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# THE ANGLICAN PARISH OF DIAMOND CREEK ANNUAL REPORTS

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## ANGLICAN PARISH OF **DIAMOND CREEK**

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## VICAR'S REPORT

*Tim Johnson*

It has been another challenging year for us all. In 2020 the key word was 'unprecedented' as we experienced rapid and unexpected change with the onset of the Coronavirus pandemic. We needed to change how we undertook all our ministries and mission. As we neared the end of 2020 we held hope of things being different in 2021.

Unfortunately this has not been the case. In 2021 the key word has been 'languishing' as the lockdowns have rolled on, coronavirus case numbers have remained high, and exhaustion from unfulfilled hopes has worn us down. Again as we approach the end of the year we look to 2022

with hope that things will be different, that life will return more to 'normal', and that the high levels of vaccination will serve as a protection for our community.

What a comfort it is that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. He is with us when we experience unprecedented change and nothing surprises him or undermines his good plans for the world. He is with us in the languishing, walking beside us to comfort and sustain us. Hope in Jesus will never be disappointed unlike our other hopes. His resurrection assures us that God's plans for us and for all creation will be fulfilled in his good timing.

God has been good to us as a church amidst all the challenges of the past year. We have seen people come to faith in Jesus. We have grown in godliness and a deeper understanding of God's goodness in our lives. We have been sustained by God even amidst incredible difficulty and challenge. God is good, all the time. In what follows we have a chance to reflect on his goodness in the life of our church.



## Church Services

The past year has seen a combination of online and in-person services as circumstances have allowed. We returned to in-person services from 17th January 2021, running a 10am and 5pm service at St John's as well as continuing our digital service. We needed to comply with density quotients, caps on numbers, QR codes, mask wearing restrictions and these were constantly changing. Our Covid safety teams and other volunteers have done a wonderful job in allowing us to meet together while staying safe and complying with all the legal requirements.

Easter was a highlight of the year as we were able to meet in larger numbers in-person and also live-streamed the services. On Good Friday we had 189 people in-person and approximately 66 people online. On Easter Sunday at 10am we had 204 people in-person and approximately 82 online, while at 5pm we had 42 people in-person and approximately 14 people online.



We had periods of lockdown in February and May and returned to a long lockdown in July that continued through to the end of October. As I write there is a possibility that we can have in-person services again from 7th November but with restricted numbers. Throughout this time our weekly online services have been essential for maintaining our sense of community, meeting together in worship, and learning from God's word.

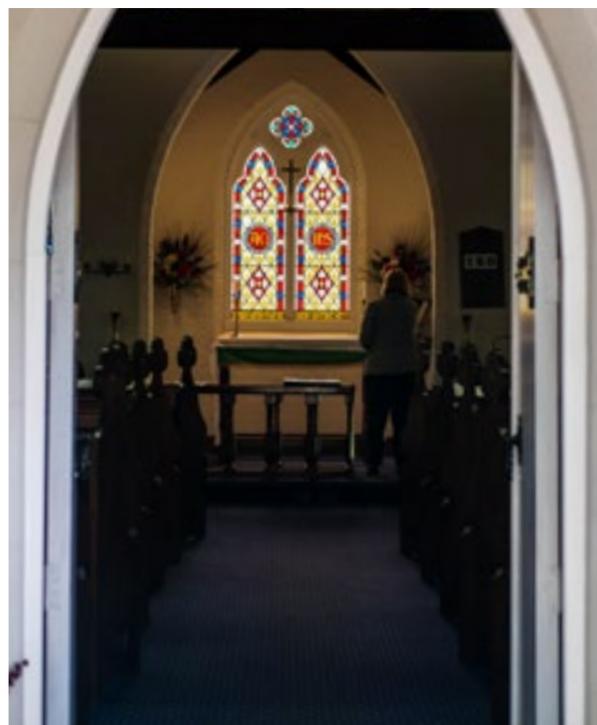


In terms of teaching this year we have covered the following: Summer Stories (Mark's gospel), Songs of Joy (Psalms 95-97), The Weeping Prophet (Jeremiah), John 20, Freedom in Jesus (Galatians), Our Deepest Desires (power, approval, comfort, control - various passages), The Church is ... (a temple, a body, sent - various passages), Teach us to pray (Luke), Giving Thanks (Colossians). God's word has fed us well throughout the changes of this past year.

