Selwyn Catholic Parish

Darfield - Leeston - Lincoln - Rolleston

Artwork: Declan Doocey

MINISTRIES & GROUPS

We are excited to share with you all of the things that happen in and around the Catholic Parish of Selwyn.

Updated December 2023

Ministries & Groups

Belonging is central to
building a strong community

May the church be the place of
God's mercy and love, where everyone
can feel themselves welcomed, loved, forgiven
and encouraged to live according to
the good life of the Gospel.
And in order to make others feel
welcomed, loved, forgiven and encouraged,
the church must have open doors
so that all might enter.
And we must go out of those doors
and proclaim the Gospel."

- POPE FRANCIS -

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03 325 2770
selwyncatholic.nz
selwyncatholicparish@gmail.com

Weekend Mass Times

ST PATRICK'S - LINCOLN

31 Gerald Street

Saturday Vigil - 5.30pm, Sunday - 8.30am

ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST - LEESTON

154 High Street

Sunday - 10.00am

ST JOSEPH'S - DARFIELD

Telegraph Road

Sunday - 8.30am (Summer), Sunday - 9.00am (Winter)

This Mass changes with daylight saving

ROLLESTON

Te Ahi Kaikomako Rolleston School Hall

11 Tennyson Street, Rolleston

Sunday - 11.00am *(from 4 February 2024)*

Weekday Mass Times

Tuesday - Friday - 9.00am (Lincoln)

Wednesday - 5.30pm (Leeston)

Thursday - 10.00am (Darfield)

Greeting from Priests

'Happy Christmas' to one and all.

To new parishioners: welcome to the Selwyn Parish that was established on 12 July 2020.

The Parish incorporates the church communities of St Patrick's, Lincoln; St Joseph's, Darfield; St John the Evangelist, Leeston; including our parishioners from the Rolleston area.

In the New Year, we intend to commence a weekly Sunday Mass, at 11.00am, in the Rolleston School Hall, 11 Tennyson Road. We hope this Mass will assist in creating a nucleus for the Rolleston Community prior to building a church on East Maddison Road.

This booklet gives a summary of parish activities; it is a guide to our Parish and what we have to offer in our community.

Please join us at any of our Sunday Masses across the Selwyn Parish area. I look forward to seeing you there.

To newcomers: please introduce yourself to myself and Fr Chris at Mass. Our contact information is in this booklet.

After a period of being in the doldrums, with no movement as regards parish buildings, Bishop Michael is encouraging parishes to now move forward.

Bishop Michael is in the process of discerning options for diocesan facilities, especially a new Cathedral precinct. In December he announced a preference for locating the Cathedral at Barbadoes Street and is seeking feedback through a three-month engagement period with an online survey on the diocesan website or through paper copies available at the parish office.

We, in the Selwyn Parish, have three major projects: strengthening the Darfield Church, rebuilding the Leeston Church and building a Rolleston Church and Centre. These projects will be on the agenda for 2024 and beyond. Fundraising will also be a focus.

I warmly invite all parishioners, of the Selwyn faith community, to join Fr Chris and myself as we journey together in our discipleship with Jesus Christ. Together we will engage, create, and grow our relationship with Christ and each other through friendship and a caring and supporting community sharing this journey of faith.

As we come to the Christmas Season it's always good to have extra motivation to catch up with one and all, especially family and friends.

Hope you have a good Christmas. All the best for 2024.

