



TE AWAKAIRANGI PARISH

RECOMMENDATION TO CARDINAL JOHN

November 2019

Introduction

In February 2019 you gave a directive to all Parishes within the Wellington Archdiocese to undertake a review of their churches and presbyteries to allow us to better respond to the availability of priests, ensure we are making wise and prudent use of our buildings to support the mass count and to ensure parishes are supported in making and implementing decisions in the future. You also challenged us to be “missionary disciples” and address the priorities and outcomes from the 2017 Archdiocesan Synod.

In order to respond to your directive Te Awakairangi brought together a Steering Group with representatives from across the parish, including:

- Tony McKone - Chair of the Steering Group (member of Parish Pastoral Council)
- Barbara Rowley - Representative of the Pastoral Leadership team
- Fr Cirilo Barlis - Representative of the Pastoral Leadership team
- Phil Adamczyk – Representative of the Parish Pastoral Council
- John O’Sullivan - Representative of the Finance Committee
- Maureen Johnson - Representative of the Development Committee
- Jo Murray - Representative from our schools
- Carolyn Sutherland - Representative from Taita (co-opted by Chair of Steering Committee)

Our Parish

The Parish of Te Awakairangi came together through the amalgamation of Ss Peter & Paul (Lower Hutt), St. Martin de Porres (Avalon), St. Bernadette (Naenae), and St. Michael (Taita) in 2015. Along with three primary schools, Ss Peter and Paul, St. Bernadette’s and St Michael’s and two colleges, St. Bernard’s and Sacred Heart our parish covers the residential areas of Central Hutt, Avalon, Naenae, Taita, Fairfield, Alicetown, Maungaraki, Normandale, Harbour View, Kelson and Belmont.

We are a diverse community of communities with a range of ethnicities and ministries which we want to continue to nurture and grow. We currently hold 6 masses each weekend plus additional community masses throughout the month for our Samoan, Filipino, Tokelauan, and Polish communities.

Our Parish consists of the following assets:

Site	Earthquake Rating (compared to NBS)	Masses	Mass Count (Nov 18)	Church Capacity
Ss Peter & Paul (Church, Office & Presbytery)	Church: Medium to Low Risk (>67%)	Saturday 6pm Sunday 9am Sunday 5:30pm Tue-Fri 7am & 12:10pm Sat 9am	817	718

St Martin de Porres (Church, Office & Presbytery)	Church: Earthquake Risk (34%-67%)	Sunday 8:30am Three days a week 9am	127	290
St Bernadette (Church, Hall, Office & Presbytery)	Church: Earthquake Prone (<34%) Hall: Medium to Low Risk (>67%)	Sunday 10am Three days a week 9am	140	360
St Michael (Church, Office & Presbytery)	Church: Earthquake Risk (34%-67%)	Sunday 10:30am Two days a week 9am	167	260

We have an average annual income of \$450,000 which after fees and levies provides an operating budget of approximately \$220,000. As a parish, we have been able to sustain four churches for the past few years however we run a small (>\$5000) deficit and are only able to provide for immediate repairs; there has been nearly no money put aside for planned maintenance since 2015 or for supporting any substantial outreach programmes for either youth or the poor and marginalised.

Last year we reached the end of a 40-year lease with the Hutt City Council for a property held on Boothby Grove and we made the decision to sell that property which generated about \$1 million for the parish. This enabled us, for the first time, to make a modest allowance for maintenance, however, not enough to address the strengthening costs some of our buildings require to meet acceptance under the new building standards (NBS).

We understand maintaining four churches and their associated presbyteries as we have been is unsustainable for our future and does not give us the opportunity for growth in ministries and outreach or to move forward and come together as a parish.

Our Future

As a Parish, our vision for the future is focused on strengthening and growing ministries surrounding youth spirituality and outreach to the poor and marginalised. This is in line with the 2017 Synod outcomes and your request that we are a poor church for the poor and should be outward facing. We have thought long and hard about how we can make wise use of our existing resources to support these ministries, as well ministries related to family and faith, and provide appropriate facilities for worship.

