

Our Lady of the Valleys Parish



Annual Report
2021

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Agenda for Annual General Meeting

1st August 2021

Pettit Centre Heretaunga

- † Welcome
- † Opening Prayer
- † Present / Apologies
- † Accepting of Minutes of 2020 AGM
- † Tabling / Acceptance of the Annual Reports
(including Annual Financial Returns)
 - Matters Arising from Annual Report
- † Elections of New Parish Councillors
- † General Business
- † Closing Prayer
- † Afternoon Tea

Opening Prayer

Reader: Lord as we prepare to begin our meeting
We recall your promise to be present
When two or three are gathered in your name.
We know that without you here among us
And within each one of us
We will labour in vain.

All: Unite us, Lord, in your Spirit

Reader: We rejoice that we are blessed and called together
To work in your name.
We pray that we will respond generously
To this opportunity to serve you
And that we will grow in our Christian calling.

All: Unite us, Lord, in your Spirit.

Reader: Inspire us with your Spirit of wisdom
Plant seeds of your vision in our hearts and minds
Give us humour and give us humility
In our working with one another
So that we may know the privilege of participating
In the coming of your kingdom

All: Unite us, Lord, in your Spirit

**All: It is our hope that the business of this meeting
will be our spiritual transformation
and the transformation of others through us
and not simply the accomplishment
of tasks and projects.
We ask this of you as we now begin
In the name of the Father, and of the Son
And of the Holy Spirit.**

Our Lady of the Valleys
Minutes of Annual General Meeting 2020
at Pettit Centre Heretaunga
30th August 2020
2:00 pm



Present

Prue von Keisenberg (Chair), Fr Tony Kearns, Kevin von Keisenberg (Minutes), Roger Wasson, Darrell Mellow, Colin Braddock, Deirdre Braddock, Rita David, Josephine Eynon, Caryl Robinson, Terry O'Brien, Heather O'Brien, Chris Henley, Therese Anstiss, Patricia Byrne, Margaret Lanigan, Trish Leahy, Veronica Sawers, Gordon Holmes, Linda Holmes, Michael Jonassen, Tony Packer.

Welcome

Prue welcomed everyone to the 2020 AGM speaking to the unusual circumstances of Covid 19 and the need for social distance and the cancelation of the afternoon tea after this meeting.

Opening Prayer

Read by all present

Apologies

Conor Healy, John O'Malley, Alan and Joan Thom, Chris Wasson.

Minutes of the 2019 AGM for Our Lady of the Valleys Parish

Minutes of the 2019 meeting had been circulated to all parishioners prior to the meeting. Copies had also been in the foyer of both Churches. Minutes were taken as read. A proposer was called for by the Chairperson that these minutes were a true record of the 2019 meeting.

Proposed by Roger Wasson that the minutes of 2019 were a correct record of the 2019 AGM for Our Lady of the Valleys.

Seconded by Michael Jonassen

Matters arising from Minutes

None

Tabling of Annual Reports:

Reports had been circulated several weeks prior to the AGM and copies also available through the parish office and in the foyer of both churches.

The following reports were tabled

- Parish Council Annual Report
- Liturgy Committee Report
- Finance Committee
- Catholic Women's League
- Circle of Friendship
- Filipino Community
- Overflow Youth Group
- Passionist Family Groups
- Samoan Community
- St Brendan's School
- St Vincent de Paul Society Heretaunga
- St Vincent de Paul Society Stoke Valley
- Annual Financial Report 2019 – 20

Matters arising from reports

None

Election of new Parish Council members

One nomination was received with the nominee being elected

Ahmed Hemady

As there were still some vacancies the Meeting gave power to the committee to co-opt members if necessary

General Business

Report from Cardinal in respect to review of Presbyteries and Churches.

The letters for the Cardinal were read out at the meeting.

Both Prue and Roger addressed this in detail advising the meeting that a favourable response had been received after a number of letters had been sent to the Catholic Centre with further details supporting our recommendations, and hence the delay in receiving the final statement from the Cardinal.

Father indicated he would publish a copy of the letter in the Parish newsletter when the parish opens for Masses, as not all parishioners receive the weekly newsletter by email.

On-line Masses

Margaret Lanigan spoke about the links that were available for online masses during the Covid 19 lockdown period and asked for these to be advertised by the parish in the event of a further lockdown in the future.

Insurance on Church Property

Michael Jonassen asked about the insurance in respect of Church property.

Roger Wasson advised that there were ongoing questions still to be answered about the new insurance figure.

Fr Tony added that it was a complicated issue because insurance is a group insurance policy for the Diocese.

