

Minister's Annual Report: July 2010 – June 2011

Overview

“A newly global Christianity, enlivened by a multiplicity of cultures and yearning for the realisation of God's reign of shalom, is finding its soul again. All the signs suggest we are poised to enter a new Age of the Spirit and that future will be a future of faith.” Harvey Cox

In last year's annual report I noted that the guiding principle for the Creating a Share Vision process is that the Glory of God begins to be revealed as we work at restoring the well-being, in a sustainable way, of all creation. ThT Also noted in that report, is the need to continue developing Sunday worship services that appeal to all ages. This has been taken a step further with the use of terms such as All Age Story and All Age Song. With those initiatives continuing in the coming year we will be reminded that the heavens tell of the glory of God and the skies proclaim God's handiwork and in so doing we will understand what Harvey Cox means when he suggests that we are poised to enter a new Age of the Spirit.

Much of what has been initiated over the last three years has been with the intent of shaping a missional church. Our style of worship, the language used, pastorally caring for church members and the wider community, the management of our resources, networking and community development initiatives all contribute to the shaping of a missional church. Our purpose in doing all the above is to not only point to the Glory of God as revealed in the cosmos, but to also reveal the Glory of God in our words and actions as Jesus did and continues to do so.

Although the 2010/2011 year had its difficulties I believe the church is currently in a very good space. We are working through a number of significant initiatives which I hope will begin to physically bear fruit over the next twelve months. Spiritually, I agree with Harvey Cox's observation that we are poised to enter a new age. Spirituality is a new societal buzz word, with many community groups now advocating, that understanding one's spirituality and the meeting of one's spiritual needs is key to wholistic well being. That everyone has a spirituality is in fact biblical and the challenge for every christian is to understand and to work with this “new found spirituality” and at the same time, reveal how God has impacted on their own spirituality. I would like to think that over the next twelve months we begin to explore our spirituality in a deeper more meaningful ways.

From October 2010 through May 2011 Tongan groups working for Ngatahi Horticulture and Fairview Orchards attended Sunday services on a regular basis. A larger group from Inglis Horticulture filled the church on communion Sundays. From October 2011, it has been predicted that the number of Tongans worshipping regularly will increase. As noted above there has been a continued focus providing All Age Worship services, with a special children's service on the third Sunday of the month. All the small groups continue to flourish with an additional new home, hosted by Marlene Greenland, bringing the total number of home groups to seven. The creating shared vision process which began in March 2010 is now starting to bear some fruit. The following Vision, Mission Statement and Goals were agreed to at the October 2010 meeting:

- Vision:** A Community United in the Love of God
Mission: Being Christ Centred, Community Focussed.
Goals: Do the research, gather hard data, and identify the needs of our community.
Be a missional church – a centre for spiritual and pastoral care.
Upgrade facilities.
Employ a part-time administrator.
Children's ministry – variety and action on Sunday morning.
– in local schools.

Develop leadership skills within the Church.

Some progress has been made toward achieving a number of those goals. A working group is currently forming a questionnaire which will gather the relevant data and help identify our community needs. The church does have access to some resources and it is important to allocate where most needed. This process will be directed by a representative from Internal Affairs with assistance from NMIT Social Science dept. and, it is hoped, students from Motueka High School. Two draft plans have been drawn up and discussion around the upgrading of facilities have taken place.

Commensurate with our goal to become a centre for spiritual and pastoral care, St Andrews, with financial assistance from Ngatahi Horticulture and Methodist General Secretary David Bush provided a container to ship much needed goods to Tonga. I hope that further collaborative work, with local businesses and other community groups to meet identified needs; will be an outcome of the Community Needs Assessment process. Another step toward becoming a centre for spiritual and pastoral care, and in response to a request from Jack Inglis Friendship Hospital staff, St Andrew's folk now conduct a bi-weekly worship service for residents.

As noted in my last annual report Motueka Uniting Parish has considerable funds invested and while interest from these investments keeps the church running on a day to day basis, this cannot, indeed, must not continue. Something we need to be mindful of is how much these funds are decreasing in value due to inflation. Although it is pleasing to note that offerings and donations have increased in recent months we continue to draw on interest accrued. Through the 2010/2011 year I have continued to network with community groups and worked at raising the profile of St Andrews. I currently chair the Motueka Family Service Centre Trust, the Collaboration of Agencies meeting and I am a Motueka Short Term Accommodation Trust committee member. Recent research has revealed the success of the restorative justice process in lowering recidivist rates. It is because of a belief, the Restorative Justice process has biblical roots that I offered myself as a Community Panel member.