Since late 2020 our Parish Council had discussed the best shape of our services looking to the future. In May 2021 the decision was made to consolidate our 8am services at St Michael's and St Katherine's into a single 8am service to be held at St John's. This decision followed a process of consultation with members of these congregations, including a

meeting with the Vestry of St Michael's. The new 8am service, a prayer book service which follows the same form and style as both the St Michael's and St Katherine's services, commenced on 20th June and was well attended and positively received. Unfortunately we have so far only been able to hold 5 services due to the return to lockdown.

The decision to discontinue services at St Katherine's and St Michael's was a difficult and painful one and has caused distress to some people. This has been especially true for members of the St Michael's congregation. In every instance where I have received correspondence on this matter I have arranged to sit with people face-to-face or, if not possible, to speak on the phone about people's grief and concerns. I do not want to shy away from the difficulties. Parish Council did not make



the decision lightly but only after a long period of discernment, prayer and consultation. We believe the decision was the right one and the

best way to fulfill our parish mission to 'Know Jesus, Make Jesus Known' and our vision to be 'An intergenerational community which is Loving like Jesus, Growing in Jesus, Sharing Jesus.'

For all our services both in-person and online we are very thankful to our dedicated volunteers who have played music, led services, read the bible, led us in prayer, operated cameras and sound equipment, cleaned seats, distributed communion, scanned QR codes and coordinated the complexities of life in a COVIDSafe world. We are thankful for your loving service of God and our community.

### Life Groups

Life Groups are a key way that we grow in Jesus together and love and support one another as we follow him. The core of Life Groups is DNA: Discipleship, Nurture and Accountability and our Life Group leaders do a wonderful job overseeing these facets of our church life. A survey in October 2021 showed that we have 20 groups with 210 people in the groups. We have continued to provide study resources to the Life Groups to accompany the teaching series that we have undertaken at church.

We had 3 new Life Groups Start this year: a High School leavers group led by Lenny and Andy Barras; an intergenerational group led by Carolyn Fairweather and a mixed young family group led by a few young families, couples and singles. We always need to commence new groups and to be welcoming people into our existing groups as a way of growing this ministry.

During lockdowns groups have had to adapt again to meeting using video conferencing or in some cases telephone calls and using printed resources to continue to support each other. Life Groups have been a vital way for people to remain



connected and to support one another through this very challenging year. Julie Blinco was overseeing the Life Groups from the start of the year until she left for her new ministry position and since September Delle Matthews has taken up the role of Life Groups Minister 2 days a week in a voluntary capacity. We are so blessed to have Delle's wisdom, experience and godly leadership to oversee our Life Groups. She has made an excellent start and we look forward to her ongoing ministry to us.

### Pastoral Care

As a church we are committed to the biblical principle of mutual care, where all Christians minister to one another and support one another on the journey of life and faith. I am constantly encouraged by the way that people take this commitment seriously and love one another sacrificially in a multitude of ways. Our Life Groups are the engine room in this and I know that people have experienced their Life Groups as a lifeline this year amidst the incredible challenges. Sharing, praying and supporting each other in these groups has been invaluable.

In addition to our Life Groups our Pastoral Care

Support Team, led by Nikki Isaks, Judy Parkin and David Smith have coordinated additional support and care as needed. We have also responded to specific needs such as reinstating a meals ministry for families with Primary Aged children as they juggled the demands of online schooling, work and life. It is wonderful to see the ways in an intergenerational community that we can love and serve one another across the generations.

Over this past year we have said farewell to some beloved church members and held funeral services for family members and those in the wider community. This has been especially hard as restrictions have meant that we haven't been able to gather in larger numbers for some funeral services. We give thanks to God for the lives Betty Newlands, Brian Sharkey, Terri-Anne Nolch, Bill Wallace, Alan Bishop, George Farrington & Audrey Hughes. We are sad and grieve their passing but we do so in hope knowing that Jesus' resurrection assures us of eternal life for these dear ones who trust in him. We are also so grateful to God for the different ways that we have been personally impacted by these people and for the ways they have modelled the life of faith in Jesus to us.

### Home Hubs

Home Hubs are envisaged as a hybrid worship gathering: part in-person (because they meet in person, not online) and part digital (because they use elements of the digital service in their meetings). Our plan was to launch our first home hub in Semester 2 2021 however from July meeting in-person in homes was illegal. So we are now aiming to launch our first Home Hub in term 1 of 2022.

