

Parish Review

Holy Family Parish of Nelson & Stoke



Our Parish

The faith community of the Holy Family Parish evolved from the amalgamation of Nelson's St Mary's parish with Stoke's St Francis of Assisi parish on 1st February 2016.

Amalgamation has progressed relatively seamlessly with the one priest celebrating two masses each weekend at each church. Fr Bill has chosen to reside at the Stoke presbytery, which is equidistant between his office at St Mary's and Garin College where he is chaplain. The St Mary's presbytery has been retained and is currently rented, as is a flat attached to the Stoke presbytery.

Integration of the various ministries has resulted in a well-run parish under very capable leadership. Volunteers, make for the backbone of almost all parish activities with two part time paid office staff and one general maintenance person.

Notably, parishioners have remained largely loyal to Mass attendance at their pre amalgamation church. This is probably due to community allegiances and the distance factor separating the two churches.

The Parish is responsible for upkeep and maintenance of the Ngawhatu Orphanage Cemetery as well as the Fr Garin Chapel.

Review Process

Following the Cardinals directive in February, a review committee was established. This committee consisted of nine people representing the leadership team, resources team, school BOT, as well as Fr Bill. Meetings were held on a monthly basis, as well as regular meetings with our neighbouring Our Lady of the Bays Parish.

A timeline was created to collect the relevant data through to August, when a presentation was made to the parish, outlining results and options. This power point delivery was well received by the 130 attendees with a robust question time to follow.

Parish feedback was encouraged from those unable to attend the meeting in the form of post-Mass addresses and suggestion boxes in the church foyers. In addition, the presentation was posted on the parish website as well as hard copies available at churches.

Demographic Trends (Table 1)

Stats NZ confirmed that the highest growth rates in the Nelson Region are Stoke and Richmond, whilst Nelson Central is stable. Indeed, Stoke population is projected to surpass the Central Nelson population by 2030.

Mass Counts (Table 2)

The 2018 Mass count for St Mary's is 417, whilst St Francis of Assisi is 340, making a total of 757.

St Mary's has declined from a high of 529 in 2010, but remains relatively stable for the last five years.

Over the same time frame St Francis of Assisi has increased from 225, peaking to 373 in 2015.

Our neighbouring Lady of the Bays parish has declined from 354 to 255 over the same time frame. This decline probably relates to the loss of its vigil mass in 2016.

Our faith community is predominantly aging, although in recent years there is a significant increase in the number of younger ethnic groups attending masses.

With the anticipated population growth in the Stoke population we would anticipate this to reflect in increasing mass counts at St Francis.

Church Capacities (Table 3)

St Mary's has seating capacity of 350, whilst St Francis is 300.

The former has a heritage classification, which makes it near impossible to be extended or modified to increase capacity.

Likewise, St Francis of Assisi church creates a dilemma if expansion is considered. Although there is sufficient land to allow a small expansion, this would then remove the ability to increase car parking which the council by-laws would dictate.

Either way, neither church would have the capacity to accommodate mass counts if one was to be closed.

Parish School Rolls (Table 4)

St Joseph's School caters for primary and intermediate education and is located adjacent to the St Mary's church. The school is an integral part of parish foundation with maximum roll numbers, and boasts the recent building of two new classrooms. Pupils regularly use the church for religious formation and its office is in a shared building with the parish administration office, meeting rooms and hall. An archives office is also housed in a separate building.

Future Scope (Table 5)

Currently Fr Bill celebrates a Saturday 6pm and Sunday 10.30am Mass at St Mary's along with 8.30 am and 5pm at St Francis of Assisi. Along with his hospital chaplaincy and other pastoral duties, his workload is very busy.

Weekday Masses are alternated between St Mary's & St Francis with liturgy of the word celebrated on alternate days. Although the parish has no employed lay pastoral leader we are blessed with very capable volunteer lay leaders.

A repeating theme however does emerge from those who create the volunteer parish rosters that it is becoming increasingly difficult to find volunteers as older parishioners retire.