In order to give us the best opportunity for a sustainable future, we propose a staged (three to five year) transition of Te Awakairangi Parish from four churches and four presbyteries to two churches and one presbytery.

- We propose to sell the Avalon property which will enable the parish to have greater resource for future parish development and the provision of outreach and ministry programmes to the peoples of the Hutt Valley.
- We believe Ss Peter & Paul church has capacity to handle an increase in mass attendance without the need for immediate modifications to the church so propose to leave it as is.
- We propose to perform modest alterations to St. Michael's church to bring it up to at least 67% of NBS and make it a more multi-purpose facility that can accommodate youth and outreach activities.
- We propose to not make any capital modifications to St. Bernadette's property with a view to retain the hall but, over time, close and subdivide the presbytery to sell at a later phase of the transition. Depending on the future requirement to support changing mass counts as a result of any changes to churches in our neighbouring parishes, we also would look to review both the requirement and need to maintain St Bernadette's church.
- We have considered developing a new presbytery and office facility, however at an estimated cost of \$1.4 million, we propose to reconfigure the presbytery and office facilities at Lower Hutt for just under half that cost. This will ensure we retain financial resources to support our future outreach and ministry programmes.
- We believe that this approach will provide our parish with the resources to put a greater focus on supporting our ministries by increasing funding set aside for outreach, youth and ministries annually, while still maintaining appropriate church facilities for worship and appropriate accommodation for our priests and lay staff.

Our preference is to retain three churches if this is both practicable and financially viable, whilst still allowing sufficient resources to support new and different ministries and outreach programmes for youth as well as the poor and marginalised. We will review the impact of mass counts and financial resources over the following three to five years to determine whether the Parish can sustain three churches, which is our preference. Once we see the impact of where parishioners in the Hutt Valley end up attending mass after the review and any effects arising from our neighbouring parishes should they close any of their churches we will be in a better position to review our ability to maintain our preferred three-church approach or whether it is more sustainable to reduce to two churches, which would be St Michael's Taita and Ss Peter and Paul, Lower Hutt. We would also reassess the facilities of Ss Peter & Paul and St Michael's to determine what, if any, future modifications might be required to support our sacramental needs but also enable us to support new and existing ministry and outreach programmes.

Capital Building Costs

We spoke to several engineering, construction, consultant and demolition companies regarding our proposed future state and have put together the following capital estimates based on their quotes. With money we already have in the bank and the sale of our St Martin de Porres properties we are fully funded for the changes we are proposing including money left over for further development to support new and future ministries.

Income	Estimate	Remarks
Proceeds from sale of Boothby Grove property	\$998,000	Sold in 2018

Sale of St Martin de Porres Church and Presbytery (net proceeds after removal of buildings)	\$2,228,000	Valuers reports Truebridge registered valuers (includes estimated Real Estate and legal fees)
Sale of St Bernadette's presbytery (net proceeds)	\$604,250	Valuers reports Truebridge registered valuers (includes estimated Real Estate and legal fees)
Sale of St Bernadette's Church (net proceeds)	\$604,250	Estimated sale
Total Income	\$4,434,500	
Expenditure		
Removal of St Martin de Porres Church and Presbytery	\$85,000	As per Jurgens quote
Removal of St Michael's Presbytery	\$45,000	Used Jurgens quote for demo of SPP presbytery
Removal of St Bernadette's church	\$85,000	Used Jurgens quote for demo of Avalon church and presbytery
Subdivision St Bernadette's Presbytery	\$48,500	As per Cuttriss's quote
(Modest) Reconfiguration of St Michaels Church	\$500,000	As per Sawey consulting engineers reduced to modest budget
Reconfiguration of Lower Hutt Presbytery and Office facilities	\$600,000	Estimated based on third party professional advice
Groundworks SPP following reconfiguration	\$100,000	Estimated based on third party professional advice
Implementation costs	\$219,525	15% total expenditure for Project Management, Design, consents, legal fees, contracts, etc.
Total Expenditure	\$1,683,025	
Capital Surplus	\$2,751,475	

