**Monastic House Internship**

**as a Model for Developing Youth Leaders**

**Nick McLennan, Mahurangi Presbyterian Church, November 2021**

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## **Abstract**

The model of a Celtic Monastic community is being used in the Diocese of Wellington as a framework for training and developing Anglican youth leaders. This Study Leave project for the Northern Presbytery[[1]](#footnote-1) considered the challenge of recruiting and developing youth leadership in the Presbyterian Church and found the “Monastic House” model to offer a viable alternative to the laissez-faire approach that has apparently characterised recruitment of youth leadership in the Northern Presbytery. Due to the climate of Covid -19 response in 2021, information was gained from books, podcasts, conference recordings and personal interviews rather than by the immersion in the monastic community that was planned before lockdowns began.

## **Why this subject?**

In my observation, the pool of ministry leaders being developed around the Northern Presbytery is decreasing, prompting my thoughts and questions to branch out in different ways:

1. Why is there a struggle to find people willing to step into leadership in the PCANZ, particularly pastoral ministry?
2. What could be done to increase the potential leadership pool?
3. What qualities should be sought and modelled in an effort to develop future leaders of the PCANZ?

The lack of emerging leaders in the PCANZ is doubtless a complex issue, with a number of factors contributing to the relatively small number of candidates being sent forward for ministry training in the PCANZ.[[2]](#footnote-2) However, in my view a significant reason for this shortage is a lack of intentionality in how the church develops up and coming leaders, in terms of both skills and character.

This is not to say that the PCANZ has had weak leadership training processes overall. Historically, the PCANZ has a strong record of training Ministers of Word and Sacrament at a national and local level. However, it is fair to say that the identification, development, and training of local and lay leadership has not been pursued to the same degree.

Why is this?

**The Challenge of Skill Development**

First of all, the job of training lay leaders is bigger and more complex than training Ministers of Word and Sacrament. The breadth and variety of lay leadership required across the PCANZ is wide-ranging. Opportunities include:

Youth Workers, Finance Managers, Small Business Managers, Trustees, Music Leaders, Community Workers, Counsellors, Social Workers, Children’s Workers, and Early Childhood Teachers.

There are already several different ways Presbyterian churches provide for their ministry needs by developing the skills required for lay leadership within the local church context. Further complexity is added when churches’ size, traditions, cultural and theological backgrounds, and community needs are considered. This means that, secondly, leadership skillsets required across the PCANZ are diverse.

This means it has been difficult for a national church body such as the Leadership Subcommittee to develop an effective training framework for such a wide array of situations across the entire country. One institution is unlikely to have the expertise and resources needed to effectively deliver training for the breadth and variety of ministry development needed.

**Leadership Development in Northern Presbytery**

In the PCANZ, Presbyteries are responsible for the mission and ministry in their area, but until recently, the Northern Presbytery had not invested a great deal of corporate energy in the development of lay leadership. With the possible exception of Youth Work, there was no effective regional approach to encourage, identify, and develop lay leaders and to enable them to further their ministry vocation

Recently this situation has begun to be addressed. As part of a new strategic plan, a leadership training course through Caleb Ministries was offered to both ministers and lay leaders in 2021. In conjunction with Laidlaw College, an internship training program to develop ministry skills was also initiated. Aimed at people interested in leadership in Christian ministry, it offered an opportunity to train theologically while serving up to 16 hours in a local congregation.

The question remains, why has it taken so long to address this situation?

One answer is that the formation of leaders has not been a pressing need for Presbyteries because there have always been people available to take up basic roles. Up until recently, there has not been a shortage of volunteers. It seems the prevailing attitude of the Presbytery was that training and development of new leaders was primarily the responsibility of individual ministers or Sessions. Local congregations were expected to identify and recruit the leadership potential coming through the ranks. The Presbytery’s responsibility was seen to be assessment of the worthiness of candidates being proposed.

In recent times, this approach has not borne much fruit in the Northern Presbytery and indeed the wider PCANZ. This is evidenced in the small numbers of people responding to the call to National Ordained Ministry. For many churches, the dilemma has also been seen in the difficulty of recruiting lay leaders willing to serve as Youth Workers, Children’s Workers or other areas pertinent to the ministry of a local church.

This Study Leave project raised the question of why ministers and congregations are struggling to bring forth new leaders?

The most likely reasons are related to the time and energy required of local church leaders who want their church to thrive in a changing cultural environment. The demanding strategic shifts in mission and ministry which are needed to form effective connections with modern society have meant identifying and training future leaders has slipped down the agenda. Unfortunately, the need to take care of the urgent tasks has come at the cost of wider goals. The pastoral responsibility for growing passionate and capable leaders is an important task which has been somewhat overlooked, and Northern Presbytery is rightfully taking this seriously.

**But What About Character Development?**

Added to this challenge is the question of assessing and developing the character of those who do indicate interest in vocational ministry.

The development of appropriate skills is undoubtedly important, but even more essential for the future leadership of the church is fostering a leader’s personal character. If churches are not intentional in discerning and developing the character of future leaders, they run the risk of recruiting people whose character flaws will harm either themselves or their congregations.

