

## Church Community Consultation

### Lower Hutt:

- If a Church is closed there is a fear people will drop out of coming to Mass on Sunday. Can we look at providing car-pooling or a minibus to transport people to Mass?
- It is important to park the buildings at the moment and to look first at what are the needs of the Parish.
- Schools (primary) need to maintain a relationship to a church.
- How can we utilise our Colleges – as for students' school is their "sense of church"
- How do we ensure that we consult with the majority of people – given that this meeting does not even represent the cross section of parishioners.
- We need to engage with our secondary schools and ask them (the students) about what they want from their church and how to involve them.
- Maybe we need to think about hubs and have something that connects the communities.
- How do we learn from our history – lay people use to be involved in developing and growing the church/faith. How can lay people have a greater role?
- Make our churches more multi-purpose. Remove the pews and have replaceable chairs.
- Create a sense of community so that our buildings get more use.
- Put bus timetables on the Church noticeboards so people know when buses are passing near our churches
- As a parish community we are not able to come together all the time – how do we ensure that parishioners still have somewhere to gather locally?
- What are other faith communities doing? They are facing similar problems to us.
- Greenstone doors is looking for a new venue – it's outgrowing its current location. They would like access to a chapel. How can our church(es) provide emergency accommodation for mothers? Greenstone is seen as being "church" for the people, providing a hub, and is growing.
- If a community "closes" how do we ensure those people with Ministries can still be part of those ministries in their "new" community, or even across the Parish?
- Why don't we use some of our parishioners who are doing good things in the community to share their reflections on the gospel (e.g. provide a "homily")?
- Overseas, Boston, the church closed its churches in town and bought leases in the mall, taking the church to the people. Is this something we should be considering?
- Parking is an issue across our parish, including here at P&P. That needs to be considered.
- How can we align our liturgy to local seasons, such as Matariki rather than following the northern hemisphere? (Note: We must be careful in that we cannot impact upon things that are canon law)
- Approach our colleges (Sacred Heart / St Bernard's) to connect with the student leaders across the Valley. Learn from what the Colleges are doing. Their RE teams will have insight – we should talk to them about how the colleges can play a role in our future, e.g. using the school properties, chapels.
- How do we connect with our ethnic communities?
- Youth have a strong idea of social justice aspects; we should talk to youth leaders at our colleges.

### Avalon:

- Question over just what is the vision for the Catholic Church in the Hutt Valley? Without a clear vision, is this review yet another disjointed reaction to a problem that is not clearly defined?
- Where do youth fit into our thinking and how do we encourage them to come to Church? Before the amalgamation and change in Mass times, St Martin's had a strong presence of youth. Now we hardly see them. Message from Ss P&P School is the children should go to Ss P&P Mass.
- We are competing with the likes of ARISE Church for our youth. A number of young Catholics are going there instead of our churches.
- We should build a new Church to be centre of our Parish and look to re-house our priests. Having four separate Presbyteries does not make economic sense.

- We need to create a centre for our youth so that they can have somewhere to come together as a community within our parish.
- Don't sell off our churches. Retain all four. Rent out our presbyteries for social housing – they can generate income to pay for themselves.
- Consider re-purposing the Churches. Make them multi-use buildings, while still respecting the sanctity of our worship space.
- Look to enter into social partnerships with others (e.g. Anglican communities, Salvation Army etc)
- We need to develop an outreach programme that gets us out of our church buildings and into our local communities.
- We need to remember our church community (at Avalon) also includes providing a place of worship and place of belonging for the Polish Community. Other Church centres also cater for ethnic communities that make up our Parish.
- All four church communities need to stop looking inwards and being entrenched about protecting “their patch” – this happened with the amalgamation and the change of Mass times.
- Our schools, particularly secondary, need to re-focus and promote themselves as being proud Catholic schools not just Christian schools.
- The June WelCom has the Cardinal's column as well as several articles affirming the church's mission to be outward facing. So, I think the many voices at the meeting seeking for St. Martin's to become a centre for worship and welcome of different groups and events and services should be captured in this context. (Cardinal: I often hear people suggesting that the church should be more modern, that we should do things differently.... The Church has no problem with that...etc. ref to Vatican II)
- I hear that the Holy Trinity Anglican Church in Avalon (with which community we have shared Ash Wed services) is closing, so potentially that community could use our church.
- There are many social activities such as the over 60s scrabble club that run out of that church (and other places) that will struggle without a venue, again a good place for our church to be used more widely and creatively.
- There is a bunch of homeless people that frequent the shops at the top of Park Ave; as a community we have nothing to offer them unless we can envision our church as offering some type of hospitality. Michael Leon who was at the meeting (a long-term parishioner) will have much experience in shaping a service for such vulnerable people.
- I think there were a few people who were in favour of building a whole new church, and the land and congregational distribution make Taita the sensible choice, so I think it's worth adding that as another option that was discussed. Community needs in North Taita are more acute than in Central Hutt.