Fr Tony thanked the three outgoing councillors Prue von Keisenberg, John O'Malley and Michael Jonassen for their contribution to the Parish.

Prue advised those present of a meeting to be held on 2nd September at the Dowse Art Gallery Lower Hutt to discuss the End-of-Life Choice Act.

Closing prayer read by all present and meeting closed at 2.50pm.

Parish Council Annual Report



Current Parish Council members are Conor Healy (Chairperson), Darrell Mellow (Deputy Chair), Fr Tony Kearns (PP), Lagi Aukusitino (Minutes), Tino Aukusitino, Tiana Sio, Ahmed Hemady, Nadene Maraku, St Brendan's School Representative

Following last year's AGM, the parish council was commissioned during the 5.30pm Mass at St Francis Xavier on Oct 31st 2020.

It's been another busy year for the parish with the highlight no doubt being our birthday anniversaries held over February 26th to 28th. We celebrated 60 years for St Brendan's School and Our Lady of the Grace Church as well as 70 years for the establishment of the Parish in Heretaunga

On Friday 26th February, we started with a wonderful celebration mass with our school and parish community. This was followed by a powerful powhiri back at St Brendan's school and special reflections from Father James Lyons, and foundation pupils Sister Kathleen Ruck and Father Kevin Connors which not only had the adults hooked but our children clinging to every word. We then gathered for morning tea in the hall.

On Friday evening, our Mix and Mingle event at the NZCIS was another opportunity for past and present friends to gather, reminisce and share more reflections on the journey of our school and parish over the last 60 and 70 years respectively.

The quiz FUNraiser on Saturday night was another success with a capacity 19 tables participating. Congratulations to the Quizzly Bears who were crowned winners, and the many raffle prize winners.

Unfortunately during the quiz we received the news the country would be going back into Level 2 which meant our Sunday Celebration mass had to be postponed.

Celebrations like we had don't just magically happen. We acknowledge our birthday committee, and the many groups and individuals of our parish and school community who contributed in a variety of ways to a wonderful celebration weekend. Thank you!

Other key highlights:

Given the importance of our school in our parish we decided to create a permanent position on the council for a St Brendan's representative. This secures a voice for the school to raise and be part of parish discussions. We are all proud of the wonderful work Veronica and her team do for our community with our young people.

We completed the Safeguarding self-review and were pleased to confirm the parish is in a good position with processes and procedures we have in place.

Whilst the result of the End-of-Life Choice referendum was disappointing, the Council was involved with various lobbying and events around this important matter.

The Filipino chaplaincy were given the green light to form a barangay in the parish.

Work continues with our neighbours St Joseph's around a youth movement for Upper Hutt

We are blessed to have our Overflow Youth Group in the Parish and their recent Worship night in March was wonderful.

We were blessed to have the Youth Development Unit Army visit us on the 29th Nov at 10.30am Mass to experience our worship. A wonderful bunch of young people. We are hoping to make this an annual visit for this programme.

The Council continues to work with the hard working Liturgy and Finance committees.

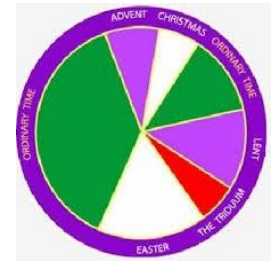
I want to thank Father Tony for his guidance and leadership and my fellow councillors for their support. We all look forward to fellow parishioners coming on board the council to bring their talents to our parish community.

God Bless

Conor Healy

**Chairperson,
Parish Council**

Liturgy Committee Report



Dear Fellow Parishioners,

The Liturgy Committee meets every fourth Thursday of the month in St. Francis Xavier or Our Lady of Grace meeting rooms. Along with Father Tony Kearns, our Parish Priest, we plan for the special feast days and celebrations that are an integral part of the calendar year of the Catholic Church in New Zealand.

The Catholic Centre provides a wide variety of courses and workshops to support our own spiritual knowledge and development. This year the workshops that we attended were facilitated by Father Patrick Bridgeman and Michael Mangin. The Catholic Centre also provides musical, visual and liturgical related resources which support us as we plan for the various Liturgical Celebrations.

The main Liturgical Events during the year are Easter, Pentecost and Christmas. The Liturgy Committee seeks the assistance from our fellow parishioners to take on the many roles and ministries within the parish. These include: Sacristans, Greeters, Leaders, Readers, Writers of Prayers of the Faithful, Children's Liturgy Leaders, Altar Servers, Extra-ordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, music groups and choirs, etc. We are very aware of the special character of each of the two parish churches. There are times when we come together as one parish, in one location to celebrate special feast days such as: All Souls Day, All Saints, Assumption, or special Liturgical Celebrations such as: Good Friday, Holy Thursday, Easter and Christmas Reconciliations, First Reconciliation, Confirmation, First Holy Communion, and Parish, Children/Family Masses.

