



# ARCHBISHOP'S HIGHLIGHTS

*“Serve the Lord with gladness;  
come before His presence with  
singing.”*

*– Psalm 100:2*



*Uto ni Yalo and her crew—Wansolwara Voyage to the Pacific Islands Forum*

## Points of Interest:

- ◆ Visit by Archbishop Justin Duckworth to the Diocesan Headquarters—Suva, Fiji
- ◆ Wansolwara Voyage to the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting—Honiara, Solomon Islands
- ◆ Community Intergrated Vulnerability Assessment (CIVA) Roll Outs—Waidradra & Nadawa Communities
- ◆ Groundbreaking Ceremony of St Lawrence—Suva/Ovalau Archdeaconry, Fiji
- ◆ Diocesan Trainings & Workshops
- ◆ Tonga Episcopal Unit Visit

## July to September 2025

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# DIocese OF POLYNESIA BLESSES UTO NI YALO AHEAD OF WANSOLWARA VOYAGE



The Diocese of Polynesia joined the wider Pacific family in blessing the voyaging canoe *Uto ni Yalo* as it departed Suva for the Wansolwara Voyage to the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting in Honiara, Solomon Islands.

His Grace, Archbishop Sione Uluilakepa, Archbishop and Primate of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia, led the blessing ceremony, invoking God's protection and guidance over the vaka and its crew.

The crew included a young Anglican sailor from Tonga and Fiji, representing the rising generation of Pacific leaders who continue to advocate for climate justice and the protection of God's creation. Their participation underscores the Diocese's commitment to uplifting young voices in safeguarding the future of the ocean and its communities.

Drawing from Psalm 107:23–25, 31–38, Archbishop Sione reflected on those who “go down to the sea in ships” and witness the mighty works of God in the deep. He reminded those gathered that the journey was both a physical and spiritual mission — one of faith, stewardship, gratitude, and hope. He highlighted that:

- The voyage is a journey of trust in

God's guiding hand

- It is a witness to the gift and responsibility of God's creation
- It is a call to give thanks for God's steadfast love
- It is a blessing of renewal and abundance for the Pacific

The Archbishop emphasised that the canoe carries with it the hopes and prayers of Pacific peoples. He encouraged the crew to see their mission as a testimony of unity across the ocean and a shared responsibility to protect and sustain God's world.

Upon reaching Temotu, the *Uto ni Yalo* would sail in solidarity with the Taumako *Te Puke* canoe, honouring the Solomon Islands' navigation heritage and supporting the Motalava Treaty. The voyage advocated key Pacific priorities at the Forum: a fossil fuel free Pacific, the recognition of the Pacific as an Ocean of Peace, and the affirmation of Indigenous guardianship and knowledge in addressing environmental challenges.

As a proud partner of the Pasifiki Voyaging Alliance, the Diocese of Polynesia stands with communities across Oceania in prayer for the safe passage of the crew and the success of the Wansolwara Voyage.

## MEETING WITH THE PACIFIC COUNCIL OF CHURCHES



The Archbishop, together with the Co-Vicar General and Climate Commissioner of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia, Fe’iloakitau Kaho Tevi, met with the Pacific Council of Churches at the Pacific Communities University to discuss critical regional priorities.

The gathering brought together church leaders and advocates to address the pressing challenges facing Pacific peoples.

His Grace emphasized the Church’s responsibility to stand alongside communities whose lands and livelihoods are under threat, urging a unified voice as the Pacific navigates the realities of climate injustice. Conversations were rich with hope, collaboration, and a shared determination to safeguard God’s creation while uplifting the dignity and wellbeing of all Pacific families.

This engagement marks another important step in the Diocese’s ongoing commitment to proactive mission—where faith meets advocacy, and where the Gospel’s call to justice leads the way forward for our region’s future.



## VISIT TO THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF HAWAI’I

Archbishop Sione Ulu’ilakepa and Co-Vicar General Fe’iloakitau Kaho Tevi visited the Episcopal Diocese of Hawai’i to strengthen ties between Polynesia and the wider Anglican community. They met with the Bishop to share diocesan updates and discuss ways to build connections between our Polynesian communities, diocesan ministries, and global partners.

