

## Vicar's report for the 2022 AGM

2022 has been a year dedicated to rebuilding and re-establishing. The impact of covid on the church, not just St Aidan's but on our lives is significant. It is sometimes easy to forget that it was only at the end of April with the move to orange level that we began to consider re-offering wine and grape juice at the Sunday services and re-commence hospitality after the service. Whilst I use the term 're-building' at the start of this report, I note that this is not about simply returning to where we were before as I see church life as vibrant with much growth and change; growth in activities, people, and faith.

### Worship and growing our faith

Our **Sunday services at 8 am and 9.30 am** remain our core parish worship services. The decision to retain **online services** has been important and is a provision that has grown out of Covid. It enables those who are unable to join with us physically on site the ability to join in worship simultaneously or at a later time. The value of this facility has often been commented on by those whose health has prevented their attendance.

One sign of the health of our church is our large group of candidates for **confirmation**. Covid had put some of these plans on hold over the last two years and so it was with much celebration that this year nine of our young people undertook this important step. I am grateful to Reverend Kerry Davis who undertook the preparation with the group and to Nic Mercer who has continued to develop young people through the youth activities.

**Planning for special services and themes** has seen a shift across the year to bring in the creative skills and experience of Reverend Anne Priestley and Lynne Trenwith to join Kerry and myself as we prepare for these events. Both members of the preaching team and with a sound knowledge of liturgy their input is valued, and this approach ensures a fresh perspective can be achieved. Season of Creation, St Aidan's Day, Advent, and Bible Sunday have been just a few of the particular focus areas.

It has been a gift to utilize **Reverend Kumar Anandanayagam** during some mid-week services and at an 8 am Sunday service. To be able to draw upon the resources within our own parish to lead ministry is a real blessing.

**Music.** My thanks to Antoinette Pope who in the last year has continued to be pivotal to the music in the parish not only on a Sunday but at the midweek service, AAW, Anzac, Pet service, Blue Christmas as well as playing at both 8 am and 9.30 am services. I value her flexibility and enthusiastic contribution to the worship life of this parish. The band, successfully developed under Celia Haggitt's leadership last year, has not had the opportunity to reform in 2022 leaving a gap, however I am hopeful that this may be remedied as we move forward.

**Greater children and youth involvement** in the services is slowly returning. The positive feedback from parents and parishioners is an encouragement to ensure this happens more often as our children and youth are an important key to the church thriving in the future. Further work is required to determine how we best cater for our pre-school children however so that both parents and the children feel relaxed and able to actively engage on a Sunday.

We have a growing team of people who assist with services at **retirement villages**. Alongside monthly visits to Remuera Gardens and 7 St Vincent's, Rawhiti Estate has been added to the places that we hold regular communion services. A huge thanks to the ministry teams who offer this vital connection for those in retirement homes who might otherwise feel disconnected from a physical expression of their faith.

**Home groups.** It has been exciting to see two new small groups form this year alongside our well-established groups. They have both been in an online format. This allowed a huge freedom to the parent group to attend without needing to arrange child minding alternatives and for the other, saved travelling on wet, dark evenings. It is great to see the 'home group' model adapting to reflect the changing needs of the church.

### People

Since our last AGM we have welcomed **Reverend Kerry Davis** as Associate Priest. He has brought a range of experience to this role and amongst other things Kerry has taken on the oversight of Mainly Music, Men's breakfast and the Health and Safety portfolio. Another full-time priest on the team since mid-March has

provided a welcome opportunity to share the workload, offer combined planning for major seasons and festivals and the provision of a sounding board when making decisions. Hopefully you too have felt the benefit of returning to a two-priest parish and Kerry along with Vaoa's contribution have been a welcome addition to what we currently provide at St Aidan's.

I would like to acknowledge the work and commitment of the **staff team** Anne Godman, Isobell Tregoweth, Izzy Hoskyn, Nic Mercer and Vicky White here at the start of the year and latterly Tracy Helg. We are a cohesive unit who support one another in their respective ministry areas. There has been a noticeable growing collaborative approach which I welcome. Despite the commitments of university and full time work we hold monthly staff meetings utilizing a mixture of zoom and in person to ensure that the majority are present each time.

I specially want to recognise **Anne Godman** whose ability to multi-task is impressive. She competently problem solves issues as they arise and is a much-valued member of the team ensuring that we all keep on track. Thank you for your enthusiasm often going over and beyond what is required of your role.

I would like to offer my thanks to a **wonderful Vestry team** who work hard to keep the wheels turning so efficiently here. A special thanks to the **wardens Desre Simpson and James Parkinson**, who have offered sage advice on a multitude of issues over the year and been strong advocates for our staff negotiating with Trust Management. Thank you for our 7 am monthly meetings and bringing your experience and love of this church into your role.

