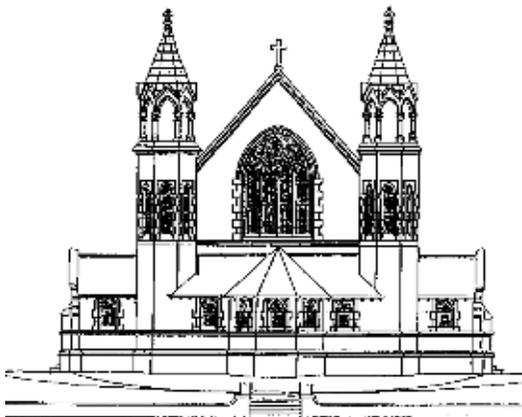


St Francis de Sales and All Souls Parish, Devonport



2022 Update of Parish Groups & Activity

1. Parish Pastoral Council

Greetings from your Parish Pastoral Council.

Around three weeks after our 2021 AGM, Auckland went into a level 4 lockdown and remained under level 3 restrictions until the beginning of December. The length of this lockdown, in the second year of the pandemic, created many challenges and resulted in ongoing sacrifices for the Parish as a faith community and for individual parishioners. We acknowledge the hardship and disconnection this caused for many, the joy of reopening the Church to at first, limited numbers and those with vaccine passes, tempered by the sensitivity and discomfort of having to check people at the door.

Throughout these difficult times we were fortunate to have the guidance of our Parish Priest, Fr. Neil Darragh, whose pastoral heart and clear thinking about the mission of the Church kept us grounded.

A Synodal Church

During the early period of the 2021 lockdown, the Catholic Bishops' Conference called on us to provide input into the General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops to be held in Rome in October 2023. Never was there a more apt time to be considering how we journey together, than during these pandemic times when we were unable to get together physically and had to identify new ways to support each other spiritually and emotionally.

A synodal church is one of communion, participation, and mission. We were called to discern how our journeying together is happening today in our local church and what steps the Spirit invites us to take in order to grow in our journeying together.

Despite the physical restrictions and the discomfort many of us felt with discernment via Zoom, many parishioners responded to the call and we were able to provide input as a Parish to the Auckland Diocese to be incorporated into the response of the New Zealand Catholic Bishops' Conference. Thank you to those who participated and shared with such openness your perspectives on how we can grow in our journey together as a Church, as a Parish. The Diocesan response to the Synod, which will be sent to Rome, has just been published. It includes matters for discernment by the Universal Church, and also local initiatives which may be pursued. Discussion of these will continue across the Diocese later this year and will be featured in our newsletter.

Mission

As a critical ingredient of a synodal church, reflecting on 'mission' as part of the Synod preparation put us in good stead to discern the mission of our Parish: what is our purpose as a local church, reaching out to the wider

community in response to the Holy Spirit. What is the Church's mission? What does that mean for our Parish community? The PPC spent time in late 2021/early 2022 meeting, praying and reflecting on what mission means. In April we reached out to the wider Parish community to join in this journey, encouraged by Fr Neil's book *But What is the Church For?* which explores Christian mission and the mission of the local church.

On May 29th we held a Special General Meeting which was very well attended and provided the opportunity to gather together and confirm our mission. Three key steps have emerged which will be progressed over the next few months: (i) learning more about what mission means from our fellow parishioners (ii) further investigation of local environmental and social justice groups and how we might work with them/alongside them (iii) identification of environmental or social justice initiatives the Parish could provide financial or other support to, e.g. through Caritas. We look forward to taking these next steps together as we carry out as mission.

Keeping our Parish running

In March this year we farewelled Corenna Rooke, our Parish Secretary/Coordinator of over three years. Corenna made a significant contribution to Parish life in her time in the role, due to her great administrative skills including financial reporting, and her ability to engage quietly with all parishioners and ensure their needs were met. Kath Petrie has recently stepped into this role and has quickly come up to speed drawing on her organisational skills and extensive networks that help to ensure everything keeps running smoothly. We are grateful to Elizabeth Klaassen who took on the role for five weeks so that Kath could visit family and friends overseas.