Of necessity, any discussions involving reduction in priest numbers would have to include collusion with our neighbouring parish. To that end, our review team has had several meetings with Our Lady of the Bays Parish to discuss possible options. Both teams were in agreement that, in the event of there being only one priest for the region, amalgamation of the two parishes would be inevitable.

The nuts and bolts of how this would work is beyond the scope of this review, but it is envisaged that a feasibility study would be necessary to rationalize the number of churches required, including the possibility of building a Catholic hub. This would probably require sale of some of both parishes land and buildings to fund such a project.

Earthquake Strengthening Issues

Both churches are over the minimum requirement of 34%NBS:

St Mary's – Between 35% and 57%

St Francis – 67%

The latter was extensively modified five years ago to achieve its current level.

Insurance is now under the parish's control and is manageable with a \$13,000 saving from the previous year.

Financial Synopsis (Table 6)

Operating Budget

Table 6 shows the predicted annual operating cash flows, before providing for items which are included in the 10 year capital and maintenance plan. The forecast annual operating surplus is \$68,065, which excludes unusual income items such as bequests or grants. However, this surplus includes net investment income of \$28,825 per annum. This could be considered to be income arising from the contributions of previous generations and takes the form of net rental income and interest on funds invested totaling \$45,700. The archdiocesan levies that would be paid on the net rental surplus amount to \$16,875, leaving net investment income of \$28,825. If this is excluded from the operating surplus, the annual surplus reduces to \$39,240, being the net income generated by current parishioners.

The annual contribution from parishioners to achieve the above surplus is \$252,000, which is the amount that has been included in the parish 2019/20 budget. This is a conservative 2.3% increase on the 2018/19 actual results based on previous years' financial and mass count trends. Deducting archdiocesan levies at 45% of this, leaves \$138,600 available for other operating costs and to sustain the parish 10-year maintenance plan.

Another point worth noting is that the budget has incorporated a \$13,000 per annum saving in insurance costs as a result of the change to the way the premiums have been calculated as from July 2019. This method, taking into account actual parish buildings, the risk and the level of cover is much more sustainable than the previous method whereby insurance costs were included with the archdiocesan levies and calculated as a percentage of parish income.

10 Year Maintenance Plan

Table 6 also includes the parish 10 year capital and maintenance plan. The Parish has identified and estimated expenditure on non-recurring maintenance and capital items over the next 10 years at \$205,150. As outlined previously the Parish does not face earthquake strengthening issues, having undertaken the necessary work on both churches to bring these beyond the minimum standards prior to amalgamation. The average annual contribution from the operating surplus to sustain the 10 year maintenance plan is therefore \$20,515, leaving an annual surplus of \$47,550. Excluding the expenditure on investment properties from the 10 year plan gives an annual contribution required from the operating surplus of \$17,900. The result is an operating surplus excluding the impact of investment income of \$21,340.

Financial Summary

The Parish can clearly sustain its existing position without relying on the contributions of past generations. The budgeted annual surplus, after providing for the amount needed annually to sustain the 10 year maintenance plan, is \$21,340 which does not rely on or include income from investments or rental properties or the sale of assets. The Parish does not face insurance or earthquake strengthening issues under the criteria that currently apply. While the budget shows a reasonable buffer, it is some years since the Parish has undertaken a planned giving renewal programme and this offers an option to consider should the current situation change drastically at any time in the future.

Options Investigated

The review team identified the following five options to evaluate.

Status Quo

Close St Francis and retain St Mary's

Close St Mary's and retain St Francis

Close both and build a new church

Amalgamate with Richmond and build a catholic hub on a new site

Of necessity the accommodation of priests would be dictated by the chosen church option.

Status Quo.

For

Financially viable

No earthquake strengthening issues

No insurance issues

Retain parish identity

Some capacity for increase in mass counts

Surplus assets available to direct towards mission (Synod Outcomes)

Against

Current number of masses not sustainable if priest numbers reduced

Struggling to find sufficient volunteers for existing masses A further round of amalgamations possible / probable

Close St Francis and Retain St Mary's

For

St Francis is a more saleable property

St Mary's would remain available for school masses

Would create surplus assets to direct toward mission.

