

Our Lady of the Valleys Parish



Annual Report 2025

Sunday 31st August 2025

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Agenda for Annual General Meeting

31st August 2025 12:00 noon

Pettit Centre Heretaunga

- † Welcome
- † Opening Prayer
- † Present / Apologies
- † Accepting of Minutes of 2024 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

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 2024
at Pettit Centre Heretaunga
4th August 2024
12:00 pm



Present: (36 Parishioners)

Fr Tony Kearns, Darrell Mellow (Chair), Roy Scoon (Minutes), Conor Healy, Margaret Lanigan, Jovena Fernandez, Doreen O'Hagan, Mary McLauchlin, Lita van Bunnik, Roger Wasson, Prue van Keisenberg, Kevin van Keisenberg, Colin Braddock, Brenda Lister, Erin Murphy, Trish Leahy, Liz McCaul, Barry Yandle, Margaret Lawrence, Philip Calvert, Phillip Russell, Mike Quin, Phillip Hall, Tom Smith, Nick Lee-Frampton, Helen Montgomery, Marilyn Montgomery, Josephine Eynon, Mary McLaughlin, Michelle McMullen, Rita David, Deidre Braddock, Kathy Smith, William Perkin, Louisa O'Brien, Grant Avery.

Welcome and introduction

Darrell Mellow welcomed everyone.

Opening Prayer lead by Fr Tony

Apologies: Doug Fauchelle, Heather and Terry O'Brien, Pauline Locker, Joan Thom, Pauline and Frank Quin.

Minutes of 2023 AGM:

Moved to approve: Jovena Fernandez

Seconded by: Lita van Bunnik

Matters arising from minutes: None

Tabling / Acceptance of reports:

Moved to accept: Roger Wasson

Seconded by: Margaret Lanigan

Matters arising from the Annual Report:

1. Question over the 'summary of cash flows' for 2023/24 raised by Margaret Lanigan – it appears four lines of data are duplicated and incorrect? Fr Tony agreed that while the totals are likely correct, the detailed line items are an error.

Actions: Fr Tony:

- *An amended Summary of Cash Flows report will be published shortly.*

Election of new Parish Councillors

Whilst no nominations were received for the council prior to the AGM, one candidate volunteered:

- Prue van Keisenberg (New)
- Darrell requested permission to 'shoulder-tap' to help fill the two other vacancies.

Moved to accept: Colin Braddock

Seconded by Brenda Lister

All in favour.

The Parish Council members are: Darrell Mellow, Ahmed Hemady, Doug Fauchelle, Roy Scoon, Erin Murphy, Philip Calvert, Lita van Bunnik, St Brendon's School Rep.

Darrell thanked Conor Healy and Andrew Brown for their service on the Council.

General Business

- **Parish Strategic Plan** – Roy Scoon reminded attendees that the consultation period is nearly ended and encouraged any feedback to be sent through before the next Parish council meeting on 14 August.
- **PPC attendance** – Darrell Mellow encouraged parishioners to attend a Parish Council meeting to see how they're run and to consider joining.
- **Maintenance** – Margaret Lanigan asked what maintenance is planned for the Petitt Centre and said that there's some rotting barge boards in SFX house that need to be repaired. Darrell confirmed that the Petitt Centre is getting new porch clearlite roofing, new timber entrance desk, gutter repairs and roof to be sprayed to prevent moss. Fr Tony advised that a parishioner is donating curtains for the Petitt Centre.
- **Heating in OLOG** – a question was asked about improving the heating in OLOG. Fr Tony agreed to review how long the automated timers are set to run prior to mass.

Action: Fr Tony to review heating timers at OLOG.

Closing prayer: read by all.

Meeting closed 12.25pm



Parish Council Annual Report

Dear Parishioners

The current Parish Pastoral Council members are Darrell Mellow (Chairperson), Doug Fauchelle (Deputy Chair), Fr Maleko Api-Tufuga (PP), Roy Scoon (Minutes), Ahmed Hemady, Erin Murphy, Prue von Keisenberg, Philip Calvert, AnnMarie Bailey and Lita van Bunnik, and the St Brendan's School Rep being either the Principal or the DRS and one member from the finance committee.

The Parish Pastoral Council year commenced with the commissioning of our new Parish Pastoral Council on the 11th of August at St Francis Xavier Church at the 8.30am mass.