During the days of lockdown, we greatly appreciated the weekly emails sent out by Stephen Bell, our Parish Pastoral

Assistant. These have continued to be an important way of communication with all parishioners on the database, especially those who have not returned to Mass face-to-face. Stephen's quiet, deeply faith-filled leadership of liturgy and his wide background knowledge of the parish context is a very important part of what keeps the parish running. One major development this year has been the formation of lay Ministers of the Word, Welcoming and Holy Communion. There have been a number of weekdays and weekends when Fr Neil was called out of the Parish for other commitments, or where he himself was in isolation. Thanks to the commitment and growing confidence of groups in the above Ministries, and the support of Fr Neil, we have still been able to gather as a faith community for Liturgies of the Word with Holy Communion. This empowerment of lay ministry is very much in line with synod discernment.

St Leo's

Strengthening the links between school and parish is a tangible commitment the PPC has made through funding the school/parish liaison role as part of the Parish Coordinator duties. This supports and complements the work of the Bishop's Representatives on the Board of Trustees: Rachel Steele, Stephen Albrecht and Kath Petrie. The Board appointed a new Principal, Vimi Chandra, in Term 2. We are confident that Vimi will continue to build the connections between school and parish and ensure the school remains true to its Special Catholic Character. Thanks to the Board members who have served the school so faithfully in the last three years, under the chairmanship of Gavin Busch. We congratulate those who were recently elected to the Board of Trustees, including the new Bishop's Representative, Anna Rumble.

Columbarium

Funding for the development plans to provide a resting place for the ashes of the deceased was provided by a generous donor, and the advancement of these plans has been delayed by the pandemic in the last two years. In 2022 a small project group has been working with Stephen Matthews Architects to bring the plans to the point of consultation by the parish and the Diocese. We hope to provide a presentation of plans and costings at the AGM.

Audiovisual update

It has become apparent over a number of years that we need to update our audio-visual equipment in the church. A small team has formed to identify options and make a recommendation.

Parish groups

As this report attests, there are many active groups in our small Parish that, despite the disruption brought about by Covid-19 and other challenges, have continued to carry out their ministry in a faithful manner. The Parish would not be the same without these groups which provide spiritual leadership and guidance, a means of fellowship, works of compassion and other practical assistance. More information on these groups is contained in this report and our thanks go to their leaders and members for the work they do. Similarly for members of the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC), who give generously of their time through monthly meetings, active prayer and outreach. We had a larger group than usual this year as a means of drawing together a more representative group from across the Parish who could facilitate two-way communication and ensure the PPC was as informed as possible in the decisions it makes on behalf of the Parish. Our members this year have been: Stephen Bell, Paul Doyle, Shaun Erasmuson, Pippa Grant, Linda Lampen-

Smith, Elizabeth Light, Vincent Phua, Karen Rawlinson and Andrew Skokandich, who has also been the liaison with the Property and Finance Committee. Thanks to all of you for what you have contributed over this past year. We welcome the nominations for the next PPC.

Denise O'Shaughnessy and Kath Petrie. Co-Chairs PPC.

2 Property & Finance Committee report – AGM Aug 2022

The Property and Finance (P&F) Committee are responsible for

- Maintaining and improving our Parish's buildings and grounds
- Managing the Parish funds which are mostly donations from our parishioners.

Our Pastoral Parish Council (PPC) now operate a budget and it is our role to manage the funds accordingly.

Jim Dobbie resigned as our Chairman last year after making a considerable contribution to our financial security in the parish, including initiating the hall renovation project. We have two new members, and with a larger group have been able to assign certain responsibilities.

Liz McMaster	Chair; Personnel
Fr Neil Darragh	
Peter Adams	Financial management and reporting; Charitable Trust report to Diocese
Alan Light	Property Management & Maintenance
Andrew Skokandich	Fundraising; PPC representative

PROPERTY

The regular group of volunteer parishioners, who work every Monday, continue to keep our outside areas tidy and pruned. They operate with very few costs to the Parish and it adds to the beauty of our church. Thank you to this generous and supportive group.