In the past, the Liturgy Committee have planned Family Masses and Parish Masses to be held on Sunday mornings at Our Lady of Grace Church. These Masses have usually been held each school term and parents or grandparents have been encouraged to support their child/children to undertake the various Sunday Ministries. Parishioners were invited to stay for morning tea after Mass and Conor Healy has organised a team to set up sporting activities on the grass alongside the church.

During 2019 until the present Covid 19 has affected these special celebrations. This has seen the cancellation and /or the postponement of School Masses, Family Masses, Easter celebrations (2020), the Chrism Mass at Our Lady of Kapiti Church (2020), Ash Wednesday School Mass (2021). The ashes were distributed at the next Sunday Mass. At Christmas 2020, we trialled the inception of having 3 Masses. The Family Mass at 5:30 pm on Christmas Eve at Our Lady of Grace Church, the Midnight Mass at St. Francis Xavier and the 9:30 am Mass on Christmas Day at Our Lady of Grace Church.

When we have experienced Level 1, we have been encouraged to continue with contact tracing for Masses and other parish gatherings. Parishioners have also been asked not to shake hands at the Sign of Peace, but rather acknowledge with a smile or greeting, the holy water fonts are not to be used and the parishioners have received communion under one kind. Also, social distancing has continued when the need arises.

Training workshops were mainly suspended during this time. They are now starting to be offered through the Catholic Centre.

During the planning process, for the various Liturgical Celebrations, every attempt is made to allocate these in an equitable manner between the two churches. In the past, the Liturgy Committee plans the Sunday Masses, and we also provide opportunities for training the various parish ministries in their roles. At times this has involved inviting experts to present workshops, or fellow parishioners, who have experience and expertise to present the required training in the targeted areas where further training is required, and as new people have taken on new ministries. The training programme has been put on hold due to the uncertain times that we have been experiencing. This will restart once sometime in the near future.

Our Lady of the Valleys Liturgy Committee is a very small group of committed parishioners, who would like to take this opportunity to thank our fellow parishioners for their generous support that we receive from those who share their talents, time and treasures for our Liturgical Celebrations. We would welcome anyone who would like to join us in planning and delivering these important Liturgical Celebrations, or the other parish ministries who also serve our parish.

God Bless,

Liz McCaul,

**Chair
Liturgy Committee**

Finance Committee



The Finance Committee is made up by the following, Roger Wasson (chair), Fr Tony, Terry O'Brien, Colin Braddock, Patrick Krippner, Sylwia Jurkwicz, Juan Balao and Bryan Scahill.

The Committee continues to manage the property portfolio and the ongoing maintenance of the various buildings that are owned by the parish.

We have recently completed a renewal of the licence, that allows the Koraunui Marae, the use of the hall at Stokes Valley and to ensure the maintenance of the building by them as required.

We are also in discussion with the Marae about a revue of the lease terms that we have with them over the land that is occupied by the Marae.

The Committee, continue to encourage parishioners to use Automatic Payment or Direct Credit options for their financial support of the Parish. These methods reduce the amount of money held on the premises and also streamline the administration process of recording parishioners giving.

Over the last 12 months, it would appear, according to the figures, that our income has increased. This has arisen because of the Covid lock down and the restriction on public gatherings, which has meant that the costs of running the parish during that time were reduced.

We still have a number of maintenance items to deal with, primarily St Joseph's chapel (crying room), the Pettit Centre and the large windows on the church at Heretaunga

This report for the year ending 31st March 2021, forms part of the Annual Pastoral. A summary of significant information of this report is attached.

Excess of Income over Expenditure	12,445.21
This Gain includes a non-cash charge for Depreciation on Fixed Assets of \$7,784 for the year	
Net Cash Inflows/(Outflows)	21,499.33
Nett Assets	1,173,874.12
This is total assets owned by the Parish less the amount of liabilities owed by the Parish	
CDF Loan	NIL
The CDF Loan for Earthquake Strengthening of Our Lady of Grace was fully paid off in January 2020	
Total Funds gifted by Parishioners	158,268.16
Insurance Costs	23,174.78
Archdiocesan Levies	20,630.17
These provide funding to the Archdiocese of Wellington to cover costs of running the Archdiocese and National Commitments	
Clergy Support	50,781.98
This is the amount the Parish pays to support the Clergy of the Archdiocese both those in active ministry and those who have retired from active ministry	