In February we farewelled Fr Tony Kearns from our Parish and welcomed Fr Maleko Api-Tufuga and were very fortunate to have Archbishop Paul officiate in Fr Maleko's installation mass into our parish. A very moving ceremony that I had not been witness to before.

As in the past few years, the Parish Pastoral Council continued to monitor Covid 19 in our communities and our decision to only offer communion of one kind. At our July Parish Pastoral Council meeting, at the request of a parishioner, after some robust discussions, it was decided that we would let parishioners have their say on the bringing back of communion of both kinds by having clipboards available in both churches where parishioners could make their choices know. This was to run from 27th July to the 3rd August and results will be analysed by the parish pastoral council at our August meeting and advised to the parish after that has happened.

This year, the parish pastoral council finished updating the Parish Plan that will help guide our parish over the next ten years. I would like to thank those members of the Parish Pastoral Council that took on this task to get this completed and in use and referred to during our meetings. It needs to be reminded that the Parish Plan belongs to the whole Parish, not just the current parish pastoral council and is a living document that will be maintained as and when the needs of the parish change.

The Living Stones committee continue in their task of working through where we as a parish would like to see the parish in the future and I thank them all for their dedication to this task.

The Parish council has been very lucky to have been able to hold a few council meetings at St Brendan's, the last being in July, I must admit, the staffroom is a lot warmer than our usual meeting rooms and Veronica has been a very welcoming host.

I was fortunate to have been invited as Parish Pastoral Chair to the reopening of our Cathedral earlier in the year. It was a very moving occasion and one that I was privileged to attend and will not forget.

I now come to the end of my time on the parish pastoral council having served four years plus an extension of two more years. I have enjoyed my time on the council and have worked alongside some fantastic people and have also met a lot of people in our parish and further afield in our Catholic diocese.

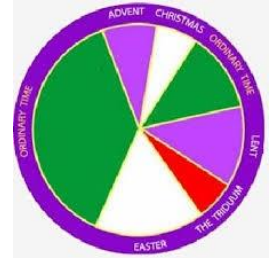
I would like to thank firstly Fr Tony for his guidance and wisdom when I first started on the council and to Fr Maleko, as you juggled getting to know our parish and how we do things here while still fulfilling our parish faith needs. My Deputy Chair Doug Fauchelle, Minutes Secretary Roy Scoon and the rest of the Parish Council for their dedication, commitment, and the diversity each has brought to our Parish over the last twelve months. I thank you all for your dedication to our Parish.

Thank you also to Jovena in the office, our greeters, eucharistic ministers, altar servers and all our many wonderful volunteers for all the work you do behind the scenes to make our Parish what it is.

Regards and God Bless

Darrell Mellow
Retiring Chairperson
Parish Council

Liturgy Committee Report



Dear Fellow Parishioners,

Our Lady of the Valleys Members:

Father Maleko, Liz McCaul, Trish Leahy, Josephine Eynon, Stella Stowers, Ann Marie Bailey, Caryl Robinson, John O'Malley, Helen Montgomery and Chris Henley.

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 and later Father Maleko, our Parish Priests during this past year. Together, 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.

During this past year, Our Lady of the Valleys Parish, has seen an increase in parishioner attendance at Sunday Masses and our major celebrations, which are held throughout the year.

The main Liturgical Events during the year are Easter, Pentecost and Christmas. During Holy Week, which started with the procession into the churches on Palm Sunday. On the Wednesday, the RCIA support Group collected the Holy Oils at the Chrism Mass. During the Holy Thursday ceremony, Father Maleko washed the feet of 12 parishioners and the Blessed Sacrament was placed at the Altar of Repose in the Petit Centre. At the Good Friday celebration, 2 men carried the heavy cross into the church and the wooden cross was pounded into position and then the Veneration of the Cross took place. At the Easter Vigil we experienced the lighting of the Easter fire and the blessing of the new Easter candle followed by the moving Easter Vigil Mass, which included the reception into the Church of our 2 RCIA candidates.

