

Priest Associate Report, 2022 AGM

Arrival at St Aidan's. I have been at St Aidan's in the role of Priest Associate for eight months now since commencing in the parish at our service of welcome on 20 March. Vaoa and I are exceedingly thankful for the warmth of the welcome we received. The kindness of the St Aidan's people is a hallmark of this church. We feel very much a part of this caring and supportive faith community and well-settled into parish life. 8 Ascot Ave is a fine property, and we are most grateful that it is our home. A lot of work went into preparing it for our arrival – replacement of boundary fence, painting, tree pruning and general maintenance. We are very grateful to the team of parish volunteers who worked so hard to ready the property. The gift of pantry food and the cooked meal that awaited our arrival demonstrates the generous spirit of this parish.

I work well alongside Rev'd Louise, and we aim to share the leading of services each Sunday as often as possible, with one of us presiding and other preaching. It is a blessing that this arrangement is supported by other clergy in our congregation, the Rev'd Anne Priestley, and Rev'd Kumar Anandanayagam, supplemented by preaching from Lynne Trenwith and the St John's College student Hamish McLean. My arrival just prior to Easter was a timely entry point to the parish given it is one of the busiest seasons of the liturgical year. Since joining the parish, it has been a time of gaining knowledge and experience on the various services, ministries and systems provided at St Aidan's. It is very satisfying for me to serve alongside the dedicated team of parish staff.

It was a special privilege for me to preach at the **Patronal Feast Day of St Aidan** in August. St Aidan lived a remarkably humble and productive life. He is largely credited with the evangelisation of Northumbria and inspiring others to a life of faith. His example and legacy remains a wonderful model for our parish.

The St Francis Day Pet Service took place on 2 October. This special service has been a feature of the St Aidan's parish supported by others whose pets occupy a special place in their lives. It is also a good opportunity to reach out to those in the wider community who may not be regular church attendees but nonetheless are blessed by the companionship and support received from their "fur baby." The number that attended the service was down compared with previous years, probably reflecting the gradual return to services following the disruption of Covid.

Purewa Cemetery Trust Board. It is a pleasure for me to serve as a Trustee on the Purewa Cemetery Trust Board which is an entity of the Diocese of Auckland. The board meets bimonthly at the St John's' Lounge at Purewa. Although serving on the board is not parish work directly, Purewa is a significant facility within the broader Remuera area and my participation fulfils the expectation that clergy make themselves available to contribute to the work of the diocese. Serving on this board opens the opportunity for relationships to be furthered between St Aidan's and Purewa.

The **Men's Ministry** has continued to meet monthly over breakfast on the last Thursday each month at a new location, Pico Café. This location offers improvements over the previous venue. It is less crowded; it's better suited to a conversational type gathering and parking is more readily available. Attendance has been steady, and it has proven to be an opportune time to catch up for fellowship and getting to know each other better as most parishioners usually attend either the 8am or 9.30am service so it is often the case that many are not that familiar with each other depending on the service they attend, so this time of gathering continues to be helpful in strengthening connections.

Lunch to Welcome Newcomers. On 17 July a successful lunch to welcome 'Newcomers' to St Aidan's, was hosted by vestry and ministry leaders/individuals. Although many of the Newcomers had been with us for several months and were somewhat 'regulars' already, it was nonetheless appropriate to formally welcome them, inform them about the various ministries St Aidan's undertakes and have them tell us something about who they are and what drew them to St Aidan's. A 'tour' of various areas was helpful as many hadn't been beyond the Gathering Area and the church. Newcomers who attended were Christine Ford, Rosemary Ballantyne, Kumar & Josephine Anandanayagam, Kate Shrigley, Ruth & John Backhouse and Kerry & Vaoa Davis. A short written contribution from each of them appeared in the August release of the parish magazine.

Mainly Music. Mainly Music has continued each Wednesday mornings during school term time. It remains an opportunity for soft evangelism and to connect St Aidan's with people from the wider community. It is a long-term ministry that has been offered by our church for a number of decades. It is pleasing that mothers/caregivers continue to bring their younger children to attend the programme after their older siblings have moved on to primary school. In July, the Mainly Music Coordinator, Vicki White, resigned to take up a primary teaching role. After a five-week recruitment, we were blessed to appoint Tracy Helg. Tracy is well-suited to the role as she has led Mainly Music for several years in Mt Roskill and is person of strong faith. She has an engaging manner with both parents/caregivers and children and has added more songs to the repertoire of music. This year we have held special occasions to celebrate Easter, Mother's Day and Father's Day at which we have had craft activities and a celebratory morning tea. The final session of the year will take place on 14 December and will be a celebration of Christmas. Throughout the year we are grateful for the efforts of Melanie Fernando and Vaao Davis and the roster of hospitality volunteers whose combined support is a key factor in the programme's success.

Confirmations. In September and October, I prepared nine candidates from our parish for confirmation of which Niven Fernando, Georgie Gray, Abraham King, Isabelle Hoskyn, Vaughan Parkinson, Asher & Ethan Stonehouse, and Brandon Wise, were confirmed by Bishop Ross on 16 October at a well-attended 9.30am service. The gift of a *kite* containing copies of the Story of Tarore, and a holding cross was presented to each candidate by James Parkinson, Vicar's Warden. In his sermon, Bishop Ross recounted how Tarore's tragic death became the catalyst for forgiveness, reconciliation, and the spreading of the gospel. Cameron Wise was unable to attend that service so he will be confirmed at Holy Trinity Cathedral on 4 December in a ceremony which will include other confirmation candidates from various parishes in the diocese.

Diocese Central Clergy Cluster Meetings. I regularly attend with Rev'd Louise the Clergy Cluster meetings hosted by Archdeacon Carole Hughes in which we share experiences of common interest as leaders of our parishes in this area of the diocese. Issues vary but have included the impact of Covid on church activity, parish events, property matters, insurances, and other issues of mutual concern. I also attended Diocesan Synod in September with our St Aidan's representatives.

Professional Supervision. I hold regular sessions with my supervisor. This time is invaluable for discussion on relationship, theological and work practices aimed at enhancing skills and abilities. These sessions are both challenging and stimulating often with new ideas and perspectives encountered.

Remuera Garden's Retirement Village. After a very long period of absence due to Covid lockdown, Remuera Gardens Retirement Village welcomed us back in July to lead worship and offer Holy Communion to its residents each month. We typically have around 25 residents attend each service. The services are held at the village's care facility, Kensington House, to which other residents from around village come and attend. I am pleased that Marie Taylor is available to assist with these services with reading, helping serve communion and introductions to the residents.

Rawhiti Estate Retirement Village. As an extension of our pastoral reach, services of Holy Communion commenced at Rawhiti Estate Retirement Village in October. We have been developing a closer relationship with Rawhiti having held Anzac Day services there the past two years and attending the Mother's Day afternoon tea. There at least six current or ex-parishioners who reside at Rawhiti so these services and follow-up support enable us to attend to their spiritual needs. The services occur on the third Thursday each month. This is consistent with regular services that we offer at other retirement villages at 7 St Vincent and Remuera Gardens.

As 2022 draws to a close I feel so grateful that God has called me to be a part of this energetic and loving faith community. It is parish that holds true to its character as a place of Worship, Caring & Mission. I look forward to 2023 and the joy, challenges, and blessings that another year at St Aidan's will inevitably bring.

Reverend Kerry Davis, Priest Associate, November 2022