

## VICAR'S REPORT FOR AGM 2024

### Our Vision

We are a Spirit filled family being shaped by Jesus, seeking to be a redemptive community in our neighbourhood. We live out and share the life changing work of the Holy Spirit, we seek to perceive and understand the King and His kingdom and to follow Him. We share our lives through table fellowship with those who are known to us and those who aren't!

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It has been a year of God-breathed growth at St Mary's Silverstream not just corporately but for individuals too. Underpinning this growth has been an intentional culture of discipleship.

At the beginning of my leadership at St Mary's, I asked God "What do you want me to do?". I sensed that God was saying "Feed by sheep. Bring them home." The evangelist in me tried to switch that around so that it was ... bring them home *first*, then feed by sheep. But there was a clear sense that no, God was inviting me to see that discipleship is feeding his sheep - and when we are a disciplined people - we do in a sense "come home", because we become aware of where our home is - in the vine - Jesus. And it is from that place, of "being home" in Jesus, that we all become evangelists! Not just some of us. For the disciplined, Jesus is the air that we breathe! So we can't not share his love with others.

So growth, in numbers and personal transformation, has come from an intentional culture of discipleship.

How have we done this?

#### One on one Discipleship

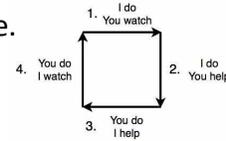
Many of our parishioners are discipling others by opening up their lives, which means being vulnerable. In the vulnerability we are seeing a deepening in relationships that lean into Jesus as the source of all and everything. Those who are being disciplined in this way, are then opening their lives up to others and discipling others!

#### Teaching and Equipping

Releasing those in our parish who have a teaching and equipping gift to help others dig deep into the foundations of our faith and what it looks like to live out our faith in the world. They are being encouraged to disciple others with the teaching and equipping gift.

## Apprentices

In all of our ministries, leaders are encouraged to bring at least one other person along with them in leadership, taking them through the leadership square.



## Listening to God

In everything we do together, we ask each other - “what do you think God might be saying to you, and how might you respond to that?”. In this way we are creating an environment of expectation - we expect to hear God!

## **Highlights of the Year**

- The “Declare and Demonstrate” worship and prayer evenings - a scaffolding bridge for those not that comfortable with Sunday services.
- The Lent Study - home groups participating and the weekly gathering at church for those not in a home group.
- Alpha - A really big group! And many experienced a fresh or new revelation of Jesus. The model of co-leadership was wonderful, and the hospitality support was extraordinary!
- Trick or Treating with our neighbours - we joined in for Halloween by being one of the “houses” to visit on the trick or treat trail. And we became the house that no one wanted to leave! It was an awesome night hosting our neighbours.
- The 10 confirmations and five adult baptisms!
- The beautiful new green shoots of our St Philip’s Revive church plant, led by James and Julia Coleman, supported by an amazing group of Jesus followers.
- The powerful transforming work of the Holy Spirit in people’s lives (including my own) bringing jubilant freedom!

I am so grateful for our church family. For your love, support and encouragement and your whole hearted “yes” to God.

*But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. Eph 2:4-10*

Grace and peace, Kath Bier

## **St MARYS ANGLICAN CHURCH SILVERSTREAM**

### **VICARS WARDEN REPORT -2024**

It has been a pleasure to serve the parish as vicar's warden for the last 12 months.

Rev Kath Bier was installed as the Vicar of Silverstream on 20 April 2023. Those who attended the service that night will recall the joy and excitement of Kath's installation as our Vicar. This was true for Julie Rokotakala who presided at the service, clergy of the Wellington Diocese who were present, the congregation, and very much for Kath and her family.

It has been less common in the Diocese for parishes that grow sufficiently to be able to move to a full-time Vicar, to provide the lead ministry in the parish. This arose because ministry had increased in the parish and we are grateful for the years that James and Julia Coleman were priests in charge and led our church to a place where a full-time Vicar could be appointed.

One significant role of a churchwarden is to be a lay leader supporting the Vicar. It has been a privilege to support Kath, in her first-time appointment as Vicar during this past year. Kath has a wonderful walk with Jesus and has brought energy, initiative, already developed communication skills and love to her ministry.

I am sure that I speak for the parish when I say that we are blessed to have Kath as our Vicar. We have seen a growth in ministry provided by others under Kath's leadership and walk with God.

