
REPORT: ONLINE ENGAGEMENT SURVEY

JUNE 2020

ALAE TAULE'ALO

REPORT BACKGROUND

The social restrictions imposed by the Government of Victoria, to mitigate the risks posed by COVID-19, have led to a significant re-shaping of St Peter's ministry. It is likely ongoing restrictions on public gatherings will require changes to our ministry and service-delivery model in the medium to long term.

Over March and April, St Peter's launched regular streamed Masses, Thoughts for the Day, Zoom Rosary, Zoom morning teas and other online content offerings as part of its online programme.

Following the move from Stage 3 restrictions to Step 1 loosening of restrictions a meeting of the online ministry committee, which consists of F Hugh Kempster, Tye Joyce and Alae Taule'alo was convened in May to evaluate the success of our shift to online engagement.

A survey to gauge the success of our online programme was mooted at this meeting and it was subsequently promoted through email and social channels.

Of a parish roll of 120, the survey elicited 57 responses, or roughly 48% of our parish roll.

A caveat in interpreting this figure is that the survey was promoted on public channels and responders were given the option of responding anonymously, and 26 of the 57 responders did so. Therefore, it's impossible to reconcile responders and registered parishioners precisely.

REPORT PURPOSE

This report has been prepared with two purposes in mind:

1. A reflective piece that enables us to evaluate our practice in light of feedback from our community
2. A rationale for continuing—or re-assessing—components of our online programme, as well as providing recommendations for further action, based on successes or problems highlighted in the survey responses.

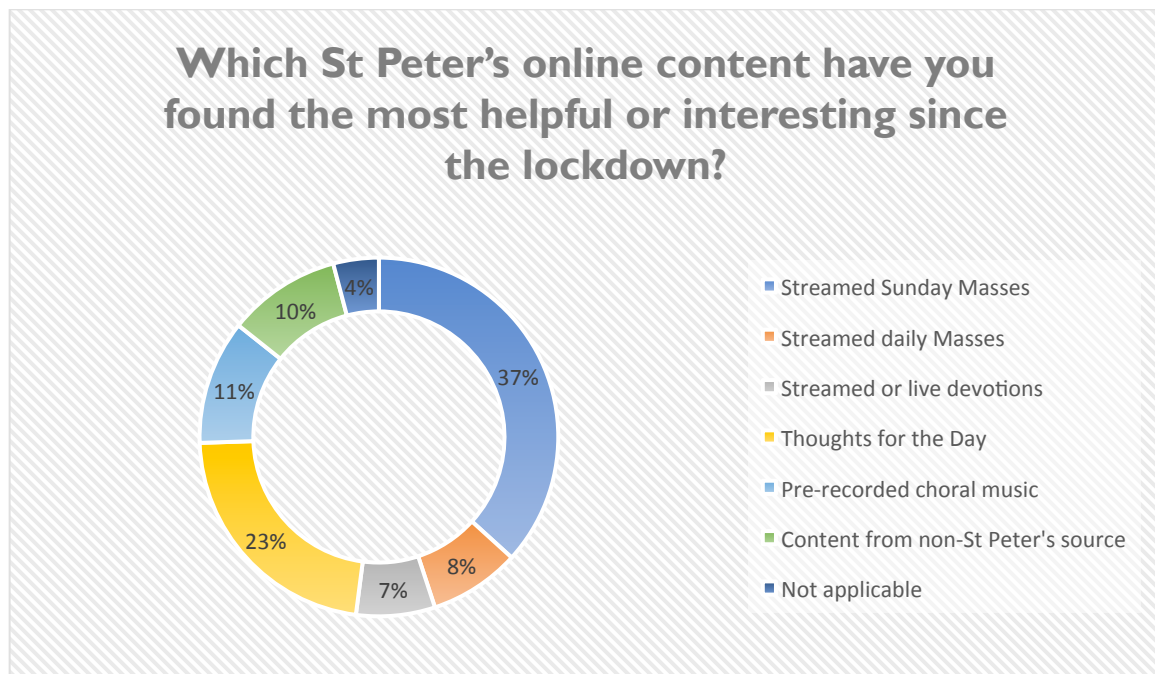
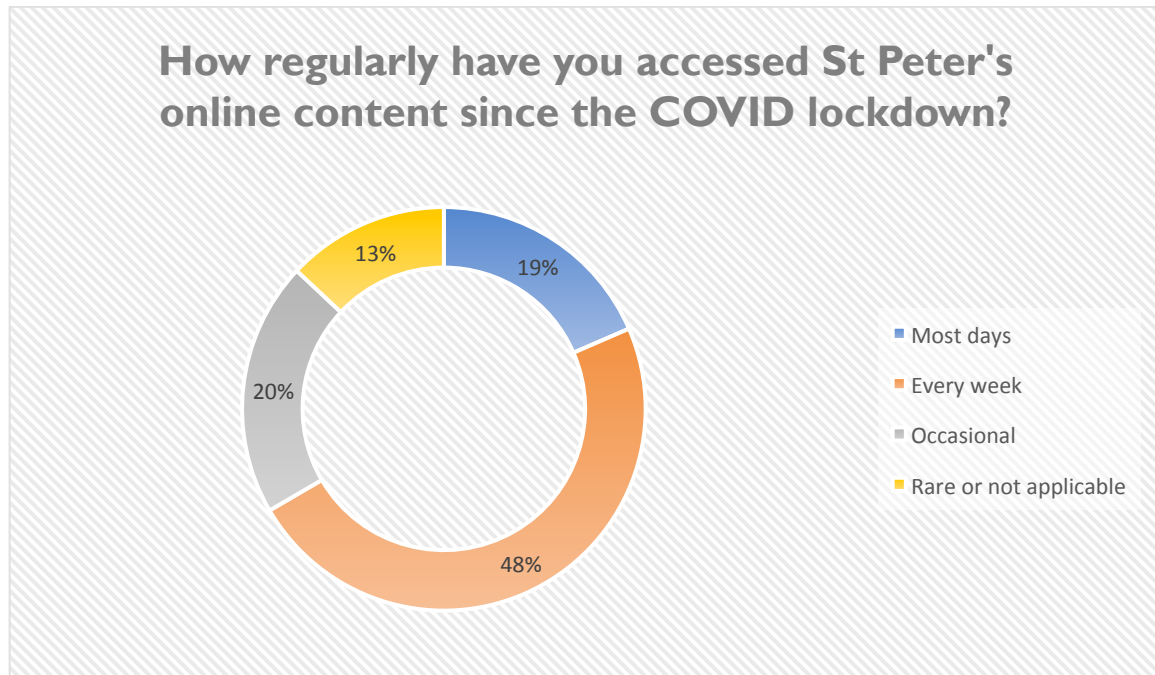
REPORT PURPOSE