Fr Brian Fennessy - Parish Priest

Parish Personnel

Parish Priest
Father Brian Fennessy

Phone: 03 325 2770
Mobile: 027 675 8456
E-mail: bfennessy@inet.net.nz

Assistant Priest
Father Christopher Orr

Phone: 03 325 2770
Mobile: 027 659 1962
E-mail: christopherjohnorr@gmail.com

Parish Adminstrator
Mary Prendergast

Phone: 03 325 2770
E-mail: selwyncatholicparish@gmail.com

Pastoral Assistant
Brigid McIndoe

E-mail: pastoralassistantselwyn@gmail.com

Parish Finance Team

Tim (Lincoln)

Robyn (Leeston)

Leon (Rolleston)

Nick (Rolleston)

Bernard (Darfield)

Selwyn Leadership Team Report for 2023

Our year began with a Planning Day in February, facilitated by Siobhan Bergin the Diocesan Transitions Facilitator. I thank Siobhan for all the assistance she has given us throughout the year. We were joined on the day by the Finance Team to look at our achievements during 2022 and set some goals for 2023. Some areas we prioritized as Selwyn Parish were: Building up and strengthening our communities, Welcoming, Communication, Formation, and the continuing need for more parishioners to become involved and to take on Leadership roles. Also, the Rolleston worshipping community - with such a large and fast-growing population, safeguarding, and health and safety importantly appear as items on our monthly agenda.

The Leadership Team meet monthly, and we also participate in the Diocesan Leadership Team gatherings held throughout the year at various parishes. This gives us a great opportunity to see how the other parishes operate and also fresh ideas to work on. We can also appreciate our own achievements. In March we met at North Parish and the focus was Youth. In April, West Parish hosted and gave a

Senior Leadership Team

Tricia (Chairperson)

Anna (Leeston)

Lesley (Leeston)

Rodney (Rolleston)

Sandra (Rolleston)

Anne (Darfield)

Mike (Darfield)

presentation on how they operate. In August our parish leaders met with Simon Thompson to look at the new plan parishes are now able to work under. This gives Selwyn Parish the need to look again at major works and prioritize these moving forward. A big emphasis will be the funding of these major works.

Some positive achievements we have reached are:

- A Selwyn Parish Welcoming Power Point shown on the overhead at our weekend Masses.
- A separate spreadsheet compiled quarterly of families entered on parish database and these parishioners emailed and invited to Sunday cuppas at Lincoln Church Centre after Mass. Please note Darfield have their Morning Teas after Mass in their Church Centre on the second Sunday of the month.
- A decision was made to employ a Pastoral Assistant. After formalizing the position and advertising, I am happy to advise Brigid McIndoe, a parishioner from Rolleston has accepted the position.
- **Alpha** - a team of 14 was set up and Alpha began in the Lincoln Church Centre, March - June with approx. 28 attendees. Look out for this happening again in 2024.
- **Formation** - Joe Hindley, coordinator is setting up this group and working with Alex Chia from the Diocese.
- **Formed.org** - some training by Siobhan and Alex and much advertising of this resource has been carried out via the newsletter. A free and very useful resource for all.
- **Health & Safety** comes under the banner of the Finance Team. It is pleasing however, to see new Wardens have been trained to cover all Masses and a practice evacuation held recently will now be held on a more regular basis according to regulations.

- **PPRE** continued this year with two teachers and maximum numbers.
- **Rolleston** - a team from Rolleston was set up to find a venue to hold an 11am Sunday Mass and to manage the ongoing organization.
- **Safeguarding** - Janet Cummings took over the role of Selwyn Parish contact. Workshops were held during July with good attendance.
- **Website and Facebook** continues to be looked after by Triona Doocey. Triona is keen for items of interest she can add to this.
- **Youth** from the parish attended two different away days organised by the Diocesan Youth Team.

Another Planning Day will be held in February 2024, when we will look at our goals for next year and looking at a long-term vision for the future of the Selwyn Parish will be necessary with consultation from parishioners.

It was a privilege for the Leadership Team to be able to make a presentation and give thanks to Margaret Rea, on her retirement in June, for her over 40 year commitment to the First Communion program as coordinator and teacher.

On behalf of the Leadership team, I wish you all a very happy and blessed Christmas and New Year, enjoy the holiday season and stay safe.

Tricia Smith (Chairperson), Selwyn Parish Leadership Team

Finance Committee

The Parish finances remain in the positive. Strong Mass numbers and rental incomes from various properties support the bank balance. Rising costs especially insurance have been able to be absorbed. Leon Verheyen joined the committee at the start of the year.

