

Music Facilitator's Report 2021

So much of the year has been spent in Lockdown, yet though we can't gather to sing God's praise together, music continues to play a part in making our on-line worship a pleasing sacrifice to offer God.

A new official addition to the Music Team is Vicki White. Vicki took up the helm of Mainly Music after Rev Glen and Sarah left for Blenheim. It has been a delight to see her readily take up the challenge of Lockdown with her young helpers. Before Lockdown on my way to Wednesday service I often saw Vicki and her helpers, still full of energy after packing up after their Wednesday sessions in the Hall. We are blessed to have her enthusiasm. Many thanks to those who also support this venture with the morning teas and present the welcoming face of St Aidan's to the attendees.

Many thanks to Celia, who despite the demands of motherhood, has continued to offer her musical talents in organising and conducting our Nine Lessons and Carols, as well as leading the Youth Band (whose after Sunday service jamming shows their increasing prowess), featuring in delightful trios and soloing in many online services where she is ably supported by husband and guitarist, Dave.

Dr Anita Banbury was again at the organ for our Christmas Midnight Service. This traditional service was well attended in person with many for whom this might be one of the few services they attend in a year. From Wellington I watched the service online. For many others also out of Auckland with family, it was our Christmas Service, well worth watching more than once, though perhaps later during daylight hour leisure.

Between Lockdowns the choir met faithfully for practices on Saturday morning. The joy of sharing in song and prayer together remains strong with Karel regularly taking the lead to focus us in prayer together, for the practice, the service, our congregation's worship and for each other. The Sunday morning pre-service run-throughs have taken on more urgency for those with Saturday commitments, but can be also a useful way of teaching new songs to early congregation attendees.

Anzac Day this year, being on a Sunday was celebrated especially by hymns within the service which was followed by the gathering around the memorial to honour the sacrifices of all who lost their lives seeking to retain our freedoms. Wednesday services now finished with a hymn accompanied by the organ which was especially appreciated by a regular group attending from the recently closed St Oswald church. AAW monthly services also include hymns and organ voluntaries. The August Lockdown was announced just in time to cancel a Youth Service, and the planned Patronal Celebrations at the end of the month had to be also abandoned.

Rev Louise has competently stitched together cohesive on-line services sourcing beautiful traditional organ music for congregation members to enjoy singing to from the comfort of their homes, with lovely offerings from Celia and a couple of attempts at my zooming with my electronic keyboard in my Village apartment, such as for the lively October 3 Pet Service zoom.

As Music facilitator I decided that if I couldn't unite our congregation from the church organ, I could still try to use the Lockdown time to use music as a focus in emails or phone calls to encourage our congregation to look to God who is never locked out from being with us. It has been a great joy to receive so many emails and calls back from members of our congregation, many praising God, also offering encouragement and giving music offerings in return to share on, like the link to the 'Praise Be' 60th Anniversary Service from Westminster Abbey.

My current round as I write this report links a visual recording from Beethoven's 5th to Isaiah 40:31. A Songs of Praise version of this verse I sometimes use as a voluntary before the service, and at this time as I phone those without computers, can be sung over the phone. It is a fitting encouragement as we face uncertain times.

They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.

They shall mount up with wings as eagles.

They shall run and not be weary. They shall walk and not faint.

(Teach me Lord, teach me Lord to wait.)

Antoinette Pope

Music Facilitator