The pressure of finding a capable, charismatic leader may create a temptation for congregations to overlook character flaws. Struggling congregations can await the arrival of a leader who, like Moses, will lead them to a Promised Land of revival and renewal. Unfortunately, this can be dangerous. A charismatic and capable leader can be a wonderful asset to a church, but if they are not equipped with the appropriate Christ-like character for service, they can be incredibly destructive, not just for the church but also for its reputation in the wider community. The story of “The Rise and Fall of Mars Hill” is a sobering reminder of the place that character plays in healthy church leadership.[[3]](#footnote-3)

The Bible regularly cautions against appointing leaders whose character does not meet the expectations of their calling. The Apostle Paul warns the church at Ephesus to be wary of leaders who would follow him, characterising them as fierce wolves, intent on destroying the flock, and seeking to build their own kingdoms other than God’s.[[4]](#footnote-4) Paul also highlights the importance of character and reputation for church elders. In a discussion of the appointment of deacons within the church, Paul advises that leaders must be tested before taking office.[[5]](#footnote-5) There are many other examples of Paul’s conviction of the importance of character development for ministry. While poor ministry skills in a leader can constrain the potential of a congregation, weak character can be more destructive, even causing confusion and despair. It is therefore not surprising that in the letters of the New Testament there is a greater focus on the development of Christ-like character for church leaders than there is about the development of skills.

Unfortunately, character development is not something that can be effectively taught or even assessed in a classroom environment. Character is generally best developed and evaluated in a community situation where people are able to encourage one another, and call one another to account. This report explores one response to the challenge of effectively developing youth leaders.

**Other Denominations Facing This Challenge**

Not every faith tradition in New Zealand is struggling to recruit youth leadership to the degree that the Northern Presbytery churches are. Many denominations, particularly churches with large urban congregations with a strong young adult focus, have developed a pool of up and coming leadership resources to draw from. Examples include: Arise, Elim, Vineyard, Acts/Equippers (Apostolic), Baptist Churches, and LIFE.

While most churches within the Northern Presbytery are quite different from such churches in terms of style, it is worth noting that these denominations have one thing in common; they have all invested significant resource and time into the development of lay leaders. A common thread is that they have developed their own internal leadership training scheme, many of which have been running for a number of years.[[6]](#footnote-6) Some are operated in conjunction with Laidlaw College who have offered an internship similar to the one Northern Presbytery offered in 2020.[[7]](#footnote-7) Interestingly, the priority seems not to be producing church pastors, but to resource anybody who feels called to participate in ministry.

Larger churches use these leadership training schools as a tool to identify potential leaders, and as a result, they have a large leadership pool to draw from when the need arises for a new church leader.

The question could be asked as to why the Presbyterians have been so slow to the party when it comes to this type of intentional training of lay leaders. I propose a number of answers:

* As noted earlier, up until recently a need to train leaders has not been necessary; we have had enough people to fill the roles.
* Our Presbyterian focus on intellectual rigour has unintentionally weeded out those who feel called to ministry but are ill-equipped to handle the academic world.
* The value and importance of youth ministry has not been recognised widely in the PCANZ, in contrast with other denominations.
* There has been a lack of emphasis in the practice of discipleship in churches of the PCANZ.

While some may find these points contentious, I believe that they present some compelling explanations for our current leadership challenges.

Therefore, I am not convinced that offering courses and internships is the complete answer to the challenge the Presbytery faces in developing new leaders. While training may be a part of the solution, a broader approach to leadership development is needed. We need to be thinking about more than how we train leaders with ministry skillsets. The more important question is how we can be intentional about forming the character of a leader.

My findings do not lay the blame at anybody or group in particular; I believe the problem we face is largely a systemic one. It is likely that the important task of developing leaders has not, up until recently, been pressing for the Northern Presbytery. There has usually been someone willing to step into a leadership role. However, the pool is running dry. We need to consider how to develop people within our congregations who are passionate about following Jesus, and are willing to serve Him within their local church community.

Consideration of the leadership demands of parishes, and the qualities of Christian character needed to meet these, will require intentional input from local churches working together with Presbytery. One possible pathway emerged from my Study Leave.

**A Monastic Approach to Leader Development**

This report offers observations of an approach to leadership development being adopted by the Anglican Diocese of Wellington. The strategy is emerging as an effective way to train young leaders in terms of both skills and character. It takes as its model the communal practices of the Celtic Monastic movement of the 5th Century, where people lived in close missional connection with one another. I believe it is a promising framework for the Presbytery to consider.

One of the key historic figures behind this movement was St Patrick, a Christian leader who was instrumental in the transformation of the nation of Ireland from paganism to Christianity in the sixth century. Patrick’s approach to evangelism is believed to have differed from that of the institutional church of the time.[[8]](#footnote-8) Earlier monasteries were designed to separate Christians out from the ‘evil’ influence of the world, withdrawing them from the community. Patrick’s Celtic churches and monasteries were designed to work alongside the pagan communities around them, inviting them into the possibility of a life that was Christ-centred. Communities led by Patrick’s followers became known for living in an intentionally-Christian way. These believers then began to influence the surrounding non-Christian villages through ministries such as service and prayer. As Patrick’s communities became more connected with their neighbours, his converts, mostly lay people, began to understand the internal dynamics of a pagan society. They were then able to translate the Gospel for the villagers through cultural forms that they could understand.