Against

Insufficient capacity to cater for existing total mass count if number of masses reduced

A significant proportion of Stoke parishioners would go to Richmond, meaning loss of community, experience, talent and financial contributions

St Mary's is a heritage building and cannot be extended to accommodate increased numbers.

Does not cater for demographic findings.

Close St Mary's and Retain St Francis

For

Stoke and Richmond are the fastest growing regions in the district

Against

Insufficient capacity to cater for existing total mass count if reduce the number of masses

Limited ability to extend St Francis church due to insufficient land to meet Council-parking requirements

Travel difficulties for St Mary's parishioners to get to Stoke

Difficulty selling St Mary's (heritage building) and therefore would not raise funds or save costs

St Mary's is on the same title as school, hall and old Collingwood St Presbytery, creating high costs to subdivide.

Close both existing churches and build a new church

Against

Difficulty selling St Mary's (heritage building) and therefore wouldn't realize funds or save costs

Would require sale of St Francis and other assets to fund the new larger church reducing options for mission

An expensive option to undertake on our own

A further round of amalgamations possible / probable

Amalgamate with Richmond and build a Catholic Hub on a new site

For

A further round of amalgamations possible / probable regardless of whether this option is selected or not

Limited masses would continue to be offered at St Mary's, Motueka, and Takaka (dependent on availability of priests)

Some initiatives for mission could be incorporated into the facility as identified from recent strategic planning responses e.g.

- Drop in centre
- Youth facility
- Faith community nursing
- Preschool

Both Parishes have investment properties to fund such initiatives

Could potentially incorporate priests' accommodation into the hub.

Against

Loss of sense of community in large purpose built church

Review Outcome (Table 7)

Status quo in the meantime (subject to the availability of priests)

Both the team and community favoured this option, but of necessity, a reduction in priest numbers in the region would create an unmanageable Mass schedule. There is merit in the argument that increased activity of the laity, as leaders of liturgies would allow our smaller community centred churches to survive even with fewer priest. This concept would mean that lay-led Sunday liturgies are held once or twice a month with the priest saying Mass on alternate Sundays.

The hub concept is perceived by some as a large purpose-built building where strangers gather so a priest can say Mass for them.

Explore Hub Option

Communications with our Richmond neighbours confirm they are also in favour of investigating this option. One would anticipate a time frame in the order of five to ten years for contingencies to be fulfilled.

These include:

- Approval from Archdiocese
- Consultation with Parishes to determine requirements
- Development of proposal
- Feasibility study and assessment of cost
- Arranging finance including sale of property
- Acquisition of land
- Drawing up plans
- Council consents
- Obtaining tenders for construct