Pentecost is another major celebration in the Church's calendar year. During the Pentecost Sunday Masses, a group of parishioners translated and read the Prayers of the Faithful in their own language – French, Dutch, Samoan, Filipino, Japanese, Tongan, Akan (South African), Tagalong, Mandarin, Tokelauan, Rotuman, Hindi, Korean, Malayalam, Vietnamese, Iwabu (PNG), English and Te Reo Maori. The Liturgy Committee is grateful to these parishioners, the musicians and all the parishioners who helped us all to celebrate the Birthday of the Church.

On Sunday, 2nd February Our Lady of Grace Parish celebrated a Farewell and Thanksgiving Mass for Father Tony, who had been our Parish Priest for 9 years. This was Father's final Mass before he took up the position as Parish Priest in Upper Hutt.

Then on February 16th, the Parish celebrated at the Installation Mass of Father Maleko, as Parish Priest of Our Lady of the Valleys Parish. Archbishop Paul and Father Tony also concelebrated this Mass, as this Mass was also a celebration of our Parish 10th year Anniversary of the establishment of our Parish. This coincided with the Parish Picnic. This was a wonderful Parish celebration with a combined choir, and parishioners from across the parish fulfilling all the ministry roles at this 10am Mass.

The Sacramental Programme has progressed throughout the year, as planned. Archbishop Paul Martin visited our parish to Confirm 29 of our children on 15th June. This was a wonderful celebration for the families involved and the parish. We also gathered to celebrate the Sacraments of Reconciliation, and in September First Holy Communion, and to support these children on their continuing faith journey.

Our Lady of the Valleys Parish is very fortunate to have a wide variety of dedicated music groups, who lead and support the singing in our parish. Josephine Eynon is the conductor for the Music Group at Our Lady of Grace Church. Sauni Aukusitino Aukustino, is the leader for the Samoan Choir, and he leads the singing at the 8:30 am Sunday Mass at St. Francis Xavier Church. A Samoan Mass is held every 4th Sunday of the month at St. Francis Xavier Church. Stella Stowers plays the organ at both churches. Two other organists also play regularly at St. Francis Xavier Church. Joey Domdom, leads the Filipino music group and Robert Whiteford plays the organ at Our Lady of Grace Church. We are grateful to these committed groups and individuals, who so generously share their talents with us.

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. The Liturgy Committee are forever grateful to these parishioners for sharing their time and talents. As a result of the "Time and Talent Survey," we are currently adding new names to the rosters to ensure that these are up to date and these will be maintained on an ongoing basis. This is a huge undertaking.

The Liturgy Committee looks forward in the future to organising future Family Masses and training sessions for the various ministries in the parish. During the year, training has taken place for: Proclaimers of the Word, new Extra-ordinary Ministers of Holy Communion and the Altar Servers. This will continue during this coming year.

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 are Roger Wasson (Chair), Fr. Tony (March till January), Fr. Maleko, Colin Braddock, Philip Hall, John Henley, Mike Quinn, Brian Scahill, and Terry O'Brien who retired from the committee during the year.

We continue to manage the finances of the Parish and also the Property portfolio which involves the land and buildings that the Parish own, both at the Heretaunga site and Stokes Valley.

The Stokes Valley properties generate a good income for the Parish from the leases and Licences held by other organisations that operate from the site.

We also manage the ongoing repairs and maintenance for the two sites and the buildings on them.

One of the most expensive costs to the Parish is the ongoing insurance premiums, which we have to budget for out the income, and the premium has to be paid in full, when due.

The finances of the Parish are in good shape as can be seen from the returns attached to this report.

We continue to encourage our parishioners to instigate automatic payments of gifting to the Parish finances, as this removes the amount of cash that is retained and handled in the Parish office.

Excess of Income over Expenditure

This Gain includes a non-cash charge for Depreciation on Fixed Assets of \$7,737 for the year

Net Cash Inflows/(Outflows)	15,678.64
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Nett Assets

This is total assets owned by the Parish less the amount of liabilities owed by the Parish	1,194,771.56
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Total Funds gifted by Parishioners	164,563.01
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Insurance Costs	17,481.00
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Archdiocesan Levies	27,726.00
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These provide funding to the Archdiocese of Wellington to cover costs of running the Archdiocese and National Commitments

Clergy Support	68,249.00
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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	
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Stormwater drainage at OLOG	4,000
Heating at OLOG	15,000
Pettit Centre Kitchen	10,000
Driveway repairs at OLOG	15,000

Roger Wasson

**Chairman
Finance Committee**

Catholic Women's League



HERETAUNGA CWL REPORT 2025 With our membership currently at 22 we have a regular attendance at our monthly meetings of about 20 with a bonus number of women from the Parish who come casually and support us in all we do.

