



Archdeacon for Regeneration & Mission

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The Vestry of the Anglican Parish of Upper Riccarton-Yaldhurst
C/o Ven Nick Mountfort
22 Main South Road
Upper Riccarton
CHRISTCHURCH 8042

26 September, 2023

RE: MISSION IMPACT REVIEW OF THE ANGLICAN PARISH OF UPPER RICCARTON-YALDHURST

Greetings in Christ's name. It was a privilege to be with members of the Upper Riccarton-Yaldhurst Parish on Saturday 23 and Sunday 24 September 2023 to undertake a Mission Impact Review. The Diocesan Mission Action Plan mandated the re-introduction of Parish Reviews in 2021. We found the process to be very worthwhile, and trust that parishioners also found it to be a positive experience. We believe that the recommendations listed below, if implemented with consultation and wisdom, will contribute to the health and flourishing of the parish and we urge Vestry to take them seriously.

METHODOLOGY

The Review Team consisted of Ven. Canon Mark Chamberlain (Convenor) and David and Glenda Prosser (Rangiora Parish). Prior to the review weekend we received a total of 110 hard copy and electronic questionnaires which were anonymous (including 58 from the Victory congregation). We also received the (draft) Annual Performance Report for 2022, the Minutes of the 2022 and 2023 AGMs, the latest copy of The Gateway, and the 2023 AGM reports.

We interviewed six people on the Saturday of the review. Those interviewed were Ven Nick Mountfort (Vicar), Ethan Wilson-Bruce (Verge and Digital), Bronwyn Tucker (Vestry), Sue Robb (Synod Rep and Aged Care Homes) Edwin Boyce (Vicar's Warden) and Naomi Selby (9.30am/11.15am congregation member and young mum).

Prior the MIR weekend the writer had attended the 11.15am (special preschool service) and 2pm service (Victory congregation) and David and Glenda had attended both the 11.15am and 2pm services on 17 September. On Sunday morning David and Glenda attended part of the 8am service, then together we attended the 9.30am worship at St Peter's, enjoyed morning tea and fellowship with the congregation, and then presented our findings to approximately 35 parishioners at the Review Feedback Meeting. Initial feedback from the congregation appeared to be very positive with the general agreement that the recommendations were worthwhile and helpful.

ASPECTS OF CONGREGATIONAL LIFE TO CELEBRATE

1. Fantastic Vicar in Nick Mountfort – prayerful, caring, listening, sense of humour, genuine pastor and leader.
2. Very much appreciated Associate Priest in Peg Riley – energetic, great teacher, wonderful with children and young people and pastoral care.
3. Very strong core of talented, active and committed lay people.
4. Many community connections through groups, ministries, and agencies.
5. Beautifully strengthened and redeveloped church building.

6. Well planned and very competently led worship.
7. Excellent choir, Music Director, organ and band.
8. Comprehensive pastoral care network through the 'Care Bears.'
9. The St Peter's Anglican Preschool – successful missional initiative.
10. Ongoing positive relationship with Petersgate Counselling Service
11. Exciting new relationship with the Victory congregation joining the parish and the Diocese.
12. Successful, pioneering, digital ministry reaching many people through valued staff member Ethan Wilson-Bruce.
13. Extensive and well-organized residential care home ministry.
14. Strong desire to engage with and grow ministry to children, young people and families.

QUESTIONS

1. BUILDINGS

- a. Does Vestry have a planned building maintenance programme, including the identification of funding for deferred maintenance?
- b. The parish has a large stock of buildings, and the true cost of maintenance is high. There are planned building maintenance programs available. CPT can provide advice for this.

2. GROWTH PRIORITIES

- a. Having four Growth Priorities is commendable (Digital, Care of Creation, Victory integration, and Family Church) however could there be a greater emphasis on reaching out to new people and congregational growth?
- b. There is a need to have initiatives and programmes that serve the community but also to have initiatives whose goal is parish growth.

