

# **Memorial Minute for Mary Clarkson**

## **Elder at St Andrew's Presbyterian Church Hamilton, serving on Parish Council 1982 till 2015**

Mary Clarkson was ordained as an elder at St Andrew's Presbyterian Church Hamilton 1982 and served on the Parish Council until her sudden tragic death on a holiday trip in China, 18 September 2015.

Her compassion for people and her interest in social justice were instrumental in Mary aligning herself with the Outreach Committee (later named the Social & Ecumenical Action Group) when she joined Parish Council. She made a huge contribution to this sector group during her time on the Council. In the last year or two she also contributed as a member of a second sector group: the Kiwi-Korean Liaison Committee.

In the early 1970s Mary had joined a committee set up by St Andrew's Parish Council to support a Vietnamese refugee family settling in Hamilton. This was the start of her real interest and involvement with refugee families coming to Hamilton and eventually led Mary and Barbara Redfern to form the Waikato Refugee Resettlement Society. This outreach of Mary's was something that Parish Council was particular proud to witness and support.

Mary brought much to Parish Council meetings. In her gracious yet perceptive way she asked probing questions, sought clarification on issues and put forward positive suggestions during debates. As an elder she was active in all aspects of the eldership - from regular serving of Communion, diligent attendance at meetings and conscientious visiting of parishioners and those in need. When asked to take devotions marking the commencement of our Council meetings, Mary brought scripture and theology together in her presentations making these a highlight.

Mary was supportive of the various activities organised by Parish Council and warmly hosted many Bible Study groups, social gatherings and planning meetings and her welcome to her home on these occasions was always warm and gracious with each individual feeling honoured to be able to attend.

Mary's interest in St Andrew's place in the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand led her to participate as the Council's commissioner to the Presbytery of Waikato for a number of years and as our commissioner to the PCANZ General Assembly on two occasions. To these roles she brought insight and wisdom. She was active in the Hamilton Council of Christian Churches for many years.

To sum up Mary Clarkson - strong in thought and person, indifferent to what people said of her, scornful of glories and titles and a strong advocate for social justice, fairness, inclusion and freedom. She brought much to St Andrew's Parish Council and her contributions will be sorely missed. Her legacy will continue however as people ponder her service to the Church where she worshipped her Lord.

John Graham  
7 February 2016