We have a number of regular dates we support, such as the last Wednesday of the month morning tea at a local cafe, we are on the Parish roster for the Sunday cafe after 10.30am Mass and our regular collection of toiletries has been very welcome by the Chaplain at Lower Hutt Hospital.

There have been several special occasions we've hosted this year, like our High Tea in February, with about 30 guests, including our friends from Upper Hutt and Lower Hutt who came to share this with us. Our March meeting coincided with Ash Wednesday so we attended 9.30am Mass in the church and invited the Parishioners to join us afterwards for a cup of tea and hot cross buns.

For our birthday in June a number of St Brendan's School students entertained us and our guests with singing and a couple of them played instruments. It was a delightful afternoon for all, with the children a credit to both parents and teachers. We really appreciate our special connection with St Brendan's School, fostered by the Principal, Veronica Sawers, who is also a League member.

In July we invited Parishioners to join us for a soup and rolls lunch as a fundraiser for Nourish Trust, a local charity aiming to give hampers of food to families in need at Christmas.

As well as the ongoing donations of food and toiletries we have given \$300 to St Brendan's School for Veronica's emergency fund, \$200 to Tonga towards a new school roof, \$100 to WUCWO, \$200 towards the new stove in the Pettit Centre and \$300 to Nourish Trust.

Heretaunga Branch is always grateful for the ongoing moral and financial support given by our Parish and we welcome our new Parish Priest, Father Maleko. With thanks and blessings to you all

Chris Wasson

Co-President

Filipino Community

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



The Filipino community within Our Lady of the Valleys Parish continues to grow in both numbers and involvement. Their active participation in church and parish activities reflects a deepening commitment to spiritual life and community service. This engagement is primarily driven by three key groups: the Community for the Holy Family, the Barangay of Our Lady of Miraculous Medal, and the Couples for Christ.

The Community for the Holy Family plays an important role in the parish's liturgical life, particularly through regular involvement in the music ministry every fourth Sunday of the month. Beyond musical contributions, the group actively nurtures spiritual growth by holding Bible study and prayer sessions on the third and fourth Saturdays of each month at the Petit Centre. The group is also part of the parish's cleaning roster, contributing to the upkeep of the church environment. During Holy Week, the community further enriched parish life by organizing a Lenten retreat, offering parishioners a meaningful opportunity for reflection and spiritual renewal.

The Barangay of Our Lady of Miraculous Medal continues to offer pastoral care and support to Filipino parishioners through a dedicated Facebook page and chat group that help keep members informed and engaged. The Barangay enriches parish life through various annual events, including the Marian Month Celebration at Sts. Peter and Paul Church in Lower Hutt, the novena and Feast Day of Our Lady of Miraculous Medal, Family Day or Picnic, and Visita Iglesias during Holy Week. A distinctive aspect of the community's spiritual outreach is the Family Block Rosary, where the image of Our Lady of Miraculous Medal is hosted by different families every fortnight, fostering prayerful connection and strengthening both family and community bonds. Members actively serve in parish ministries such as mass readings, church cleaning, and altar serving—particularly involving younger members—and also assist with church decorations during Christmas and provide needed services during the Holy Week. Last December, a group of young carolers from the community raised funds to support various Archdiocesan initiatives. The Barangay offers pastoral care such as compassionate support to bereaved families through novena prayers and other forms of assistance. It also sponsors one of the monthly Filipino First Sunday Masses, and works in partnership with Barangay Santo Rosaryo in Upper Hutt to organize the Christmas novena masses, known as Simbang Gabi. Donations collected during these celebrations are generously given to the respective parishes, reflecting the community's deep commitment to faith, service, and solidarity.

The Couples for Christ (CFC) community continues to enrich parish life through parish church services such as scheduled morning teas and church cleaning. Behind the scenes, CFC conducts prayer assemblies and praise and worship sessions for families, supported by its various ministries. Notably, this year, the Youth for Christ (YFC)—the youth arm of CFC—provided music and entertainment during the Parish Anniversary celebration and picnic held in February.