Deacon Heather Schollum has led our pastoral ministry team and developed the "Alongsiders" program to bring care and comfort to those in need. Heather is supported by a team of lay people who are mentored by Heather to ensure that the pastoral care ministry can be extended to many more people than Heather could possibly hope to care for alone.

The church planting ministry continues in Stokes Valley under the leadership of both James and Julia Coleman. They are licensed, by the Bishop, as the Priests in Charge of St Philips. They also are supported by a team of lay people from St Mary's. In time there will be a transition to the lay people of St Phillip's providing ministry support for James and Julia.

Kath has been very appreciative of both David Wells mentoring of those with the ministry of delivering sermons, and Peter Benge with his considerable experience as a vicar.

The Vestry takes responsibility for providing all things necessary for worship and is comprised of the Vicar, the wardens, the Synod representative and people elected as lay representatives. This team meets to support Kath in her leadership, to provide all things necessary for worship and to take responsibility for the care and stewardship of church assets.

Kath, supported by Vestry, is leading an emphasis of discipleship for the church family. This emphasis is being developed through several ministries. It pervades the teaching and the focus for the programs within the parish.

The youth group has been a significant ministry. This is led by Mark Bier and Karla Billington. The youth group brings together both young people from church families and young people from beyond the church to help those young people, at such a questioning time of their life, to see Jesus as their answer. This work has been supported through the occasional evening services, with a full electric band, aimed at appealing to younger people.

Children's ministry is also significant in the parish. There have been several lay people involved in providing teaching ministry to the younger members of our family.

And then there is the myriad of other ministries of service carried out in our parish family. They include assisting the Vicar with worship and services, delivering sermons, various administration roles, providing flowers, providing copious hospitality, cleaning and maintaining of the church and its grounds, and many other ministry roles.

The lay people of our community provide so much of this ministry. This was exemplified, as recently as Saturday, 2 March 2024, by a large turnout of our family for a working bee both inside the church buildings and outside in the church grounds.

The work of the Vicar, the priests in charge of Stokes Valley and the many ministries carried out by the family at St Mary's demonstrates a community of Christian life walking closely with our Lord.

Let us stay close to Jesus and each other.

Merv Gaskin  
5 March 2024

## **PEOPLE'S WARDEN REPORT FOR St MARY'S**

### People's Warden report for St Mary's AGM 24th March 2024

Dear Church Family,

Thank you for the opportunity to present this report.

Yet another year has rolled by and we are together again for a look at where we are and where we are going. There has been substantial change to St Mary's and St Phillip's over this time. James and Julia have taken up the Stokes Valley Church plant and are making great headway. Kath Bier has taken over their duties and with her husband Mark they are adding a new dimension to our worship services, youth ministries and pastoral care life. In addition, we have support clergy with Peter Benge (retired but not out) and Heather Schollum (Deacon) who is also closely involved with the "alongsiders" initiative. In the wider Diocese we have recently been informed of the appointment of Rev Anna Fletcher (Wanganui) to the position of Assistant Bishop to support Bishop Justin Duckworth.

There is a new look National coalition government who are already making changes to existing laws and the departmental structures of the government. Some of these developments can be viewed as causing internal changes to our Churches, our Diocese and New Zealanders.

Externally (outside of NZ) there are serious changes taking place as well. The Ukraine invasion conflict still drags on, Israel is still determined to end Hamas terrorism, Houthis in Yemen are attacking ships in the gulf causing many vessels to take the long way round and the USA is attacking Iran backed militias in Syria and Iraq. China is threatening Taiwan and other nations in the South China Sea and posing a security threat to Australasia. China and India have a serious dispute in the Gulwan valley which has led to conflict on a minor scale. Wars and rumours of wars? I leave this for you to make the link to scripture and all that which Jesus predicted.

There are also economic factors to consider such as the roll-over of mortgage finance worldwide in an era of inflation higher than has been seen for nearly

20 years. Unemployment is predicted to rise in many countries and taxation is a major concern. Worldwide, families are struggling.

I mention the above as because at the Electoral college recently 2 speakers (Rev Digby Wilkinson and Bishop Justin) both expressed concerns for the global situation and where things appear headed. I also point these things out so you can be reassured that God protects the future of his people. Jesus himself said 'Do not worry about tomorrow '.

At the same time He has commanded that we “Be alert, Look out , Pay attention, Keep watch and Take care that no man deceive you” .