Significant Items of Upcoming Maintenance include

Realignment of roofline of Pettit Centre to remove internal gutter and repair flood damaged (12/12/19)	6,000.00
Repair of glass wall of porch outside OLOG meeting room	3,000.00
Replacement of rotten bargeboards OLOG	4,000.00
Replacement of end windows OLOG	2,000.00

Roger Wasson

**Chairman
Finance Committee**



Catholic Women's League

Heretaunga Branch of Catholic Women's League is happy to report we have about twenty-six active members. The average number at our monthly meetings is around twenty. We welcome any casual visitors too. We continue to be a social group while still maintaining our core values of faith and service.

We get together regularly with other Branches in the Wellington region to renew friendships and to celebrate special occasions. During last year of 2020 and this year of 2021 we had a number of activities cancelled due to the COVID 19 virus.

Our November meeting was held in the Parish Church with Joy Cowley as our speaker and this was open to the Wellington Archdioceses. It was a well attend day and people came away feeling that Joy had given them a number of areas for reflection. A shared luncheon which also gave people the opportunity to reflect on what Joy had said. In December we held an Advent reflection at our church which was attended with Upper Hutt and Hutt City League members plus our Christmas lunch which was held at Te Marua Golf Club. Always a very enjoyable get-together. February saw us hosting a Garden Party under the shade of a very large tree in the grounds of the Church. Upper Hutt Branch joined us in this very pleasant afternoon. This is where the president Chris Wasson handed over to Marilyn Keating as President for the year. The conference was held in March at Kapiti and 6 members attended. Unfortunately the meeting for April, which was to be Stations of the Cross, had to be cancelled due to an outbreak of Covid 19. This was unfortunate because having the Stations before Easter can be a very uplifting time before the Easter season. We have had another change to the directions of the President and we have decided to Co-president with Chris Wasson, Kathleen Emmerson and Marilyn Keating sharing the role.

We have not had a major fundraiser event this year, so far, but I am sure that this will happen before the year is over. We still help out with the Sisters of Compassion and our local school St Brendan's. We also have been collecting toiletries for the Lower Hutt Hospital for people who find themselves in hospital without having the necessary items for a shower etc. We were able to help with a request from the Chaplain at the hospital for Rosary Beads for people at the end of life care.

Much of what we do relies on the support and generosity of the Parish and Father Tony. With thanks and blessings to you all.

Marilyn Keating

Co-President

Circle of Friendship

As our name suggests, we are a very friendly, informal gathering (no membership requirements, minutes, motions or attendance records!)



Meetings are held on the first Saturday of each month from 2-4pm in the Pettit Centre in Heretaunga.

Our gatherings are kept interesting with guest speakers most months and voluntary 'sharing time' other months e.g.: favourite books, recommended movies, holiday musings, childhood memories, recipes, but to name a few).

The subject of each meeting is advertised the week before in the church bulletin, and women of all ages are most welcome to come along any (or every) month.

We begin with a short prayer and /or bible reading relating to the theme. Guest speakers include people from our local community. We are always open to suggestions for future speakers of interest.

Our attendance averages 20+ to 40 and friends of all denominations are welcome to come to any gathering.

Entry donation of a gold coin is used to cover any expenses and a donation to the speaker's charity or a charity of our choice.

A 'book-swap' table is a popular draw card, and there is a box for collection of any toiletry items for the needy.

The afternoon ends with fellowship over afternoon tea.

Committee Members: Brenda Lister, Denise Allen, Helen Dench, Josephine Eynon, Judy Mc Mahon, , Kathy Smith, Pauline Quinn, Rita David, Trish McCauley.

Filipino Community

(Community for the Holy Family and the Filipino Chaplaincy: Barangay Our Lady of Miraculous Medal)



The Community for the Holy Family, a faith group composed mainly of migrant Filipino families, continues to provide music ministry and presence in Our Lady of the Valleys Parish. It is a part of the choir rotation that sings a combination of New Zealand and Filipino liturgical songs on the fourth Sundays of the Month for the 10.30 mass in Our Lady of Grace Church, Heretaunga. This serves an avenue for Filipino parishioners to participate in the parish by being a part of the music ministry. The community also meets at least twice a month for bible study, prayer group activities, and choir practice. On the 27th of March this year, the Community of the Holy Family organised a Lenten Recollection facilitated by the Cenacle Sisters and Father Gerry Burns.