#### **Main recommendations:**

- Retain our four churches – once they are gone, we will never get them back. Outreach will grow our communities, so need to be outward focused and not inward focused.
- Re-house the priests and rent out surplus presbyteries.

#### **Naenae:**

- Lack of transport and cost. No direct bus to Taita. Taita is small church so would not accommodate merging. Schools need churches. Splitting the community would be an issue. Elderly becoming isolated as they shift would be a problem.
- School often the only contact with parish life for unchurched.
- Youth
- Travel
- Central building / complex – youth, elderly, music “Catholic Community centre”
- Strong prayer focus on vocation.
- Increase links with missionaries worldwide
- Link with schools
- Fundraise for buildings – tithing.

- Presbyteries used for community projects – unemployed etc
- Schools and church staying together
- Transport is a challenge for people
- Multicultural community – church is important
- Get the money to support that.
- Group that looked at property and cost – do they have answers? No! Because they were only looking at \$\$\$\$\$. Not pastoral.
- Then cardinal’s directive came, and we needed to broaden our view. If it was just about finance, it would be one thing, but the directive is about pastoral care and living in service to the marginalised.
- We could sell the Naenae presbytery and strengthen our St Bernadette’s church.
- If money is the driver people can just drive anywhere to Mass.
- The Church communities all think they have something special in their place. We could make the most of our parish resources by selling what we don’t use.
- If we don’t have priests, we can just have word and community. We could broadcast mass from other places through technology.

#### Taita:

- There needs to be a meeting place for each community
- Don’t rush to dispose of churches
- Need to keep in mind elderly or those who can’t afford to drive can attend mass (any day) – arrange some sort of van or transportation (use the school vans?)
- Forward planning for population of Lower Hutt - is this the right time?
- Keep in mind the impact of climate change – should we be going further north?
- Why is there no one from Taita on the steering committee?
- How do we ensure that the right people are involved to represent the diversity and thoughts of our parish?
- A central hall and church for everyone to come together – Taita would be a great place for this
- Confirmed that the schools are not included in this review
- However, we should keep in mind that the ability for the schools to celebrate mass
- The schools are empty at night so could those be our hubs
- How many presbyteries do we need? Should these be modernised? What happens to the current presbyteries?
- Need to ensure we focus on the pastoral needs and how do we get the eucharist to them instead of focus on buildings
- Historically P&P was the ‘head’ Parish and it still feels that way even though we are one Parish now
- Can we have a ‘museum’ area to keep our history alive and how they’ve changed throughout the years
- Biggest pastoral need is to remember there is going to be a lot of hurt due to the emotional ties with whatever this decision is
- All of our ministries should be under one umbrella so they can be used by all our churches – we don’t have to wait till the properties to change to do this
- We need to look after our priests as well – insulated and sustainable
- If we are taking people to and from church, how do we allow people to build a community?
- We should look at multi-purpose facilities include things like a cafeteria, meeting spaces, youth space, and other areas away from the mass celebration
- Taita’s capacity is 265. We can go above that, but we’ll need to get a monitored alarm
- If we have a new church can it be called “Good Shepherd”
- We need to look at the cost of combining and closing churches rather than just upgrading each

- We should look at times that would suit families and that aren't after mass on Sundays in order to hold future meetings for this process
- Tony to attend the combined meeting of the youths and reps on 28 July
- How do we promote family in our churches because those kids will turn into our youths and eventually into adults to keep our churches going in the future?
- Is it more logical to look at churches to keep before the presbyteries?
- THIS IS ABOUT THE PEOPLE – THE SPIRIT AND OUR COMMUNITIES WILL SURVIVE WITHOUT BUILDINGS
- Thank you to the Cardinal for the courage to take this step forward to bring us together as it will equalise us and bring our community together more.
- Close other 3 churches and build one big church in Taita