Together, these Filipino community groups offer invaluable support to the parish, enhancing cultural engagement and spiritual vitality. With continued prayers for grace and guidance from the Holy Spirit, Our Lady of the Valleys Parish looks forward to an even more vibrant and united community that welcomes and gathers people into the life of the Church.

Ahmed Hemady



This report covers the period from Term 3, 2024, through Term 2, 2025.

St Brendan's School

St Brendan was a brave explorer who set sail on an adventure to navigate the world. He was the Patron Saint of sailors, travellers, and navigation. We use these familiar references to reflect who we are as a school and the journey our students go through during their eight years at St Brendan's. We are the only school in Aotearoa named after St Brendan and the only school in New Zealand founded by the Missionary Sisters of the Society of Mary (SMSM), we proudly uphold our unique heritage.

Our vision: Inspiring Navigators

Our values: God's irresistible GRACE: Gospel - Respect - Aspire - Compassion - Explore

Our current strategic goals: Collaboration - Curriculum - Character

Our guiding whakatauki: He waka eke noa - we work in unity, we rise, fall and keep going together.

Each of our **Houses**—Tralee, Clonard, Galway, and Annagh—connects us with places of significance to St Brendan's life in Ireland. Their mottos remind us to treasure life as a gift, grow with knowledge, aspire to make a difference, and reflect on today to set goals for tomorrow.

Our School Plan

We continue to focus on three key goals: Collaboration, Curriculum, and Character. We aim to strengthen community engagement, deliver an engaging curriculum that fosters student agency, and grow student identity as they walk with Christ. Initiatives include understanding and responding to diverse cultural values, implementing new English and Math curricula, embedding practices to promote well-being, and enriching students' faith journeys. Our school's values of God's Irresistible GRACE – Gospel, Respect, Aspire, Compassion, Explore – are woven into all aspects of our plan and guide our actions, along with our guiding whakatauki, "He Waka Eke Noa - We work in unity, we rise, fall and keep going together." We are committed to working together to create a supportive and enriching environment where every student can thrive.

Highlights from the 2024 Catholic Special Character Review Report

The Catholic Special Character Review Report highlighted the strengths of our school's spiritual life and our community's commitment to living out our Catholic values.

The report commends St Brendan's for its rich spiritual life, which is deeply rooted in our vision of 'Inspiring Navigators' and our GRACE values. This is reflected in daily class prayer, weekly whole school and staff prayer, and retreat opportunities for students and staff. Our commitment to celebrating key moments in the life of the Church through liturgies and Masses, along with our regular participation in weekday Mass, further enhances our spiritual foundation. The school's support of the Parish Sacramental programmes and the Baptismal programme underscores our role in welcoming and evangelising within our community.

The report also recognises the successful implementation of the new national Religious Education curriculum across the school. The positive relationships between kaiako and ākonga create a welcoming environment in our classrooms, where students feel accepted and included for who they are. Through various leadership roles and initiatives, our tamariki are actively learning to live out their values and the principles of Catholic social teaching in their daily lives.

The report praises the strong unity between the staff and the Board in upholding our school's Catholic character. This commitment ensures that the Catholic character will continue to be safeguarded and strengthened in all decisions made for St Brendan's School.

Our Gift to the Community: Pātaka Kai for Our Lady of Grace In Term 4, 2024 a group of Adventurer students built a Pātaka Kai, a community food bank. This was designed and painted with the help of Amy Burrell. The project was blessed and gifted to Our Lady of the Valleys Parish to sit outside Our Lady of Grace Church, facing Fergusson Drive. We hope it will be a lasting and helpful resource for our community.

Fruits of the Holy Spirit Mural Project

A group of our Adventurer students worked with local artist Amy Burrell to create a *Fruits of the Holy Spirit* mural.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law" Galatians 5:22-23.



Celebrating Catholic Schools Day, Wednesday, 28 May, 2025

The day was an opportunity to come together to celebrate. The theme for this year: *"Shine like stars in the world: E tīaho ana koe hei rama i te ao."* This theme aligns with Pope Francis' designation of 2025 as the Church's Year of Jubilee, "Pilgrims of Hope". This Jubilee year encourages global sisterhood and brotherhood, solidarity with the poor, and care for the environment. Pope Francis encouraged us to strengthen our hope and to live as Jesus taught. He wanted our Catholic schools to be places of hope and light for everyone.