Last year, the Filipino Chaplain, Fr. Marlon Tebelin, together with its council members met with the Parish Council of Our Lady of the Valleys (OLOV) Parish and Fr. Tony Kearns. The agenda of the meet was to facilitate the establishment of a new barangay, Barangay of Our Lady of Miraculous Medal, which will encompass the community under the OLOV Parish. The barangay is a Filipino term that denotes the smallest administrative unit in the Philippines. Our Lady of Miraculous Medal is the patroness saint of the barangay.

The establishment of the barangay in the Parish is an initiative of the Filipino Chaplaincy. It is to organise a ministry that will motivate, encourage, and mobilise Filipino families to be active members of their respective parishes. The barangay will serve as a key point of coordination for the chaplaincy to be able to provide pastoral care to Filipino families, especially the new migrants.

Commencement of the Barangay of Our Lady of Miraculous Medal was celebrated with the first Filipino Mass on the 15th of November last year in St. Francis Xavier's Church in Stokes Valley. After the mass, Fr. Marlon Tebelin gave a presentation about the formation of the barangay, as well as its cause, and its purpose. The development of the barangay was halted by the COVID 19 restrictions and the focus for preparations and celebration of the 500 Years of Philippine Christianity which was commemorated on the 4th of April this year. At present, the barangay has created its own Facebook page and group composed of 25 families and growing. Its next activity is a celebration of the Marian Month to be held on the coming 29th of May in Our Lady of Grace Church in Heretaunga.

The Barangay of Our Lady of Miraculous Medal is a gateway for Filipino members of the community to offer their services to Our Lady of the Valleys Parish. At the same time, it serves an opportunity for Filipino migrants to be provided with Pastoral Care from the Filipino Chaplaincy and the parish as well. The Community of the Holy Family continues to provide the parish with its services through the music ministry. Both the barangay and the Community of the Holy Family encourage active involvement of migrants and the poor in the parish.

Ahmed B Hemady

Filipino Barangay Co-ordinator

Overflow Youth Group



Unfortunately, there is not much to report from the youth. Due to COVID – all of our youth activities, even the Morning tea's after 8.30am mass, have been on hold.

However, since OVERFLOW's creation in 2019 – it has been one major rollercoaster!

We started by having monthly Worship Night sessions. It was great to explore different themes that our elected Worship leaders for the month would pray and discern upon. Each night was different than the last and throughout the Worship Nights, we saw every individual grow in their own way and it was great to see a different kind of worship in our Parish. We are currently praying and discerning about future Worship Nights so watch this space!

Near the end of 2019 – start of 2020, we as a group prayed upon the possibility of leading music liturgy in our Parish masses. Therefore, every 3rd Sunday, OVERFLOW have started to lead music liturgy at SFX and every 5th Sunday, we are at OLOG. This has been a very challenging journey for all of us, but it has been great to sing together with our brother and sisters in Christ!

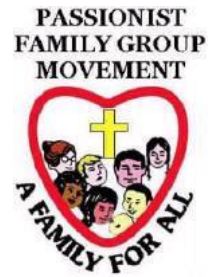
Open call to all those budding musicians who may be looking for an opportunity to offer their gifts to the Lord – Haere mai ra!!! We are always open to those who are able and willing to offer their gifts, just let us know 😊 You can contact us via our email overflow31032019@gmail.com or come talk to either Barbara or Lagi after Mass if you are interested.

Blessings,

Barbara Aukusitino

Youth Co-ordinator

Passionist Family Groups



The aims of the PFGs are based on Acts 2:44-47 which promotes community, by sharing our Christian life and supporting each other, especially in times of need. Great friendships develop as groups gather on a monthly or bi-monthly basis.

Activities usually involve refreshments in our homes or cafes, and outings for plays, movies, museum, walks, train trips, bowling, parks and beaches

Father Tony is always supportive, often contributing with a House Mass for some of the groups.

Combined group events, with the parish, include the picnic in February, the lunch in July and the Races games night in November.

We have five groups in the parish with coordinators.

Compassion Group	Kathleen and Barry Emmerson
Grace Group	Christine and Nigel Pask
Henley Group	Christine and John Henley
Nixon Group	Tricia and Keith Nixon
Jones Group	Lyn and Paul Jones
Parish Coordinators	Heather and Terry O'Brien

As well as coordinating our parish groups, Heather and Terry are Hutt regional coordinators for Upper Hutt and Lower Hutt parishes, also meeting regularly with the Wellington teams.

An annual regional PFG day is held (this year in August) for all members of family groups in the Wellington region. Father Brian Traynor comes from Australia to share ideas and lead discussion, usually followed by a pizza meal.

New members are warmly welcomed!