Annual Running Costs

Our finance committee has estimated the annual running costs for a two-church option based off our average income and expenditure over the last four years. This estimate sets us up to be in the best position moving forward, it includes full natural disaster insurance cover for all of our buildings, doubling the current amount spent on ministries and outreach, and setting aside \$20,000 per

church for planned maintenance each year. There is an estimated small operating surplus between our incoming money and expenditure once depreciation is applied.

Operating Impact of two churches (Ss Peter & Paul and St Michael's)	per annum
Income	
Collections	452,000
Other Income e.g. Donations	23,000
Avalon closing reduced collections (25%)	13,250
Naenae closing reduced collections (25%)	15,757
Total Income before Levies	445,993
Less ADW and Clergy Trust Fund levies 45%	200,697
Net Income after Levies	245,296
Plus Income not levied e.g. specific donations	10,000
Plus Interest income	27,415
Net Income available for operating costs	282,711
Current Operating costs	220,000
Adjustments-Cost Savings:	
Avalon closing	27,000
Naenae closing	24,000
Total Cost Savings	51,000
Adjustments-Additional costs	
Insurance of all buildings for natural disaster	49,000
Outreach programme	10,000
Total additional costs	59,000
Total Revised operating costs	228,000
Cash SURPLUS between Income and Operating Costs	54,711
Non-cash items	
Depreciation	7,000
Planned maintenance	40,000
Operating Surplus	7,711

How We Got There

As expected, this was not an easy proposal to create however we looked at a number of factors as well as gathered insights and feedback from our parishioners.

Consultation Process

The Steering Committee held multiple rounds of consultation with our parishioners and discerned on everything we were told. We took a focus, first, on the pastoral needs of the parishioners to shape the proposals we presented to the parish.

We began the process with a 'blank sheet' where we held briefings during our weekend Masses followed by consultation sessions with parishioners after each Mass. Through these sessions,

approximately 120 attendees and 70 online participants answered three questions; what questions do you have, what concerns do you have, and any suggestions.

Then the Steering Committee came together to develop a range of five high level options to present to the parish; these options ranged from one new church to maintaining our four existing churches. We held two all of parish 'world café' sessions to get feedback on each of the options where approximately 100 people attended, and a further 50 sent feedback to use via our online consultation process. Additionally, we received nearly 200 'votes' on which of the five options parishioners preferred.

The Steering Committee then reconvened to discern the feedback and prepared two options for further consultation. By focusing on the pastoral needs we determined a preference to maintain three churches and one presbytery. Our two options were very similar, with the key difference being one where we built a brand-new church in Taita and the other where we undertook a reconfiguration of the Taita church to provide for multi-use facilities to support our outreach and ministry programmes. These options were presented to the parish subject to being financially viable. We also charged our parish finance committee to undertake a due diligence costing to inform us of the financial viability of our proposal. During the due diligence period we received approximately 150 further response to our preferred options.

Upon receiving the findings of the financial implications, the Steering Committee met again to discuss the feedback from parishioners and what it fiscally means for our parish. Once we discerned all this information, it provided focus and clarity that we cannot sustain a three-church model. We subsequently refined our thinking around a two-church one presbytery option and asked the finance committee to model this for fiscal viability and sustainability.

As a result, while our preference remains maintaining a three-church approach, it was apparent that fiscally, to provide sufficient resources to support our outreach and ministry vision, the most likely outcome would be to, over time, reduce to a two-church one presbytery model, based on retaining the Lower Hutt and Tait churches. We also identified that it was more financially appropriate to reconfigure our Lower Hutt presbytery and office facilities rather than develop new facilities. This will ensure we retain financial resources for outreach and ministry activities.