The report consists of survey findings followed by analysis and recommendations:

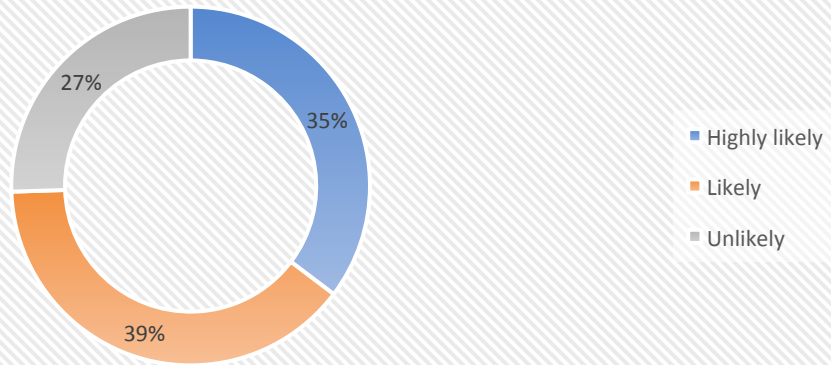
1. Quantitative responses
2. Qualitative responses clustered in broad themes
3. A summary of survey responses
4. Recommendations

SURVEY RESPONSES

QUANTITATIVE RESPONSES



As restrictions on public gatherings ease, how likely are you to continue engaging with our online content offerings?



QUALITATIVE RESPONSES

Not all qualitative responses have reproduced below. Qualitative responses are grouped under broad thematic subheadings.

IF YOU ENGAGED WITH ST PETER'S ONLINE OFFERINGS, WHAT ASPECTS DID YOU FIND HELPFUL OR INTERESTING?