They were warmly received by leaders of ‘Iolani School and St. Andrew’s Schools, historic institutions linked to the Episcopal Church in Hawai’i. Over lunch, church and school leaders celebrated their shared Anglican heritage and looked toward future collaboration. A photo from the visit shows Archbishop



Sione seated, Co—Vicar General Fe’iloakitau standing behind him, and their school leaders with the Dean. The visit highlighted the Archbishop’s mission to strengthen educational and faith-based partnerships, promote unity, and carry forward the Anglican Church’s legacy of grace, justice, and community across cultures.

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## VISIT OF ARCHBISHOP JUSTIN TO THE DIOCESE



Archbishop Justin Duckworth, together with his wife Jenny, visited the diocesan headquarters where they were warmly welcomed by our diocesan team.

During their visit, Archbishop Justin met with the executive staff during their weekly Heads of Department (HoD) updates, taking time to listen to the priorities and challenges faced by each ministry area. He also toured the various departments, personally engaging with diocesan staff, offering encouragement, and affirming their contributions to the mission of the church.

They were hosted to a dinner at the Bishop's residence alongside diocesan staff, members of St. John's College, and their

families. This gathering provided an opportunity for informal conversation and fellowship, deepening bonds of friendship and collaboration between the dioceses.

To further strengthen these ties, Archbishop Justin accompanied Archbishop Sione and their spouses on a visit across the Archdeaconry of Suva/Ovalau. They spent time in parishes, meeting with clergy and congregations, engaging in talanoa and learning about the vibrant ministries within these communities. Their presence was a powerful reminder of the shared calling of the Anglican Church to journey together in mission, mutual support, and the proclamation of God's love throughout our Province.

Their visit came to a close with a joyful dinner hosted at the MAST, the diocesan headquarters, where diocesan staff and St. John's College families gathered to celebrate shared mission and friendship.

## GROUND-BREAKING CEREMONY OF ST LAWRENCE ANGLICAN CHURCH



On the 9th of September, we had the honour of opening the groundbreaking ceremony for the long-anticipated renovation of St Lawrence Anglican Church in Nausori.

This occasion marked the culmination of many years of careful planning and development to upgrade and preserve one of Fiji's most treasured historic landmarks, and one of our oldest churches within the Suva/Ovalau Archdeaconry of the diocese.

Standing prominently on Nausori's Main Street, St Lawrence has long been recognized in the town's history and celebrated by the wider community as an iconic feature of the Nausori delta. It is often described as the oldest Anglican church on Viti Levu, its image captured over the years in countless photographs and

local galleries that reflect its deep place in the cultural and architectural story of the region.

Gratitude was shared for the faithfulness of the St Lawrence congregation, who continue to serve as a vibrant center of worship and community life. Even as their

church undergoes renewal, they have remained steadfast—gathering in one another’s homes, sustaining their fellowship with joy, and looking forward with hope to the completion of their beloved church for generations to come.

## COMMUNITY INTERGRATED VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT ROLL OUTS



### A. Waidradra Safe & Resilient Community Initiative Launched

The Diocese took a major step forward in strengthening community disaster preparedness through the Safe & Resilient Community campaign, first implemented in Waidradra Settlement, Navua. Led by students and staff of St John the Baptist Theological College, the assessment engaged the entire community to identify local vulnerabilities and build a clear path toward resilience.

The report they revealed several high-priority areas requiring urgent action. Evacuation planning ranked as the most critical challenge, with 88% of households found vulnerable in this area. Other significant concerns included water security (67%), income stability (66%), and

the safety of vulnerable people such as the elderly, disabled and widows (79%).

Using these findings, the team worked with local leaders to design the **Waidradra Resilience Action Plan**, outlining practical measures such as improved evacuation routes, upgraded housing and community facilities, backyard farming initiatives, expanded water storage, and support programs for families most at risk.

This collaborative effort ensures that the community—not only the church—owns the process, recognizing resilience as a shared responsibility grounded in compassion and preparedness. With implementation underway, Waidradra’s new story has begun: a journey from vulnerability toward a safer, stronger future.



