

## Vestrylink - Number 7 – September 2020

During September, meetings of interest were two meetings of Vestry plus the annual meeting of Synod.

### 6 September – Vestry

As indicated in August, Vestry's four key steps are to:

- Identify the causes of St Alban's disunity
- Decide how to address this
- Build the people of God
- Rebuild the house of God

This first meeting focused on identifying causes of disunity. We are now prayerfully prioritising these causes and discerning how we might go about addressing and resolving them. This is likely to include both outside support and parish involvement.

### 16 September – Vestry

Our Diocesan Canons 2019 ("the rules") tell us the primary calling of the Vestry is to "have as the foundation of its work that Vestry be a community of disciples in which the will of God may be discerned through its corporate prayer, reading of Scripture, reflection and fellowship...". For the last five years, our meetings have alternated their focus between business and Bible study. The September meeting, focused on discipleship and Bible study and was led by Libby Bloomfield.

We reflected on chapters one and two of the Diocesan-recommended book Strengthening the Soul of your Leadership. In the book, soul is defined as the essence which exists beyond anything. Moses and Jesus sought God in solitude then carried out what God revealed to them there. Vestry members shared their experiences of seeking God in silence and solitude. Then Libby led a guided meditation from Thomas Keating's book Open Mind, Open Heart.

### 19 September – Synod

This year due to covid-19, Synod was reduced from a two-day session (planned for the Kapiti parish), to a half day on Zoom. Denis Packer and I (Joy) are St Alban's Synod representatives and together with Rev'd John we zoomed from our own homes. This was my first time at Synod and it seemed to me this year, Synod was a low key gathering, with no contentious motions, but interesting 'Diocesan family' input.

Bishop Justin presented the Diocesan priorities for 2021, which are:

"that this Synod commits as a Diocese to follow God's priority for the last, lost and the least: that we commit to seek transformation for those most vulnerable within New Zealand's

housing crisis: and we actively uphold the safeguarding of all creation by actively addressing climate change". This was passed unanimously.

There were some interesting presentations and challenges, particularly the two Bishops' Charges.

Bishop Justin talked about the importance of the 'hospitality of hope' at this profound point in history. "Let's do what we can", he told Synod, "think globally – act locally". He challenged us to host meals each week, alternating between members of our church group and neighbours or strangers.

Following the same theme, Bishop Eleanor talked about the women of Kagera, Tanzania ( a community we supported through our mission table for many years), and how they had saved or restored distressing and difficult situations, by love and fellowship.

The Bishops challenged us to "Prayerfully partner with God in the restoration of the world". A challenge in which we can all participate, individually or collectively.

Synod introduced 'Hotspots'. These were short, interesting presentations from a number of parishes, telling about groups or activities where transformation and growth was happening within their parishes.

All of these items have relevance to us at St Alban's. Can we undertake to pray for guidance, as to how we might demonstrate growing unity through our involvement, with perhaps a commitment to report to a future Synod?

Wellington Cathedral Dean David Rowe, talked about the development of Mission Action Plans, a system to involve people in contributing to the way forward for their parish. Again, with real relevance for St Alban's.

## **Upcoming Events**

A quick reminder of two upcoming events and sincere thanks to everyone involved in their planning. If you'd like to be involved, please contact:

Parish Spring Dinner – from 5.30pm Wednesday 30 September

Contact: Jennie [jennie.lovellsmith@gmail.com](mailto:jennie.lovellsmith@gmail.com) or Sheryl [sheryl@ncf.ca](mailto:sheryl@ncf.ca)

Working Bee in church & hall grounds – 9.30am Saturday 3 October

Contact: Mike [mikeandcarolynparker@gmail.com](mailto:mikeandcarolynparker@gmail.com)

Joy Baird  
Libby Bloomfield  
For St Alban's Vestry  
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