Major Changes

One the major changes for 2010/2011 is the gap that has been opened up through the deaths of a number of long standing church members who have contributed so much to St Andrews over the last sixty years. The knowledge, wisdom and the sense of stability they brought to this community is sadly missed. Many in our faith community are having to deal with profound changes in their lives, because of age and infirmity a significant number are having to, down size, take up residence in Rest Homes, move out of the district, pass on responsibilities, retire, give up driving, spend time in hospital etc. As a consequence there has been a dramatic increase in the numbers requiring pastoral care. However, it has been pleasing to see many new faces attending Sunday worship with some electing to become members and offering to take up office. It is most pleasing when new members bring energy and creativity to workgroups. It is hoped that in another twelve months we will see the implementation of a strategic plan based on the data gathered through the community needs assessment survey and as a part of this agreement on the additions and alteration that need to take place ensuring the church and its facilities will be here and thriving in fifty years. The publishing and distribution of a bi-monthly newsletter seems to be working well and with the new logo appearing in our advertising, newsletters, bulletins and webpage it is now hoped to have a parish brochure printed and distributed in the near future. There has been an increase in requests for assistance, not only from community groups, such as the Motueka Family Service Centre, but also from Community Link. On the third Sunday of the month the first part of the worship service caters specifically for children and Judy Walker organizes an activity. The numbers of children attending have fluctuated with about six attending on average. It is also important to have children's activities prepared for every Sunday, just in case we have children in attendance. During the fruit picking season we continue to have groups from Tonga and Vanuatu join us for Sunday worship. It is anticipated that the numbers attending will increase upon their return in October. We have yet to fully cater for these groups.

Praise Points

The facilities which have served the people of this parish for many years.
The stewardship of those who have gone before which has ensured the continuation of ministry
The interest on investment capital which allows the church to keep functioning.
The number of people, both new and returning, who now worship at St Andrews.
The special contribution RES workers make to our worship services.
The active role many church folk play in community organisations.
The many talented people who contribute to the dynamism and vibrancy of this parish.
The warmth and concern shown for one another in this church and for many in the wider community.
The many interest groups and the group leaders who give time and effort to leading these groups.
The community groups who use the facilities.
A full complement of workgroup convenors and co-convenors
Parish Clerk Catherine Dunkley and all the work she does.
Those who see potential and have a clear vision for this church and its place in the community.
The diverse range of theological perspectives, world views and personalities which add colour and give impetus as we move forward.
The number of people and community groups who collaborate with St Andrews as together we seek to enhance the spiritual well-being of our community.

Prayer Points

Those who have to make difficult choices and face profound change in their lives.
Those families who are grieving for loved ones.
A commitment to reach those goals as identified by the Creating a Shared Vision Process.
The Community Survey research data identify gaps, from which recommendations will be made and prioritised for implementation.
That project goals will be set and an implementation plan developed to determine how these goals will be met.
That objectivity be maintained as the research data is taken into consideration when planning additions and alterations to physical plant.
That consensus be reached on future direction.
What to do with a church building that was erected before 1935: seismically strengthen, rebuild or pay increased insurance?
Young Family and Children's ministry, how can we build on Children's Sunday.
The employment of a part time administrator.
Training for church members who would like to lead worship.
We are asset rich, but cash poor; a deficit of \$25,000 for the 2010/2011 financial year.
Aging congregation and increasing pastoral needs.
Those who convene workgroups and attend Parish Council.
Meeting the cultural, theological and pastoral needs of RSE workers.