Responses: 29

NEWSLETTERS AND UPDATES

1. News of the parish, Pew sheets, Outreach e.g. meals Vicar's updates

MASS STREAMING

1. Sense of being present at the Eucharist. Conversational approach of people giving Thoughts for the Day.

DEVOTIONS & THOUGHTS FOR THE DAY

1. I attend Rosary 3x weekly, with alacrity and amenity. I enjoy morning tea at the vicarage at 1230 Sunday
2. Relevance of thought for the day. I watched a great deal around Easter. Also revisited the Mission services then. Masses were uplifting. I listened to the music too. The morning tea after mass. Joined zoom meeting on Palm Sunday. Was touched by the warmth of the welcome I received and was so good to see people. I really appreciated that.
3. Zoom Rosary three times a week

COMMUNITY & PASTORAL ENGAGEMENT

1. Having visited last November from the UK, it has been lovely to "keep in touch". I have found the St Peter's content really helpful in sustaining my own personal spiritual life in order to minister in my home parish here.
2. The online worship, together with emails from the vicar, pastoral calls from Father Roger and caring phone calls and email messages from Rachel, Sue and the two Daniels were very much valued.

WHAT DID FIND LESS HELPFUL OR INTERESTING?

Responses: 27

DEVOTIONS & THOUGHTS FOR THE DAY

1. Youtube Videos – I don't have that much data

COMMUNITY & PASTORAL ENGAGEMENT

1. It would have been good to get the T-tree out quickly, in the first week of April - perhaps starting with those on the parish roll – and then build on it. St Peter's offered a wide range of product, but I found them tiresome to navigate – I'd expect to find links on the stpeters.org.au home page, preferably with a minimal entry points. Teched out during lockdown, I don't want to have to dive into the pew sheet to unearth a variety of links. Some more community building products would have been good to strengthen the sense of St Peter's faith family during lockdown.
2. I didn't like the streamed content at all as it wasn't at all participatory. Watching my own church in this way was not at all satisfying and did not fulfil any of my spiritual needs, particularly not in a time of difficulty within the broader community.

MASS STREAMING

1. I did not feel part of the mass. I found other churches here and overseas gave more meaningful services, which allowed more involvement. Carol's thoughts and readings and poetry on FB I found thoughtful and relevant.
2. Pre-recorded Mass. Mass facing the people.

3. Masses over Easter were a bit disappointing-in particular the Vigil, which was uploaded in sections. A continuous live stream would've been better.
4. I didn't find the streamed masses helpful at all. Gathering in church is the heart of Christian community as is actually receiving communion at mass. Some of the choral music was good to hear. I watched Thoughts for the Day, but it all seemed so remote from the issues in lockdown I was thinking about. Private meditation and my own reading kept me going.
5. I find that if the video shooting could become more lively, trailing the movements of the speaker, or the thurifer and rotate 360 degree panorama views would be very beneficial to the experience of the parishioners giving them the real theatrical feeling of the Mass. Perhaps some training for the cameraman might also come in handy as we currently possess only a flat two-dimensional view of the altar.

IS THERE ANYTHING THAT WE COULD HAVE OFFERED TO MEET YOUR NEEDS BETTER?

Responses: 24

LITURGICAL

1. Eight o'clock style BCP Mass
2. If you're going to have Low Mass from the High Altar, do it correctly and not have the servers wandering around. Speak to Mr. Peter Bryce I am sure he will put you straight about the correct serving Low mass from the High Altar.

SERVICE DELIVERY

1. Physical delivery in person (3D) and online delivery intermediated by technology (2D) are distinct modalities - each have advantages and disadvantages. Neither is superior or inferior to the other, they are different media, like cinema/live theatre, audio file/concert. In static form, 2D tends to cast people as an audience, disengaged or critical, spectators rather than participants, with the protagonists as performers - attention span becomes critical. 2D sight and sound only. It works well where these are paramount and has significant advantages if there are costs associated with physical presence - travel, or more generally "dislocation". Accordingly, I am unlikely to attend morning, evening prayer or rosary in 3D - they are too short to merit dislocation from my home - but in 2D I do so regularly, along with a goodly number of others and wish to continue this practice. Similarly, I'd attend bible studies / discussion groups / homilies in 2D rather than 3D.
2. Yes, regular prayer engagement and interactive services via Microsoft Teams or Zoom. Providing the community via the pew sheet with the daily bible readings without offering the opportunity to join in morning or evening prayer seemed somewhat counterintuitive
3. Probably more interactive devotional content. Streamed Masses are fine but no replacement for the real thing.