We had a very successful Catholic Schools Day with St Joseph's School, Upper Hutt. Some St Patrick's College students also joined us for the day. Our students enjoyed liturgy, celebrated Mass, created art, and had fun at Maidstone Max. It was great seeing our students show the theme, reflecting who we are as a Catholic school community, living as people of hope and caring for others.

Property Refurbishments

We are blessed to now have two modern, adaptable Year 7-8 learning spaces, joined by a sliding door that enables collaboration and teamwork, and a bright and welcoming junior classroom, each with its own breakout space. We also have a dedicated teacher workroom and storage and an incredible new STEAM facility complete with benches, ovens, microwaves, stove tops, and storage. Over time, we will continue to furnish and resource this space, making it an even greater asset to our school.

Rooms 8, 9, 12, and the library have also received major makeovers. To achieve this, these spaces were also packed up, relocated, and then reopened. Everyone was inconvenienced, but everyone was willing to spin on a dime and be creative with solutions. Despite what at times was significant disruption, we were able to hold all the events that we usually would during Terms 1 and 2.

This project's success was a collective effort, made possible by the support and expertise of many individuals and organisations. We extend our gratitude to the Archdiocese of Wellington; Archbishop Paul Martin our Proprietor; Koa Martel our School's Property Manager; the Upper Hutt City Council, and Mayor Wayne Guppy. Special thanks also to Stephen Geuze, our Silverwood's architect; Natasha and Barry Possenniskie from Urban Outcomes Limited; Peter Finucane from Maycroft, and Daniel Roberts, Maycroft's site foreman.

Our Parish Connection: The NZ Catholic Education Office recognises that Catholic Schools are an integral part of the evangelising mission of the Church. Likewise, our school is strengthened by a close connection with Our Lady of the Valleys, and with Our Lady of Grace as our church in walking distance in particular. Our school values our community and we appreciate your ongoing support. Parish members continue to be so generous with their time, talents, and support - kei te mihi, kei te mihi, kei te mihi ki a koutou.

In the last twelve months, highlights and opportunities to connect with our parish and faith community included:

- Significant School Masses/Liturgies to start and finish the school year, Ash Wednesday and Holy Thursday Liturgies, and Assumption of Mary Mass.
- Class Masses and Liturgies supported by Fr Tony and Fr Maleko.
- Termly Mihi Whakatau to welcome new students, families and staff to our community.

- St Brendan's Feast Day.
- Students taking active roles in fortnightly school prayer, masses and liturgies.
- Navigator (Year 7 and 8) students reenacted the Stations of the Cross.
- Paschal candle design competition to represent Jesus as the Light of the World.
- Parish volunteers supporting music for school Masses and Liturgies.
- Collections for the Upper Hutt Foodbank, fundraising for Caritas, and other social outreach causes e.g. care packages for the elderly at Christmas.
- Sacramental and Baptism programmes.
- Connecting with Catholic Women's League and other parish gatherings.
- School representation at parish meetings.
- Strengthening links with our neighbouring, and other, Catholic schools.

Thank you to our supportive parish community and Frs Tony and Maleko. Our students, families and staff acknowledge and are grateful for your many contributions. The parish is able to connect with us via the website and our fortnightly newsletters. Our gate is always open and everyone is always warmly welcome to visit or attend any of our many school events.

Ngā manaakitanga, and God bless.

Veronica Sawers

Principal

Sarah Chard

Director of Religious Studies

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 Aufaipesa (Choir) and Samoan Autalavou (Youth).

As it is the Jubilee Year of Hope, members of the Samoan Autalavou thought it would be good to resume the Morning Tea after the 8.30am mass just outside the church entrance. It's been such a blessing to see members of the community to fellowship together and finally put names to faces that we see each Sunday and even a chance to meet new parishioners or visitors that Sunday. We are blessed with the contributions, varying from packets of biscuits to money to purchase milk for the tea/coffee, from fellow parishioners and would like to thank you all once again. If you are keen to help with the Morning Tea setup (easy setup - we promise), just talk to anyone near the table and they will be able to sort something out! Certain members also prepared a small gift for our mothers on Mother's Day this year. It was later reported that not all the mother's present received a gift as their children were enthusiastic about the gifts too and got to them first!!