This year has then focused primarily on learning and preparation. Kirk Mackenzie has gathered two groups: 1) A Home Hubs brainstorming group. 2) A

Home Hubs prayer group.

The Prayer Group is connected via Whatsapp, sharing prayer requests, thoughts and answers to prayer. The Brainstorming Group have met weekly on Zoom to pray, study passages on the bible that focus on mission and the early church and discuss principles of mission and church planting.

Kirk has also been training through City-to-City as a church planter, undertaking a two week online intensive with other church planters from the Asia Pacific region. He has also been involved in a weekly (3 hours) City to City Residency with church planters and potential church planters from Melbourne and Sydney. This group has been helpful to process together and realise we're not the only ones whose plans have been scuttled by covid, and also talk through positive steps we can take to adapt the move forward.

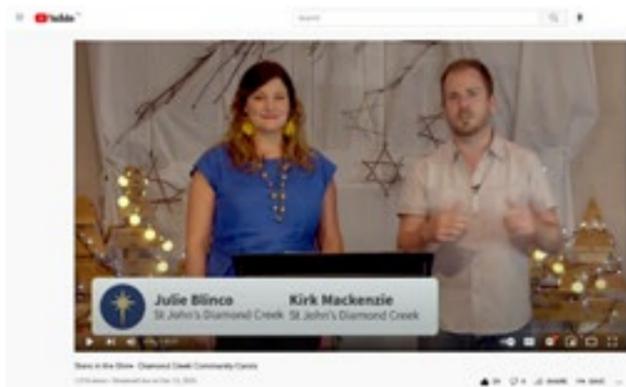
We plan to continue the Home Hubs initiative in 3 ways:

1. Continued communication. Informing church members of the good work happening behind the scenes so that Home Hubs stay in our minds as something on the horizon when restrictions lift next year.
2. Keep growing the two teams. Recruiting new people to prayer for and participate in this missional initiative
3. Start our first Home Hub.

Covid allowing, we hope to start our first Home Hub in Term 1 of 2022 and begin to gather some momentum for more Hubs from there. The ongoing threat of Covid means smaller meetings have great potential in the mid-term future given large gatherings involve lots of complications. However, the main motivation for Hubs is their huge missional potential to reach those currently not connected to Jesus.

### Local Mission

Lockdown restrictions have made some areas of local mission more difficult but our various teams



have persevered under difficult circumstances. We held a large online Community Carols event in 2020 which involved local traders and community organisations being filmed as part of the event. We had 151 concurrent views for this event which equates to well over 300 people watching with a number of large gatherings watching the event on one device. It has been viewed well over 1500 times in total.

SRI in schools and Kids Hope have been unable to undertake ministry in schools due to restrictions. Retirement Toolbox is developing their workshop as an online resource and we are hoping that this means it can be shared with other churches and multiply its gospel impact. It is an excellent tool for helping people prepare for Retirement and a way of building relationships in the community. For many aging congregations engaging with retirees will actually lower their average age and increase their mission and so we are keen to make this resource available to other churches. Linda Cridland and Kayleen O'Neill are involved as chaplains to the Diamond Creek Women's Football Club and are offering wonderful support there and serving as the hands and feet of the church in that place. Mainly Music has continued to minister to families during COVID restrictions by providing online musical, craft and activity resources and

maintaining regular contact with families using a closed Facebook group and then transitioning to Zoom through the year. Sue Jetten has done



a wonderful job in leading this ministry and continuing to provide wonderful music for our families. Alpha was run as an in-person event in Term 1 led by Lenny Barras, Robyn Bland and Bethany Woodman. There were 5 participants in the course and we rejoice that 4 of these people indicated that they had made a commitment of faith in Jesus by the end of the course. Praise God for this!

Through the year we have also started some food distribution initiatives to assist those who have been doing it tough especially during lockdown. We now have a community pantry which is located outside the portable building (the 'Pizza Box') at the rear of the church. This pantry has been organised in partnership with Diamond Valley Community Support and allows people to take food as they need it without the stigma of asking for help. Members of the church and community can leave items in the pantry to assist others. This pantry has been used regularly since

its inception. In September we also delivered food hampers to families in need in partnership with Veronica's Pantry and the Diamond Creek CFA. Conscious of the even greater needs in the City of Whittlesea we have also promoted the Whittlesea Food Collective Supermarket and encouraged people to volunteer there and provide financial assistance. We are also developing a partnership with Orange Sky, who provide mobile washing vans so that people who do not have stable accommodation or access to a washing machine can wash their clothes. The van service will use the St John's carpark on Saturday mornings once volunteers have been recruited at the Orange Sky end of the project. These are all exciting new ways that we can be involved in serving our local community and sharing Jesus in word and in action with them.