While the life of each monastic community operated differently, depending on the context of the community they served, there were a number of practices that they held in common:[[9]](#footnote-9)

* They were committed to serving the people around them
* They were committed to observing a ‘rule’ of life (Orthodox Christian praxis)
* They were committed to regular communal prayer

### **Service**

Depending on the needs of the environment and the skills of the residents of the monastery, service could vary widely, from horticultural expertise to the education of children. Patrick’s followers became known for praying for people’s needs, caring for the ill, mediating conflicts and learning the local cultures.[[10]](#footnote-10)

### **Rule**

Patrick’s followers were devoted to following a ‘rule,’ or series of basic Christian practices that set them apart from the spiritual practices of those around them.[[11]](#footnote-11) Behaviours like hospitality, non-violent community and forgiveness were practices that characterised the lives of the Christian groups, in contrast with the culture of the villages that surrounded them. In the book, ‘*Living in Community,*’ Christine Pohl delves more deeply into particular practices within Christian communities that help sustain healthy and life-giving environments.[[12]](#footnote-12)

### **Prayer**

Regular routines and rituals of prayer were essential to the Rule followed by the early Celtic Christians. Communal prayer in the mornings and evenings was normative, while occasional prayers accompanied everyday activities like kindling fires, milking cows, churning butter, travelling, even going to sleep; examples are recorded in the *Carmina Gadelica*, a handbook for Celtic prayers. [[13]](#footnote-13)

Patrick’s formula for reaching the people of Ireland proved to be an incredibly successful one. By the time of his death, 30 to 40 of Ireland’s 150 tribes were largely Christian.[[14]](#footnote-14) The Celtic Monasteries proved to be prolific developers of Christian leaders as well. Within a century, Ireland had grown to become a sender of missionaries to the rest of the unreached ‘barbarian’ world, through the missions of St Columba to the Picts in Scotland, and St Aiden to the Anglo Saxons in the North of England. Missionaries such as St Columbanus in Gaul and St Boniface in Holland and Germany pioneered teams to reach the people of Northern Europe with the Gospel. The methods of the Celtic missionaries proved to be exceptionally successful in evangelising the peoples of the West.[[15]](#footnote-15)

Approaches similar to those of the Celtic Monastery movement can be seen in the Moravians, [[16]](#footnote-16) the modern missionary movement,[[17]](#footnote-17) or the underground seminaries set up by Dietrich Bonhoeffer prior to World War II.[[18]](#footnote-18)

**Wellington Anglican Youth Movement**

While reflecting on the current situation, I was made aware of the unique approach to leadership development taking place within the Youth Ministries arm of the Wellington Diocese of the Anglican Church

Compared with the previous examples of churches with leadership development schemes, I believe that the Anglican situation and approach is potentially more transferable to the congregations of the Northern Presbytery.

As in PCANZ, the Anglican Church in Wellington is made up of a number of congregations that have an older demographic. By contrast with the larger independent churches, they have not had many young people attending their worship services. As a result, a significant number of those attending their youth groups come from non-Christian families.

The Wellington Anglican church has also struggled to find people willing to step into pastoral ministry. A number of years ago they faced a significant challenge as many priests were retiring with no-one to replace them.

In 2014, in response to this lack of emerging church leaders throughout the Wellington Diocese, Bishop Justin Duckworth began to train leaders using an urban monastery model. This model was inherited from Urban Vision, a communal movement related to the wider Anglican Church of Aotearoa. Urban Vision has 14 residences around the North Island, including a “River Monastery” at Ngatiawa inland from Waikanae.[[19]](#footnote-19)

The basic premise of the monastery model was to create an environment that would encourage and develop Christian leadership, both in terms of skill and character. The intention was to create a place where people living in close community could have opportunities to deepen their faith and serve their church and wider community. In his book, ‘*Against the Tide, Towards the Kingdom*,’ Bishop Justin identified the Urban Vision movement with the worldwide initiatives of ‘New Monasticism’ by indicating its shared principles of those communities, including discipleship, hospitality, peacemaking and spiritual formation. [[20]](#footnote-20)

Urban Vision was unashamedly based on the idea of the Celtic Christian Monasteries that thrived throughout Britain and Northern Europe between 300 and 700 AD. The Celtic Monasteries of this time were notable for their adherence to the three key practices mentioned above, which translate into the three values of Urban Vision: serving others together through Youth Work, growing in community together, and praying together.[[21]](#footnote-21) The Anglican Monastic Houses in Wellington have adopted these principles for their practices.

AYM Houses began with a number of students living in the Bishop’s home in Wellington. This has since expanded to 50 residents living in six houses throughout Wellington and Upper Hutt. Each of these residents serve as youth workers in one of eight churches within the Wellington Diocese, as well as being involved in Sunday worship at their local church and the evening Youth Service in the Cathedral.

