

YOUTH REPORT

This year has been a busy year for youth. From the bunker flooding at the beginning of the year, to the first full year in a while with no Covid interruptions, it has been all go from the start. The youth group has maintained a group of 8 – 10 regulars with a few newcomers joining in at various stages throughout the year. Both Friday night and Sunday morning programmes have been running during each school term, with Friday nights being a social activity and Sunday mornings being more focused on a specific teaching. Numbers at Sunday mornings have remained rather stable, with all youth normally attended at least once a fortnight. Numbers at Friday nights have been more variable due to some of the youth having conflicting commitments. As part of my plan going forward, I am looking into the format of the Friday night gatherings to see if they can be done better to allow more of the youth to come along more regularly.

During our Sunday morning's we have been using a couple of studies from a series called LifeGuide. For the first part of the year, we looked at the topic of Growing Older and Wiser, with a focus on things like wisdom, listening and learning from those young and old, and trust. Over the second part of the year, we have been looking at New Testament Characters, including Mary Magdalene and Thomas. The LifeGuide series has provided some good questions and discussions allowing the youth to explore different aspects of their faith individually and as a group.

As in past years, it has been great to see the youth wanting and willing to be part of the many church events that occur during the year. These events are great for the youth as it allows them to interact with the wider church community and help to make them feel more at home, building their confidence and encouraging them to be a valuable part of our community.

We were not spared from the large rainfall that hit Auckland in January, with the bunker flooding as a result. While the water was only enough to thinly cover the floor, it did create a large clean up job as well as giving us the opportunity to reimagine the space and give it a facelift. The old carpet was removed and many of the couches were taken apart or donated to the Salvation Army. The walls were sanded and received a new coat of paint, new

couches and new carpet to create a space that can be used for years to come. My thanks to Isobell, Izzy, and Cameron, who were instrumental in helping to get the bunker back to a suitable state to be used and cared for by our young people.

We have been fully involved with Anglican Youth Ministries (AYM) events during the year. Over Easter, some of the youth attended the E-Fest camp, with many of our youth holding other responsibilities beyond just being a camper. It was great to see them step up and take on these new challenges and allowed them to develop in a friendly and encouraging environment. Later in the year, some of us attended a Leader's Retreat out at Huia, a great opportunity for us to connect with other leaders from across the diocese and to spend some time understanding ourselves a little better. In August, some of the youth made their way down to Wellington for The Abbey, a national youth conference held each year. This was a chance for our youth to make new connections with others from all parts of the country, and to expand and deepen their faith and understanding.

Personally, it has been a busy year. Along with attending the already mentioned E-Fest and Leaders Retreat, I attended Synod as a Youth Representative, seconding a motion, and somehow got elected to represent the Auckland Diocese at General Synod Te Hinota Whanui next year. I am really looking forward to this opportunity to learn, grow and make new connections in amongst what is, hopefully, a productive week.

My thanks to all those who have been a part of youth this year. It has been great to see you all grow and deepen your understanding as you look to explore your what your faith means to you. I look forward to another exciting year as the youth group goes from strength to strength.

Nic Mercer
Youth Leader