

St Luke's in the City

Celebrating at the Crossroads

3rd Sunday in Lent

24 February 2008

Dear Friends,

Important Meeting - Saturday 8 March from 10am

I would like to encourage as many of us as possible to attend this very important meeting, to be held at the Anglican Centre. Hosted by Bishop David Coles and the Church Property Trustees (CPT), there will be representatives from St Luke's, the Historic Places Trust (HPT), Ngai Tahu, the City Council, and Te Pihopatanga o Aotearoa o Te Waipounamu. The hui/meeting is an opportunity for all parties to discuss the Proposal by HPT to register St Luke's as a 'Wahi Tapu' – a sacred site – to be known as "Tautahi Rua Koiwi". Details of the Proposal are outlined in the HPT document, copies of which are available in the church.

The Proposal potentially affects both church and vicarage. Both buildings are already listed with HPT, but this Proposal relates to land rather than buildings. The owner of the land is the CPT, the parish exercising what amounts to custodial guardianship on behalf of the Diocese.

The Proposal refers to the St Luke's land as the burial site ('koiwi' means human remains) of Tautahi, the Maori chief after whom Christchurch is named - hence the interest in this Proposal by both Ngai Tahu and the City Council. Tautahi is said to have died sometime in the mid 1750s when passing through this area and thought to have been buried in the urupa (burial ground) "on the site of the present-day St Luke's Church vicarage", according to the historian W A Taylor.

During excavations for the construction of the vicarage, which was completed in September 1868, unidentified human remains were found. The Proposal notes that, "subsequent references to Tautahi's resting place do not indicate whether the remains were re-interred or relocated elsewhere following their discovery. However, despite this, the site of the St Luke [sic] Church Property is still regarded as the location of Tautahi's final resting place." The Proposal seeks to honour both Tautahi and the sacredness of the burial ground.

Though the HPT Act guarantees the rights of landowners, Vestry has identified a number of issues which could potentially affect future generations at St Luke's. The meeting/hui is an opportunity for us to learn about local Maori history and taonga, to engage with our Treaty partners, and will enable all parties' questions and concerns to be expressed. I hope that St Luke's will be well represented at the meeting/hui.

With my love,
David