One significant change in the Wellington Diocese over this time is the number of leaders now stepping into the ordained ministry. In 2014 there were ten churches with vacancies throughout the region. In 2021 the Diocese ordained 23 new ministers. Approximately half of these came from, or are still involved with, the AYM House ministry. While the way in which the Anglican system recruits for the priesthood is quite different from the Presbyterian path to ordination, this change over a relatively short period is remarkable.[[22]](#footnote-22)

**Anglican Youth Movement Houses**

Anglican Youth Movement (AYM) Houses are communities of young people committing to live their lives together, following Christ and serving Him.[[23]](#footnote-23)

Involvement in an AYM house requires a high level of commitment and engagement. It involves participants serving others sacrificially, with a readiness to grow in personal relationships with housemates, and a willingness to stretch themselves in faith as they journey deeper with Jesus.

House residents usually sign up for a twelve-month period which can be renewed at the end of each year. Some people continue on, or leave as life their life circumstances change. Often, those who identified as potential leaders are encouraged to take on a role as House leaders. Experience has shown that the six-month mark is where most residents find it difficult to settle into the environment. Occasionally, some find that the level of commitment is more than they can cope with, and leave early; however, most residents work through this period and find themselves thriving in the environment.

People who live in AYM houses are expected to contribute towards the rent, utilities, and bond, as well as perform chores around their house. They are also expected to pay for the costs of events that they are required to attend (Approximately $450 over the course of the year). Many rooms are shared by two people in order to keep costs down, so residents need to be prepared to live in close community.

Some AYM House residents may be in full time employment, others are students, while others may be working part-time in a church or as 24-7 youth workers in a local College. However, in addition to these individual commitments, all residents are required:

* To commit to involvement in house life
* To serve the youth of a local congregation
* To regularly attend Sunday worship at their youth group’s congregation
* To assist in the Sunday evening service held at the Wellington Cathedral.[[24]](#footnote-24)

Each house has a House Leader, who oversees the residents and mentors them, meeting individually with each young person every fortnight to encourage and challenge them.

**AYM Rhythms of Community**

AYM Houses commit themselves to three different rhythms as a community; The AYM community rhythms align closely with the common Celtic practices outlined above:

* Focus Upwards Engaging in communal prayer every day
* Focus Inside Nurturing and challenging one another as Christians and serving the body of Christ
* Focus Outwards Providing hospitality and journeying with young people in local youth groups

The Rhythm of Community activities run over 10 months of the year, with a break over the December – January period. [[25]](#footnote-25)

Focus Upwards

Residents in an AYM house regularly meet to pray together on a daily basis. Generally, this takes 20-30 minutes every morning and evening. Times vary depending on the house.

Focus Inside

**House Nights**

House residents meet together every fortnight for House Nights. This is a time of sharing, worship, prayer, Bible teaching and encouragement led by the house leader.[[26]](#footnote-26) Every alternate fortnight residents of all six houses meet at one venue. As well as time for socialising, these gatherings include reflection on what is going on in their roles as youth leaders and training.

**Mentoring**

Each resident also has a fortnightly scheduled meeting with a mentor (usually the house leader) to talk through anything that has come up or that they are finding challenging.

**Local Church Attendance**

Sunday morning attendance in the local church of the Youth Group is a priority for any AYM House resident. On Sunday evenings, the Wellington Diocese holds a regional Youth Service which AYM residents are expected to attend.

Focus Outwards

**Youth Work**

AYM residents are expected to serve up to 10 hours in the youth group of their local Anglican church. Youth groups normally happen weekly on Thursday or Friday evenings. Roles and responsibilities may vary depending on the experience and skill of the youth worker. The main focus is on coming alongside youth and sharing life with them.

**Events**

Residents of AYM Houses are expected to participate in the five regional Anglican Youth Movement events held during the year. These include:

* The Games
* Easter Camp
* Intermediate Camp
* Discipleship Camp
* The Abbey.[[27]](#footnote-27)

In addition to this, there is also a starting-up day in January, a closing day in December and a Hui on Queens Birthday.

**Reflections on the AYM Community**

In reflecting on the AYM Houses, I suggest that the Wellington Anglican Youth Movement has established a promising approach to leadership development. It has the potential to develop up and coming leaders, not only in their calling and pastoral skill, but also their character. A community environment, coupled with caring mentoring and monastic practices of prayer and service seem to me to be a viable way to foster and develop character in young leaders.

This model has the potential to work well in a Presbytery environment, for a number of reasons:

* Many churches within the Presbytery still have youth groups actively engaging with the young people in their church and wider community
* It provides incentives for young people to engage with local churches
* It provides opportunities for meaningful service and engagement for Youth who have ‘aged out’ of a traditional youth group structure
* It could make good use of existing church infrastructure such as unused manses/churches
* It is an approach that could work either for individual congregations, or for a group of congregations in relatively close proximity to each other.
* It could create opportunities for engagement for churches whose youth work struggles to integrate with their regular Sunday congregation
* It provides an intensive, monastic nurturing environment for young people to pursue the call on God on their lives, wherever that may lead.

