

Anglican Parish of Milford

Happy Advent to you all!

After 14 Sundays of no services in the church, we now celebrate that we can come together again on Sunday 5th December. This newsletter from your Wardens, Liz P. and Megan, is to let you know about the procedures in place for worship once we return to church from this coming Sunday, and also the upcoming work on recladding the church exterior.

Recladding Project

After more delay than we care to think about, we have made some real progress on the reclad project. We have worked through the 3 tenders received with the assistance of the Diocesan Property Manager and, having established that we have enough money (by way of current savings and some Parishioner loans), have now accepted the tender from Platinum Pacific Reclad. We are pleased to advise that a contract has now been signed with Platinum Pacific Reclad (following approval by the diocesan lawyers, Hesketh Henry).

The builders are hoping to begin work during the week commencing 6th December. The cladding material has been procured and the window joinery has already been ordered to beat expected price increases. It does mean that we will be mid-project as we head into Christmas services but that seemed preferable to further delay.

We will put up some details on the noticeboard in the foyer of what the reclad will look like.

We are also investigating the possibility of using the lovely stained-glass windows currently in the Hall (at the back of the stage) in the church itself as it would be nice to use them to best effect but that will depend on cost and the viability of doing so. We will also require a Faculty from the diocese.

Parishioners have been very generous to date with funding this project and we are most grateful. The more money we can continue to raise while the build progresses, the less we will need to borrow from those who have made offers of loans. If you have been holding off making any contribution until you saw some progress then this is the time to come

forward! Remember, your donations qualify for a 33.3% tax rebate that you can claim in April.

Church Finances

Over the past 15 weeks of lockdown we have managed to live within our means, with income being at almost the same level as expenditure. This was achieved, thanks to the several people who have continued their automatic payment of offerings into our bank account over the past 3 months. While we lost all rent income from casual users of the hall, the two who have lease agreements with us (Mango Lash and the Korean Church) continued to pay rent, though with some relief granted to them. Even though the Op Shop was closed and therefore not generating funds for us, Grant was very busy placing the more valuable items donated from people's 'lockdown decluttering' on Trade Me. He successfully raised around \$8,000 and this money has boosted the Op Shop bank account.

Opportunity Shop

The Op Shop re-opened on Monday 15 November and that first week generated \$1,863 of sales - our highest weekly takings ever! And last week's takings totalled \$1,112. Thank you to all our Op Shop helpers who so willingly came back to enable the shop to fully operate its normal opening hours. Vicki, Liz D-B, and the sorting team worked tirelessly over the few weeks before re-opening to sort all the new donations and to make the shop spick and span.

Mainly Music

As the first day we would be able to hold a programme in the hall under the Traffic Lights system coincided with the scheduled last session for the year, and also the probability of noise from the builders, we have decided to wait until the new year to recommence our weekly sessions. Mainly Music will begin again on Thursday 4th February.

Selwyn Centre

Throughout lockdown Mary has kept in phone contact with all the folk who attend Selwyn Centre on Tuesday mornings. She is pleased to advise that there will be one more session before Christmas - a Christmas Morning Tea on Tuesday 14th December at 9:30am. We look forward to welcoming you all back that morning.

Procedures for Attending Church under the 'Traffic Lights' System

The diocese has consulted with all ministry units via a survey and received a clear direction of how Vestries preferred to operate under the three traffic light colours. The Diocesan Health & Safety committee then drew up a policy and procedures for everyone to follow. These were discussed and approved at the Diocesan Council meeting last week. Auckland will be in 'Red' when we come back into the church building this coming Sunday (5th December). Our parish will be operating under the following procedures:

- Only fully vaccinated people plus all children under 12 years of age can attend the usual Sunday services at 8:00am and 9:30am, and the Wednesday service at 10:00am
- You must bring your My Vaccine Pass and scan it when you arrive.
- Social distancing of 1 metre is required for seating (unless you are a family sitting together) and socialising. Only the odd-numbered rows of pews (1-3-5-7-9) will be used.
- Face coverings are encouraged
- Communion will be in one form (wafers only) - Grant will bring these to you in the pews rather than people moving to the altar.
- Music will be in recorded form for the first 2 Sundays. Hopefully we can move to singing for Christmas services.
- No refreshments after the services.

Christmas Services (for your calendar)

- 9 Lessons & Carols: Sunday 19th December, at 9:30am (no 8:00am service that morning)
- Christingle Service: Friday 24th December, at 5:00pm

- Midnight Communion & Carols: Friday 24th December, at 11:00pm
- Christmas Day Communion and Carols: Saturday 25th December, two services - at 8:00am and at 9:30am

From Our Vicar - Rev'd Grant Robertson

Advent reminds us once again of the light that shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. Jesus, Emmanuel, God is with us. If there ever was a timelier reminder then it is now as we can finally gather after such a long absence of being together as an Anglican Church in Milford.

There are so many emotions that have been stirred up within us as we have at times stumbled our way through yet another and much longer lockdown. The uncertainty and fragility of our routines, and the disruption to the way of life we knew, has for many shaken their foundations. As we gather this Sunday in the season of Advent the call is to see the signs of God's presence. Be kind to others and yourself; we have all been affected by the lockdown in various ways. Be watchful too of God's ever-present ways where light breaks through and give thanks. Amen to being finally able to gather once again. I look forward to seeing you all again this coming Sunday.