On the property side, St Joseph's Church in Darfield is now a listed heritage building in the Selwyn District Council Plan and the land at Shands Road is being investigated for sale.

Next year a plan will be advanced for the major capital works in the Parish. The projects are the strengthening and refurbishment of St Joseph's Church, a new church at Leeston and a new church at Rolleston. The timing and funding of each project will be contingent on consultation with the Parish, the sale of Parish assets and fundraising.

Timothy Hogan

Health and Safety

Lincoln

The Church and centre are compliant with the requirements of the Building Act and have a current Building Warrant of Fitness (BWOF). Inspections for egress compliance are ongoing.

The health and safety folder for notification of near misses or accidents for all users is beside the doors of the parish centre.

A working bee of 15 volunteers was held on the 16th of April. The team were inducted to the site and signed in. There were no near misses or accidents.

To comply with various requirements evacuation procedures are in place. I have trained 12 wardens and arranged trial evacuations. Notification of these are sent Fire and Emergency NZ (FENZ).

Leeston and Darfield

I have visited both churches but need to spend some time and do a full health and safety assessment once I have read the engineering report written following the earthquakes. I have not been informed of any further structural damage following the September 2023 earthquakes and aftershocks. Thanks to everyone for keeping safe.

Leon Verheyen

Safeguarding

Safeguarding in the Selwyn Parish has been very well set up by Jean Hindley who was our initial Safeguarding Officer. Jean did an amazing job growing the awareness of the need to keep our children, vulnerable adults and parish volunteers safe. She set up a great administration process for tracking police vets, other relevant forms and safeguarding meeting attendance, as well as ensuring that appropriate signage and contact information was on display in all the Selwyn churches. Jean was well supported in this by Mary Prendergast, our Parish Secretary. After Jean stepped down the position was taken up by Janet Cummings.

In the past year we have also been well supported by Clodagh Ward the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer who has provided three safeguarding workshops. These meetings were well attended and informative. Clodagh was able to answer questions and queries on the spot.

We send our thanks to Katherine Pawson from the diocesan office who regularly updates us as new police vet results arrive.

The Selwyn Parish appreciates and values the support of Fr Brian, Fr Chris, Mary Prendergast and Clodagh Ward, in ensuring that safeguarding becomes part of the fabric of our parish.

Janet Cummings

St John the Evangelist, Leeston

In the heart of St John the Evangelist Leeston,
stands a church so grand,
Where parishioners gather, future in hand.
With faith as their guide, they come to pray,
To find solace and peace, each and every day.

The bells chime softly, calling all to hear,
A message of hope, dispelling every fear.
The pews are filled with voices raised high,
Singing hymns of love that touch the sky.

The Priest speaks words of wisdom and grace,
Guiding the flock to a better place.
With open hearts and minds, they listen intently,
Seeking answers to questions, so gently.

In this sacred space, friendships are formed,
Supporting each other through life's storms.
They find strength in unity, love in their hearts,
A community bound by faith that never departs.

So let us celebrate this church so dear,
A beacon of hope that is always near.
May its light shine bright for all to see,
And bring joy and peace to you and me.

Leeston

We thank our Readers of the Word and Prayers of the Faithful, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, all who set the Altar for Mass, computer operators, and our organists. Our families who take part in the Offertory procession. Thank you to everyone who sees a need and sorts it.

Thank you to those who mow the lawns and keep the grounds tidy. The ladies who organise our gatherings and clean our church. Rita and Mike for inviting us to their home for study groups.

To each and every one of you who joins us to celebrate Mass, you are important to us we know you're coming makes us the parish we are.

We thank Fr Brian and Fr Chris for their support and care of us. Please know how appreciated you are by us all, and our local community.

May the Christ Child's blessing be upon us all as we go forward. May he give us strength and fortitude and joy in the knowledge that we are all so loved by His loving Father.