I believe this approach has had a positive effect in developing leadership in a denomination with similar demographics to those of the PCANZ.

**Potential Challenges to This Approach**

However, as promising as this approach seems to be, there are some challenges. If the Presbytery were to adopt an approach to leadership development similar to that of the Wellington Anglican Diocese, we would have to factor in a number of key considerations:

* recruiting appropriate house leaders
* identifying potential residents
* finding churches with opportunities for residents to provide service that is meaningful to them, to the church, and to the wider community
* locating suitable accommodation in Auckland, and within proximity to churches, that can house six or more residents as well as a house leader/s
* developing policies regarding expectations and behaviour of residents (i.e. alcohol, Health and Safety, on site costs, relational expectations)

If the Presbytery is interested in trialling a monastic house model, these priority areas would need to be addressed.

**Conclusion**

From my observations, it would seem that undertaking a monastic approach to leadership development within the church has a lot of merit.

It has the advantage of developing the ministry skill base of individuals, in the context of a Christian environment where character issues can be explored, observed, and addressed in a loving and prayerful way.

Furthermore, the experience of the Wellington Anglican Youth Movement over the last seven years shows that a long-term investment in leadership development can bring lasting results. AYM Wellington have been able to effectively develop and leverage the potential of young leadership in a denomination that has historically struggled to do this, all in a relatively short period of time.

To my mind, this is exceptionally significant for Northern Presbytery. I believe that the lack of emerging lay leadership is the greatest challenge our Presbytery is facing.

I believe that this approach to leadership development is one worthy of investment and propose that it should be given serious consideration by Northern Presbytery.

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**Appendix I**

**Text

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**AYM HOUSES INTRODUCTION SESSION**

**THE WHY.**

1 Samuel 22:1-2 “David departed from there and escaped to the cave of Adullam. And when his brothers and all his father's house heard it, they went down there to him. And everyone who was in distress, and everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was bitter in soul, gathered to him. And he became commander over them. And there were with him about four hundred men.”

These individuals that gathered with David at the cave of Adullam would go on to be David’s mightiest warriors whose exploits are outlined in 2 Samuel 23:8-39. Their training took place in the cave of Adullam. It was in this cave where their character, skills and faith was deepened, stretched and grown.

We believe that God is on the move and is wanting the next wave of mighty men and women to see God’s kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven. We believe that there is a better option than leaving home to live in the halls while at uni or flatting while starting work. We believe that God has a crazy awesome adventure in store for everyone and that how we can discover the adventure and help us develop the character and skills required for this adventure is in the context of intentional community.

Living in intentional community is the first step of this adventure as we are brought into a family that we have the permission to speak life into, and that has the permission to speak life into us. The constant interaction means that our own hurts, fears and shortfallings begin to come to the surface in a way that they wouldn’t normally. As is pointed out in Proverbs 27:17, when we journey with people who are committed to our wholeness and wellbeing we grow and strengthen as we help others grow and strengthen.

The rhythms that we maintain (prayer, community, service) provide a structure that not only helps carry us through the year, but sets us up for a lifestyle where we are able to live the kind of life that Jesus calls us to in his Gospels. Prayers pushes our focus UPwards as we look to God to sustain, carry and guide us. Community draws our focus to that INside us which needs to develop, grow and heal. Serving in youth groups, parishes and communities means we are living a life that is OUTwardly focused to a broken and hurting world.

The three prophetic statements of the AYM Houses:

Prayer

Youth Work

Community

**THE WORK OF AYM HOUSES.**

We are a Wellington Anglican Diocese intentional community with houses throughout the Wellington Diocese that is committed to serving the young people of our communities.

The houses are full of a mix of people. Full time tertiary students studying, people undertaking an apprenticeship and some who have graduated from study and are now working full or part time jobs.  
We believe that Jesus has more in store for us than simply getting a degree or good job and living a life chasing the dreams that the world offers us. We believe that we are truly alive when we are living out the call of Jesus to give our lives away in the service of others. We know that by doing this we can get a better understanding of who God is and how much God loves this world and these people that God created.

**VISION STATEMENT.**

Missional Communities built around shared life, prayer and youth work**.**

**STRUCTURE.**

LEADERSHIP TEAM

Decisions that take the Houses out of their original parameters of operation.

**OUR CALLING.**

TOWARDS OTHERS

WITHIN OUR COMMUNITY

**PASTORAL CARE.**

AYM House Leaders, Clergy, Mentors and Counsellors.

If you need, or we feel you need a professional counsellor, we will locate someone and AYM will cover the cost for you.

**OUR RHYTHMS**

MORNING & EVENING PRAYERS

This is more of a strong suggestion for our crew to be at Prayers. We see the difference in our lives because of it. We have watched each other grow and be held through the rhythm of Prayer.

WEEKLY HOUSE NIGHTS

Compulsory for all AYM House Crew.

