

Vicar AGM report 2021

Ka mua, ka muri

This phrase means looking to the past as you move forward into the future. As a leader I want to be conscious of the rich heritage of this parish as we journey together towards the future.

In my first annual report to the AGM of the parish of St Aidan, may I thank you for placing your trust in me to be your Vicar in the middle of this year. Whilst only in the role since 20th June, I will include reflection on the full year since I happened to be in the parish all of that time.

Let us note for the record that since the middle of August we have been in a Covid lockdown which has precluded us gathering in person. Watch out for the expression, 'delayed due to Covid' which appears occasionally in this report!

I commend to you the many reports which demonstrate how the parish has continued to offer ministry, worship, outreach and pastoral care despite what might have been a somewhat challenging year, due to Covid.

Services

For the majority of the year services have run as usual and my thanks to the huge team of people who contribute in so many ways both in preparation and on the day. I will not comment on all areas however I would like to highlight some of the developments or developing areas.

Sometimes gaps create opportunities. Glen's departure has meant there is space to enable more lay involvement in services. Our St John's student Hamish Maclean along with Lynne Trenwith join Reverend Anne Priestley on our preaching roster and bring a diversity of styles and voice to our teaching on a Sunday morning. I am grateful for their willingness to share in ministry in this way and we all benefit from the breadth of input.

It has been great to see an increased lay involvement in services with many new people undertaking training to be chalice assistants, liturgists, servers and readers. It is wonderful to see people willing to step out of their comfort zone, but with encouragement easing into these new roles comfortably. Thank you to Annmarie Raffel and John Priestley who have delivered training in these areas across the year.

Music can be a divisive topic as personal preference for different styles of music impact on worship. As your new vicar my intention was to engage in wider discussions about this issue, but such conversation is delayed due to Covid. I am grateful for the input around music selection which Antoinette Pope offers regularly both in and out of lockdown. We have also benefitted from Celia Finn's leadership of the resurrected band that enables a wider selection of music to be incorporated into our services. Our current combination of organ, choir and band provides a breadth of style which acknowledges our diverse worship preferences, however online services have resulted in a stronger reliance on more traditional styles that don't have the same stringent copyright issues, due to Covid!

Evening service attendance has always been variable and discussions have begun to look at reshaping this into a different format. I understand that over the past 10 years various styles and changes to this service have occurred and I foresee a need to revisit this in 2022 in order to offer something that is meaningful and sustainable. Delayed due to Covid 😊

Cameras and IT have become an increasingly important part of our services both when in the building and also in Covid level restrictions. Peter Macaulay, David Cotton and Simon Hackett Pain have spent many

hours addressing some of the issues of monitors not working, cabling upgrades and camera installation. Whilst there is quite a steep learning curve still in front of us, we are grateful to their determination to overcome some of the presenting problems whilst acknowledging that we are not quite there yet. Huge thanks also to the Sunday AV team whose calm attitude is always appreciated in the smooth running of the 9:30 service.

Services at retirement villages have seen some changes with Anne Priestley join Barbara Weir at 7 St Vincent each month and I was invited to assist in the leading of the Anzac service at Rawhiti. Home communion at Edmund Hilary was added to Yvonne Kennedy's regular visiting list. Remuera Gardens continues to be visited regularly, although obviously visits to all retirement villages have been paused due to Covid.

People

Glen's move to a new parish in Blenheim at the end of January alongside Conor's departure in August to take up full time employment instigated some staff changes, with some minor restructuring. The details are in the personnel and the wardens' reports so I won't replicate the information however let me add that I am thrilled to have a cohesive staff that is enthusiastic about their ministry. They have adapted well to lockdown offering online programmes in creative ways that continue to nurture the growing relationships. Not an easy task when Isobell Tregoweth, Nic Mercer, Vicki White and Isabelle Hoskyn have only been officially in their new roles for 6 months or less, (two weeks in Nic's case) before lockdown occurred, due to Covid!

With these changes to staff it has been wonderful to have Anne Godman's capable presence as administrator. Her unflappable personality and ability to think outside the square has enabled many problems to be easily solved. Her knowledge has been invaluable as I transitioned into the role of Priest in Charge and then to Vicar.

Two weddings for parishioners were held towards the start of the year and as a parish it was lovely to celebrate the marriage of Ruth Lowe and John Backhouse and a week later Jerome Amerasinghe and Ruwani Ranaweera. Whilst there are times of celebration such as this, there have also been occasions of sadness as we held 7 funerals this year and mourn the passing of a number of parishioners. Sadly several memorial services are paused due to Covid and alongside families waiting baptisms, we need to wait for changing levels before these can be held.

Mission and Outreach

Our call from God is to share the Good News and to love our neighbour. Equipped and sustained through our worshipping community, we then take our Christian faith and live it out in the community. I commend to you the Outreach report which highlights some of the many practical ways that this parish engages with the community. Keep up the great work.

Property

The property team had a busy year. Please see the property report for full details however just to highlight some of the improvements that have been seen this year:-

- New alarms replacing a failing system
- Oak trees trimmed in response to Health and Safety issues
- Full paint of exterior and interior Church, lounge, offices and hall
- Hall lighting replaced
- Carport roof replaced at clergy house
- Heat pumps installed in the vicarage and clergy house (compliance with healthy homes standard)

Many thanks to those who work tirelessly maintaining the upkeep of our grounds and buildings, the hours of which are often unseen, but the results are: we are most grateful. Not delayed due to Covid. 😊

Building project

Several meetings have been held with Wayne Houston to begin scoping some improvements to our buildings. The work will potentially include hall toilets and hall kitchen upgrade, disability access to the hall and social lounge, improved storage, provision of cooking facilities in the Gathering Area kitchen and so on. This is an exciting step, but complex due to the current layout and restrictive nature of the sloping site. An engineer has been engaged to assist with discussions however a pause during the interregnum followed by the current lockdown has meant little notable progress to report. Improvement to the Gathering Area kitchen is currently the main focus as it is a contained scope of work. Further information will be made available to the parish at appropriate steps.

Finances

Kumar Mather as our treasurer will present a brief report on behalf of the team. I have reinstated a regular finance committee meeting so that there is a larger collective grasp of the finances. The big garage sale for the second year has not been able to be held due to Covid which affects our overall income. The garage sale team however are looking at creative ways to move some of the produce through Trade Me and hopefully a market stall in December to begin to recoup some of the losses.

Professional Development

This year I continued with the second year of my Spiritual Direction formation course, and despite a number of the training days held online rather than in person, I am nearing its completion. Whilst the course has been largely carried out in my own time a few of the days have been during parish days. This has felt appropriate as I believe the transferable skills have already benefitted parishioners during the year.

Vestry

The wardens in their report will thank vestry outlining those who are not standing again and I join with them in expressing my gratitude for their wise counsel and hard work across the year. However the wardens can't easily thank themselves so I take this opportunity to thank Juli Mercer as Vicar's warden for her care and advice during the year. A special thanks to James Parkinson who stepped into Juli's shoes during the nomination process to liaise with me so that there weren't boundary issues with Juli as a nominator. James always brings his logical thinking and calm manner to any matter and his contributions are valuable. Although this is James's last duty at our AGM as people's warden as he releases this role he is standing for vestry at the election.

Looking back on 2021 from where I sit it has felt a bit like a 'stop/go' sign and yet we have accomplished a great deal. My hope for the year ahead is that many of our paused projects will be able to burst back into life and I am sure like many others, my main hope and prayer is that 2022 won't be delayed due to Covid.

God's Blessings Louise

Reverend Louise Anderson