Table 1

Demographic Trends

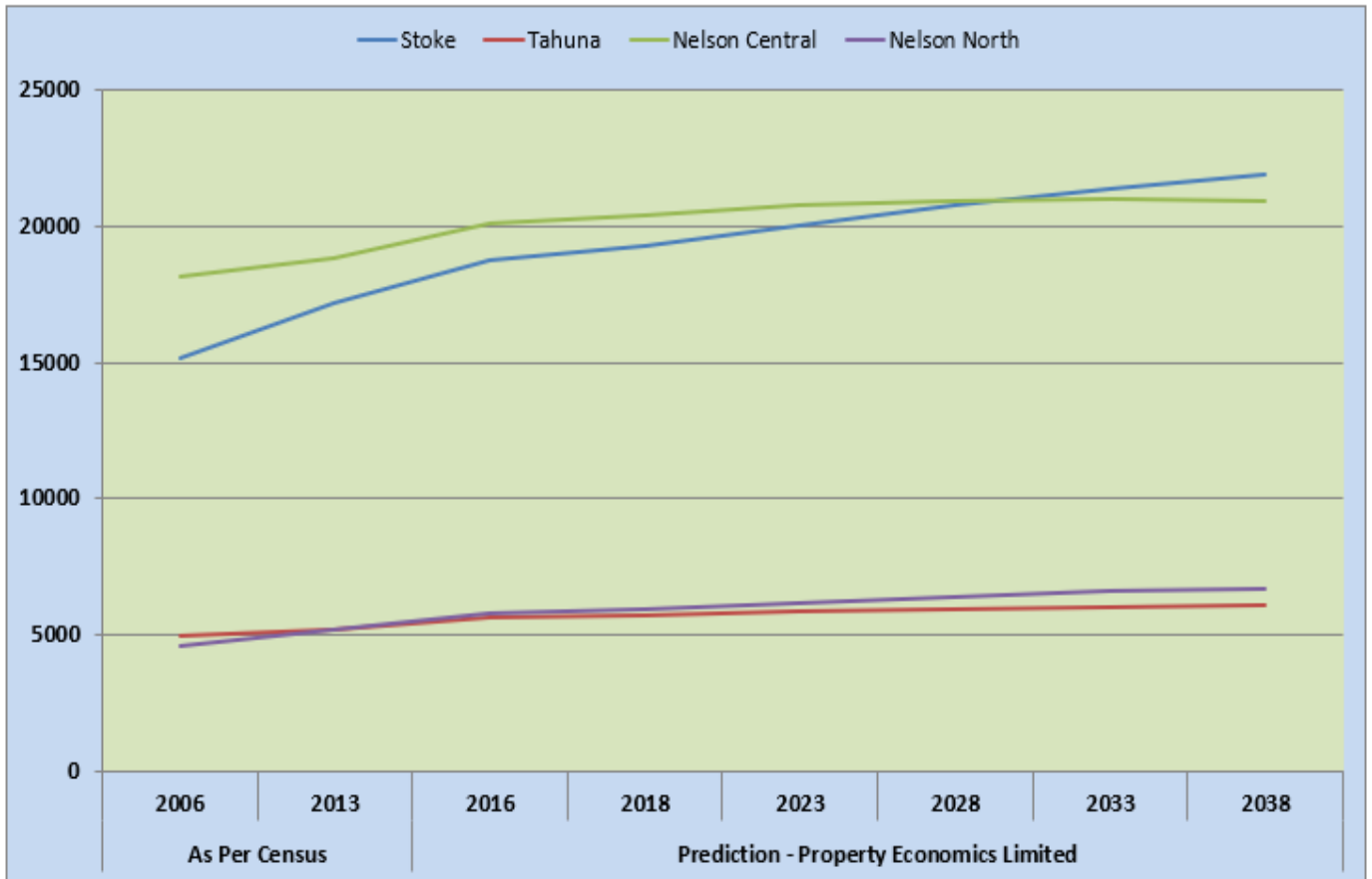
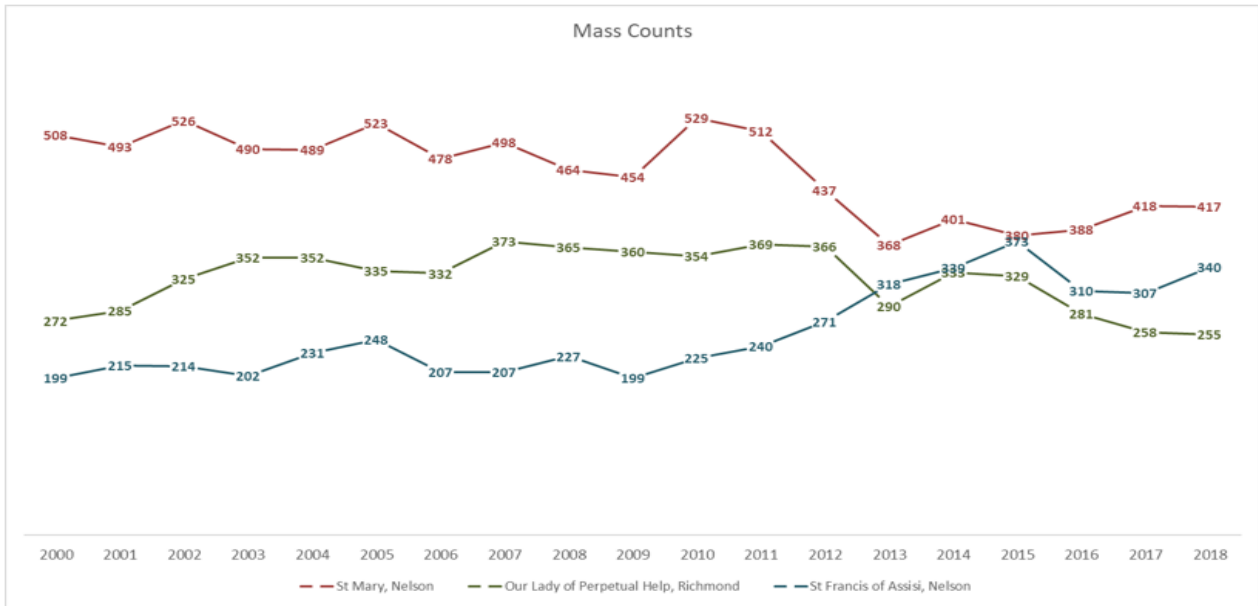