Our parish has responsibility for 4x buildings – church, presbytery, carport/shed and the Parish Hall. They all require ongoing maintenance and specific improvement projects. This year we have decided to appoint a maintenance group under the leadership of Alan Light and it will be their responsibility to prioritise and ensure that the projects are completed.

Church

Repair of the pointing (mortar between bricks) in several locations including the decorative work on one of the towers has been completed.

We now have a new Lectern which complements the altar and tabernacle.

Parish Hall

The hall continues to be used extensively by St Leo's, and Income from leasing the hall for after-school activities continues to make a significant contribution to the parish finances.

Improvement to the hall acoustics has been requested and painting the outside of the building is now a priority.

Presbytery

The key project this year has been the kitchen / dining area upgrade made possible by the generous donation from a parishioner.

As reported last year, there have been several other upgrades required to make the building a more comfortable and safe place to live.

FINANCE

Current financial position

The Covid restrictions over the last two years have presented challenges in that lockdowns and level 3 restrictions have resulted in

- a loss of income for the parish from in-church collections, both loose cash and envelopes,
- from rental income from hiring out the hall and fundraising events.

It has only been offset by increased automatic payments from members that represent 70% of total income (up from 49% in 2020) and provided confidence to pay our known regular expenses. We are very thankful to our members that regularly donate this way.

However, our expenses have increased 8% over last year due to price increases we all experience and we choose to complete church repairs and maintenance for brickwork, stonework and the rose window repair at level 3 – taking the opportunity as we could not use the church and the scaffolding could remain in place.

To manage costs, we now prepare a budget based on the two years history to ensure we do not run out of cash. This has enabled us to start and complete the presbytery upgrade. The facts remain that we only receive sufficient income to cover known regular expenses but if we are cover future large project costs, we will be reliant on fundraising, one-off donations and bequests.

At mass over the weekend 30/31 July, the committee requested that parishioners review their planned giving

pledges whether by automatic payment, envelop or cash, and to see if they can increase it by 5% to assist the parish finances for the future and to cover rising costs.

Accounts:

From a cash perspective, and after the 1/3 allocation for the church and priest expenses, the parish income was \$104k. Parish expenses totalled -\$104k that included 9K for repairs to the church exterior, so we were balanced from a cash perspective.

From an accounting perspective that includes the depreciation (of -\$51k) and church allocations, total income was \$148k less expenses of -\$184k resulting is a financial loss of -\$38k. The parish accounts for the Charities Commission are attached to this report.

Capital Expenditure

After the parishioner donation of \$50,000 in 2019 for the presbytery upgrade, we finally commenced the project in November 2021 with a budget of \$85k knowing that our parish bank accounts could fund the balance. We began the year with \$145k in the bank and ended the year with \$143k after paying \$9k for church repairs and \$15k towards the presbytery upgrade.

We continue to maintain a register (or wish list) for new and uncompleted projects including maintenance of our existing assets as attached.

FUTURE PROJECTS (Fundraising)

We spent time this year considering projects that would align with our Mission and at the same time provide financial security for the parish. We do not have a formal fundraising

programme so the intent was to start identifying more sizable projects which would require substantial fundraising effort. One of the ideas we explored was better use of our assets, and we chose social housing on the land near the presbytery as a first project idea. On our behalf, Andrew spent considerable time on this project idea getting a better understanding of the impact on parish life. He has prepared a scenario report with the options and what we would need to consider. The next step is to now get parish feedback. We have commissioned a concept drawing which shows how the land could be used for four housing units. This concept design was done by Peter Adam's niece, Terese Fitzgerald from Bayswater at no charge. Terese is employed by Studio Fitzcross <https://www.studiofitzcross.co.nz/> They include the concept drawing on their website.

Liz McMaster
Chair

3 St Leo's Catholic School

St Leo's Catholic School It has been a blessing and honour to be appointed as the Principal of St Leo's Catholic School in May this year. I am looking forward to this exciting journey, working alongside a wonderful school and community. We started the year with 52 pupils, and 3 teachers. The roll has now grown to 55 with 2 more confirmed enrolments in Term 4. We continue to strive to foster a close family atmosphere at St Leo's with small classes, good communication and strong Catholic values. A recent survey highlighted these core attributes as well as the school having a community like feel, excellent teachers, and a wonderful range of teaching and learning experiences.