COMMUNITY & PASTORAL ENGAGEMENT

1. More attention to the needs of the actual parishioners of St Peter's during the lockdown would have been appreciated, in fact is the primary duty of care of the clergy. A telephone tree that should have been established in February or March was not implemented until the end of May, at a time when restrictions were just beginning to be eased, though for how long is anyone's guess. Forms about online services are fairly meaningless if the at-home care and attention of parishioners is not being met.

LEARNING & TEACHING

1. Series of teaching on Christology, 39 articles of faith, Mariam theology will keep parishioners coming back online to seek more spiritual enrichment.

2. Perhaps the material is on the website and I haven't looked properly, but I would like to see some serious reflections on biblical topics. CCSL in Sydney has some excellent material even on its youth pages. I relied on reading material from Tom Wright or listening to debates on the UK podcast Unbelievable?. SPEH needs to start ramping up its teaching ministry and posting this online and not just "catholic" topics such as the meaning of the sacraments or liturgical matters - although that would be a good start. So, Holy Hour is now offered: how about some links to excellent meditations on what that means and how to approach contemplation of Christ in the species of the host?

IF YOU ENGAGED WITH ONLINE CHANNELS OTHER THAN ST PETER'S FOR WORSHIP OR DEVOTION, WHAT DID YOU FIND HELPFUL OR INTERESTING?

Responses: 28

1. Appreciated any musical content.
2. We looked at Ely Cathedral and loved the beauty and simplicity of the services together with the remarkable setting.
3. Fr Glenn Loughrey's services came from St Oswald's really easily so I often tuned in to those while waiting to connect with SPEH - and very worthwhile they were too
4. I liked the High Mass offerings from Christ Church St Lawrence and other international high churches.
5. Zoom morning and evening prayers

ARE THERE ANY OTHER COMMENTS YOU WOULD LIKE TO MAKE?

Responses: 28

SERVICE DELIVERY

1. I find 2D an unsatisfactory mode to experience the encounter Real Presence Eucharist (or Eucharistic Adoration) – partly because of the overall sensory impact, as well as my beliefs concerning the Eucharist - but am a regular communicant at 3D Mass. Somewhat to my surprise, I have found I respond devoutly to a 2D BYO bread and wine “memorial meal”, with priestly words when individually taking the elements - my evangelical upbringing emerging.
2. Emphasis needs to be on restarting the physical services on a Sunday. On-line has no appeal for me. Restarting Sunday services should include all who attend not just 11.00 attendees. Families had no-online content during the cessation of services and the evening mass and evensong congregation have not been considered in restarting services when attendance at both is below 20 people.
3. The lockdown dilemma for St Peter's is that our branding, our charism, is in stratospherically high real presence mass, with loads of liturgy in Latin, incense, ceremonial and robes. This cannot be scaled down without diminishing our glory. Those with low or no liturgical pretensions could and did adapt their 3D product to 2D with either a light pruning of servers here, a gracious pivot there. For St Peter's magnificent music and ceremonial the change in medium requires a vote face - it is not just that we are translating 3D to 2D, we are doing on the stringent spatial and numerical restrictions - and with more sense of being participants rather than spectators. The required reimagining for our glorious product to compete in the market is likely to be drastic.
4. It's hard to answer this: if there were more content with substance online I would be a regular user of the online offerings; but not if it's just going to be a recorded mass.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE PARISH

1. We were in the process of evaluating our relationship with St Peter's prior to the beginning of the COVID-19 situation. As we emerge from this period, our time of engaging with another church community in an interactive manner has cemented our thinking and we will be moving permanently from St Peter's.

TECHNOLOGICAL & DEMOGRAPHIC BARRIERS

1. I have difficulty with on - line services of all types. Other than emailing - I prefer not to rely on my computer for very much. (Also I don't have an iPhone or a smart phone. Only an old-style mobile phone. Prefer my own devotions/reading and listening to music of my own choice- where face to face contact or interaction with others is not possible.
2. I am simply too old to find any form of streaming attractive. During the past months I have not "zoomed" with any person or institution. I am informing you because there must be a few others who react as I do.
3. We all have to adjust in difficult times and we should be grateful that we live in an era of high tech. Perhaps the program of giving to the foundation could have been forward earlier but I am no longer familiar with the conditions of how that money must be spent and perhaps wouldn't have been able to assist with liquidity problems. In this electronic age, at my age, I feel uncomfortable in sending a large donation by electronic banking without receiving a receipt. I have not received a receipt and so am left with the assumption that my donation was received by St Peters and didn't end up elsewhere.

