

## Introduction

The purpose of this project was to find out exactly what programmes and community services each Church offers, or is planning to offer. The longterm aim is to maintain a simple directory of what is happening in the parishes, to keep everyone up to date, probably online and maintained by someone central. From there we will have a clearer picture of what is happening in the city, with a base to share skills, knowledge, and perhaps resources from, thus helping to use these skills and resources more effectively.

Churches who run or are planning to run a certain programme can see at a glance who is doing something similar and, if they choose, talk to the Church running the existing programme about their experiences. This would help save time, energy, and teething problems for people establishing programmes. It will hopefully help Churches prioritise what programmes to establish, too; for example, if a Church wants to run a toy library but see someone nearby is already doing that, they could possibly arrange to have their Church members subscribe to the existing one. Then with the energy and resources that would have gone into setting up a toy library they could run something else instead, say a book library or seated exercise class or opshop, which the *other* Church could then make use of. As well as the time and resources such information could save, it is hoped that it will foster collaboration and help create new connection among the Churches.

The impetus for this project was derived partly from John Murray's Hamilton Methodist visioning day, where strong themes emerged of communicating, forging links, and pooling resources across the city. For instance, a vision was articulated of Methodism as "a place and a network where all people are accepted and experiences, hopes and aspirations, and dreams are shared" with "city-wide communication activities across parishes and services which share information, promote activities, [and] address social justice issues..." The project at hand is the beginnings of that. I talked to Methodist and Cooperating Churches within Hamilton to discuss what activities and programmes they run, or would like to run. There was some difficulty in engaging all the Churches, and in the end I was unable to reach a representative of St Paul's Tongan congregation

To help inform programme selection and aspiring collaboration, I also asked questions around Churches' connection to the community and how they determine what programmes to run; whether they looked primarily inwards to the congregation or outwards to the community; and what was run from churches' premises that were not run the by the church itself. Finally I enquired whether churches already share information or resources amongst each other or Synod, and the value of Dream or Visioning days to them.

The first two tables show programmes run out of Churches. The first table shows those run by the Church, and programmes they are either planning or dreaming of. The second table those run *from* the Church but by other groups. In fact there is some overlap between what is a Church activity and what is a community one; I based the decision on who it is intended for (and obviously, any activity organised and run by a non-Church member is intended for the community even if a large proportion of churchgoers attend it). Nonetheless the lines are blurred in some cases.

I have further categorised the programmes into those that more than one Church run, and those that are unique to a given Church. I didn't include church services in the report or anything with a religious focus such as youth groups, unless they are exceptional and community-oriented such as disability church services; or they are something unusual that other Churches might want to emulate (such as messy church). But in general church services were not the focus. The third table lists those programmes and services offered by Methodist City Action (MCA).

It is difficult to say that there is an overall culture of either inward (congregation) or outward (community) focus when Churches decide on programmes to run. Certainly some Churches are explicitly community-oriented, such as St Clare’s, St Francis, and Chartwell, while one or two clearly look to themselves first (generally the ethnic congregations, which is understandable as they are already in a position of disadvantage with significant needs of their own). One Church maintains that “a balance is needed”, which I interpreted as being significantly inward-looking as it is not making a clear commitment to the community and the programmes they currently run are virtually all religious. The full responses are listed at the end of this report; note that some were email responses to a form rather than face-to-face conversation and so sometimes lack depth.

Most Churches observe a general need to be met in the non-Church community, although it is not always clear how these perceptions of need are founded; All Saints, for instance, place emphasis on the role of prayer in determining needs and a several others admit that “getting to know” the community around them is a work in progress. Chartwell and St Francis are probably the farthest advanced, with a history of building relationships and learning needs firsthand. Chartwell are considering establishing trust for funding purposes, structure, and credibility and to cement a deliberate outward-focus. It’s worth noting that all Churches acknowledge the needs of parishioners as fundamental to Church provision. In general one is not antecedent to the other, although there is confusion sometimes over whether the “outside” community and Church community are different groups. In a number of cases, “community” programmes are attended by a significant proportion of Church members. It has been observed that other users add to the richness of Church fabric, although there can be conflict too because the centre becomes so busy. The parish in this case actually needs to be flexible with its own needs, although it ultimately helps the parish to have a diversity and array. So there is a state of flux to be managed but which is ultimately enriching.

Some difficulties were reported in running programmes. Funding played a surprisingly minor part in this. Chartwell’s Lightbulb Moment idea is facing potentially terminal problems with health, safety, and liability; volunteer capacity and negotiating the use of community space outside Church property also came up as difficulties that arise.

The items highlighted below represent amendments supplied by Chartwell Parish in June 2017.

