

VICAR'S REPORT

In memorium. There have been some sad occasions for us as a community as several parishioners have died since the AGM last year. We remember Tony Laity, Margaret Pellow, Richard Caughey, Heather Sands, Janet Hanna, Tony Farrow, George Marr, Elizabeth Macky and Lillian Gnanasunderam, and whilst Roy Everill was no longer a parishioner it is only right that his death should be acknowledged in this parish where he served as vicar for 20 years. We continue to mourn their losses with their families. May they rest in peace.

2023 has been a year that has seen the parish respond to the challenges placed in front of them and the response has been fantastic.

Worship and growing our faith

Our **Sunday services at 8 am and 9.30 am** remain our core parish worship services. It is encouraging when people feel empowered to take up new roles and that has occurred across all the services. This year, 4 new liturgists were added to our rosters and new readers stepped up, as others retired. An upfront role can be rather confronting at the start and the support of the worshipping community is vital as they find their feet and relax into their roles. Thank you to the parish for assisting their growth in this way.

Our other **weekly service remains on Wednesday morning** although it has never quite recovered from Covid and its numbers are currently unviable. My intention is to promote this service during the season of Lent before making a decision about its future.

Music. My thanks to Antoinette Pope who in the last year has continued to play a pivotal role to the music in the parish. I value her flexibility and contributions as we decide on the weekly hymns that reflect something of the theme. I am extremely grateful for Antoinette's dedication to supporting our worship services often making several trips across Auckland to attend special services.

Last year I commented that we were adding a third **retirement village** Rawhiti Estate to our monthly roster of communion services that St Aidan's is responsible for, joining the existing villages Remuera Gardens and 7 St Vincents. Rawhiti has now become a regular part of the outreach into our rest homes and relationships continue to strengthen between management and the visiting teams. This seems to be a burgeoning mission field as we have now been approached to take regular services at

Waimarie private hospital, the first in November. A huge thanks to our parish teams who provide this important ministry.

People

The warden's in their report have done a wonderful job of thanking people and I wish to add my thanks to theirs. St Aidan's is a very supportive parish to be a part of and as people are able, they give of themselves financially as well as offering their time and skills. It certainly takes a large team to keep the place going smoothly and I want to thank the huge number of volunteers who quietly undertake various roles in ensuring that ministry and mission continues.

My clergy colleagues **Reverend Kerry Davis** and **Reverend Anne Priestley** provide me with constant and valuable support as well as providing you with a wider range of priestly ministry. Kerry continues to be a helpful sounding board and with plenty to do in our busy parish I am thankful to having another fully paid priest to share the ministry load plus we work well together with complementary skills.

I would like to acknowledge the work and commitment of the rest of the **staff team** Anne Godman, Isobell Tregoweth, Izzy Hoskyn, Nic Mercer and Tracy Helg. It has been great to have had their combined contributions into the various ministries and to draw upon their ideas during cooperative planning sessions. We have maintained our routine of holding monthly staff meetings on zoom to ensure that those members who are in full time employment off site are able to still be present. Sadly Tracy Helg has resigned for health reasons from her position of mainly music coordinator. She has been a real asset during her 14 months of working with us and I know we will miss her wealth of experience in this ministry and her passion for the programme. Vaoa Davis will step into this role temporarily as we work to find a replacement for this outreach. I encourage you to read the staff reports who cover their own ministry areas in detail.

I would like to offer my thanks alongside the wardens to a **wonderful Vestry team**. A special thanks to the **wardens Desre Simpson and James Parkinson**, who have again been a wonderful source of strength and sound advice as we have covered a breadth of issues across the year of staff changes, fire, burglary, health issues and building projects to name a few. It has been helpful as a team to be able to brainstorm the appropriate responses to issues. Thank you.

Caring for ourselves and looking beyond

St Aidan's continues to be a parish that is **actively engaged with Mission**. The **flooding and devastating weather events at the start of the year** in Auckland meant that St Aidan's was able to respond in a practical way and offer missional outreach on our doorstep. Parishioners did what they could to support their own neighbours and as a church many baked or provided practical items that was distributed to those affected in our local neighbourhood. Towels, blankets and sheets were sent to a central distribution centre to reach those in need in the wider Auckland area. How wonderful to see the people of St Aidan's in action. Our on-going missional groups such as prison ministry, Pins n Needles and the Mission shop are just a few of the outreach ministries that the parish is involved with. Please read the various reports particularly the Outreach report and Mission shop to see how the parish engages in practical ways. **Andy Miller our NZCMS mission partner** visited in February providing opportunities for us to engage with his missionary work and to ask questions about this outreach in Costa Rica.

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. I do want to take this opportunity to again thank the parish for the prayers and support shown to me as I took some considerable sick leave during the year. I was very appreciative of the care and understanding during this time. A special thank you to Kerry and Anne in the office who dealt with the day to day issues that occurred in my absences. It was wonderful to know that the parish was in good hands as I recovered.

As a church we continue to look to ways that we can build relationships within our own church community and to extend this to others at **social events**. The year began with the **Shrove Tuesday pancake event**. Whilst we didn't attract many from our wider community, those from the parish who attended enjoyed themselves with plenty of pancakes to go around. The **Pentecost Lunch** was a new venture and may become an annual event. Meals and traditions were shared unique to each individual's cultural heritage and all went away, slightly richer for having attended. The **quiz night** was another successful social event with parish teams alongside community teams, raising funds for Habitat for humanity. The **parish picnic, movie night, 'Sing your favourite Hymn'** were other opportunities to spend time together and to invite non-parishioners along. In the coming months there will be many carol singing opportunities both out in the community and at church. Plans for the **carols**

and picnic on the Vicarage lawn is underway along with the **9 Lessons and Carols service** in December.