APPRECIATIVE FEEDBACK

1. Your enormous efforts have been greatly appreciated and I am learning a lot about the new technology Zoom that I never would have without this COVID disaster
2. Thanks you for keeping our unique and precious liturgy going through these challenging times. In relation to live streaming and pre-recording, I have observed that other parishes have whittled their services down to the bare minimum; others have sought to impress with multiple cameras, groups of singers and post-production. Neither of these approaches seem satisfactory to me. What is essential is there in our online content and it has been comforting to me to see familiar faces and hear their voices. There is nothing like being there and I look forward to attending mass sooner, rather than later. Blessings to all.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

COVID-19 has been a massive leveller, requiring sudden adaptive agility for all parishes, and while facing many challenges like other communities, St Peter's has on many fronts adapted well and the survey results support this.

One of the drawbacks of attitudinal surveys is disengagement resulting in low response rates or insufficiently detailed feedback. For this survey, the response rate was relatively high and full of candid and useful reactions showing a high level of interest in the ministry of St Peter's.

It's also worth noting that successful adaption to delivering content in the context of COVID-19 relies on both deft pivoting of supply—including mastery of appropriate, sustainable technology—and a clear apprehension of latent demand.

1. Almost three quarters of our survey respondents (67%) have engaged with our online content on a regular basis, i.e. weekly or every day
2. Of all our online offerings, the top three rated (from the perspective of being useful or helpful) were Streamed Sunday Masses, Thoughts for the Day and Pre-recorded Choral Music
3. Seventy-four per cent of our survey respondents expressed a willingness to continue engaging with our online channels, even after the ending of current COVID restrictions. Thirty-five per cent said they'd be "highly likely" to continue to engage.
4. Although pastoral care is articulated as being a successful component of our online/virtual service offering in some instances, at the same time, pastoral care is also called out as being an area where the parish was less successful in terms of making people feel like they were still part of a caring community by virtual means. In particular there was a perceived lag with respect to putting together and implementing the telephone call list during the initial shock of lockdown, when anxiety within the community was most heightened.
5. Responses to the streamed Masses were mixed. For some respondents, they created a strong and highly valued sense of continuity and allowed them to feel that St Peter's was continuing its core mission in the world even in lock down. For others, the Mass is a sensuous and participatory experience that requires the communicant members of the parish to be present for the rituals to be effective or beneficial. Overall, the level of reported engagement with our streamed Masses, alongside detailed feedback, has been relatively high and positive.
6. Technical deficiencies, e.g. unclear camera work and awkward angles, in some of the streaming offerings were noted
7. For some of our community the COVID lockdown has clarified their preferred service delivery model, signalling a desire for a new "Business as usual" after COVID restrictions have eased. One respondent in particular articulated a new-found sense of "product" differentiation between 2D and 3D modes, commenting that their mode of engagement was now permanently shaped by the experience of lockdown.
8. It was noted that St Peter's product offerings from a devotional, reflective and teaching standpoint weren't sufficiently diverse, interactive or engaging
9. Barriers to online engagement, dictated by demographic (age, comfort level with technology, access to technology etc) were noted.

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

Online and virtual ministry is going to be an essential part of our ministry at St Peter's for the foreseeable future rather than an adjunct to 3D parish ministry.

Unforeseen re-introduction of tighter restrictions in late June, brought about a spike in COVID-19 cases in Victoria, demonstrates the volatility of the physical environment, whereas it is possible to plan with some confidence an online programme because it can consistently be delivered virtually.

The qualitative survey data offers us detailed, compelling if at times contradictory suggestions for developing our online ministry. A clarifying lens we can apply these comments is our essential identity as a catholic parish and our charism of Real Presence, which requires us not only to communicate at Mass, where possible, but also to:

1. Embody the Sacrament in our living, our faith and our community
2. To teach people, wherever and however we can, about Jesus Christ

It is not desirable for us to replicate the different online models of other parishes in a diverse Diocese. Not all models will be appropriate to our community, with its distinct values and charism.

Other communities—such as St James Old Cathedral, which is mentioned more than once as an external source of online engagement—by virtue of their theological and liturgical dispositions are better suited to deliver compelling group morning/evening prayer and memorial meals. It is wise for St Peter's to focus on its particular area of ministry and worship rather than spending scarce resources competing with other parishes within the diocese in their area of comparative advantage.