Church-run	Programme	Church
<b>Common (to more than one church)</b>	Mainly Music	St Francis Melville Chartwell
	Op shop	St Clare’s St Francis
	Games afternoon/morning	St Clare’s St Francis
	Foodbank collection/drives	St John’s St Paul’s Chartwell
	Art and craft	St Clare’s St Francis
	Toy Library	Chartwell St John’s

	Exercise classes	Chartwell Korean (table tennis)
<b>Unique to a church</b>	Methodist Commoners	St Francis
	Community movie night for families to access new release films at a low cost, and provide a social space	St Francis
	Movie nights for the community	Chartwell
	Tongan Brass Band and Choir	St Paul's Tongan
	Bottletop Café with free food to get to know the community and their needs, and the community to get to know the Church	St Clare's
	Quiz nights	St Clare's
	CEC (Bible in Schools)	All Saints'
	Community-led disability service at Ryder-Cheshire homes for disabled	All Saints'
	Evening homework classes – NCEA	Melville
	Winter lunches for the community	Chartwell
	Girls' Brigade	Chartwell
	OSCAR out-of-school-care	Chartwell
	Messy Church	Chartwell
	Insight – interactive café style church service	Chartwell
	Essential Tremor Group ( <i>related to Parkinsons</i> )	Chartwell
	Library	Chartwell
	Food parcels (non-foodbank agency)	St Francis
Community garden	St John's Tongan	
<b>In the pipeline</b>	Scoping exercise around creating community spaces for migrants	St Francis
	Scoping to meet community/find needs	Melville
	Coffee mornings to interact with and build relationships with community	Melville
	Café space (social space and business incubator)	St Francis
	Cooking class/community kitchen	St Francis Melville
	Alpha course for disabled	All Saints'
	Community homework classes	Melville
	Seated exercise classes	St John's
	Dropin centre	St John's
	Finance courses for Pasifika community	St John's
	Men's/fathers' workshops on being a Godly father; Father's Resolution.	St John's Tongan

<b>Community-run</b>	<b>Programme</b>	<b>Church</b>
<b>Common (to more than one church)</b>	General room hire available	St John's St Francis St Paul's Chartwell
	Parkinson's Group	St Francis St John's
	Esol	St Francis All Saints' Melville (conversational) St Paul's (conversational)
	Probus	St Clare's Chartwell All Saints' Melville
	AA	St Clare's St Paul's
	Garden Group	St Francis All Saints' Melville
	Exercise classes Power hoop (exercise using hula hoops) Mama and Me dance	All Saints' Chartwell Chartwell
	Sewing/craft/quilting group	Melville St Clare's Chartwell
	Choir/singing	St Francis St John's St Clare's Chartwell (Cantando Choir)
<b>Unique</b>	Budgeting/finance/debt courses	St John's
	Gideons	St Francis
	Bowls	St Francis
	Community Fruit (harvesting & processing/preserving)	St Francis
	Guitar tutor	St Francis
	Counselling	St Francis
	Connect drug/alcohol rehab	St Francis
	Plunket	St Francis
	Dept of Corrections	St Paul's
	Narcotics Anonymous	St Paul's
	Waikato Celtic Arts	St Paul's
	Labour Party branch	St Paul's
	Trinity College	St Paul's
	Evergreen Leisure Marchers	St Paul's
	Disable Person's Assembly	St Paul's
Child, Youth, and Family	St Paul's	

	Overeaters Anonymous	St Clare's
	Girl Guides	All Saints'
	Japanese International Students	All Saints'
	British Evacuees	All Saints'
	NZ Indian Association	All Saints'
	Diabetes retinal photoscreening	Melville
	MS Waikato	Melville
	Cardiac rehab	Melville
	ERAS acute occupational therapy educational classes	Melville
	Waikato Photographic Society	Melville
	Seventh Day Adventist services (use rooms)	Melville
	Bowling club	Chartwell
	Garden club	Chartwell
	Genealogical Society	Chartwell
	Gold club (for lonely retirees)	Chartwell
	Weight Watchers	Chartwell
	Tai Chi NZTCA (ACC falls prevention)	Chartwell
	Diabetes NZ Waikato Branch	Chartwell
	University of the Third Age	Chartwell
	Chinese language club	Chartwell
	Alzheimer's support	Chartwell
	Miniature club	St John's
	Dance clubs	St John's Wesley

<b>MCA Programmes</b>
Community meal
Hamilton Combined Christian Foodbank Agency
Cookery Classes
Indoor Team Sports
Brain Gym Plus (activity class for those with limited ability)
Art and Craft
Zumba Gold
Shower facilities available on request
Support Person for Deaf and Hearing Impaired