3. OWNERSHIP OF GROWTH PRIORITIES

- a. How can the Growth Priorities be owned and enacted by a greater proportion of parishioners?
- b. The review team felt that several of the current Growth Priorities relied on a single person, or very few people. It is ideal to have the whole congregation both own and be committed to the parish's Growth Priorities.

4. VICTORY CONGREGATION

- a. What is the Victory congregation doing well that can become a challenge and learning for the whole parish?
- b. An example of this is the discipleship pathway the congregation appears to have established and be using well with new members.

5. ST LUKE'S

- a. What is the long-term vision for St Luke's?

6. CARE OF CREATION

- a. How is the parish responding to the care of creation?
- b. This emerges from the ACC 'Marks of Mission' and the recent Lambeth Conference Call to care for creation.
- c. How well is this balanced with the parish's response to the other four 'Marks of Mission'?

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. PRAYER

- a. Ensure that prayer is made a priority in the parish by articulating a Biblical theology of prayer, encouragement to pray, and providing opportunities to pray for personal renewal and the regeneration of the parish and Diocese.
- b. The 'Prayer for Growth' could be used more widely and frequently.

2. DISCIPLE MAKING

- a. Develop a 'Disciple-Making Process' or 'spiritual pathway' so that all parishioners, from newcomers to the faith to more mature Christian, can continue to grow as disciples.
- b. We suggest that the model of one-on-one disciple-making be included in this and that all parishioners be invited/encouraged to participate in some way.
- c. Home groups and other regular bible study groups should also be considered. These have proved extremely effective in other parishes.

3. MINISTRY OF ALL THE BAPTISED

- a. Develop a greater emphasis on the ministry of all the baptized by building the lay leadership capacity of the parish through specific training, encouragement, and deployment of parishioners in ministry and mission.
- b. Consider appropriate licensing – as a call to renewed service, not as a 'reward'.

4. STEWARDSHIP PROGRAMME

- a. Undertake a Stewardship Programme in the next six months so that new people are encouraged to become regular financial givers, existing parishioners prayerfully re-evaluate their giving, and everyone is encouraged to become involved with the vision and growth priorities of the parish.
- b. Provide an invitation and mechanism for online viewers to contribute to the ministry of the parish.

5. COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

- a. Set up a Communication Team to develop a comprehensive communication strategy for the parish.
- b. People with the following skills would be suitable members - advertising, marketing, IT, communication, journalism, and media.
- c. The Comms Team would produce, implement, and oversee a Communication Strategy covering website, email, social media, print media, and signage.
- d. The goal would be to lift the parish's profile in the community, showcase the parish as a place of spiritual life and energy, better inform parishioners, and enable enquirers to more easily find and visit your parish.

6. INCORPORATION STRATEGY

- a. Develop an Incorporation Strategy to help newcomers feel that they belong and can easily become fully involved in the life of the parish.
- b. Aspects might include the way the parish engages with people digitally, helping newcomers find and visit the church, personal welcome before during and after worship, invitation to refreshments after worship, follow up visit, meeting parishioners and other newcomers, tracking using Church Management software, inclusion on the parish roll and email newsletter and ministry involvement.

7. PARISH OFFICE

- a. Continue to consider ways of making the parish office more accessible to parishioners and newcomers so that it becomes the 'heart' of the parish.

