

## Youth Report 2022

The more I think about what the youth group has been up to this year, the more I wonder how we managed to fit so much into one year. The youth group has maintained good numbers this year with between 10 and 15 regulars. Sunday mornings tend to be more consistently attended by the youth with Friday night numbers tending to fluctuate a bit more. After having to go back and forth between in person and online gatherings over the past couple of years, it has been good to be back to having youth in person for the majority of this year.

Sunday mornings have covered a wide range of topics, such as Wisdom, Exile and Gratefulness, as well as looking at the Bible and how it relates to what is known as today's popular culture. The youth continue to engage well with these sessions and ask a wide range of questions which has helped to increase their knowledge of which ever topic we are talking about. We have enjoyed some combined sessions with kids church this year at times such as Easter and St Aidan's Day.

The youth group continues to attend events run by Anglican Youth Ministries (AYM). Over the Matariki long weekend, we attended M-Fest (this was instead of E-Fest on Easter Weekend due to Covid restrictions at the time) with a couple of our youth stepping up and being tribal leaders. Other AYM events attended by the youth this year includes Diowhodunnit and the newly created Senior Space for those in their last years in high school and those who have recently graduated.

If you had said to me that we would have had a youth baptised and seven youth confirmed I would have thought you would be joking (and at the time of writing this, we will have one more baptism and confirmation before the end of the year). It was great to see our youth showing the congregation what their faith means to them, even being able to put it into their own words. It was encouraging to see them making these commitments and wanting to continue to learn and grow and deepen their faith and relationship with God. My thanks to Kerry for pulling the confirmations sessions together and being willing to take the time to work with our youth, and Louise for the support and encouragement provided.

Something that has been great to see this year is how involved the youth want to be in church events this. This especially came to light during the Garage Sale with many of the youth helping on a stall and some even putting in a large amount of work helping to set up or pack down. Their eagerness and willingness should continue to be encouraged and celebrated as they look to be involved in more than just Sunday services.

Moving into next year, the youth group has built some great momentum that I hope to build on as we look to keep helping our youth to explore their faith and continue to be greatly valued members of our congregation.

Nic Mercer  
Youth Leader