of the Capital city. I am thankful for the generosity of those who have gone before us and for those who have more recently shared their time, talent and gifts to make the necessary plan for the strengthening work. I pray that as we get the job done together, we continue to live and share God’s hope in our city. I invite you to join me in wholehearted support of this project.”

— **REV ALLISTER LANE**
(MINISTER, ST JOHN’S IN THE CITY)



“St John’s in the City is one of the most beautiful wooden churches of its era in the Southern Hemisphere. The acoustics are well suited to the expanded community use that will be possible after this strengthening. I definitely encourage people to support this project.”

— **ELEANOR CARTER**
(MUSIC DIRECTOR, ST JOHN’S IN THE CITY
AND CELLO SECTION MEMBER, NZSO)



“The essence of worship is not the building in which it takes place. Without that church building though, giving expression as it does to one’s faith through worship and in bringing people together in this important act, that act of worship becomes much more challenging. While we are rightly proud of St John’s in the City, including how it stands quietly yet firmly as a landmark for Wellington, the reality is that it needs strengthening if it is to continue being occupied. We need to get behind this strengthening or that landmark of worship in our city will be in jeopardy.”

— **IAN MCKINNON** CNZM GSO JP



“St John’s in the City holds a special place in my heart as it is truly our family church. During the past 22 years our family members have been married, baptised, celebrated and blessed as part of this wonderful church family. We have always found warmth in being welcomed for who we are and most importantly, our culture and identity has always been accepted. We have always found joy in being able to come together to worship in our shared beliefs. As an iconic part of Wellington, we anticipate that as our children grow in the church, our future family generations will continue to worship and find fellowship at St John’s in the City.

la manuia lava ma soifua”

— **TOFILAU IRIS WEBSTER**



HOW YOU CAN HELP

This substantial earthquake strengthening work will need both big and small gifts and a lot of time and energy. Our target is to raise \$3 million over three years. While ambitious, it is important for the Church building to be available for community ministries into the future.

It will be possible for people to contribute in all these ways, in addition to regular giving:

- One-off gifts
- Pledging regular gifts over three years
- Property and securities (e.g. stock, shares)
- Bequests
- Letting someone else know about this opportunity to help or telling us about someone else who may be interested in supporting the strengthening project.

This project challenges all of us to consider making a gift at a level that is personally unprecedented. But if we all work together as a family, we can achieve this goal.

If you would like more information on any of these opportunities, visit **www.stjohnsinthecity.org.nz** or phone **(04) 385 1546**.

All gifts are currently eligible for a Government rebate of 33% of the amount gifted to a maximum of each individual giver's income tax paid in that year.

MAKING A BEQUEST

Like those faithful servants who have gone before us, you may want to leave an enduring gift of faith in the form of a legacy to the mission and ministry of St John's. Making a gift in your Will is easy to do. It does not affect your current day-to-day living, and enables you to express the hope of your faith for the sake of future generations. You can make such a bequest to St John's in the City when writing or updating your Will, or by adding an additional clause to your current Will. Your legal advisor can offer professional advice as to your options, and you can talk to the St John's Treasurer who can explain more and discuss your preferences with absolute confidentiality – phone **(04) 385 1546**.

A COMMENT ABOUT THE TRUST FUND

We are indebted to those who have gone before us, who planted a Church community, had the vision to build for the future, and provided an enduring spiritual presence and witness of God's hope in Wellington City.

We are indebted too to those who have given to support the mission of the Church, preserved the capital in the Trust Fund and applied the income to many causes.

WHAT IS OUR PART, TODAY?

As we must strengthen the Church building, let us support this project, and thereby provide a safe, usable building and ensure a legacy of resources for the future ministry and mission as a witness to God's hope in Wellington City and beyond.

FOR NEWS AND UPDATES

Go to: **www.stjohnsinthecity.org.nz/**

Phone: **(04) 385 1546**

Email: **enquiries@stjohnsinthecity.org.nz**

Mail: **PO Box 27148, Wellington 6141**

Or come in person to the corner of Willis and Dixon Streets.

This brochure was prepared by the St John's Earthquake Strengthening Committee: David Galt (Chair), Rev Allister Lane, Rev Stuart Simpson, John Allen, Rob Anderson, Glen Labrum, Ross Chesney, Daphne Chua, David Wood.



ALL WELCOME!

COME VISIT US