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BIG HOUSE NIGHT AGENDA (Combined Houses meeting)

All AYM houses join or skype in

7:00pm: Kick off - Prayer and a Waiata (welcome song)

7:05pm: Notices (eg. promo next two upcoming events/commitments)

7:10pm: Session: (eg. Strengths Finders)

7:45pm: Small Groups & Kairos moments

8:00pm: Pray to end

8:30pm Leaders Meeting

SMALL HOUSE NIGHT AGENDA (Individual House Meetings)

7:00pm: Kick off - Prayer and a Waiata (welcome song)

7:05pm: Notices (eg. promo next two upcoming events/commitments)

7:10pm: Session (3DM Huddle)

7:45pm: Kairos moments

8:00pm: Pray to end

LEADERS MEETINGS

Compulsory for all house leaders.

Fortnightly together after Big House Night either via Skype or in one of our houses.

Safe space to be vulnerable, debrief, share life and pray with/for one another.

Discuss house and relationship dynamics, with the support of other leaders.

YOUTH GROUPS AT LOCAL PARISHES

Compulsory unless there is a medical reason or you have spoken to your leader and come to an arrangement.

SUNDAY MORNING SERVICES AT LOCAL PARISH

This is also compulsory unless there is a medical reason or you have spoken to your leader and come to an arrangement.

SABBATH & REST

We believe wholeheartedly that to run like we do, we need a Day of Rest.

RETREATS

Four per calendar year that are compulsory unless due to medical reasons or prior work commitments that you have talked through with your house leader.

**(Some paragraphs omitted here)**

**AYM RECOMMENDED READING LIST.**

Against the Tide, Toward the Kingdom Justin & Jenny Duckworth

The Five Disfunctions of a Team Patrick Lencioni

Irresistable Revolution Shane Claiborne

Daring Greatly Brene Brown

21 Elephants Scottie Reeve

Foreign to Familiar Sarah Lanier

Red Moon Rising Pete Grieg

Dirty Glory Pete Grieg

Messy Spirituality Mike Yaconelli

Ragamuffin Gospel Brennan Manning

The Furious Longing of God Brennan Manning

The Return of the Prodigal Son Henri Nouwen

The Wounded Healer Henri Nouwen

Huia Come Home Jay Ruka

Good to Great Jim Collins

Lead Karl Martin

**Appendix II:**

**AYM TERMS OF COMMITMENT**

This document outlines the terms and commitments of being a part of the Anglican Youth Movement (AYM) House family. It outlines what is expected of those entering in to an AYM House and what is expected to be provided by the AYM Houses to those entering in.

**Length of time:**

Those entering into the AYM Houses are entering a 12 month commitment to live in the AYM Houses. The start date of this 12 month time frame can vary depending on the house but the AYM House start date is the last weekend of January.

**Financial Commitment:**

**Rent**

By agreeing to enter into an AYM House the individual is also making the financial commitment to be accountable for rent for the 12 month period. An automatic payment MUST be set up to the nominated account within two weeks of arrival.

The weekly cost covers rent, power, internet and food. In regards to food, this covers basic food needs. In regards to special dietary requirements these are to be discussed with your house leaders and how the basic needs of the dietary requirement can be incorporated into the house shop (i.e if you are dairy free and require something expensive it will not be covered by basic food costs.) Treats and chocolates are not considered basic food needs and will need to be bought at the individuals expense.

**Camps**

An additional cost of living in the AYM Houses is attending the camps associated with the ministry that you are a part of. (**details omitted**)

**Leaving Prior to the 12 months Completion:**

Any person who chooses to leave earlier than the 12 month time frame is responsible for covering the baseline rent (total rent - expenses) for their room. Anyone who chooses to leave cannot sub-let the room to cover their costs unless this is approved by the AYM House Leader responsible for the house. Anyone who comes in to replace someone leaving early must do so with the knowledge that they are entering in as a member of the AYM Houses and will therefore be expected to fulfill the basic AYM House commitments.

**Appendix III**

**AYM INTRODUCTION LETTER 2020**

**Text

Description automatically generated with low confidence**

**Kia Ora, so you are interested in joining The Houses! Welcome. Here is some information to help guide you in your decision to joining us for 2020.**

**Vision Statement.** We are an intentional community that seeks to raise up leaders in the church for the next generation and move of God.

**MOVE IN DATE FOR 2020:**

Move in date for 2020 is Saturday, January 25th with our first gathering up at Ngatiawa Monastery the afternoon of Sunday January 26th.

**YOUR COMMITMENT TO THE HOUSES.**

**SPIRITUAL**

**Prayer** It is expected that those entering The Houses fully participate in the prayer rhythms of the house unless work or study means you are unable to make it. If you are unable to make some consistently due to work it is expected that you don’t miss other prayer times. Prayers are an integral part of our rhythms as a community so if your work means that you cannot make any of the times then it is expected that different work is found to allow you to participate in at least some of the prayer times. Make sure to talk to your house leader/s if work or study becomes an issue.

**FINANCIAL**

**The weekly cost** ($180 pw in Lower Hutt House but this will differ between different areas of the wider Wellington region) covers rent, power, internet and food. Regarding food, this covers basic food needs. By agreeing to enter into an AYM House you are making the financial commitment to be accountable for rent for the 12-month period. ***An automatic payment MUST be set up to the nominated account, and first payment made, the week prior to your arrival in AYM Houses.*** Rent is paid one week in advance and if you are having trouble meeting the payment then talk your house leader immediately so that something can be arranged.