Terry and Heather O'Brien
Passionist Family Group Co-ordinators

Samoa Community



Our Lady of the Valleys Parish is fortunate in that we have not one but two Samoan communities operating within the Parish, one based in Stokes Valley and the other in Heretaunga. These groups provide a rich and supportive cultural environment for the Samoan families in the Parish and share their cultural gifts and talents with the wider Parish family.

Stokes Valley Samoan Community

The Samoan Community here in Stokes Valley (known as the Aulotu), have two main groups that branch from this main community – the Samoan Aufaipese (Choir) and Samoan Autalavou (Youth).

One major milestone that we could report is that our Choir master, Le Mamea Filifilimaali'i Pute Tafuna'i, has launched a world first Catholic Hymn book in the Samoan Language. The Hymn books range from hymns and psalms to Praise and Worship music. On Easter Sunday @ SFX, we celebrated mass to bless the books that were ordered for our Choir before the official launch in Australia. It was well attended by people from all over Wellington and includes those from other Christian denominations.

With COVID restrictions on and off this past year, our activities have not been too different than previous years for our choir. We have choir practice every Wednesday 7pm (sometimes on Tuesdays at 7pm if needed) and Saturday 2pm to prepare for the Sunday mass. Our choir sings every week at SFX at the Sunday 8.30am masses and whenever merged masses are held in SFX. We also participated in the Good Friday Walk; a collaboration of participating Christian churches in the Stokes Valley community and like the Stations of the Cross; we travel to each church following the cross in commemoration for what was to happen later that day.

As an aulotu, we continue to maintain the grounds around our church here in Stokes Valley. Our work includes a range of jobs – mowing the grass, pruning trees and even water-blasting. We also church clean whenever one of the families in the aulotu is rostered to church clean. Every fourth Sunday of the month at 11.30am, we continue to celebrate mass in the Samoan language as we are a part of the Wellington Samoan Chaplaincy.

Aukusitino Aukusitino

President of the Samoan Aulotu - SFX



St Brendan's School

Since the 2020 St Brendan's Annual Report to the Parish, our school and community have continued to feel the ripple effects of the global pandemic. With a positive attitude and lots of creative problem solving our team at St Brendan's has provided our students with a wide range of opportunities while still being responsive to changing alert levels.

At the beginning of Term 3 last year we welcomed the Catholic Special Character Review team. They visited classrooms, met with our full St Brendan's teaching and support teams, connected with our community and checked our school documentation. The team had a very full timetable as we endeavoured to showcase so much of what we do at St Brendan's. We were grateful to the friends and family of our school community for making time to connect with the team. These reviews are designed to assist schools to provide authentic Catholic education, which is always aspirational and focused on continued improvement and transformation.

Catholic Special Character Review Summary

St. Brendan's School, the only school of that name in New Zealand, is a full primary with a maximum roll of 290. It was founded in 1961 by the Missionary Sisters of the Society of Mary (S.M.S.M) and is situated in the parish of Our Lady of the Valleys.

A hallmark of St. Brendan's, according to all those surveyed and interviewed, is that it is like a big family. The school provides a happy and secure environment where children are nurtured holistically. There is a strong sense of community which is welcoming, inclusive and caring. The school's transparent and regular communication during the Covid-19 national lockdown, gave children and whānau clear information as well as reassurance, and this care and sensitivity to student and family wellbeing continues to be demonstrated into the present alert level.

The school has a rich spiritual life, underpinned by its mission statement and the new GRACE values. This is nurtured by daily class prayer, weekly whole school and staff

prayer, as well as retreat opportunities for students and staff and staff professional learning. Special times in the life of the Church are celebrated with liturgy or Mass as a school, as well as regular attendance at weekday Mass. The school supports the parish Sacramental programmes which are run by a teacher from St. Brendan's. The Parish Priest is a visible presence in the school and a regular visitor to classrooms and the staffroom.

The mandated Religious Education programme is implemented with integrity and sound pedagogy. It is based on the principles of Catholic Social Teaching and integrated across the curriculum. Teachers empower students through authentic faith experiences which teach them what it means to be Catholic in the world. This leads to action in service of others. We continue to develop affective assessment across the school and capture this so that it can be reported to the Board and the community.

Students are respectful, relaxed and happy, and relationships between staff and students are positive and warm. Students feel that they are accepted and included for who they are. Parishioners commented that students demonstrate an attitude of gratitude and of service, which can be seen in the way they offer their help in many small ways. Student leadership responsibilities teach them to serve as a way of being.