### Mission Partnerships

Partnering with other organisations in mission is a key priority for our church. Our missions committee oversees these partnerships and this year's committee was Tim Johnson (Chair), David Woods (Parish Council representative), Robyn Bland, Katherine Shields, and Jo Stolfa. We met bi-monthly throughout the year to ensure that we are meeting our mission commitments, to support our missionaries in the field, and to promote mission activities across the parish.

In the 2020-2021 budget cycle, we assigned 15% of our offertory income to missions, as has been the pattern for some years at St John's. This amounted to \$81,000 and of this money \$75,000 was allocated upfront, keeping a reserve in case the parish didn't meet its budget for offerings. This initial allocation can be found on page 22.

Money was also allocated on behalf of St Michael's

and St Katherine's. At the end of the church financial year when the actual offertory income is known the amount of money remaining is assigned by the missions committee and paid out in November. Additional money was also paid to various mission partners through the direct mission giving of congregation members through the offertory.

Missions are promoted in a variety of ways throughout the parish. This year we commenced a Missions Blog which highlights a mission partner or explores an area of global mission. We have committed to publish a blog post at least once a month and have published more often than this. There are currently around 40 people subscribed to this blog. Mission Partners have also given video updates in services before reading the bible reading for the service. Again this has been well received and a good way to regularly hear from and to see our partners in mission. Mission Partners are also promoted on social media (primarily through the St John's Meeting Place).

Through the year we had services with Missions speakers doing the sermon and sharing about their work: In April we welcomed Ian Whitehall from Prison Fellowship; In May to celebrate the 50-year anniversary of Open House we had Paul Burgess speak at 10am and Jordan Wakelin at 5pm, on 10th October we had Adrian Lane from Bush Church Aid speak at our online services and on 17th October we focused on Ridley College with a sermon from the Principal Brian Rosner. On 21st November Nils von Kalm from Anglican Overseas Aid will be joining us.

I am proud of the history of missions within this parish and the commitment to supporting God's work throughout the world. Let's encourage

each other to be prayerful, generous, and consider our own personal involvement in serving the Lord wherever he calls us to go.

### Children's Ministry

The beginning of 2021 saw St John's Kids resuming in-person at the 10am and 5pm services, and very quickly had an average attendance of 39 across the two services. Early sessions included as much focus on games and interaction designed for encouraging in-person reconnection between peers and with leaders, as it did on biblical teaching.



With lockdown restrictions, St John's Kids moved back online, with Zoom sessions being run each week at 9:00am for those in Kinder-Grade 2, and 9:30am for Grades 3-6. Online average weekly attendance has been 24.

The St John's Kids teaching program has followed the sermon series for most of the year. This term, however, we've dived into a 10-part series on Genesis to learn more about some of the people we often find referenced in the New Testament, and how their stories point towards Jesus and help us learn more about God's plans, promises and blessings.

Whether in-person or in lockdown, the Parents' Blog has continued to provide families with resources

to incorporate into everyday conversations and routines, to help make engaging in 'God stuff' with their children part of everyday life, not just for Sundays.

Peak Experiences are age specific events designed to build community and encourage kids in their faith journey. In 2020, these moved online. At the beginning of 2021 we had every hope of being able to meet in-person and a Grade 4/5/6 event including a bush scavenger hunt, bonfire, and dinner was organised ... then postponed ... and finally cancelled. Instead, online events were again organised for our Grade 4/5/6 and Grade 2/3 cohorts.

Our annual school holiday program, Going Bananas, was unable to run in 2020, so we were very much looking forward to the prospect of relaunching this event in 2021. To comply with COVID restrictions and to accommodate as many families as possible, instead of the 'normal' three-day program, a one-day, pirate-themed program was written, Anchors Aweigh! The identical program was to be repeated on a second and third day for a new intake of kids each day. Our team was recruited, we went into and came out of our May/June lockdown, we went back to in-person services, things were looking hopeful, but ultimately number restrictions did not lift enough for other church activities and the program was cancelled. As disappointing as this was, we know that the work done on the 2020 and 2021 programs will not go to waste. God will use it in his time ... a head-start on 2022 programming perhaps.

