

## St Paul's Anglican-Methodist Co-operating Parish Putaruru

Christmas time 2016 saw St Paul's, a small rural Anglican-Methodist Co-Operating Parish in the heart of the Waikato host a Christmas Messy Church for our local community. Following lots of Christmas crafts, a fun filled family Nativity play we were able to provide a wonderful sit down Christmas dinner of ham, new potatoes and salads, followed by pavlova, jelly and strawberries.

We had over 100 people attend and this was our largest Messy Church we have held so far. Funding from the "Let the Children Fund" helped make this possible. It was wonderful to have people say the place is crowded and we don't have enough room. Wouldn't that be great if we could say that each Sunday.



Also we prepared and delivered over 75 shoeboxes or gift bags (the shoeboxes were too small in many cases) of gifts to children and parents from our Sunday morning programme Fun, Food & Faith (Sunday School renamed). This programme has connected with a number of unchurched families who find life a struggle. Plus we gave gifts to other children in our community that have no connection with church.



These names were sourced in discussion with the local low decile primary school. The gift boxes generally contained undies, socks, pyjamas or other clothing items. Also pens & pencils for school. Other Christmas goodies completed the boxes. It is very humbling to ask the children what they would like in their Christmas boxes and be told undies or socks as their first request.

We have been doing this ministry for 4 years now and the children and families look forward to their boxes of goodies. Let the Children funding helped fill these boxes with a number of good quality essential clothing items. Thank you. The grant made a big difference to the ministry we, as a small parish are able to offer children and families in our community.