Anna Carter

Spiritual

Rolleston Future Sunday Mass

In Mid-2022 the Selwyn Parish Leadership Team engaged Rolleston parishioners with a survey to see what the overall feeling was regarding building a faith and worship community. There was a strong desire to have a Mass centre in Rolleston. Since then, the Parish leadership team has been exploring a venue to celebrate Mass in Rolleston.

After looking around at what was available, we have now found our new venue which is Te Ahi Kaikomako Rolleston School Hall. Hope Presbyterian Church has been using this venue, but recently moved out and are in their new church. Selwyn Parish will start to celebrate Mass in Rolleston School Hall starting Sunday 4th February 2024. The time will be Sundays at 11am to fit in with our priests travelling to Darfield and Leeston.

We have set up a team to work together to ensure the requirements of a regular Mass and look forward to growing the Rolleston worship community.

Rodney Keegan and Sandra Davey

"For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them."

Matthew 18:20

"For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

1 Corinthians 11:26

First Holy Communion Programme

This year was the biggest class I can remember. We had 44 children of all ages from 8 years up to 15 years. The programme our parish uses is a 12-week programme for the children with five parent meetings conducted by Fr Brian at which they are given sets of three or four worksheets for their children to complete and bring one back each Sunday at Mass. The children have a lesson during Mass to re-enforce the lesson done at home. Reconciliation is conducted about halfway through the programme. The first Communion Mass was celebrated on Sunday 11th June in the afternoon and the church was full of proud parents and relations.

If you would like to register your child for the communion class in 2024, please contact the parish office: *selwyncatholicparish@gmail.com*.

Margaret Rea

Baptism

A Baptismal preparation programme for parents who are requesting to have a child baptised, is held about every two months within the Selwyn Parish.

To assist with the commitment, that parents are undertaking, the Parish offers two sessions of preparation and instruction. In these sessions, an explanation of the Sacrament of Baptism is given.

These sessions are a requirement for the parents; godparents are also welcome and encouraged to attend.

The dates are advertised in the Parish Newsletter.

A few points of clarification:

- A godparent must be a baptised Christian of whom at least one must be a Catholic. Godparents also need to live 'a life of faith which befits the role to be undertaken.'
- A date for Baptism is arranged at the completion of the programme.
- The appropriate place for celebrating baptism is the Parish church - which is the focus of faith for the local Catholic Community.
- Families, who live in other parishes, may have a child baptised in their grandparents' parish; however, the parents need to attend a Baptismal programme in their own parish. When the parents have contacted their 'home parish' - then arrangements may be made to celebrate the child's baptism within the Selwyn Parish.

To enrol your child in the Baptismal preparation programme in 2024, please contact the parish office: *selwyncatholicparish@gmail.com*.

Fr Brian

"From there you will seek the Lord your God, and you will find Him if you search with all your heart and soul."

Deuteronomy 4:29

Confirmation

Every second year the Selwyn Parish celebrates the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Confirmation is the final anointing of Baptism and celebrates that we are 'People of Mission'. Strengthened by the Holy Spirit - we are commissioned to proclaim and live the Gospel.

This year, Bishop Michael celebrated the Sacrament of Confirmation on the 2nd of December; 16 young people and three adults received the Sacrament of Confirmation.

The Sacrament will be offered again in 2025.

Fr Brian

Wednesday Evening

Lincoln Prayer Group

We began five years ago with those interested in developing a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, listening and reflecting on church teachings. There is a core group who regularly attend, with others coming for a short time or longer. But all have been blessed by the prayer, intercession, praise and worship, and the fellowship with others wanting to grow in using the gifts of the Holy Spirit and serving the Church. 2023 saw us all participating in Alpha, while continuing to meet each week, which led to others joining us. Newcomers are always welcome. We begin again on Wednesday 31st of January 2024.

If you would like to attend or find out more, please contact the parish office: *selwyncatholicparish@gmail.com*.

God bless you and keep you in his tender care.