I’m happy to report that our congregational activities are all progressing well. St Marys has increased its profile in the general community around it despite choosing not to hold light parties and Easter in the park as in previous years. Our parish role is healthy thanks in part to the closure of Kings Arms church which has helped with our continued bounce back from decreased numbers after the COVID lockdowns.

We are in a good financial position at the moment however there is cause for concern at the rising costs of insurance.

A part of the work of Vestry has been the upgrade of the site with replacement of the side footpaths and consultation with a registered engineer on the best way forward for the upgrade of the crib wall. A sub-committee has met and will be reporting to the AGM as promised.

As part of the social program for the Anglican Church, we are given the Synod directives of caring for the lost the last and the least. Our four principal aims of the last few years are:

Help with welfare housing

Help with refugees

Help alleviate poverty

Help with issues of climate change

Finally I end this report with the news that I will not be seeking another term for Peoples Warden even though I have another potential 4 years to run on my 6 year term. I wish to concentrate on the project in front of us, namely securing the crib wall.

It has been my pleasure and privilege to serve as the people’s warden. I would like to thank Kath and the St Mary’s family for your support and wish God’s blessing and outpouring of His Spirit on you all.

Yours in the love of Christ,

Adrian

## **ALONGSIDE MINISTRY ANNUAL REPORT**

For the AGM on Sunday 24 March 2024

The Alongside Ministry (pastoral care) team has gone from strength to strength this year, following a change to our new name in February 2023. At various times throughout the year, the team comprised the following: Revd Heather Schollum, Jai Kemp, Rosemary Jamieson, Joy Mylek, Helen Topham, Joy Stanford, John and Jenny Pepper, Denise Trotter, Martin Bland, Ruth Peoples, Tracey Weir and Michelle Ryder-Lewis.

The focus of the Alongside team has been to ensure that everyone in the church is being cared for in their time of need, particularly if they don't belong to a home group. Over the past year, members of the team have visited the elderly, the sick, the bereaved and those struggling or in need, either at home or in hospital. The team has also provided meals and practical help to individuals and families as needed. Home communion was regularly taken to those in the Parish who are home-bound and unable to attend church.

On behalf of St Mary's, team members held church services each month at the following rest homes:

- St Joseph's Lifecare (previously the Home of Compassion), led by Helen Topham
- Heretaunga Rest Home, led by Rev Heather Schollum
- Manor Park Private Hospital, led by Rev Kath Bier
- Cashmere Rest Home (Johnsonville), led by Helen Topham

Jai, Rosemary, and Joy Stanford kindly provided support at one or more of these services., and Glenys Thomson was a much valued pianist at the Heretaunga Rest Home. The highlight of the year was the Christmas services held at St Joseph's and Heretaunga Rest Home in December, with the assistance of extra carol singers from St Mary's.

The team underwent safety training, in line with new Diocesan requirements. This is for team members' safety, as well as the safety of those we minister to.

During the year, the Alongside team hosted a number of church lunches / sausage sizzles following the 10.00am service. A monthly coffee morning was also initiated for women who were new to the church.

In April, a new 'listening ministry' was started up, to provide a listening ear for those who wanted someone to talk to. Joy Mylek, Helen, John Pepper, Brian Jones, Stuart Hunter and Heather were trained in listening and safety, and were rostered to be available every Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday from 10.00am to 12.00pm. However, this was wound up in October due to lack of uptake, and it was recognized that it takes time and a measure of trust before people are willing to open up. In order to help people make connections with one another, some sort of new venture will be started in 2024.

Those trained for the Te Hāhi ministry (a network of inter-church teams working in partnership with the Upper Hutt Police to visit the victims of family harm) had a very quiet year, due to the low number of police referrals. (It should be noted that the Police were very stretched due to the increasing number of serious family harm incidents, and many were diverted to the Hawkes Bay following the floods there.) However, we continued to provide baking for the police on a regular basis, thanks to Jai, Joy Mylek and Jan Biggs. Helen Topham resigned as team coordinator mid-year, and we are very grateful for her commitment and expertise over the last two years. With a new Police Area Commander and Upper Hutt champion (Miles Davison), we hope that Te Hahi will be up and running again in 2024.

Many thanks to Jenny Pepper who has looked after our Police vetting, and created a spreadsheet of volunteers who are available to provide practical care.

My special thanks to all the wonderful people on the Alongside team who have shown such pastoral hearts for others over the past year.