As there is potential for changes to the number of churches in our neighbouring parishes of Te Wairua Tapu and Our Lady of the Valleys, which could result in increased mass counts in Te Awakairangi, we believe initially retain three churches (Lower Hutt, Taita and Naenae) until we can see the impact of any changes to churches in the Hutt Valley before making a final decision on disposing of the Naenae church is the appropriate path to take.

Along the way all information and feedback were published and shared on our website to ensure our parishioners knew where in the process we were and how to submit their feedback.

Determining Factors

The following factors were considerations in determining which two churches were to be kept open:

Availability of our priests

- While we are quite blessed at the moment to have multiple priests in our parish, we know this is not always going to be the case, so all options the Steering Committee considered had to be based on the parish having no more than two priests at some point in the medium

to long-term future, we have undertaken our planning on a future where we may only have one priest to say Mass. This means that although at the present we could still retain having up to six masses (one Saturday vigil and five Sunday services) it makes practical sense to plan on the basis of one priest and only four Masses (one vigil and three Sunday) split over two churches, and to look to incorporate the ethnic Masses, where appropriate, into our normal weekend Mass celebrations.

- Ss Peter & Paul has our largest capacity church, of 719 and has the highest NBS rating of our current churches, at around 97%. No immediate work is required on this building.
- St Michael's, while currently having a capacity at 260, has had some strengthening work done and sits just under 67% of NBS and would require some expenditure to bring up to a higher standard.
- St Martin de Porres requires some strengthening work, as it is in the 34-67% of NBS standard, however as it is an ideal parcel of land, makes a sensible candidate for liquidation to provide funds to support outreach and ministry programmes.
- St Bernadette's is our weakest church building at less than 34% of NBS and also has asbestos that would require attention if any work was to be undertaken. Bringing this church up to at least 67% of NBS would require substantial investment. While we would like to ideally retain this church, long term this will be dependent on whether we have a mass count to support any investment in strengthening without absorbing funds that could otherwise be focused on outreach and ministry activity.

Size of our churches / mass count

- By 2030 the population is predicted to rise by 6.7% (7000 people) and the majority of those are expected to settle in the northern parts of Lower Hutt and the Eastern Hills within our parish boundaries. However, the current mass count and rate of 'active' Catholics in our community is slowly decreasing so we believe the two factors will balance each other out and our current mass count of 1400 will remain steady.
- What is unknown is the impact any decisions made in respect to our neighbouring parishes might have if churches within Our Lady of the Valley's and Te Wairau Tapu parishes close, some parishioners may attend Taita or Lower Hutt. However, holding 2 masses at both Ss Peter & Paul and St Michael's will allow for a weekly mass count of 1900.

Geography and accessibility

- The largest distance between our churches is 7km so by Ss Peter & Paul and St Michael's being at each end of the parish it provides easy accessibility for all members of the parish. Additionally, both Ss Peter and Paul and St Michael's are near transport hubs with a bus depot and bus and train stations available at each site respectively.
- Ss Peter & Paul and St Bernadette are built in residential areas which limits development opportunities while St Michael's and St Martin de Porres are in high density areas which means they are zoned for commercial and residential. This gives more opportunities for development as well as potentially gets a higher price when being sold.
- We have the largest piece of land (5 acres) in Taita which provides us with many opportunities for future development and/or freeing up some of this resource to generate income for other uses in the future if necessary.
- It is predicted that the flood plain for Lower Hutt will be all the way to Knight's Road so if this is the case, it is prudent to plan for the longer term future of the church as both people and business are predicted to move north it puts us in a good position to have both ends of our parish covered.

- There was some fear that having our parish split between Lower Hutt and Taita for Mass services could result in two separate demographics within our parish. We believe that this can be addressed by ensuring Mass times are set such that parishioners are “actively encouraged” to think parish rather than community when it comes to Mass attendance.