Rosalie Matthews

Marian Group

The Marian Group continues to meet each Wednesday immediately after the 9.00am Mass to pray for Priests and for our children.

Our devotions begin with a Rosary.

We invite anyone who wishes to do so to join us for all or part of this prayer time.

Tricia Baugh

Saint Padre Pio Prayer Group

We pray monthly for all the sick and suffering, especially for those near and dear to ourselves and those who have asked for healing. We meet on last Monday of the month at 1.30pm at 12/28 James St, Lincoln.

For further enquiries, please ring Jeanette: 021 102 0294.

Jeanette O'Donnell

St Joseph Prayer Group

We wish to re-establish prayers to St Joseph. Let us ask him to protect our families as he did his own. May he help us to discern God's hand in the ups and downs of family life. May he help us with our financial problems, so that we don't allow money or material things to spoil the bond that unites us as a family. Place our trust in God as he did.

Devotees of St Joseph willing to form a prayer group again, please ring Jeanette 021 102 0294 or 03 325 7066.

Jeanette O'Donnell

Legion of Mary

Mother of Mercy is the Legion Mary that was established in Selwyn Parish a year ago. The Legionaries have a weekly meeting on Saturday, 3.30pm at St Patrick's Church.

The works we do so far include taking part in Lincoln's liturgical ministry, visiting the sick, special prayers for people in need, group retreat, and promoting the Rosary and Catholic literature. Going forward we hope to be able to take part more in any type of spiritual work that is needed in the parish.

For further information, please feel free to contact Catherine at 027 356 0916 or *legionmary.motherofmercy@gmail.com*.

Elly pp Catherine (President of Legion Mary - Mother of Mercy)

Parish Primary Religious Education (PPRE)

For the past two years we have been blessed to be able to provide classes for children at State Primary Schools to learn more about the Catholic Faith and prepare to attend a Catholic High School.

This year over 30 children in years 6 - 8 attended PPRE in Lincoln each Friday from 4.30pm – 5.30pm during the School Term. Children come to know more about Jesus and his teachings; Mary; Bible Stories; the Saints; the Liturgical Year and many other aspects of our Catholic Faith.

If your child is in Years 6 - 8 next year at a State Primary School, you would be most welcome to register them for PPRE for 2024: please contact Fr Chris Orr: *christopherjohnorr@gmail.com*.

Fr Chris

OCIA - Journey to Catholic Faith

It is heartening that several adults wish to become Catholic within the Selwyn Parish. The 'Journey to Faith' (it is also known as the 'Order of Christian Initiation of Adults') commenced in September and will conclude at the Easter Vigil in 2024.

We have a group of 12 adults who are on the Journey to become Catholic. Six of the candidates have been baptised as Christians, and six have not been baptised. They are supported by a team of parishioners. The group meet each Tuesday evening to learn and reflect on the teachings of the Catholic Church. We wish them well on the Journey.

If you are interested in participating in the next 'Journey to Faith' programme, please contact the parish office: *selwyncatholicparish@gmail.com*.

Fr Brian

Liturgical

Altar Servers

After this year's First Communion program, myself and Fr Brian trained nine new Altar Servers giving us a total of 26 children covering our two weekend Masses. It is a very important ministry within our church and it is wonderful to see the joy and commitment of the children and a special thank you to parents for bringing them along.

If you would like your child to become an altar server, please contact the parish office: *selwyncatholicparish@gmail.com*.

Coordinator - Tricia Smith

Liturgy of the Word with Children

For many years a team of five leaders have dedicated their time to take the Children's Liturgy during the 8.30am Sunday Mass in the St Patrick's Church, Lincoln (term time only). This year we have had a range of numbers attending the 20-minute session. Some weeks five or six children and other weeks up to 20 children. It is very encouraging to see so many children coming to Mass with their families and willingly join in their liturgy.

Newcomers are always welcome to join us as we leave during the Mass.