Revd Heather Schollum,

Alongside Ministry Leader

*"Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another as God is Christ forgave you."* -  
Ephesians 4:32

## MISSIONS REPORT

Ehara taku toa, he takitahi, he toa takitini

The Missions team consists of Joy Mylek, Mark Ryder-Lewis, Nigel Mander and myself. On your behalf and out of your generosity to St Mary's, we had about \$21,000 to disburse for missions and disaster relief.

During the year you supported the following: Scott and Nikki in PNG; Craig and Nay in Cambodia, and Zach and Alice in student ministry in Italy (where Catholicism is now the religion of student's grandparents' generation). During the year Zach and Alice ceased needing support and we chose to support instead the work of Māori evangelists, supported under the Church Missionary Society umbrella.

Why give "missions" money to a New Zealand effort you might ask? Historically, once they had a translation of the bible into Māori, it was Māori missionaries (not Pakeha) who spread the gospel among the tribes throughout Aotearoa. There is a spirit-led move to see that miracle repeated today.

We also support a child in Uganda through International Needs. We paid donations for disaster relief following the Türkiye -Syria earthquake; the Nepal earthquake (\$1,000 each) and the crisis in the Middle East (\$2,000).

Brian Jones

## PRAYER MINISTRY REPORT

Prayer Ministry at St Mary's is alive and well and growing! Jesus commands his followers to pray, teaching us in the words that we repeat every service. The New Testament is full of commands to pray: "and pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests" Eph 6: 18; "pray for each other so that you may be healed" Jam 5: 16 (part); "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Phil 4: 6-7).

We are all pray-ers; let's all be prayer ministers. One delight this year has been to see members of the fellowship here praying for each other. Yes, we have a prayer ministry team 'on duty' at the 10 am service, but there are also many incidents of people asking their friends, family and neighbours in the pew beside them to pray. My vision is that this will grow until we are all ministering to each other naturally in prayer.

The pre-10am service prayer meeting has grown, and we are seeing great encouragement as people respond to the words of knowledge when coming for prayer. There have been increasingly frequent testimonies of answered prayer, and we have seen miracles in answered prayer. The rostered prayer ministry team has also increased over 50% this past year, which is a great encouragement as more people hear the call to serve our church in this ministry.

This year we are hoping to give an opportunity for people who would like to receive a more extended time of prayer than is possible after communion on a Sunday to be able to arrange prayer with a member of the prayer ministry team at a time suitable to both.

Also, this year we would love to start 'prayer partners / prayer triplets' for any who are interested.

Starting last year on the 5th Sunday of the month, our monthly (now 4th Sunday 7pm) Community Prayer has seen a small but steady commitment to pray regularly for our community, nation and world. Interestingly, the people coming each time are not always the same, so there is definitely a wider commitment to be interceding for the world around us.

The confidential Prayer Line has been busy and, again, we have seen many answers to prayer. Please feel free to contact the office to ask for prayer from this group.

I want to thank all of you who are part of the Prayer Ministry Team, Prayer Line or just everyday pray-ers for answering your Lord's call to pray. A special thanks to Pam Claasen as she joins me in fronting prayer ministry.

Recently, someone who has joined our fellowship this past year said that they saw St Mary's as a praying church – let's make it more so! I am excited at what God is doing among us in prayer as we move forward; please help fulfil my vision of a church where everyone is praying for their neighbour and the whole church are 'prayer ministers' to each other.

Joy Mylek

## **SUNG WORSHIP REPORT**

We believe that when we lift our voices in praise and thanksgiving we experience the thin space between heaven and earth and encounter God in a powerful way.

We continue to be an open worship team where everyone is welcome, where worshipful hearts are more important than skill and talent.

Our goal is for the whole congregation to sing, so we are committed to setting the key of all our worship songs within a singable range.

It has been so encouraging hearing the increase in voices and the confidence of the congregation singing together.

And God's spirit has been speaking - we see that in the way the song choices match up with the scripture and sermon - and with what God seems to be doing among us when we gather.

It is also wonderful seeing the personal growth and transformation in our worship team - and the strong friendships that are being forged as we serve together.

Kath Bier (on behalf of Karl Claasen)

## **WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP**

Our group meets on the fourth Thursday of the month, for food, fellowship, Bible readings and prayer. Sometimes we have speaker and other times we will go out on a trip.