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### B. St Phillip Nadawa Safe & Resilient Community Assessment

The Diocese of Polynesia, through St John the Baptist Theological College, launched its first Safe and Resilient Community Campaign in St Phillip, Nadawa on 27 September 2025. Guided by the Archbishop's call for a church that is responsive and relevant, the campaign uses the Community Integrated Vulnerability Assessment (CIVA) framework to identify risks, strengthen disaster preparedness, and support long-term community resilience.

The assessment involved interviews, surveys, and story-collection from

households across the settlement. Findings highlighted key vulnerabilities, especially in evacuation planning, security of place, water security, and support for vulnerable individuals. A detailed resilience action plan was developed, outlining steps for improving food and water access, strengthening housing and land security, enhancing community governance, and increasing disaster preparedness through awareness programs and upgraded evacuation facilities.

This initiative marks a significant step in the Diocese's ongoing commitment to empower communities, strengthen safety, and build resilience across our region.

## DIOCESAN STANDING COMMITTEE

The Diocese convened its second Standing Committee of the year—a two-day gathering that brought together our unit representatives and leaders in a spirit of partnership and shared purpose. Alongside them were our representatives to various 3 Tikanga Boards, who joined the meeting to observe, contribute, and offer valuable insights on a range of topics within their areas of responsibility.

Guided by a shared commitment to serve the Church with wisdom and integrity, members worked through key matters affecting our life and mission, addressing emerging needs, refining ongoing initiatives, and ensuring that our diocese continues to be governed with clarity and care.

Their dedication—often carried quietly

behind the scenes—strengthens the foundation of our common ministry. As they continue this vital work, we give thanks for their service and for the unity that shapes our journey forward.



## TONGA EPISCOPAL UNIT COUNCIL MEETING



Archbishop Sione traveled to Tonga for the Tonga Episcopal Unit Council Meeting. It was marked by purposeful dialogue, collaborative spirit, and a shared commitment to the mission of the Church. Throughout the sessions, council members engaged in substantive discussions on key priorities, including strengthening ministry formation, supporting local congregations, and enhancing coordinated outreach across the region.

The Archbishop contributed

thoughtfully to the deliberations, offering guidance while also listening closely to the perspectives of clergy and lay leaders. His presence reinforced unity and affirmed the shared responsibility of shaping the Church’s direction in Tonga.

His Grace also joined the congregation for worship, where he participated in a reverent and joy-filled service. The fellowship that followed was warm and grounded in mutual respect, providing space for meaningful conversations and encouragement.

Overall, the visit highlighted the depth of partnership within the Episcopal Unit and strengthened the collective resolve to continue serving with faithfulness and purpose.

## CONNECTING WITH OUR DIOCESAN STUDENTS IN NEW ZEALAND



Archbishop Sione’s visit to New Zealand was marked by heartfelt reconnection with our diocesan students and their families. Gathering around a shared meal, he spent time listening to their experiences, checking in on their studies, and simply enjoying the ease of being together. The conversations flowed naturally—full of laughter, encouragement, and the familiarity that comes from long-standing relationships.

For the Archbishop, this was not a formal inspection but a family visit. As people of

the Pacific, our sense of home is carried in our relationships, and community is woven into who we are. Regardless of our diverse backgrounds, we belong to one another. His presence reminded the students that they remain held within the wider church family, supported and remembered even while studying far from home.

The visit strengthened bonds, offered reassurance, and affirmed the unity that continues to anchor our Pacific people wherever we may be.

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## CONFIRMATION SERVICE AT ST MARK'S, NEWTOWN, FIJI



The confirmation service at St Mark's in Newtown was a joyful and spirit-filled occasion, led by Archbishop Sione. Surrounded by family, godparents, and the wider church community, the candidates stepped forward to affirm their faith and commit themselves to a life shaped by Christ's love and guidance.

Confirmation holds a profound place in our Anglican tradition—it marks a personal declaration of faith, a deepening of one's relationship with God, and a willingness to take up greater responsibility within the life of the Church. For the young people

confirmed that day, it was both a celebration of who they are now and a blessing over the journey that lies ahead.