**Leaving Prior to the 12 months Completion** Any person who chooses to leave earlier than the 12-month time frame (January through to December) is responsible for covering the baseline rent (total rent - expenses) for their room. Anyone who chooses to leave cannot sublet the room to cover their costs unless this is approved by the AYM House Leader responsible for the house. Anyone who comes in to replace someone leaving early must do so with the knowledge that they are entering in as a member of the AYM Houses and will therefore be expected to fulfil the basic AYM House commitments.

**Events.** An additional compulsory cost of living in the AYM Houses is attending the events associated with the ministry that you are a part of. (**Some detail omitted**)

**PHYSICAL**

**Youth Work** Another one of our key rhythms and expectations is that everyone in the AYM houses is involved in a weekly youth work in a youth group setting in addition to attending the parish in which your youth work is done.

**Food + Shared Meals** We eat dinner together as a House as often as we can. We share the prep and cleaning. We welcome others to join us to eat and chat! Regarding special dietary requirements these are to be discussed with your house leaders and how the basic needs of the dietary requirement can be incorporated into the house shop (i.e. if you are GF, DF etc. and require something expensive it will not be covered by basic food costs.) In Lower Hutt we purchase Free-range meat and eggs and get milk and toilet paper from a sustainable source meaning less plastic. Treats and chocolates are not considered basic food needs and will need to be bought at the individual’s expense.

**We are Homes of Hospitality.** This means your shared space needs to be welcoming, semi tidy and clean to welcome your young people and friends. We value Generous Hospitality by our time, offerings of drinks and food and sharing our life with others.

**Shared Spaces.** Sometimes you will be asked to consider sharing a room with a person of the same gender so we can fit everyone into a House. We are always open to discussion/negotiation on this. For everyone's safety, only girls in girl’s rooms etc.

**Alcohol.** We are dry houses. This means you are welcome to responsibly consume alcohol off the premises, but for the safety of ourselves and our young people we choose to have zero alcohol in The Houses.

**Community nights** AYM Houses has a rhythm of house nights every Monday night. These alternate between big and small house nights with big house night’s meeting at the diocese centre, or via video conference if the house is out of town, and small house nights which are at the AYM house. These nights are a priority and it is expected that you are at every night unless otherwise arranged with the house leader. If you have work it is expected that you are at the big house nights before 7pm. If your work means that you are consistently not able to be at house nights or are consistently late to big house nights then it is expected that arrangements are made with your work to be able to get there on time or other work is found. Small house nights are on Monday nights at a time that works best for the whole house.

**Insurance.** You are responsible for your own insurance for your personal belongings. AYM is not liable for anything lost or stolen on the premise of an AYM House.

**Outside Commitments.** We recognise that family, friends, hobbies and a part time job are important. We do ask that you prioritise being at all the commitments listed above as much as you possibly can and that when a conflict of schedules arises to discuss this with your AYM House leader as soon as possible.

**Time Out.** If you are planning to go away for Uni holidays or away for the weekend, we just ask that you keep your leaders in the loop and are back for House Night. If we know what your plans are we can work with you and support you in them.

**Friends Staying.** We welcome people staying over! Please just give your House Leader a heads up so your whole house is happy with the sleeping arrangements (e.g. couch or mattresses in the lounge)

**EMOTIONAL**

**Relationships.** We are good with relationships!

We don’t date people in the same House for the year we have committed to AYM Houses. (Hill St is considered one House) The reason for this is, if or when there is a break up, this can cause significant emotional challenges across the House and Movement. We value our crew and want the best chance for growth and this is a safety precaution.

We ask that you refrain from having sex with your partner in the year you have committed to being in The Houses. This is not beating you with the Jesus stick, rather a stance we believe keeps you and the wider Houses crew safe. With a variety of beliefs on this matter in and around the church, this is what we have landed on for our crew.

**OUR RHYTHMS**

**Morning + Evening Prayers.** A core part of our daily rhythm is prayer. At the Lower Hutt House this is morning and evening at St James’ Church (currently 0800 and 1700) It is expected that all who are staying at our house are at morning and evening prayers unless there is a lecture/class or work commitment. We see the difference in our lives because of it. We have watched each other grow and be held through this rhythm of prayer.

**Weekly House Nights.** Compulsory for all AYM House Crew.

**Youth Groups at Local Parishes.** Compulsory unless there is a medical reason or you have spoken to your leader and come to an arrangement. In Lower Hutt this is on a Friday at St. James’ – we also ask that as a house we commit to doing an outreach programme ‘Waffles’ each Thursday together (unless work/study is in the way).

**Sunday Morning Services at Local Parish.** This is also compulsory unless there is a medical reason or you have spoken to your leader and come to an arrangement.

**Sabbath + Rest.** We believe wholeheartedly that to run like we do, we need a Day of Rest.

For some of us this looks like a day, for others an afternoon or a space that is dedicated to switching off each week. We believe that rest and Sabbath is about doing things that give you life as opposed to just switching off and shutting down, about knowing the difference between self-care and self-comfort.