### Youth Ministry

Whether St John's Youth is in-person or online, the focus remains the same; to create and foster a safe environment for youth to wrestle with questions about God and be encouraged as followers of

Jesus.

Youth Life Groups meet weekly to hang out, discuss the Bible and pray. A lot like adult Life Groups... but with more games! Like all St Johns life groups, we use the DNA model (discipleship, nurturing and accountability) as the foundation of what we do together. This continues to be an incredibly valuable time, especially in lockdown. This regular contact enables continual support in the emotional ups and downs of life in lockdown.

Currently we have three Youth Life Groups:

- The youngest group has 6 youth, led by Andi Fidock and Jacob Sgarlata.
- The middle group has 7 youth, led by Scott Pilkington and Ella Tregale.
- The oldest group has 4 youth and is led by Isobel Fisher and Adrian Pain.

A big hope this year was to encourage both youth and leaders to engage missionally in the wider community. This could look like once a month encouraging the youth to volunteer together, plan a fundraiser for an issue they are passionate about, offer time to garden or clean for those that need a hand in the community, etc. We want to provide an additional opportunity to interact in person with one another, not only by learning about Jesus in Life Group but through living out their faith in the Diamond Creek Community. The first time as 'Youth part of God's Mission' was practically loving the participants of the Alpha course. When Alpha had their final meeting together, talking about what church is, the youth made them burgers and decorated the room to help them celebrate the end of the course. This was an awesome opportunity to show the participants how much the church loves them. Right before we headed back into lockdown, we had planned a working bee at the local Diamo Café Piccolo Meccanico. Unfortunately, this had to be cancelled but the hope is to reschedule once restrictions ease. I am

looking forward to seeing what happens next as the youth grow in their passion for God's mission.

St John's Youth holds occasional Friday night youth events which are an opportunity for the youth from all Life Groups to get together as a wider youth community. These events are designed to be an accessible entry point for youth to invite their friends to. Our aim is for youth to have a ton of fun and get a feel for our community of people that love Jesus and one-another well. Most youth events have again had to be online this year, doing escape rooms, mafia, and other online games. We usually have 10-15 youth that attend these events.

Due to ongoing restrictions, we were unable to hold Camp Crave in March this year. Instead, we had a two-day Crave youth event. We did many of the usual camp activities but at St John's: games, discussion groups, teaching, worship, and good food. Some of the youth chose to have sleepovers between the two days to experience some of that type of camp fun. Ella Tregale brought a message to the youth about God's grace; how through this underserved gift we are saved and also empowered.

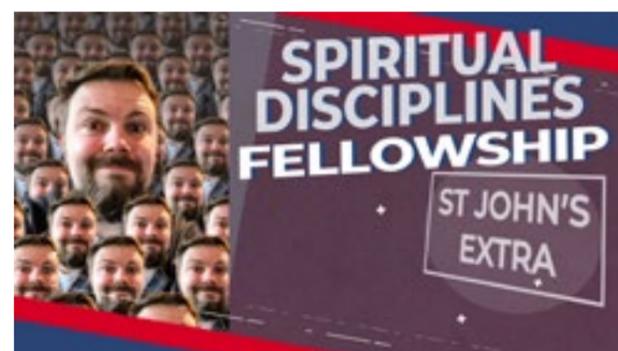
In September 2021 we were hoping to have a combined youth camp with some other smaller youth ministries in the area: St James Ivanhoe and Plenty Life Doreen. Our vision was to come together as a community of believers and see young people's lives changed through the power of the Holy Spirit. We wanted to create a space where youth are challenged, supported, and encouraged in their faith. We believe camps are great experiences for youth as they grow in their understanding of being a follower of Jesus. Often the time taken out of everyday life for a camp gives youth a chance to really focus

in on God, free from distraction, in a loving and supportive environment. For many youth camps become a formative experience in their faith. We don't think youth should miss out on this opportunity just because they're part of a smaller youth group - that's why we're interested in doing a combined camp.

