

Retiring vicar sees challenge for church

The numerical value of Eltham's Anglican Church could fall if the sense of evangelism and mission does not increase, retiring vicar, the Rev Alex Duffy said yesterday.

Saying the numbers at All Saints' Church had not increased for more than four years, Mr Duffy said the church's existence was in danger.

"That sense of mission should be left to the congregation and not just the vicar," he said.

Mr Duffy retires at the end of this month after 4½ years in

Eltham, and will move to Wanganui with his wife Verna.

Urgency

He said Eltham had a great sense of family, but urgency of urban problems of Maoridom and unemployment was low. "People living in this neck of the woods feel it does not happen here, so their sense of awareness at urban problems is not high."

Mr Duffy said two 90-year-olds attended his church regularly, but expressed concern that the interest and involvement of up-and-coming elder members could wane, reducing numbers at the church.

"It tends to make you wonder what the future of this parish is."

Although more than 300 families from all over the Eltham district belonged to the church,

numbers had not increased for many years.

Mr Duffy said a new vicar would be appointed by the Diocesan Board of Nomination, which included Eltham's four parish representatives, in the near future.

During his career, Mr Duffy has been pastor at the Maori Mission in Wanganui and districts, and Wairarapa.

Shark alert

Two New Plymouth city beaches were cleared yesterday afternoon after a shark sighting.

Two off-duty lifeguards from the Fitzroy Surf Life Saving Club were training at Fitzroy Beach when they were told of a circling shark off the Waiwakaiho rivermouth, north of the clubhouse.

The shark was spotted by a group of men who watched it circling for some time before informing the lifeguards at 3pm, who then cleared about 25 people from Fitzroy and Strandon beaches.



The Rev Alex Duffy — retiring this month — and his wife Verna.