**Retreats.** Our House Hui will be in the middle of the year over Queen’s Birthday long weekend (30 May – 1 June), this is compulsory unless due to medical reasons or prior work commitments that you have talked through with your house leader. We also bookend the year with half day retreats together to start and end our year well. (**some detail omitted**)

1. *Study Leave planned for June and July 2021 was significantly reshaped, partly in response to Covid-19 lockdowns imposed in 2021. The topic of Developing Young Leaders was adopted with the agreement of Mahurangi Session and some interviews and conferences were accessed remotely.* [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Some of these factors are described in the PCANZ - Council of Assembly – TELT Second Report. April 2021:

   *3.The State Of The Church As We Have Discerned It, pp 2-3*

   *4. Problem Definition, p3*

   <https://www.presbyterian.org.nz/sites/default/files/PCANZ%20-%20COA%20-%20TELT%20Second%20Report%20-%202021.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The Christianity Today podcast series on this topic outlines the influence and impact of the Mars Hill Church of Seattle, where the exponential rise to fame and unchecked bad behaviour of Pastor Mark Driscoll led to the collapse of a congregation of 16,000 within a short time frame. Both potential and perils come with gifted communicators. See <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/podcasts/rise-and-fall-of-mars-hill/who-killed-mars-hill-church-mark-driscoll-rise-fall.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Acts 20: 19 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. 1 Timothy 3: 1-13 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. LIFE Church, Assemblies of God, Elim Churches of New Zealand and Baptist Churches of New Zealand have their own leadership training schools. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Arise Church, and until recently, the Association of Vineyard Churches have worked in tandem with Laidlaw College’s Internship Program. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Hunter III, George G. *The Celtic Way Of Evangelism: How Christianity Can Reach The West… Again (10th Anniversary Revised and Expanded Edition)*. Nashville TN: Abingdon Press, 2010. p5 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Ibid, p35-37 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Ibid, p9, 17 [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Ibid, p17 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. 12 Pohl offers four specific practices that are essential ingredients to a healthy functioning community: Embracing Gratitude as a way of life, Making and Keeping promises, a Commitment to Living Truthfully, and Practicing Generous Hospitality. It struck me that these practices were similar to the Christian practices identified within the early Celtic Monasteries. Pohl, Christine D. *Living Into Community: Cultivating Practices That Sustain Us.* Grand Rapids MI, Cambridge UK: William B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Carmichael A (Compiler). *Carmina Gadelica.* Edinburgh UK. Floris Books, 1992 [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Hunter III, George G. *The Celtic Way Of Evangelism: How Christianity Can Reach The West… Again (10th Anniversary Revised and Expanded Edition)*. Nashville TN: Abingdon Press, 2010. p11 [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Ibid p28 [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Schmidt, A.J. *How Christianity Saved The World.* Grand Rapids Michigan. Zondervan, 2004. p179 [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Neill, S. *A History of Christian Missions.* Middlesex, England. Penguin Books 1973. pp 254-257 [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Metaxas, Eric. *Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy*. Nashville TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010. p266-273. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. <https://urbanvisionaotearoa.org/about> [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Bishop Justin noted how Urban Vision aligns with the New Monastic Movement in these twelve areas:

    Relocation to the “abandoned places of Empire [margins of society]”

    Sharing economic resources with fellow community members and the needy among us

    Hospitality to the stranger

    Lament for racial divisions within the church and our communities, combined with the active process of reconciliation

    Humble submission to Christ’s body, the Church

    Intentional formation in the way of Christ and the rule of the community along the lines of the old novitiate

    Nurturing community life among members of an intentional community

    Support for celibate singles alongside monogamous couples and their children

    Geographical proximity to community members who share a common rule of life

    Care for the plot of God’s earth given to us, along with the support of our local economies

    Peace-making in the midst of violence and conflict resolution along the lines of Matthew 18

    Commitment to a disciplined contemplative life

    Duckworth, Jenny & Justin. *Against The Tide, Towards The Kingdom.* Eugene OR: Cascade Books, 2011. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. See ‘Prophetic Statements’ Appendix I p16 [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. The initial information came from my discussion with Andy Spence on Jul 13, 2021. I was able to follow this up at <https://movementonline.org.nz/ordinands>. While a lot of this change in the Wellington Diocese is no doubt due to the influence of the Bishop, the fact remains that many of the up and coming leaders have been drawn from the AYM Monastery Houses. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. See Appendix 1 [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. These commitments are explained in more detail in Appendix III, AYM Introduction Letter 2020, p24 of this report. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. The key rhythms identified here were shared with me in a discussion with Andy Spence on Tuesday 13, July 2021. The AYM movement has been strongly influenced by the Modern Monastic movement, so it should be no surprise that the rhythms also correspond with the 12 principles described in Duckworth’s book. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. For further information, go to Appendix II, AYM Houses Introduction Session. p18 of this report [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. For further information, go to Appendix II, AYM Houses Introduction Session. p18 of this report [↑](#footnote-ref-27)