Doreen Holt

Liturgy Team

This group meets with our priests to help organize the parish liturgies and coordinate the various Liturgical Ministries within the Selwyn Parish. They meet three or four times a year – prior to Advent/Christmas, prior to Lent/Easter and we also meet to debrief following these important Liturgical Seasons. At Pentecost we organize to have the Prayers of the Faithful said in different languages and encourage the wearing of cultural dress. For All Souls Day a Bereavement Mass is held at St Patrick's Church in Lincoln for the deceased parishioners of Selwyn Parish, this includes Leeston and Darfield parishioners. Some other special days are the Feast of St Patrick and the anniversary of the Dedication of our new church of St Patrick on the 19th of May.

Coordinator - Tricia Smith

Youth Ministry

In May 2022 at the St Patrick's Church in Lincoln, a Selwyn Parish youth gathering organized with the Mission Team, volunteers from Couples for Christ, and Jesus Youth aimed to launch a parish youth group. The event featured games, competitions, and a BBQ for the 30 young people who attended. A second gathering in Darfield followed for those who missed the first. These events fostered enthusiasm for attendance at the CYT Sports Night and Day in 2023 where the Selwyn Parish team won the Fair Play award. Youth from the parish also participated in CYT Revolution and Antioch camps, learning and reflecting on theme "More" from John 10:10.

The plan moving forward is to get these young people to attend future diocesan youth gatherings and events and to create opportunities for Selwyn Parish youth to be more involved in the Parish like adoration, praise, and worship, creating youth music ministry, youth-sponsored Mass, and a youth camp.

Cyrene Tionko

Service

St Vincent de Paul

Our conference is called the St Teresa of Calcutta conference. We started our conference in Selwyn parish in mid 2021, and were fully operational before Christmas, when we had our first major initiative, providing Christmas parcels to needy families. This was a great success, entirely due to the generous participation of the parishioners of the various Mass centres in Selwyn. Fulfilling our mission in meeting clients' needs has included the provision of food, but has also included furniture, bedding, clothing, school support, and other initiatives, including budgeting suggestions. We processed firewood at Darfield, Hororata and Greenpark, yielded firewood for the SVDP needs locally and in the city. We intend to continue this support in the future too.

We are establishing local links with Age Concern and other local community organisations. We had a stall at the Rolleston Fireworks display as well as a very successful sausage sizzle at Rolleston Family Day, sponsored by Property Brokers, who are also collecting Christmas presents for Vinnies to distribute.

We set up a CORS team, which is an officially recognised Refugee Sponsorship Programme, and hope our nominated refugee family will arrive here early next year. Providing for this family has been our major focus this Christmas. Providing a four-bedroom rental house in Rolleston for them will be a major challenge. Merry Christmas to you all.

For more information contact Ian: 027 323 8076.

Ian Tennant

Leeston Catholic Ladies Group

The Leeston Catholic Ladies group has had a fairly quiet year for 2023, being a small number we try to have something every month. We have enjoyed the housie held in Lincoln, a nice get together during the winter month of August. Lots of fun and laughter and sometimes winning a line or even a house.

This year we have been to a couple of movies, had a van trip to Darfield, Oxford, Cust, and back to Darfield for afternoon tea. The day was very stormy which didn't dampen our enthusiasm.

Some of us joined Fr Brian's Bible study. We finished the year by going to The Raspberry Café for our Christmas get together, where we brought gifts for distribution to children.

Kathleen McMahon

Catholic Women's League

The St Patrick's Catholic Women's League have had another successful year. We ran our usual Mother's Day raffle with all money raised going to KidsCan. Also, in May we hosted the ladies of the parish to a high tea complete with China cups saucers and plates and beautiful tiered cake plates. We celebrated our 56th birthday at the Good Home at Prebbleton and also took part in the parish quiz night which was a lot of fun.

We served food at the afters following funerals in our church, and in November we had a bus trip to Akaroa for the day along with some parishioners. Also in November, we hosted a bus from Christchurch East parish for a Christmas luncheon and the money raised will go to our Mission Station in Honiara

We are a small happy band of ladies, and we usually meet on the second Monday of each month.