Table 2



MASS COUNT NELSON / TASMAN - 2018

St Mary, Nelson	417
St Francis of Assisi, Stoke	<u>340</u>
Holy Family Parish, Nelson/Stoke	<u>757</u>
Sacred Heart, Takaka	34
St Peter Chanel, Motueka	126
Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Richmond	<u>255</u>
Our Lady of the Bays	<u>415</u>
Grand Total	<u><u>1172</u></u>

Table 3

Capacity of Existing Churches:

St Mary's

- Capacity 350
- Heritage Building
- Unable to be extended or altered

St Francis

- Capacity 300
- Limited options to extend
- Insufficient parking if extended

Table 4

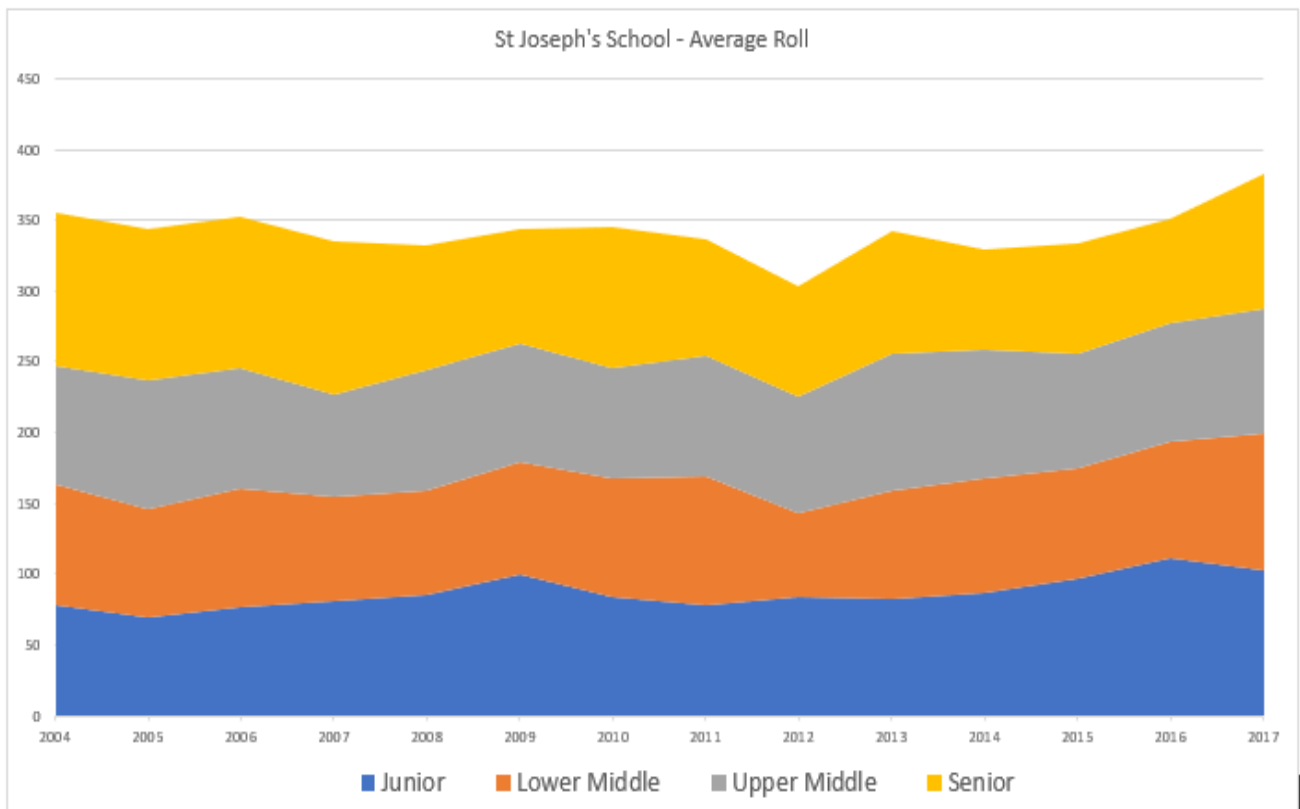


Table 5
Current Mass Timetables

	Nelson	Stoke	Richmond	Wakefield	Motueka	Takaka	Waimea West
Saturday					5:00 PM		5:00 PM 4th Saturday
	6:00 PM						
Sunday		8:30 AM		8:00 AM			
			9:30 AM		9:30 AM		
	10:30 AM						
		5:00 PM				4:00 PM	
	1 Priest - 4 masses		2 Priests - 2 or 3 masses each				

Table 6 Operating Budget

Annual Operating Forecast and 10 Year Maintenance Plan

Account	Operating Cash Flows	10 Year Maintenance Plan			
Income					Surplus/ (Deficit)
Collections and Planned Giving	252,000	St Mary's Church	Seating	20,000	
Hall and Non-Residential Rental	7,875		Painting	60,000	
Other Non-Rental Revenue	1,200		Kitchenette	10,000	
Rental Income	46,540		Organ Repairs	20,000	
Interest Income	8,200	St Francis Church	Carpet	30,000	