Evaluation of 2010 -2011

Over the last twelve months it has been privilege to welcome a many new members and a number of others who attend worship on a regular basis. The liturgical worship services are designed to encourage and the language used is contemporary and theological jargon is avoided. The importance of Sunday worship cannot be overstated. I believe anyone attending for the first time must leave having experienced something that is cognitively relevant and positive, if not inspiring. The services are intended to be warm, inviting, at times humorous while, most importantly, maintaining a reverence. The groups from Tonga and Vanuatu add much with their singing and participation in

other aspects of worship and church life. There have been many highlights throughout the twelve months with a major highlight being the recording of Praise Be in the church in March of 2011. The Winter Lecture series was held in September of 2010 and the guest speaker was the Rt. Revd. Philip Richardson Bishop of the Taranaki/Waikato Diocese. He spoke on: *Using a Taranaki Gate – the #8 fencing wire approach to building the vision, structures and tools for Gospel driven community engagement and transformation*. Over the last twelve months two fundraising retro dances have been held in the hall. The music from the 50s and 60s was provided by four piece band Sentimental Journey. It was an absolute delight to marry Jim Fry and Noel Francois in December of 2010 and Peter Allbon and Beverley Gerritsen in April of 2011. For a couple of months, Truthfinders Christian Fellowship used the church and hall for their worship services and children's programmes respectively. Sadly they disbanded in February 2011. On an even sadder note, in November 2010 I was called upon to organise a memorial service for the West Coast miners who lost their lives in the Pike River Mine explosion. It was pleasing to have most of the local church leaders take part. Community Board chairperson David Ogilvie, Tasman/West Coast MP Chris Auchinvole and Harry Bell retired chief mines inspector, part time mining tutor at the Greymouth Polytechnic and a member of the Strongmen Mine disaster rescue team, all spoke. Following the February 22 earthquake I was approached by Te Awhina Marae representative Donna McLeod and asked if I could arrange for the churches of Motueka to provide evening meals for Christchurch evacuees. It was pleasing to see the way all churches responded and provided meals for the first seven days. However the expected numbers of evacuees did not arrive and no further assistance was required. On Tuesday 1 March a remembrance service for the people of Christchurch was held at St Andrews and it was well attended by, local church and community members and a number of people from Christchurch.

Over the last twelve months I have been called upon to conduct ten funerals. As noted above St Andrews has lost several long standing members. I have also noted, the need for pastoral visiting is increasing and the numbers who are able to visit are decreasing. It is important for the church to be there when people need it and this is especially so when someone dies.

Numbers regularly attending worship services have been relatively steady with 60 - 80 attending over the last twelve months. Numbers attending on communion Sunday have been up to 120. Our festive seasons continue to attract increasing numbers; it was particularly pleasing to see the church close to full on Easter Day and Christmas Day. Numbers attending the Reflective (Blue) Christmas and Tenebrae services are steady. Vocal group Harmonia Venerdi sang during the Tenebrae Service and added another dimension to the experience. There has been a lot of positive feedback for all the festive services and many have suggested advertising more widely next year. Other festive days such as Spring Sunday, Harvest Thanksgiving, Matariki, Pentecost, Mother's Day, Hymn Sing a Long were also well received. The many activities and events held during the year continue to reflect the diversity and vitality of this parish.

I have been Presbyter at St Andrews for three and a half years and the time has flown by. I must reiterate that I am enjoying being a part of such a loving, supportive church community. The structures of this parish are still robust and the Parish remains in a position of relative strength. I believe 2012 is an important year for the Parish as we continue to look at upgrading our facilities and implement a plan based on the gathering of hard data. I continue to look forward to the coming year with anticipation and excitement.

The support and encouragement of Parish Clerk Catherine Dunkley again requires special mention. The reason this parish functions so well is because of her diligence. I continue to enjoy the challenges presented by ministry, the warmth of the people, and the grace and blessings of God. I continue to be amazed by the amount of respect the Motueka community has for our church. I

continue to hold the following positions; Chairperson of the Motueka Family Service Centre Trust, Chairperson Collaboration of Agencies, Trustee and Committee Member for The Motueka Short Term Accommodation Trust, Community Panel member for Nelson Restorative Justice and Nelson Marlborough West Coast Synod Secretary.

Comments

The vibrancy and dynamism of this parish is reflected in the number of interest groups that meet on a regular basis. There also seems to be a continuous stream of new people attending our worship services. I am mindful of the need for our services to be inclusive, especially for the eight months the RES workers are with us. I am excited about the Creating A Share Vision Forces which is starting to gather momentum and will build on the networking already done with the Not for Profit Sector and Government Agencies working Motueka. While many of the practical aspects on ministry are being worked or are in place, I am hoping 2011/2012 will be time when we deepen our spirituality, our connectedness with God, and the Glory of God will be revealed in all we say and do.