



Rangitikei Parish

Unity | Family | Discipleship | Service

'Moving forward together, as a diverse community; loving, serving, and proclaiming Jesus in the Rangitikei'

Priest-in-Charges letter to Parish General Meeting 28th June 2020

Tena Koutou Whanau; Greetings brothers and sisters in Christ.

We find ourselves at the beginning of a new season in our Parish life together. We have come through an unexpected and unprecedented time of change and are on the cusp of new growth and possibility in God. While tired, I am so excited for the work God is doing in our Parish life together.

The Parish leadership has seen this time of stillness as an opportunity to discern where God is leading our Parish; so that as we begin gathering, worshipping, and serving together, we start strong – ensuring that all aspects of Parish life help us fulfil our vision; to move forward together, as a diverse community; loving, serving, and proclaiming Jesus in the Rangitikei.

Part of this discernment process was the Parish survey. We are thankful for all those who took time to share their thoughts and feelings with us through that survey. We received 55 responses from all-across the Parish. Your sharing has helped the Vestry's discernment, and we hope our proposal will honour your feedback.

As we look to Gods future for us, the Vestry and I are committed to ensuring all parts of our parish life – every group, service, gathering, ministry – are empowered to achieve their full potential. As we prayed, we looked across the Parish for evidence of ministries where the vision and values of the Parish were clearly in action. Additionally, we looked for signs of our core business as an Anglican Church: Are our ministries leading people into deeper relationships with God, through prayer, worship, and teaching? Growing disciples of Jesus who care for one another as the family of Christ? Have clear outward engagement with the community around them, serving the most vulnerable and sharing the good news of Jesus?

We were greatly encouraged in our discernment because we saw so many signs of life and growth. We want to acknowledge the communities and leadership of St Stephen's 8 am, 9.30 am, and 10 am, Tea & Tots, Woolly Blessings, Funeral Catering, Ladies Lunch and community partnerships in Bulls. God is so clearly blessing these areas of our Parish! Our challenge, however, is what to do in areas where we see no growth or evidence of our core business, vision, or values being lived out.

What follows next is not a decision, but a recommendation. Vestry and I have prayerfully considered how to faithfully lead the Parish into God's future, and we believe that this proposal will enable us to do that. **We are seeking your feedback on this recommendation, to ensure that we make the right decision for the whole Parish.**

Based on our discernment, and the feedback from the Parish Surveys, Vestry and I are making the following recommendation to the Parish. We ask you to prayerfully consider it, share your feedback, and help us make the best decision for the whole Parish.

1. During July one service will be held in the following churches: St Andrew's Bulls, St John's Hunterville, St George's Turakina, St Thomas's Sanson (dates in pewsheets). Vestry will join in worship and host a meeting to share the outcome of today's general meeting.
2. From August 2020, the Parish will cease to hold regular services in the following churches, laying them fallow for 12 months: St George's Turakina, St Thomas's Sanson, St John's Hunterville. During this time there will be opportunities for the local community to consult about the future use of, and ministry in, their church and community.
All churches being 'laid fallow' for 12 months will be invited to plan and prepare, in partnership with the Priest-in-Charge and Parish Clergy, a final celebration service.
3. From August 2020, weekly services will be held at St Andrew's, Bulls, alongside the three regular services at St Stephen's, Marton.
4. From August 2020, the 9.30 am service at St Stephen's will shift to 10 am to allow both Sunday morning services room to grow.
5. The Parish AGM will be held on the 1st of November, 11.30 am, at St Stephen's Hall, Marton. Two Parish consultation meetings will be held prior to the AGM on the following dates: St Andrew's Bulls on the 11th October, St Stephen's Marton on the 18th October.

We believe that God is at work in the Rangitikei, and He will grow His church. While what we are proposing may feel like a loss, we see it as a season of pruning, believing that God the perfect gardener will faithfully raise up more leaders, more believers, and new opportunities for growth all over our Parish. We believe that this season is simply that, a season, and it will be followed by a season of growth if we faithfully follow God.

Once again, this is a proposal, not a pre-made decision. Please, prayerfully read through it, and take the opportunity of today's meeting to share your feedback with us.

"Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen." (Ephesians 3:20-21)

Yours in Christ Jesus.



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