

Ministry Educator for the Diocese (DME) Reporting on 2021

My role as Ministry Educator is funded through the St John's College Trust. A wide range of educational projects and responsibilities are within the Ministry Educator's domain, both locally and nationally.

Nationally, I am a member of the Anglican Ministry Educators Network, AMEN. Representatives from each diocese were able to meet in Tauranga in February to share resources and experiences, and to discuss developments and different approaches to process of discernment for ordination and the formation of leaders in across the country.

Members of AMEN are also members of the larger TPMC group – Tikanga Pakeha Ministry Council. In this group we have been working on the development of a national education strategy and a website with a range of resources that will be added to over time. The educational strategy provides a framework that expresses a commitment to mutual accountability and shared learning goals across tikanga pakeha. It also recognises the need to invest in leadership across the different vocational pathways of those who are ordained and those who offer ministry as laity. Both projects were completed, and you can explore the website and the strategic framework here: <https://www.tpmcanglican.nz/>

The implementation of the strategic framework was then modelled by TPMC at a rural forum held in Hamilton in May. Archdeacon Dawn Baldwin gave a thoughtful reflection on rural ministry as part of the Christchurch diocese presentation. Participants at that forum also contributed to the work of Te Pai Tawhiti, which was just beginning at that time. Te Pai Tawhiti is a research project initiated by Te Kotahitanga, the group that decides on the distribution to St John's scholarship money. The Te Pai Tawhiti project looks towards 2040 and is attempting to find out how the formation of those involved in ministry and mission can be advanced by using 10 different research approaches.

At the beginning of the academic year, I visited St John's College in Auckland to join staff and students for the pōwhiri. It was a nice opportunity to take the Christchurch student cohort out for a meal not knowing at that time that Auckland's extended lockdown would mean student life would soon be filled with additional challenges.

Closer to home, the 2021 clergy conference was held at Hanmer in May. Recognising that many clergy were feeling wearied by the constant changes associated with COVID, and other concerns, it was good to be able to hold the conference in this beautiful rural town. Many clergy colleagues contributed to prayer rhythms, discussion groups, and 'blessed' the local cafes and business by using a pressie card that was gifted to them. Bishop Richard, Te Waipounamu, led us in worship and into deeper understanding of Māori kaupapa. Paul and Leslie Askin bravely shared some of their faith journey in a moving testimony. And in the educational space, ministry standards were in focus and the new Title D complaints process was explained.

I was contacted by staff from Anglican Financial Care (formerly the pension board) and asked to help them connect with active and retired clergy and their spouses.

Two seminars were held – one in Christchurch and one in Ashburton – to provide up to date information about their financial products, the health and welfare grants available to retired clergy and their spouses, (whether or not they are part of the pension scheme), as well as pension funds and their kiwisaver scheme. The Wellington based staff expressed their intention to hold these seminars regularly.

Despite the need to cancel and reschedule some events during 2021, I did manage to lead eight Healthy Boundaries Training days across the diocese. (Those with a bishop's license must complete this training at least once every three years.)

Also during 2021, a Royal Commission of Enquiry into Historic Abuse Diocesan Working group was established. As a member of this group, I work with the other members to develop a compassionate and survivor focused response to the harm that has occurred in this diocese. This work is ongoing. Along with several others from the diocese, I was able to attend a one-day presentation in Auckland from the very successful Australian redress initiative that came out of the Melbourne Anglican Diocese in response to their Royal Commission of Enquiry. Staff from this entity, called Kooyoora, described their learnings as well as their models for provision of training, vetting employees, helping victim-survivors through a redress process, handling complaints, and the kinds of skills and knowledge needed to do this important work well.

The annual BACO (Bishop's Advisory Committee for Ordination) weekend went ahead coordinated by Rev'd Jenny Wilkens, the Diocesan Director for Ordination. This gathering includes the ministry educator and other advisors as well as candidates for discernment. It was hosted at the Community of the Sacred Name.

This was the first year I was responsible for the curriculum of Post-Ordination Training, now known as Professional Development Fridays - PDF. I am assisted by Gareth Bezett who took over the reins when I was away on study leave. This group of recently ordained people was often a highlight each month as we shared lively discussion around "*The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*," by Patrick Lencioni, explored best practice regarding pastoral care, and issues associated with Anglican identity.

Out and about in the diocese, I led a retreat day with members of St Mark's Opawa. It was a treat being with these creative and prayerful people. I was also the guest preacher at the South Canterbury Archdeaconry annual gathering, another special day, as well as at the Transitional Cathedral as part of a series on Scripture in the Anglican tradition. I was briefly involved in preparations for the Anglo-Catholic hui hosted by St Michael and All Angels hui and was able to find some funding to support the hosting of this event.

I remain a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). I did however resign from the Theology House Board at the end of the year after five years' service. Rev'd Meg Harvey resigned at the same time and I acknowledged her six year commitment. During her tenure as chair we recruited that fantastic Heather Fraser as administrator, Gareth Bezett as the new director, and developed a SIPO (statement of investment policy and objectives) for appropriate stewardship of Theology House investments.

Many people, lay and ordained, benefit from St Johns Scholarships. I continued to assist those who applied to the St Johns College Trust to fund their studies in the March and September rounds.

The diocese receives significant funds from St John's College Trust which pays for those employed in educational work. As mentioned in last year's report, there were significant unspent funds carried over to 2021. This led to the development of the first Governance Uplift training day. I was also granted permission to use a portion of this funding to run four training events focused on mental health. Meg Harvey provided administrative support for these projects. Over 100 people from across the diocese attended one or more. I, and I am sure many attendees, are grateful to Rev'd Dr. Pauline Stewart for her two seminars on drug and alcohol misuse and the impact this has on families and people trying to assist in a pastoral capacity. Tricia Hendry provided a carefully curated two-day seminar of suicide awareness training which was full of professional expertise, best practice, up to date research and care. The fourth event was a Mental Health First Aid course led by Sean Pawson and Janelle Butcher from Stepping Stone's Trust.

Unspent funds also enabled the development of a website for mission, ministry and training in the diocese. The website was built by Jon Brighton and it is expected that during 2022 content will be added in and it will 'go live.'

In 2021, I was eligible for study leave. Unfortunately, my plans were interrupted by another lockdown but I did complete an online course provided by the Faith Trust Institute along with a group of thoughtful students from across the United States and Canada. I remain grateful for this time of reflection and refocussing.

Stephanie Robson - April 2022