We would welcome any new parishioners to join us. For more information contact Margaret Rea, email *mbmerea@gmail.com*.

Margaret Rea

Selwyn Friendship Group

On the first Friday of the month after the 9.00am Mass at St Patrick's Church, a good number of parishioners stay in the church centre, for a cuppa and a chat. The group began in 2014.

All Selwyn parishioners are welcome to join in.

Coordinator - Tricia Smith

Selwyn Craft & Friendship Group

We have had a great attendance fluctuating from seven to about 15, to our friendly Craft and Friendship group. The numbers differ every week as people are not committed to coming every week but when they feel like it or if they know we are doing something that they are interested in.

We have people who are regularly attending who do either one or all of the following; knitting, crocheting, embroidery, paper craft or patchwork. However, there are other skills our trusty group has. Sometimes people come just for some company and a cuppa.

This year 2023, we have had hands on days doing mosaics and needle felting. Plus, we have a day coming up at Leeston where we will have morning tea and do a felting workshop and visit a historic home where we will have lunch.

We welcome people from all of the community not only our parish.

We are at St Patricks in Lincoln in the Parish Centre every Tuesday from 1.30pm to 3.30pm. Any enquiries please contact Yvonne: 027 334 1151 or 03 366 9795.

Yvonne Morgan

Social Activities Team

The social activities team continues to run different events during the year. We started with a very successful picnic in February at the home of Mike and Helena Hanning's place near Darfield. The day was beautiful, and we had around 85 people. The day started with Mass, and later everyone sat around eating lunch and enjoying the company. The kids had fun with races and games and a lollies scramble.

Ray organised a men's breakfast which those present wanted to repeat it again next year. In June we organised a mid winter luncheon at the HQ restaurant in Lincoln with a good crowd attending and the meal was well received. Housie was again popular with the older parishioners and there was always lots of chatter over afternoon tea.

Our annual quiz night was again popular with 15 teams competing with questions to test our brains. We were able to donate the entire takings which was $600 to the Vinny's in Selwyn. Our potluck dinner after Mass on Saturday the 18th November was held in the Lincoln Event Centre and was again another successful night with nearly 90 present.

During the year we have served the suppers for different events at church. We are a happy group and enjoy doing things in the Selwyn parish.

Margaret Rea

Selwyn Parish Alpha Programme

The Selwyn Alpha Pilot Programme was a huge success with a full muster of 32 people, with almost all completing the series. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, praising the program administered by Triona, the interesting discussions ably led by group leaders, the amazing music ministry led by Rodney and Cyrene, the superb food contributions from donors, decor by Joan, and 'dad-jokes' by Chris.

The revised videos, featuring young presenters, effectively conveyed the transformative power of the Gospel and received a positive reception.

The small group discussions played a crucial role in addressing doubts and affirming truths, fostering love and inclusion. Sharing of personal experiences, built trust and understanding. Relationships were strengthened by acknowledging each other's challenges, blessings, enlightenment, and faith journeys.

The day away at Darfield church, marked by exceptional hospitality and the goodwill of the parishioners, further enriched the experience. The Holy Spirit showed up, touching us in various ways, refilling and anointing with spiritual gifts to deepen our walk with Jesus and enhance our effectiveness in His work. Many felt the presence of the Holy Spirit lovingly protecting us, guiding us, providing for us, making compensation for our shortcomings and highlighting to us areas where we could improve.

Participants acknowledged the potential of Alpha for community evangelization, aiming to rekindle faith in those who've drifted from the church. Plans include collaboration with other churches for a combined Alpha in the future. We thank God and everyone who contributed to making our first Alpha so successful and look forward to holding many more Alpha programmes in our parish.

For information about Alpha in 2024, please contact our parish office at: *selwyncatholicparish@gmail.com*.

Joan Gomez-Douglass

Formation

Formation in Selwyn Parish is coordinated by Joe Hindley. To date, a small team including Sandra Davey and Nick Otto has been formed with a view of compiling an annual plan. The team has included input from Alex Chia the Diocesan Education Advisor.