Ministries and Outreach

- To fulfil our vision of outreach to the poor and marginalised, we need to go to the peripheries, we need to ensure we have a presence in the Northern parts of our Lower Hutt community where there is great need. A facility in Taita will give us a place from which to centre our outreach and having a multi-purpose centre also gives us options to develop and run new outreach ministries to the citizens of the wider Hutt Valley. To allow us the ability to walk and talk the ministry of Jesus – by reaching out to the poor and marginalised and by providing resources.
- A multi-purpose facility is able to meet other needs within and across our community – a place for families, young people, elderly, poor and the youth to come together not just for sacrament and worship, but also to grow and develop as a community. Taita currently has a strong, active teenage group and a multi-purpose centre will provide a place to grow our ministry for youth. We can provide them a centre that they can call their own – a place to grow spiritually and as the next generation of community leaders. This is one way we can give life to Pope Francis’ desire to keep in touch with our youth.
- By not investing all the realised income from how we reconfigure our parish back into buildings we provide a fund to support new and different approaches to both outreach and ministry that up until now we have not been able to provide finance to support and/or develop.

Moving Forward

Our objective with moving forward with the proposal (pending approval) is to ensure we continue to grow as a parish community. Our proposal is not about destroying existing communities but one of building a stronger, more outward ministry focused parish community.

We will need to ensure that with the changes in the church buildings the pastoral care and ministries currently provided through the different church communities are not lost, nor the true sense of belonging to the community of faith. How this is done needs to be discerned by the Pastoral Council and Team.

Naturally with less churches in the Valley there will need to be a valley wide look at how the Mass schedule is organised.

We acknowledge that this is a large change for many in our parish who have spent our lives in and around these churches, families and communities. To support any approved change to our parish facilities we will need to hold a celebration when a church is closed. Looking to the future we can see the need to treasure symbols of our journey as Catholics in the Hutt Valley and ensure our traditions and history of all the churches in Te Awakairangi are not lost as a result of change.

Conclusion

This was a difficult process and the hardest part is yet to come but the best way to make the transition is to put the focus on our people and building the parish community.

We need to look across the Hutt Valley and outside the boundaries of our parish to deliver the best outcome for the wider Church. While we've consulted with neighbouring parishes, and they have developed their own recommendations, we understand the importance of any final decision made in respect of our, and our neighbours, recommendations may need to be looked at from a whole of Valley perspective.

We have the support of both the Parish Pastoral Council and Pastoral Leadership Team for the recommendations set out in this paper.

Recommendation

It is our recommendation that our parish of Te Awakairangi, upon approval:

- Reduce to a three-church one presbytery parish, based on retaining our churches at Lower Hutt, Taita, and for the immediate to medium term, Naenae.
- That we sell the Avalon property, which will enable revenue for supporting outreach and ministry activity.
- That we re-configure the presbytery and office facilities at Lower Hutt to provide appropriate fit for purpose accommodation for priests and facilities for our parish office, including meeting space for priests and/or lay pastoral minister to meet with parishioners.
- That we subdivide the presbytery at Naenae and sell that property to generate revenue for supporting outreach and ministry activity.
- That we undertake a modest re-configuration of Taita church to provide for increased mass count and better facilities to support multi-use of the building for outreach and ministry.
- That we dispose of the presbytery at Taita but retain the land for future development if required.
- Depending on the impact of changes approved for our neighbouring parishes of Te Wairua Tapu and Our Lady of the Valleys, we review the sustainability of St Bernadette's church.

We are grateful to our parishioners and the passion they have brought to the input provided to our consultation process. We also thank you for giving us the opportunity to shape our future and taking the courageous first step towards being a truly outward facing church.

If you have any questions, please contact teawakairangi.ppc@gmail.com

God Bless

Tony McKone,
Chair of Steering Committee
pp Te Awakairangi Parish Pastoral Council

Fr Patrick Bridgman
Parish Priest
pp Parish Leadership Team