As Archbishop Sione reminded those gathered, our children and youth are not only the future of the Church but also an essential part of its present life. Their energy, curiosity, and faithfulness breathe new hope into our communities. The service at St Mark's stood as a testament to this truth, honouring the young confirmands and the generations who will continue to carry the light of the Gospel forward.

## LAY MINISTER'S TRAINING



The ongoing Lay Ministers' Training, led by Saint John the Baptist Theological College, continues to play a vital role in strengthening both the quantity and quality of ministry within our parishes. Through structured learning, guided formation, and practical ministry development, participants

are being equipped to serve with deeper confidence, theological grounding, and pastoral awareness.

This training reflects our commitment to nurturing capable lay leaders who can support the spiritual life of their communities and uphold the mission of the Church. As the program progresses, each participant moves closer to receiving their lay minister's licence—the journey will culminate in December with a special graduation service held during our Diocesan Synod. It will be a moment of celebration, thanksgiving, and recognition of the dedication shown by those preparing to serve our parishes with renewed purpose and faith.

## SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES AT LAKENA, NAUSORI



Each Sunday, the St Lawrence congregation gathers at Lakena, Nausori, faithfully maintaining their rhythm of worship while the St Lawrence church building was closed, but now undergoes its long-awaited reconstruction. Though displaced from their usual sacred space, the community continues to worship with strength, unity, and an enduring spirit of hope.

Archbishop Sione frequently leads these services, offering guidance and encouragement as the parish moves through this season of transition. In his absence—when he is away on mission—the students of Saint John the Baptist Theological College step in to conduct services, gaining valuable pastoral experience while supporting the life of the parish.

The worship at Lakena has become a testament to the congregation’s resilience and devotion. Even as the physical church is being rebuilt, the spiritual life of St Lawrence remains vibrant, rooted in fellowship, prayer, and the shared belief that God continues to shape their journey forward.



## DIOCESAN HEADQUARTERS

### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY TRAINING

The Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) training conducted by the Fiji Ministry of Employment, Productivity, and Workplace Relations at the Diocesan Headquarters – the MAST provided staff with a strong foundation in workplace safety and awareness. The session introduced the core principles of OHS, outlining common risk areas within the workplace and emphasising the importance of proactive prevention.

Participants were divided into groups to discuss potential hazards, identify preventative measures, and practise assessing real-life workplace situations. These practical activities strengthened their confidence in recognising risks and

responding appropriately to create a safer environment for all.

A key outcome of the training was the establishment of a dedicated OHS Committee, formed by staff to champion ongoing safety initiatives, ensure compliance, and foster continuous improvement within the workplace.

To conclude the program, the staff expressed their appreciation to the facilitator through a small traditional token of gratitude, followed by a shared meal—symbolising unity, respect, and a renewed collective commitment to workplace wellbeing.



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## BUILDING A HEALTHIER WORKPLACE COMMUNITY AT THE MAST



Staff of the MAST participated in a workplace health check conducted by nurses and doctors from the Fiji Ministry of Health and Medical Services as part of an ongoing initiative to promote healthier lifestyles within the organisation. The medical team provided assessments, guidance on nutrition, and advice on maintaining long-term wellbeing, reinforcing the importance of healthy eating and active lifestyle choices.

This initiative marks the beginning of a regular practice designed to support staff in taking proactive steps toward their

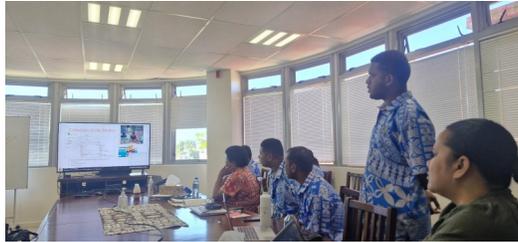
personal health, while fostering a workplace culture centred on wellness and prevention.

To acknowledge the commitment and service of the visiting health professionals, the staff extended their appreciation with a shared meal, celebrating partnership, gratitude, and the collective goal of improving overall health within the workplace.





SNAPSHOTS  
FROM  
JULY - SEPTEMBER



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