**Funerals.** There have been some sad occasions for us as a community as a number of parishioners have died this year: The Right Reverend Peter Atkins, Geoff Brown, Marjorie Glasgow, Mary Hills, Margaret Kirby, Ian Mclean, Patricia Maud, Neil Phillips, Barrie Ross, Margaret Sinclair and Harold Titter. We continue to mourn their loss with their families. May they rest in peace. Peter's death particularly touched the hearts of the parish as his long-standing service to St Aidan's meant that many have received his pastoral support, his wise counsel, and the benefit of his teaching across the 31 years he was part of our parish.

**Newcomers.** Whilst we have farewelled some parishioners, we have welcomed many new faces into our parish. Our newcomer's lunch did this in a formal way albeit without the vicar who was in isolation with Covid. It can be hard settling into a church, and I appreciate the way many parishioners make a huge effort to go and talk to new people and by wearing a name tag assisting those trying to learn many names.

**St John's students.** We have been privileged to have had two St John's theological students with us this year, Hamish Maclean concluding his final year and Kate Shrigley just commencing. They both actively joined in with parish activities such as the garage sale and cleaning bees and we have welcomed their ministry contributions on a Sunday. Hamish's thought-provoking sermons provided variety to the preaching team and based on the positive feedback, have been appreciated by the congregation. On behalf of the parish, I acknowledge the contribution that the whole Maclean family have made during their 3 years with us. Hamish, Rachel, Kaelyn, Jesse and Hazel our prayers are with you as you move onto the next stage of your journey with God.

### **Caring for ourselves and looking beyond**

God's love in action is evident through the support of parishioners who look out for one another. For the work of the **pastoral care** team please read their report submitted for the AGM. It is wonderful to see the increasing number of people providing transport for others assisting those no longer able to drive to attend church.

On a **personal note**, most of you are aware that my mother died in September of this year. Thank you for the many expressions of love and support at the time. I have been touched by your concern.

St Aidan's continues to be a parish that is **actively engaged with Mission**. Some activities are based on site such as the Mission shop and Pins n Needles however a number of parishioners go out to facilities such as the prison, the hospital and the Anglican Trust for Women and Children to offer ongoing support to their work, ministry and activities.

It has taken a while to get off the ground but the plan for the **Pataka Kai (community pantry)** is close to being realized. A provider has been found and we will soon have a place for the community to share surplus food. Timely with the rising grocery items.

The **annual Garage Sale** returned this year with Covid restrictions lowered. It is a massive amount of work in the long lead up to the garage sale and for the many willing hands during the week of the event, however we are fortunate to have a dedicated committee who oversee this preparation. It was a tremendous result raising over \$30,000. A huge thanks to everyone for their hard work and for the many volunteers who assisted in making this a success. It is a wonderful way that we can engage with our wider community and bring people through our doors.

### **Ensuring our buildings are adapting to the changing needs**

Andrew Maclean and John Glenie have been working closely with architect Wayne Houston to progress the **Gathering Area Kitchen project**. Following extensive input from key stakeholders including the Church hospitality group, a preferred lay-out has been agreed. The process is now at a point where we will shortly obtain final architectural drawings with elevations. The adaptation of the kitchen is long overdue and will provide a much-needed facility to assist us as we move forward.

**IT** is something that often goes unnoticed however we are quick to be aware when it is not operating efficiently. The majority of the upgrade work is carried out by Simon Hackett Pain and we are extremely fortunate to benefit from his expertise in this area. Thank you Simon, and to the team of David Cotton and John Glenie who provide many unseen voluntary hours. Amongst a few of the projects that have been accomplished this year are:- the church's computer software upgraded to Microsoft 365, new wifi access ports installed and old original ones replaced, a guest network has been created meaning it is easier for visitors using our facilities to access the internet and a new TV in the social lounge means users will be able to easily use the screen for presentations off their personal laptops.

This report could be many more pages long, but I have touched on just a few highlights.

I commend to you the many **reports** that have been written and will be received at the AGM which ably demonstrate the breadth of mission and ministry happening through St Aidan's. A huge amount of ministry is lead and done voluntarily by you, our wonderful parishioners and the staff are here to support the fantastic work that is already being done.

This year, our eldest parishioner turned 103 congratulations Lilian, and our youngest Naomi, is only a few months old. Our church is diverse in not only age, but ethnicity and theologically and there is much to celebrate. As I look back on a year filled with mission and ministry – we give thanks to God for what has been achieved and look with anticipation at the signs of new growth.

Reverend Louise Anderson  
Vicar