St Peter's challenge is to develop an online ministry that complements and augments our charism of Real Presence, in other words an online ministry that is compelling, interactive and catholic.

It must be noted that the most sizeable barriers to online engagement, which are demographic and socioeconomic, are not insignificant and are articulated by more than one responder. It is not clear how these barriers could be addressed and it is not within the scope of this report to address these challenges, other than to include “analogue” recommendations (i.e. those which involve telephone calls or volunteering) in the mix.

This report recommends, therefore, a three-pronged approach to online ministry. Some of these activities we are already doing as noted and affirmed in some of the survey responses—others require further development.

SUSTAINING COMMUNITY

- **Streaming weekly and weekday Masses.** There is an appetite for streaming Masses, particularly for people in the community who miss the rituals and the routines of weekly public worship. E
 - **Recommendation:** Even as lockdown restrictions are slated to ease at some stage, it is recommended that the streaming of Masses continue.
- **Choral content.** The music programme is a beloved part of St Peter's, and restrictions on public signing are currently more restrictive even than the restrictions on public worship.
 - **Recommendation:** The choir continue to create and publish digitally blended chant settings through YouTube and Facebook.
- **Thoughts for the day.** Thoughts for the day help sustain a sense of community by providing a forum for known and well-loved members of the community to discuss spiritual and pastoral concerns of interest to them. Social media reach of thoughts for the day is consistent and reasonable sustained, average 100 reaches per post.

- **Recommendation:** Thoughts for the day continue. More diverse voices within the parish need to be sought consistently.
- **Social media and Website.** We have relatively small but nonetheless highly engaged audience on social media. Videos, photographs and music recordings on social media sustain virtual community and keep people abreast of news in the parish.
 - **Recommendation:** The parish continue to generate and post content on our social channels and Website—and there is scope for us to build our cross-posting of related sources from third-party sources (general news about Anglo-Catholicism etc) to increase traffic.
- **Vicar's newsletter.** This has specifically been cited as a valuable resource for news in the parish.
 - **Recommendation:** The vicar's newsletter continue, although there is scope to make essential links and news about events etc. more findable on social channels and the Website.

TEACHING

- **Zoom talks.** A paucity of engaging teaching was identified as point of concern in the survey responses.
 - **Recommendation:** A monthly or fortnightly Zoom talk on a doctrinal, Biblical or devotional topic. The talk would go for about ten/fifteen minutes and be followed by a QA. Participants would have the opportunity to engage with the speaker and to have their questions answered in real time.
- **Education for Ministry (EFM).** EFM is a theological education programme, which students pay for, which results in a non-tertiary certificate of participation. In response to COVID restrictions this programme has moved partially online.
 - **Recommendation:** EFM continue to build its online presence. The possibility of leveraging some EFM content for Zoom talks should be explored, partly to drive uptake of EFM and partly to provide gratis theological education to our community and beyond.
- **Sermon videos.** Sermons are a key teaching tool and currently nestled in the streamed Masses, where engagement tends to decrease over the length of the stream. Audio-visual quality has also been a problem.
 - **Recommendation:** The preacher for the week video his or her sermon as a separate video, which can be uploaded and shared through YouTube. The sermon should also be shared weekly through the Website and Facebook for people who are hearing impaired.

PASTORAL CARE

- Post-Mass morning tea. Morning teas on Sunday by Zoom have been referred to specifically as useful and enjoyable.
 - **Recommendation:** Morning tea after Mass continue. Links to morning tea can be shared more widely via social channels to encourage participation.
- Friday night Zoom drinks.
 - **Recommendation:** As an adjunct to morning tea, an hour-long slot (530 to 630pm suggested) with alternating hosts every week or fortnight. The host would take ownership of the admin elements (distributing invitations and making him/herself available for the duration of the drinks).
- Telephone list. The telephone list has helped formalise pastoral outreach in the parish and put a process around engagement.
 - **Recommendation:** More rigorous administrative follow-up of telephone reach-outs, including report-backs to parish council on any emerging themes or concerns. Report backs should be de-identified to protect the privacy of parishioners.

- Delivering meals. Pastoral care relates not only to how the community cares for itself but how it cares for the wider community.
 - **Recommendation:** preparation of a list of parishioners who have capacity, on request, to deliver meals to students and the wider community where there are gaps in current volunteer arrangements.