The **annual Garage Sale** was once again a success. Thanks to the committee and the over 100 volunteers who worked tirelessly in the lead up and on the day to achieve the tremendous financial result. Despite feeling like there was not the quantity of items to sell prior to the day compared to other years, the fantastic total raised of over \$ 37,000 tells a different story. The committee are constantly making adjustments to how the Garage Sale is run and this year saw the removal of the electrical stall, the social lounge used to store items prior and more upstairs offices used for stall locations. The date of Saturday 14th September 2024 is already in the calendar for next year's event.

Our buildings setbacks and steps forward

A **burglary in early February**, resulted in damage to office doors, and some of our users losing substantial items. We were fortunate that a newly purchased TV for our social lounge was not damaged too badly when burglars removed it from the wall. As a result, an alarm was installed in the social lounge.

Our own buildings didn't go completely unscathed from **Cyclone Gabrielle** damaging roof tiles over the Gathering area and flooding the youth room. We are very grateful to Hāpaitia Anglican Missions Board for their \$8000 grant which contributed to the restoration of these areas. The electronic sign was flattened and looked to be a 'write-off' however thanks to the time, patience and skills of John Glenie and David Cotton this was able to be repaired.

Whilst the repair work from the Cyclone was carried out on the roof, further **remedial work on the church roof**, gluing down and replacing tiles was carried out to address the ongoing leaks. It was with much relief that the buckets placed strategically on pews were able to be finally removed. There will at some stage need to be maintenance to the bell tower which we will programme into our future budgeting.

The youth and young adults took the opportunity to **update the bunker** and held a number of working bees to paint and freshen up this space with fantastic results. Whilst they are still seeking a couple more pieces of furniture they are to be congratulated for the hours spent on this project. Thanks to those in the parish who provided equipment, baking and labour to support them in their endeavours.

A fire in the hall toilets in the middle of the year created a huge amount of work and the insurance claim is ongoing. Thankfully everyone evacuated safely and there were

no injuries. Whilst the actual fire was small the smoke damage was extensive, damaging all of the men's toilets and requiring professional cleaning in all of the upstairs offices and the social lounge. We were very fortunate that the concrete construction in this area limited the spread of the fire along with effective alarms, and the quick arrival of numerous fire appliances. It has been another timely reminder of the vulnerability of our buildings. As a result the vestry have approved the installation of several **security cameras** that will be placed around the site and this work is currently underway.

The **Gathering Area Kitchen project** was added to during the year amalgamating the **men's hall toilet upgrade** to what was already in the pipeline. This made the new focus a two-pronged plan, two distinct areas for upgrades but working on both simultaneously in terms of plans, consents, builder's submissions and fundraising. A staggeringly successful **fundraising campaign** led by Keith Simpson was launched on St Aidan's Day. Along with the rest of his team, the challenge to reach the target of \$150,000 was accomplished within a month. A huge thanks to the parish who rose to the occasion and as they were able, pledged financially in support of the project. Although some pledges are yet to be realized we know that our total will exceed the amount we initially asked for. In discussing this with many parishioners we are delighted at your encouragement to go on and address one or two other important projects such as the ladies hall toilets and the hall kitchen repairs. It is exciting to think we may be able to accomplish even more than we set out to do. Time will tell.

Thank you to all of the maintenance team Simon Lee, John Glenie, David Cotton who along with Simon Hackett Pain work hard to ensure our physical buildings and equipment are working well. For IT updates please read the various vestry reports to see the work that Simon has been doing across the year.

New chapters

It has been wonderful to watch the flourishing of a new social ministry group this year. **Coffee and K's** ably inspired and lead by Vaoa Davis meets monthly and provides an opportunity to get some exercise whilst building relationships. The planned routes allow for various levels of fitness and it is a great vehicle for bringing along partners or friends who might not normally attend Sunday worship. Thank you Vaoa for instigating this popular group. If anyone has ideas for new outreach or suggestions for social activities please make time to talk with me about them.

Anne Priestley's **letter writing group** has found a regular home on the last Friday of the month in the Gathering Area. Providing a space to write letters that have a social or community concern have been an important part of the purpose of those who have met together. Anne asks the question, "If Jesus were alive today, what would he write about?" Do talk to Anne if you want to find out more about this group which is another new venture for our parish in 2023.

Students discerning their call to ordination. St Aidan's has been blessed by having both Kate Shrigley and Christina Turner offering ministry in our parish. It is Kate's second year with us as she continues her training at St John's theological college. Christina joined the parish at the start of the year and having completed her Diocesan Training programme will be ordained as a deacon at the end of November. We are pleased to hear that she will remain with us for a further year in her non-stipendary role.

We undertook to be part of the **Church Life Survey** and I am grateful to the 84 people who took the time to complete it. The survey will provide a nationwide view of the church post-Covid. Invaluably however as we can see our own results it provides us with a snapshot of areas for St Aidan's potential growth. This survey will feed into our future planning and my thanks for your assistance as we work together to see how we might grow and offer ministry in this place.

I commend to you the many **reports** that have been written and will be received at the AGM and I thank you all for contributing in the many various ways that you do to the life of this parish. The common bond that we have is our love of God and it is God that should be our inspiration for the ministry and mission that we carry out. So let me close by thanking God for all that has been achieved and hopefully like you, I look with anticipation to the coming year and all that it might bring.

Reverend Louise Anderson
Vicar