The Principal and staff, with the support of a committed and effective Board of Trustees, are unified in upholding the Catholic Character in any of the decisions they make for the students of St. Brendan's School.

The full 2020 St Brendan's School Catholic Review Report is available at our school office or on our [school website](#).

Via a letter from Jenny Gordon, Vicar for Education Archdiocese of Wellington, Cardinal John sent his congratulations and gratitude to the whole school whanau and faith community for enduring commitment to ensure each child receives an excellent Catholic education at St Brendan's School.

This year, 2021, marks the 60th anniversary of the establishment of St Brendan's School, and the 70th anniversary of the appointment of the first Parish Priest, Fr Heavey, in Heretaunga. During the last weekend in February we marked these events in our Parish and School. Also, Our Lady of Grace Church was opened in 1960, but last year's celebrations had to be postponed.

At Mass on Friday, 26 February, the words of the song, 'Standing on the Shoulders' were shared to acknowledge that we, the current community, stand on the shoulders of those who came before us. We were joined by some very special guests, including Sr Kathleen Ruck, SMSM and Fr Kevin Connors - both foundation students, and Fr James Lyons, our Parish Priest 1992-1995, who were all able to share personal reflections. Past students, families, colleagues and friends, together with current families, parishioners and friends attended our Mass at Our Lady of Grace. After Mass a Powhiri

of special welcome was held at St Brendan's, followed by the cutting of a birthday cake and an opportunity to share memories.

Our success criteria at school on Friday, was for everyone 'to have fun'! Rotating in House groups, our students had a fun filled day. In the evening we gathered for a Mix and Mingle event which was an opportunity to connect and reflect. On Saturday night our school hall was filled for the 'Funraiser' Quiz. Sadly, during the evening, news was received that Alert Levels were changing which meant that the scheduled Sunday Birthday Celebration Mass had to be postponed.

The birthday events were all well attended and celebrated with enthusiasm and joy. We are grateful to all who helped us celebrate, a wonderful time of sharing memories and making new ones.

Last year St Brendan's Feast Day was a focus during Distance Learning. We were delighted to be able to gather for our Feast Day this year. Cardinal John joined us for Mass at Our Lady of Grace. We also warmly welcomed the principals of St Patrick's College Silverstream and St Joseph's Upper Hutt, together with colleagues and students from both schools. Many family, friends and parishioners joined us for our Feast Day Mass.

At school everyone had fun in our House groups, all of which have special significance to St Brendan:

Tralee: The place of Saint Brendan's birth. Motto: *Life is a gift, treasure it.*

Clonard: Saint Brendan attended this famous Monastic School. Motto: *With knowledge we grow.*

Galway: Where Saint Brendan set off exploring. Motto: *On your journey make a difference.*

Annagh: Where Saint Brendan died. Motto: *Learn from today to create a better tomorrow.*

At St Brendan's we treasure life as a gift, grow with knowledge, aspire to make a difference and reflect on today to set goals for influencing the future.

In 2020 our overriding Catholic Social Justice principle was 'Human Dignity' and in 2021 it is 'Human Equality'. The Catholic Social Teaching principles continue to shape our integrated learning.

Highlights of opportunities to connect with our Parish and faith community during the last twelve months include:

- † Significant School Masses to start and finish the school year, Ash Wednesday and Assumption of Mary Masses, promotion of Parish Family Masses. Class Masses and Liturgies supported by Fr Tony.
- † Termly Powhiri to welcome new students/families of our community.
- † Commissioning Mass for Catholic School staff.
- † Saint Brendan's Feast Day.
- † Regular Friday Mass schedule continues with students taking an active part.
- † Special Liturgies for Anzac, Grandparents, Gratitude and Armistice.
- † Easter candle design competition.

- † Parish volunteers supporting music for school Masses.
- † Weekly St Vincent de Paul collections and fundraising for Caritas.
- † Connecting with the Home of Compassion Island Bay.
- † Sacramental programme.
- † Seasons for Growth programme.
- † Celebration of Laudato Si' Week, Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and Suzanne Aubert's Birthday.
- † Connecting with Catholic Women's League and the monthly Community Cafe catch ups.
- † Strengthening links with our neighbouring, and other, Catholic schools.

We are looking forward to celebrating Catholic Schools Day together with our neighbouring schools at the end of Term 3.

The 2021 theme is: Tūrangawaewae: Catholic Schools – A Place to Stand.

Thank you to our supportive Parish community and Fr Tony. Our students, families and staff acknowledge and are grateful for your many contributions.

Please know that our gate is always open and you will be warmly welcomed if you would like to visit.