This year we are working to implement suggestions which were highlighted in the 2020/2021 internal Catholic Character review. These were embedded into the school annual plan. Some of the recommendations made have already been implemented in the school such as:

- Professional learning opportunities organised through Father Neil Darragh around the Sacrament Strand of the RE curriculum.
- Important Feast days are celebrated as a school to allow for further development of our faith.
- Teachers attend cluster meetings which are now called Maramatanga sessions- teacher well-being attended in term 2 and one scheduled in September.
- Classes to attend Parish mass on Fridays.
- More outreach opportunities.
- Staff meetings at the beginning of each strand to discuss theological focus and teaching and learning activities.

We have had a group of students take part in the Sacramental programme. Some students have also shown an interest in Altar Server training, which is now under way. The Mercy values are at the core of our charism and are integrated in all curriculum areas. The Parish and school have been striving to work closely together to empower the school to continue to show Catholic Character in all areas of teaching and learning. I would also like to acknowledge the Parish Community for supporting our school.

Vimi Chandra Principal

4. Children's Liturgy of the Word.

This ministry, at the Sunday morning Mass, has been curtailed by Covid precautions, with young children unable to be vaccinated at first. It is intended to seek a new start with

some new volunteers. We would especially like to hear from parents of young children; there are resources available from the Catholic Liturgy Centre and the Diocesan Religious Education Centre. No expertise is required, only enthusiasm. One leader and one adult helper is required each Sunday. Please contact Kath at the parish office if you are interested. 445 0078 office@devonportcatholic.org.nz

5. Altar Servers Roster

Some steps have been undertaken recently to restart this roster. A parishioner with years of experience in serving on the altar has offered to start training and there are young parishioners who are keen to refresh or begin as servers. This is an ideal way of developing knowledge and faith in our young people. Safeguarding procedures mean that there should always be two adults present at training sessions, and ideally a parent should be one of these. If your child is interested and you would like to help out, please contact Matt McKinney via the parish office.

6. Communion to the Sick and Aged.

While this was disrupted during various lockdowns, there is a small but committed group of volunteers who take communion to the sick and home-bound in our community, although more volunteers are always welcome. The majority of recipients are in rest homes or the local retirement village. If you know of anyone in the parish who would like to receive Communion in this way, please contact the parish office.

7. Church Flower Ministry.

This dedicated group of women enhances our sacred space every week and undertakes special displays, supported

generously by the parish in donations of time, money and physical assistance. It is much appreciated.

A recent highlight was the use of pampas (standing in for toitoi), harakeke, Karaka from the Tipuna Maunga Takuranga, pink lillies and other foliage for our inaugural Liturgy of the Word at Matariki in late June.

The five large lights which Margaret Pereira generously bought us a few years ago all blew their bulbs at once in June. Thank you to Ian Story for generously repairing these so they can continue to add drama to what we do.

Displays of the festive yellow and white at Easter and of course red, white and green at Christmas are a big focus for the group which has an excellent supply of equipment, talent, energy and enthusiasm to carry out this ministry.

Thank you to the wonderful Maria Fleming for so many years of devoted service and all your talents. We are sorry to lose you. We would appreciate any volunteers who may be able to join our group, or to help with donations towards the high price of bought flowers at present.

Thank you to the parish for all your support and if anyone would like to join the roster, please contact Anne Gibson via the parish office.

8. Family Group – Story Family Parish Group.

Another disappointing year due to Covid restrictions. We were only able to have 2 gatherings: they were held at our place, both on our outside deck. For many years now, we have hosted the annual group dinner. Just before Christmas we had a late afternoon dinner, enjoyed by all who came.

Again, late summer had a shared luncheon. Hopefully once the weather warms up we can do it again.