Our Samoan Aufaipesa is also part of the St Francis Xavier Church Choir and so we have choir practice every Wednesday 7pm (sometimes on Tuesdays at 7pm if needed) and Saturday 2pm to prepare for the Sunday mass. We also participated in the Stokes Valley Ecumenical 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 participated in the 24 Hours for the Lord adoration that was held at the Sacred Heart Cathedral on Friday the 28th of March as part of the Archdiocese Jubilee celebrations. Our Parish had the 2am-3am slot so our Aulotu attended, leading with the rosary and hymns for the hour. Although it was quite early in the morning, it was an hour filled with the Holy Spirit and reflective prayer.

We continue to maintain the grounds around the St Francis Xavier church in Stokes Valley. Our work includes a range of jobs – mowing the grass, pruning trees and even water-blasting. We also contributed to the decoration of the church from Palm

Sunday through to the Easter services. We also church clean whenever one of the families in the Aulotu is rostered to church clean.

This year has been interesting as the celebrant of the Samoan mass is now our Parish priest, but we have been able to navigate new territory together and are still celebrating Samoan mass every fourth Sunday of the month at 11.30am. We welcome all to celebrate mass together with us in the Samoan language.

God Bless,

Aukusítino Aukusítino

President of the Samoan Aulotu - SFX



St. Francis Xavier Church Choir

The St Francis Xavier Church Choir has been running for nearly 25 years now and have choir practice every Wednesday 7pm (sometimes on Tuesdays at 7pm if needed) and Saturday 2pm to prepare for the Sunday mass. With a roster consisting of our three organists (Stella Stowers, Barbara Aukusitino and Faletasi Launiuvao) the SFX Church choir sings every week at SFX at the Sunday 8.30am masses.

In this Jubilee year, it has been a busy yet exciting time for the choir. It begun with an addition of a new choir member, Celine! Its so good to have a new voice to join us and a timely reminder that the invitation is always open if you want to join the choir – we look forward to seeing you!! 😊

We have also been leading music ministry for major milestones for not only our parish but for our Archdiocese also. It started with the celebration mass for Fr Tony Kearns as Parish Priest. We sang his final mass as Parish Priest at St Francis Xavier, and we thank Fr Tony for the support and prayers that he has given to the choir during his service in the Parish.

The next milestone was the installation mass of Fr Maleko Api-Tufuga as the new Parish Priest. We participated in the music ministry for his installation mass and sang the 'Pilgrims of Hope' hymn for the recessional hymn. It was a great experience to take part of the music ministry alongside fellow music groups of the Parish on that day.

Most recently, together with the Vietnamese choir, we led the music ministry for the [ordination mass for Fr John the Baptist Kinh Nguyen](#) at the Sacred Heart Cathedral on Saturday 12th of July. While he was a deacon and placed in the St Josephs Church in Upper Hutt, Deacon Kinh attended one of the masses at SFX along with Fr Maleko and later told Fr Maleko that he wants this choir to sing at his ordination and even told the choir master. What we thought was a light-hearted joke became an earnest request this year and we were grateful that Fr Kinh considered our choir for such a momentous occasion.

Supporting one of our organists, Stella Stowers, members who were able to attend also sang at the mass for the Jubilee of Priests that was held at Our Lady of Grace Church on Tuesday 15th of July. It also happened to be Fr Tony's 25th Jubilee celebration so we got to see him again there.

We are grateful to be able to share and use our gift to praise the Lord's name in our community and in our archdiocese. If there are any other music groups within our Parish who would like to do music ministry for one of the Sundays at SFX, please approach any of our organists. Again, the invitation is always open to join the choir – for those who have a willing heart and want to share your gift with your fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.

God Bless.

Barbara Aukusitino





Parish Statistics

	2024	2023	%
Average Mass attendance per Sunday (prev Nov)	453	432	95.36%▲
COVID GATHERING RESTRICTIONS IN PLACE			
Sacraments Conferred			
Baptism	25	25	
Confirmation	35	35	
Marriage	1	1	
Funerals Celebrated	8	8	
Families on Parish Roll	783	778	99.36 ▲
Individuals on Parish Roll	2,164	2,155	99.58▲
Registered Planned Givers	253	249	98.41%▲

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