God bless,

Veronica Sawers

Principal



St Vincent de Paul Society

Our Lady of the Valleys Parish is blessed to have two St Vincent de Paul Conferences working in the Parish, one in Heretaunga and the other in Stokes Valleys. Each in their own way strive to follow the ideals of the Society to provide support for the less fortunate members of our Parish family and also the wider civic community.

St Vincent de Paul Society – Heretaunga

Members of our conference continue to put their time and energies into a variety of activities. These consist of visitations (both public and private homes) - 85hrs; transport - 40hrs; food parcels – 20hrs while 80 hours were spent at the St Vinnies' shop, in Stokes Valley.

We have maintained our links with the St John's Anglican food bank; providing non-perishable goods kindly donated by parishioners. We also receive very generous baskets of goods from St Brendan's School. We distributed grocery and warehouse vouchers amounting to over \$2,800.

Our conference is very grateful to the Stokes Valley conference for their continued financial support.

I would like to give my personal thanks to my committee members - Brenda Lister (Secretary) Marion Conroy, Leola Kelly, Josette Gibbs, for their valued support.

Because of Covid conference meetings were irregular during the year.

During the last year our President Terry Kavanagh became unwell and has not been able to attend meetings but has still been the contact person for us. We wish him well.

Also towards the end of last year I was indisposed for three months. During this time Frank Quin a past member of the Society offered to help to deliver the donations to the food bank and also to assist in the distribution of the food and gift vouchers at Christmas. We are very grateful for this assistance.

There are still some empty seats around the committee table if you would like to join us. We meet on the second Wednesday of the month (1 hour from 7.15pm).

Kevin von Keisenberg

Treasurer

St Vincent de Paul Society – Stokes Valley



The first half of the year was dominated by COVID 19, this disrupted our charitable work. Our shop had to be shut down during the lockdown. As our food delivery driver was over 70 years of age, and we had to ask the Salvation Army to take over the distribution of food. Jan Fletcher was able to deliver food parcels to those families who needed help immediately. This highlighted our reliance on the 70-year-old volunteers.

The opportunity shop in Stokes Valley when it reopened after the lockdown was very busy. Jan Fletcher our Co-ordinator did a great job organising the shop and our volunteers. Many thanks to our 14 volunteers for making the shop a warm and welcoming shop. WE REALLY NEED AT LEAST 6 MORE VOLUNTEERS.

At Christmas we delivered to 36 families Christmas hampers and 140 presents for their children.

A special thanks to Veronica Sawers and her staff and the pupils of St Brendan's School who gave of their time and donated food and toys for Christmas. Also thanks to St. Patrick's College Silverstream for generous donation of food. We would like to thank all those parishioners who donated money and gifts for our needy at Christmas.

We use our garage as a depot for the Hutt Valley SVdP Particular Council as a food storage bank and furniture storage for our conference. At the present point in time we have bought a shipping container which under the guidance of Frank Vailini we are filling with household items and clothing. When the container is full we will send the container to "SAVILI" in Samoa. The container will be left there maybe to be used as a shop.

SVdP can only operate through the many kind people who have donated money, clothes, food and TIME. Many thanks. Many thanks to Margaret Lanigan who continues to sell Christmas cards for us.

Activities from March 2020 to March 2021

Ministering Holy Communion to the sick.	342
Home visits.	112
Hospital visits.	49
Transport.	114
Funerals.	20
Food parcels.	253
Furniture deliveries.	6

I would like to thank Jan Fletcher (Shop Coordinator), Lei Solia (Treasurer), Frances Cummings (Secretary), and Committee Members, Win Lewer, Chris Henley, Frances Williams and Frank Vailini. As the President of Stokes Valley SVdP the committee has made life very easy for me.

God bless you all.

Gordon Holmes

President

Parish Statistics



	2021	2020	%
Average Mass attendance per Sunday (November)	510	534	(4.5%) ▼
Sacraments Conferred			
Baptism	17	25	(32%) ▼
Confirmation	43	45	(8%) ▼
Marriage	0	2	(100%) ▼
Funerals Celebrated	21	24	(12.5%) ▼
Families on Parish Roll	851	836	1.8% ▲
Individuals on Parish Roll	2,279	2,219	2.7% ▲
Registered Planned Givers	214	243	(11.9%) ▼

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father
as we come to the end of our time together
we thank you for what has been accomplished here today.

May the matters discussed
serve as a catalyst to move us forward
and cause us to advance
and see growth in all areas of our lives.

May we leave here
recognizing you are the God of all wisdom
and you are willing to lead us forward.

This we pray in the name of the Lord Jesus

Our Father