An introductory session on FORMED.org, the free website available to everyone in the Parish was given by Alex to the Formation Team and the priests during the year. Alex held further sessions with First Communion and PPRE parents to widen the use of this excellent resource.

The Formation Team intends to put together a Parish plan for 2024 and to expand the team to ensure all churches within Selwyn Parish are involved. The Parish Plan has a proposed format of four terms, each term having a different focus based on available material in *FORMED.org* and the plan will be finalized early in 2024.

Joe Hindley

A Christmas Message - 2023

The Stars & Light of Christmas

For the past two years, Matariki has been a public holiday, the observance reminds contemporary society of the significance of the stars, especially for navigation.

In Matthew's Gospel, the magi set out on their journey in response to seeing a 'star as it rose'. They travelled in response to the star, but they needed the interpretation of people of faith, in Jerusalem, to direct them to Bethlehem and the person of Jesus.

In the southern hemisphere, Christmas falls a few days after the summer solstice. Light is a feature of the southern Christmas; it banishes darkness. The longer days beacon us to enjoy and celebrate family, friends, and the world about us.

This is a great simile for Christ enabling us to live and enjoy life to the full.

St John, in the prologue to his gospel, describes Jesus as *'a light that shines in the dark, a light that darkness could not overpower'* (1:5). In the Book of Revelation, Jesus is described as the *'morning star'* (22:2).

In these references, Jesus is certainly the light that provides a true bearing for our lives.

Christmas is a season that affirms humanity; humanity has been blessed by Jesus sharing in human life.

The 'star' and 'light' are Christmas motifs that speak of our journey in life, and the reality that we need others to assist us to live life well. The long days and the warmth of summer remind us of the joy and fulfilment that we receive by discovering Jesus and allowing him to accompany us in life.

I hope that the enjoyment of summer lead us to a deeper appreciation of God's love for us all.

Fr Brian Fennessy

Selwyn Parish Website & Facebook

The Selwyn Parish Website and the Selwyn Catholic Parish Facebook page are online spaces for our parish faith! Our website serves as a hub, providing useful resources and information, to help enrich your spiritual journey. Over on Facebook, our Parish page is another community resource, connecting you to other Catholic pages and accounts. In the last year, we were able to follow novenas together, see how the inaugural parish Alpha programme progressed, check-in with Fr Chris as he travelled on his sabbatical, and reflect on scripture quotes each weekend.

Join us in nurturing your faith through *selwyncatholic.nz* or *@selwyncatholicparish* - where spiritual inspiration and connection await!

Triona Doocey

Coming up in 2024

Rolleston Mass: in the New Year, we intend to commence a weekly Sunday mass, at 11.00am, in the Rolleston School Hall, 11 Tennyson Street. The first mass will be on Sunday 4 February, 11.00am. We hope this mass will assist in creating a nucleus for the Rolleston Community prior to building a church on East Maddison Road. If you are able and willing to assist with the Ministry at this new location please use the following link online *www.surveymonkey.com/r/7BZYDBT*

Selwyn Parish Picnic: will be held on Sunday 11 February, beginning at midday with mass: At Mike & Helena Hanning's Property - 4/1608 West Coast Road, West Melton. BYO food, drinks & chair. There will be games for children. More details to follow in the New Year.

The First Communion Programme for 2024 will commence in February - a couple of weeks after School starts. If you will have a child in Year 5 (an 8-year-old) during 2024 then please inform the Parish Office or Frs Brian/Chris.

Selwyn Catholic Parish

Incorporating the churches of
St Joseph's Darfield, St John the Evangelist Leeston, St Patrick's Lincoln
and including parishioners from the Rolleston area.

03 325 2770

selwyncatholicparish@gmail.com

Connecting with our Community...

GET CONNECTED

www.facebook.com/selwyncatholicparish

www.selwyncatholic.nz