8. PLANT A NEW 10.30AM CONGREGATION.

a. PREAMBLE

- i. It was overwhelmingly clear from the questionnaire feedback, that the parish has a heart for children, young people, and families and that it wants to 'grow younger'.
- ii. Bishop Peter's vision for the regeneration of our Diocese includes an emphasis on children and families.
- iii. Demographic studies show there are large numbers of young adults living in the immediate vicinity of church corner.
- iv. Other parishes in the Diocese have successfully planted new congregations for children, young people, and families. This has proved to be a successful model to attract and hold young people and young families and for parishes to 'grow younger.'

b. **RECOMMENDATION**

- i. We recommend that the 9.30am Sunday Service be moved to 9am to enable a new congregation to be planted at 10.30am which would have a contemporary, Anglican feel with band music and a Children's Ministry.
- ii. Note that 10am or 10.30am is the 'sweet spot' for families with children and is the most common time for this kind of service in the Diocese and in other denominations.
- iii. The 8am service would be unaffected.
- iv. The 11.15am Family Church would move to the new time of 10.30am albeit with a new feel and emphasis.
- v. The new 10.30am service must be seen as a church plant beginning with a good critical mass of committed people.
- vi. Excellent planning, preparation and promotion would precede the launch date, ideally including learning from such services in other parishes.
- vii. The vision would be to begin with 40 - 50 people but to grow to 80 within 2 years and 100 within 4 years.
- viii. The style and content of the 9.30am (at the new time of 9am) service would remain unchanged.

PARISHIONER RESPONSES NOTED AT THE TIME OF THE FEEDBACK SESSION

1. Some queried the availability of families if older teens and young adults have jobs. The resulting suggestion was to drop "Family" from the name of the new service in favour of "All Age Worship" or "Contemporary Worship".
2. It was clarified that the new service would be an Anglican expression of worship in a contemporary way.
3. A reminder not to promote it as a "family" service as the time may attract older people too. The service should be open to all.
4. A suggestion to simply call it "The 10.30 Service".
5. A reminder that the Lambeth Conference resulted in the Lambeth Call to take care of creation seriously, otherwise we were looking at the collapse of Creation. The call is to transform the world, not just us.
6. May be hard for disabled people to get to an earlier service (9am)
7. It was suggested that the change in timing would mean that the 8am congregation would no longer be able to fellowship after the service – but it was pointed out that the Atrium area can be closed off from the rest of the Church building, as is already happening.
8. Victory Church is a fabulous experience, but the culture and way of worship is different and reflects their values, just as Anglican worship reflects the culture and values of Anglicans. The two congregations could learn from each other and their drawing closer together is a very positive move ("better together"), but they should not be combined. The comment was made that the 2pm service be called "The 2pm Mandarin Congregation" rather than "Victory Church". (We think any re-naming should be the initiative of that congregation).

CONCLUSION

The parish has developed a number of excellent community ministries in the past, including Petersgate and the St Peter's Anglican Preschool, and these showcase the parish as a caring, credible witness in the community as well as providing many opportunities to build relationships with people. However younger generations are not strongly represented in the worshiping life of the parish, and it appears that the longer-term future of the parish may be in doubt.

The reviewers felt that the parish was at a crossroads. There are presently good numbers of people at worship on Sundays, there are many lay leaders who are very committed and involved in the wider activities of the parish, there are a good number of community groups and outreach groups operating, and there are some (diminishing) sources of income over and above the direct giving of

parishioners. However, the parish needs to develop a fresh missional engagement with younger people and young families. This is not only pragmatically wise but a missional imperative.

The development of a new 10.30am contemporary service is therefore crucial to the success of a vision for reaching children, young people, and their families. The first 7 recommendations must be seen as undergirding and supporting the 8th recommendation which is to successfully plant a new 10.30am, contemporary congregation and thus reach younger generations with the gospel.

The Review Team would like to thank all those who participated in this review, and we pray it will be used by God for the flourishing and growth of God's church.

Finally, please call on me for advice, support, information, or to discuss or brainstorm further details on the establishment of a new congregation. I will be in touch with Vestry through the Vicar for a follow up visit in 4 to 6 months' time.

Grace and peace,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Mark Chamberlain', written in a cursive style.

Ven. Canon Mark Chamberlain

(On behalf of the Review Team)

Attachments:

Analysis of Parish Demographics, D Prosser

Analysis of Parish Finances, D Prosser