Sadly, Alan and Barbara MacDonald recently left our group, due to on-going health issues. Alan and Barbara had been members for many years and we thank them for their involvement. We wish them well and will keep them in our thoughts and prayers.

That's it, let's hope we can do more activities over the next year. This is the only Family Group functioning still in the Parish, but we are happy to help with any new or resurrected ones.

God Bless, Sue and Ian Story

9. MUSIC MINISTRY

- Music during our Sunday Masses, particularly that which accompanies our singing, invites us to a more active participation in the Liturgy, giving voice to our prayer in a way that lifts it above the mere spoken word. That's the idea, anyway. Returning to Mass after the lockdown almost a year ago, we refrained from singing in order to avoid spread of the virus. Instead, we played various recorded hymns; a device which proved to be adequate, up to a point. Congregational singing was reintroduced at Easter this year, and the difference that has made to our liturgies has been quite palpable, I think.
- The organ is, perhaps, the natural instrument for accompanying our singing at Mass, but it needn't be the only instrument. On rare occasions in the past we have been blessed with other instruments alongside the organ, such as a violin, a flute, a trumpet. This has worked quite well on those occasions and been well received. There is room for parishioners who have some

talent or proficiency in such things to be included from time to time. The guitar as an instrument does not work well with the organ, but on it's own as a means of leading/accompanying the singing, in the right hands, can work well and be a welcome change. Suggestions or feedback about any of this would be very welcome.

- We are grateful for the contributions of talent and time given to our liturgies by our organ musicians: Vincent Phua, Valeria Park, Susan McSweeney, Mia Dobbs and, lately, Roy Netto. Sadly, for us, Vincent will be leaving in September for an extensive sojourn abroad. He has said he will return to us some day and, God willing, he will. Vincent began his ministry with us as an organist when he was fourteen.
- The hymns are chosen with close reference to the Lectionary, the scripture readings for the day. Suggestions for each Sunday come from various resources, including those provided by the Auckland Diocese Liturgy Centre, as well as the Melbourne Arch-diocese's "Summit" website. An attempt is made to balance some of the traditional hymns of the church with more recent compositions. Hymn suggestions are always welcome and will be considered.
- Offers of assistance with music or singing are always welcome.

Contact: Stephen Bell (via the parish office)

10. LITURGY COMMITTEE

The Liturgy Group has been meeting on a monthly basis, a couple of times via Zoom, but usually face-to-face. The group is charged with overseeing all aspects of the liturgical life of the parish in order to foster the full and active participation of the assembly and all who are present. With

this in mind, an important task is to continually review our liturgies with a critical eye: discerning what works well and which areas might need adjusting or improving. Resources provided by the Diocesan Liturgy Centre are helpful for this purpose. An attempt is made to listen to feedback from parishioners and all comments are welcome, especially critical ones, which can be the more useful. We are a small group at present and looking to attract extra members to more accurately represent the views of the whole parish. Other tasks of the group include over-seeing the on-going formation of our liturgical ministers: Particularly, Introducers, Readers, Communion Ministers. The improvement in confidence and ability of these ministers to lead our liturgies in the absence of a priest has been evident in recent times.

Contact: Stephen Bell

11. Parish Choir

Our Parish choir has continued to meet when it has been possible and keep in touch. We practice singing some new music with old favourites and parts of the Mass. Vincent has directed us and shared his musical talents and love of sacred music with us. The Parish choir is part of the overall Music Ministry that is directed by Stephen Bell.

Christmas 'Midnight' Mass 2021 was celebrated with Carols sung outside our church before Mass, followed by a 9pm Mass. This was enjoyed by many parishioners.

We have choir practice on Tuesdays from 7-8pm until the end of September, anyone is welcome to come along. We keep in touch via a Choir WhatsApp group, which has provided community and comfort in times when we were not able to meet face-to-face.

We will be farewelling Vincent at the end of September as he leaves NZ for a new adventure, we wish him well and many of God's blessings on his journey.

Contact: Maria Fleming via the parish office.

