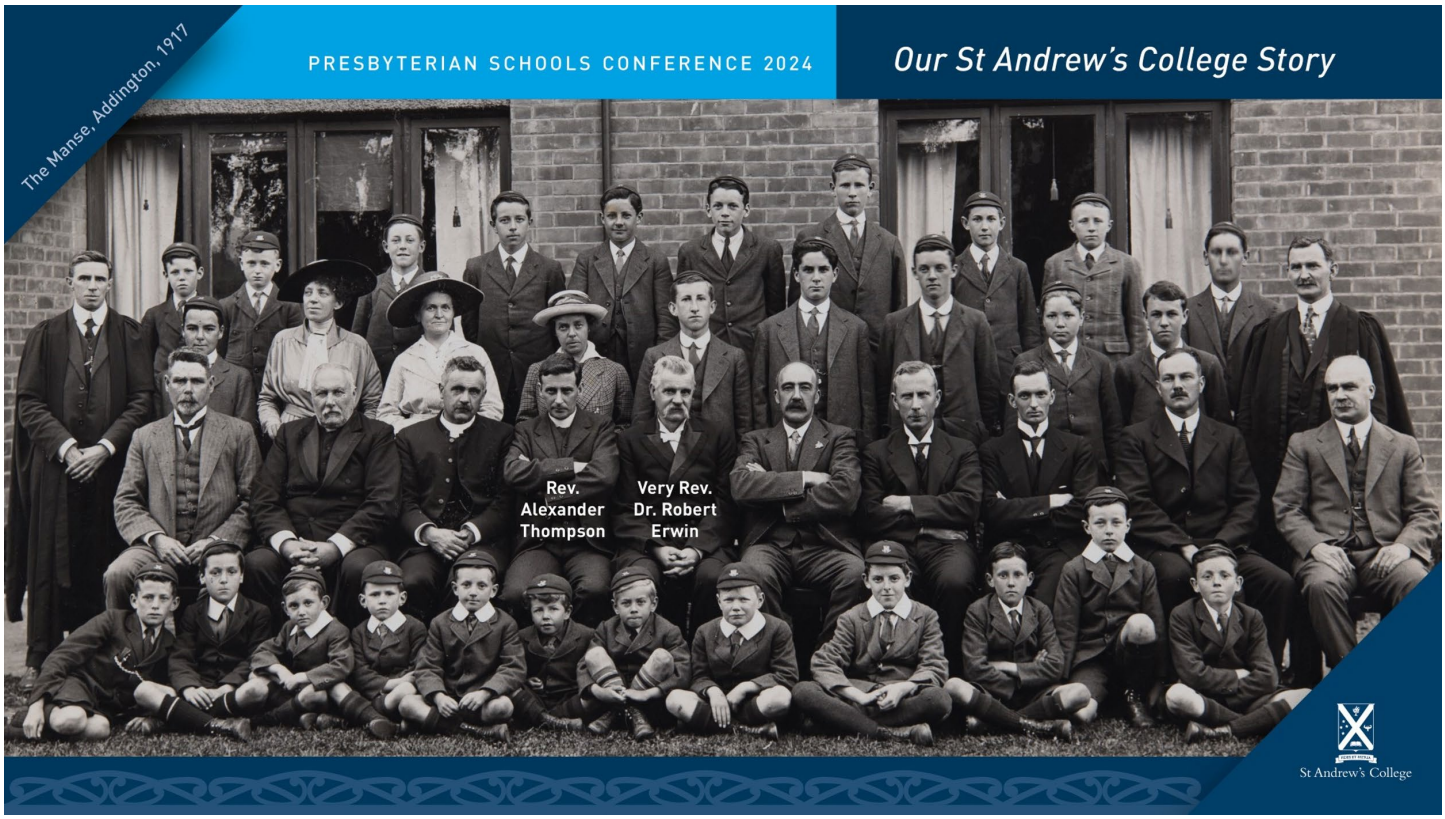
St Andrew's College

Presbyterian Conference

Thursday 8 – Friday 9 August 2024

"Our Story – St Andrew's College"



St Andrew's College was established in 1917 under the auspices of the Presbyterian Church. Our founder was Rev. Alexander Thompson, and the first Board of Governors included six Presbyterian ministers. The school opened at the St Andrew's Church Manse with 19 boys on the first day.



A bequest by Mr Duncan Rutherford enabled the purchase of Strowan, to which St Andrew's moved for the start of 1918. The name of the College honours Scotland's patron saint the apostle, Andrew, whose legendary links to Scotland are related in our school song. Our name connects our College to Scottish traditions and places.



Perhaps the most obvious of our Scottish links, the College Pipe Band, has performed for over a century at major school events and many public competitions. The StAC band is the premiere Junior Pipe Band in New Zealand and every three years travels to Scotland to compete in the Pipe Band World Championships, coming second and third in world rankings in recent years.



In 1955, the College opened the Memorial Chapel, a long-held dream of A.T. Thompson. The Chapel was built in memory of the old boys and staff who died in WWII, and in the spirit of our College values Truth, Excellence and Faith. It quickly became the spiritual centre of the College, together for worship, and special events.



Students of St Andrew's have always given their time and service willingly to others, and community service remains a strong feature of the College today. Similarly many benefactors have supported the development of our school. Many scholarships, facilities, and educational opportunities have resulted from the generosity of our community.



There have been 10 rectors at St Andrew's College, guiding and leading the College through innovation and changes, whilst upholding important traditions. In 1992, Rector John Rentoul and the Board of Governors determined that St Andrews' College would become co-educational, and girls make up 45% of the school roll today.



St Andrew's students worshipped regularly in the Chapel for 60 years, but the Canterbury earthquakes changed all this. The damage and destruction of College buildings, years of disruption to daily life at school, and tragically, the loss of life within College families were enormous challenges. For five years StAC students once again worshipped in makeshift Chapel venues.



The Centennial Chapel, which was opened in 2016, now beats at the heart of the College. Acknowledging the losses, seeking creative solutions, and focussing on the rebuild of spirit, community, and infrastructure, meant the College emerged stronger than ever before.



The College's Centenary was celebrated in 2017, celebrating the present and honouring the past. Our foundation story is kept alive through our founding values Truth, Excellence, Faith, Inclusivity and Creativity. In recent years we also acknowledge and celebrate the place of mana whenua and Te Ao Māori values, including Whanaungatanga and Manaakitanga.



Today St Andrew's welcomes students and families with an ongoing commitment to our special character and values. A focus on excellence in personal and collective endeavour, and building better people for life, is achieved through providing extensive opportunities within an inclusive culture. Our College Whakataukī, He waka eke noa, supports our collective purpose to ensure St Andrew's College is a thriving school, built on traditions and focused on a future of hope.

Christine Leighton

Rector