Some of the highlights of our year include:

- "The Journey"- Bible readings and music for Lent (2023)
- The Rhythms of the Church Calendar - a talk from Kath, about the liturgical colours and the seasons at the altar. We talked about using these colours in our floral arrangements in the church.
- Joy Mylek talked about the Prayer Ministry.
- Carols and Christmas music led by Della and Ali.
- A very inspiring talk from Helen Bengel. She told us about her 7 decades of attending churches. (18 in total) and how she knew she wanted to follow Jesus. It was about the interesting people she met on the way and the places she visited.

We welcome all women to join our group.

Chris Bland.

## **10+ SUNDAY SCHOOL**

God has been inspiring the kids in 10+ Sunday school with his awesomeness! We have been amazed by his healings from the Gospel and Wow moments such as the transfiguration. Fellowship and getting to know each other continues to be a strength. The planning and preparation for the lessons is deeply rewarding for myself. I love the journey of learning.

Pam Claasen

## **Children's Ministry Report**

We have had craft, science and games as we explored the gospel and some old testament stories over the last year.

We farewelled Helen, Steve and Georgie as part of the team, and welcomed Amberley, Emma and Peter.

We have loved forming relationships with the tamariki and seeing the children's friendships grow with each other as we explore how God works in our lives and cover topics such as prayer, forgiveness and how little people can play a big role in God's plan!

Leading up to Christmas we also had great fun putting on 2 wonderful Nativity plays!

We are excited to see God at work in our tamariki and plan to have them share what they have been up to in Sunday school with our wider church whanau during the service going forward.

## **YOUTH GROUP**

In the youth group space this last year, we have trialed splitting into two groups for a whole year and have decided to go back to one group in 2024. 'Co-leader' Karla and I spent a lot of time thinking about it and it seemed like a good idea to try and go back to one group. Last year we were hitting numbers of around 40+ kids at times and this year we are back to about 20 or so regulars. Kids come and go with various work and sports commitments, which change throughout the year, but we seem to hover around the 20-30 mark consistently each week and so far, we have met three times in 2024.

In 2023 we have 2 of our youth confirmed as Anglicans, had several programs around finding out more on Christianity, and each week there has been a lot of fun and food to be had.

We are still running with 2 adult leaders and currently have 1 'youth' leader. Our very own Vicar has been coming regularly as 'Parent help' and we are praying into what we might be best to do in 2024 for attracting more 'youth' as leaders and possibly parent help on a rostered system.

God is definitely working in our youth's lives and, although we are not planning on being at the Easter camp this year, we are looking forward to joining in on other AYM activities run throughout the year. This is so that our local kids can see that there is a lot more available than just youth on a Friday. Some of these things are Camps, Board game nights, Games nights, Martial arts, Declare and Demonstrate nights, and (of course) Church.

We have recently been more involved with setting up an area that the youth can 'own', within the church, and look forward to our vision of: "A place of belonging where we have fun and meet Jesus", comes into being a reality as belonging becomes believing.

Mark Bier & Karla Billington

## St PHILIP'S REVIVE REPORT

First a huge shout out to everyone who has helped out with St Philips over the last year and glory to God for everything that has been happening.

We started up weekly services last year with Dinner Church on 16 March so by the time of the AGM will have been running for a year. Dinner church is a contemporary church service (with Sunday School) at 4pm followed by dinner.

We now have a core group of people from Stokes Valley coming each week (about 20 to 30) with new people all the time. Most are new to church or have been away for a while.

During the year we discerned/decided to cut down the monthly Messy Churches we had been having to 3 to 4 times a year and make them a bigger deal. They have been a real feeder for the church services with many people getting to know us first this way.

Our last years' Messy Churches' Easter Festival, Spring Festival and wait for it...Christmas Festival were well attended and well received by the community. We make sure the gospel is preached at each. We are just getting ready for our next Easter Festival on the lawn on Easter Sunday.

We got funding to run Mainly Music and a Mum from St Philips is running it. This is on a koha basis and is well attended most weeks.

We ran the Alpha course through the church services in the 3<sup>rd</sup> term last year and had a full weekend away at Forest Lakes which we got 28 people to.

A huge sadness for us occurred a week later when one of the Dad's committed suicide but everyone pulled together and we mourned well together. Please keep the family in your prayers.

We've also just started up home groups and have one women's and one men's one. The women's one is being led by Kim Shaw and Megan Bray and the men's by Dan Shaw and James.

Our aim for this year is growth, both in numbers and in spiritual depth. We feel we are in the centre of God's will and are grateful to God and people (you all) for their support.

Julia and James Coleman 😊