12. Rosary Group.

The rosary group has continued to meet every Monday evening to pray the Rosary in the Church at 6.00pm. During lockdown we met by zoom. We have a core group who attend every week. We pray for our own intentions, the intentions of the parish and for needs of wider community, and for any that look for the powerful and motherly intercession of our Lady. We are there from 6.00 to 6.30 and everyone is welcome. We would like to see this group to grow and continue to flourish.

Contact : Elizabeth Light via the parish office

13. Senior Coffee Group.

The past year has been an up and down affair for our group, with lockdowns and the passing on of our founding member. Nola Hendry passed away early December at the great age of 98 and Anne Campbell passed away early August. We are still meeting each month and making small contributions to a sponsored pupil at St Leo's. There are usually eight members present for morning tea. There is a notice in the church newsletters a week before we meet and the address of the meeting place. The school are very happy with our contribution and give us regular updates on the pupil's progress. We meet every 2nd

Thursday of each month and everyone is welcome. Men are welcome too.

Contact: Kathy Lynch via the parish office

14. St Joseph's Guild / Monday Morning Gardening Team.

It is with great sadness that I inform you that in late May, we lost one of our on-call helpers, Brendan Meehan. Most of you won't have known Brendan, as he wasn't a parishioner of our Parish, but a good friend of Darcy O'Brien's. It was around 2000 that Darcy first called on Brendan for any arborist work that needed his skills to attend to, especially in our cemetery area. Only a few weeks before his passing, Brendan came to help to clean up a tree that was damaged in a recent storm. Another larger tree also came down but was too big a job for Brendan and his trusty chainsaw. Fortunately we have a younger Brendan by the name of Jeremy (Fleming) who is also a skilled arborist, to sort it. Since taking over from Darcy December 2013, I called on Brendan a number of times to help with tree work. Rest In Peace dear friend. Our condolences to family.

As mentioned in past reports, we are still planting Clivia along the boundary fence line under the trees. We were given another 30 odd plants recently, which have been planted & getting some more very soon, which should complete our planting of them.

We have had no other major happenings. The team have done a great job in maintaining the hedges, gardens etc. In addition, Alan & Simon (Rooke, Corenna's husband) assisted in getting the presbytery ready for great upgrade and all the

work Alan, Marie, Jeremy and others have done since upgrade. Next step is to get the asphalt by presbytery resurfaced. Hint, hint.

My thanks to Harry, Arthur, Alan, Jeremy, Nevil & Tony. A very special thanks to my dear Sue for all the lovely morning tea pikelets.

God bless, Ian.

Contact: Ian Story, via the parish office

15. St Vincent de Paul, Devonport Conference.

Report to follow at AGM

16. Hospitality – Sunday Morning Tea & Dishes

Our Morning Tea and dishes roster has been operating for 8 years now. Our community enjoys meeting after Mass on a Sunday morning to catch up with other parishioners and to provide a warm welcome for anyone new. One person is rostered each week to provide some nourishment and a warm drink + tidy away the dishes afterwards. It is great to see so many people linger after Mass to foster closer relationships within our Parish community and, of course, to reach out to anyone new.

In wet weather, this can be a bit challenging, as we have no cover, so it would be great if we could find some way to accommodate this.

Thanks to all of our generous volunteers. New volunteers are always welcome.

Contact: Francisca Knottenbelt via the parish office

17. Safeguarding.

Safeguarding is the name given to the processes and procedures by which the Catholic Church ensures that, individually and collectively, we accord each person the value and dignity they deserve as a unique creation in the image and likeness of God. It is about the creation of a Church where everyone can feel safe. It is focussed on the particular protection of the vulnerable within our community, including, but not limited to children and older people. As a parish we can take advantage of the resources and advice supplied by the Diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator, who assists with training and police vetting. Those people already active within Ministries in the parish are already very familiar with Safeguarding, but the people in the pews may be less so. We regularly review our practice as a parish, and in March of this year we reached the Maturity level for the implementation of safe practices and we now focus on renewal and updating. If you have any safeguarding questions, concerns, comments or suggestions please contact Kath Petrie, our Safeguarding Coordinator.

Contact: Kath Petrie 445 0078 / office@devonportcatholic.org.nz