

YOUNG ADULTS

It's a thrill to continue serving our Diocese in my role as Young Adults Ministry Developer under Bishop Peter's leadership. The Regeneration of our Diocese obviously must involve the sowing and growing of young leaders who are able to adapt to the changes our society is undergoing. We're passionate about seeing these young people flourish in our church as the bare witness to the gospel.

Young Adult ministry activities undertaken over the past year

Discipleship – As discipleship is a priority of our new strategic plan, we continue to see growth and hope in the formation and transformation of our young adults. Many of our people have enjoyed nurture and challenge by being part of a “huddle” discipleship group in some form in 2019.

Vocatio – In 2018 Spanky Moore has led a team to pilot a new kind of missional community called ‘Vocatio’, which specifically worked with 24 young adults who had “tapped out” of church, but still wanted to explore faith. 2019 saw this community double, working with around 48 of this “de-churched” young people, and exploring contemplative prayer, emotional health and vocation.

21 Elephants Podcast – Scottie Reeve (Wellington Diocese) and Spanky Moore launched their third season of this podcast series – this time exploring “Artists and Activists”. So far the podcast has been downloaded over 25000 times.

Monastery – 2019 saw us launch the Peel Forest Eco Monastery, which has a mission of “introducing and foster contemplative spiritual amongst young people”. Most weekends small groups of young adults went their on retreats, as well as 8-10 larger retreats happening there of 15-20 young adults, including three of our ‘**Unplugged**’ 3 day silent retreats.

Missional Communities – A number of residential missional communities have begun or continued in 2019, and are proving an appealing and effective way of discipleship and living the way of Jesus together. Communities currently include houses in Sumner/Redcliffs, Spreydon, Bryndwr, Burwood, and Fairlee.

Alpha Marriage Course – As with our strategic focus on Family, we hosted 5 married or engaged couples that serve as young leaders in our church for a 7 week Alpha Marriage Course. This is a great way to invest in the relational health of our young people.

Young Adult Resourcing – As always, we continued to source and make available specialist young adult resources for parish based ministries and small groups – including a new portable library for young adults.

Younger Persons Mental Health Educator - It's been fantastic to have Charlotte Falloon begin in 2019 as our Younger Persons Mental Health Educator – a 3 year position thanks to a very generous grant from St John's New Initiative Fund. She is doing a great job of scoping, training and resourcing those working with younger people in our diocese in the area of mental health.

FOCUSES AND CHALLENGES IN 2020

We have a number of key vacancies in youth and young adult work positions, and so attracting and retaining leaders for these positions is a key challenge for our Diocese.

There is an increasing hunger from our Tikanga Pakeha young people to engage more intentionally in the Bi-cultural Journey – both through formal education, and with our Tikanga Maori partners via Bishop Richard Wallace and his team.

It's been so exciting to see new expressions of faith taking place in our diocese too. Adventure Church in Sumner shows great creativity (surfing and family ministry), as does some of the new developments of community at Sister Eveleen House. We pray that more of our young leaders continue to "push the waka" out into new territory in creative ways, and that our church structures might enable and encourage this, rather than inhibit and restrain such adventures.

Evangelism, as a strategic focus of Bishop Peter, feels for most to be a difficult area to work in. However it's essential we focus our minds in this area if we are to see meaningful regeneration in our ministry units. Alpha is a fantastic way to do this, but we will need to explore different horses for different courses, and different dishes for different flavours of parish. And we need a new generation of those gifted for sharing faith with those on the margins. Come Holy Spirit!