Total Income	315,815		Seating	12,000	
Expenses		195 Collingwood St	Demolition	21,150	
Archdiocese Costs (Excluding Insurance)	127,200	Admin Block / Hall	Painting	10,000	
Archdiocese Costs - Insurance	16,200	11 Manuka St	Painting	5,000	
Direct Costs	2,000	Songer St Presbytery	Painting	15,000	
General Expenses	23,990	Songer St Rental		-	
Pastoral Expenses	5,160	Garin Chapel	Guttering	2,000	
Personnel Costs	36,180	Archive Building		-	
Property Expenses (Excluding Rentals)	20,900	Total Over 10 Years		205,150	
Travel Costs	7,080				
Rental Property Expenses	9,040				
Total Expenses	247,750				
Surplus / (Deficit)	68,065	- Annual Contribution Required		20,515	= 47,550
Investment Income Less Property Expenses	45,700				
Less Parish Levies on Net Rental Income (45%)	16,875				
Net Investment Income	28,825	Total Excluding Investment Properties		179,000	
Surplus / (Deficit) Excluding Investment Income	39,240	- Annual Contribution Required		17,900	= 21,340

Table 7

Recommendation of Options: Committee's Assessment of Viability:

1. **Status Quo** (subject to availability of priests) ✓
2. Close St Francis and retain St Mary's ✗
3. Close St Mary's and retain St Francis ✗
4. Close both and build a new church ✗
5. **Explore Options** for amalgamation with Richmond to build a Catholic Hub on a new site ✓