Due to ongoing covid restrictions this camp has been postponed until 2022, dates TBC. My hope is that the love and planning already poured into the camp by the leadership team will be able to carry over to a future camp, whenever that may be! The camp's teaching will have a focus on 'Who is God?', 'Who am I?', and 'Who are we?'. Our desire is to encourage the youth to find both their individual and collective identity in who God is and what he has done.

Amid sadness about camp not going ahead, some generous members of St Johns donated money for the youth ministry team to prepare and send care packages to all the St John's Youth.

### Digital Ministry



More than 70 weeks of Digital Church. Over 500 videos posted to our YouTube channel. We've done a lot of learning as a church and have come a long way in many areas.

As described above we have continued our digital services throughout the past year and these have had to adapt to the differing circumstances as we have moved in and out of lockdown. We have

remained committed to providing a 'made-for-digital' service where the service leaders and preacher speak directly and exclusively to the digital audience. On occasions we have also provided a dedicated live-stream of the service as well.

As well as the Sunday services we have experimented with a variety of ways of building community around the services:

- Pre-church hanging out - engaging with the chat about a fun question or topic,
- Post-church hanging out - joining a Zoom call or playing games online,
- Q&As
- A Cooking Show
- A Trivia night
- A Thanksgiving Clip-show

Through our YouTube, Facebook and Instagram, we have also been producing content aimed at a non-churched audience. St John's Extra is targeted as a first point of contact for someone getting to know Jesus better, available publicly on our YouTube channel. It has covered topics such as busting myths about Christmas and Easter, being spiritual but not religious, and the spiritual disciplines such as bible reading, prayer, fasting, rest, fellowship and worship. Bible Breakfast is a way to help people engage with the bible online and each week involves a half hour discussion on a bible passage helping people to read it for themselves in a simple and non-threatening way.

In the last few weeks, Andy has been telling stories of the history of Diamond Creek, and sharing these in local community Facebook groups. The videos have been received well, drawing lots of conversation, and increasing the awareness of St John's within our local community.

Thanks to the generous contribution of a parishioner, we have been able to build and fit out a recording studio. This space has enabled

us to produce professional looking and sounding content with very little effort in pre- and post-production especially useful during snap lockdowns. It will continue to be a well utilized resource for our church and community for years to come and provides a great launching place for new digital ministry opportunities.

### Looking to the Future

The last two years has made setting and achieving goals very difficult. This has been true in our personal lives and it is equally true in the life of our church. Our current church vision document runs up until 2022 with the aim that we be an intergenerational community which is Loving like Jesus, Growing in Jesus, Sharing Jesus. Certainly we have been implementing this vision over the last two years and have had to adapt the methods for achieving our aims. In 2022 we will need to commence a re-visioning process and think what God is calling us to do for the next 3-5 years.

We will continue to pursue the vision of 3 ways of gathering for worship: in-person, online and home hubs. The bible insists that we gather with each other as Hebrews 10:24-25 indicates: And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching. However, in the bible and in history the church has gathered in a variety of ways. The above three ways of gathering allows us to remain agile and to engage with as many people as possible including those currently outside the church.

We continue to be challenged by the rapid growth in the Northern Growth Corridor on our doorstep. During the last two years of lockdown our strategy for engaging with this need has shifted from

planning a more traditional church plant to exploring how Home Hubs may enable us to reach out into a range of new growth suburbs and establish a network of Christian gatherings resourced by St John's (especially using digital resources) and supported to connect with the local communities where they gather. The Diocese of Melbourne is seeing some very exciting initiatives happening with church planting in the West and South but there is not much happening in the North and we are well placed and well resourced to take a lead role in this.

If we have learned anything in the past two years it is that we do not control what the future holds and while we can make our plans and preparations we need to be willing to change and adapt to the circumstances. What a comfort it is to know that God holds the future in his hands and in his son Jesus he have a sure and certain hope that God will bring his plans to fruition.

### Thank you

It has been another challenging year in the life of our church and yet through it all we have seen the faithfulness of God and experienced his love, and the love of our sisters and brothers in Christ. I am immensely grateful to all those who have served in our church as partners of the good news of Jesus Christ.

I'm grateful for a cohesive and passionate staff team: Kirk Mackenzie, Kylie Pilkington, Andy Barras, Carolyn Burns, Andi Fidock, Delle Matthews and Isobel Fisher. Isobel has served as the Digital Ministry Assistant for the second 6 months of 2021 and will conclude in this role at the end of December. Julie Blinco was a wonderful Associate Minister and it was sad

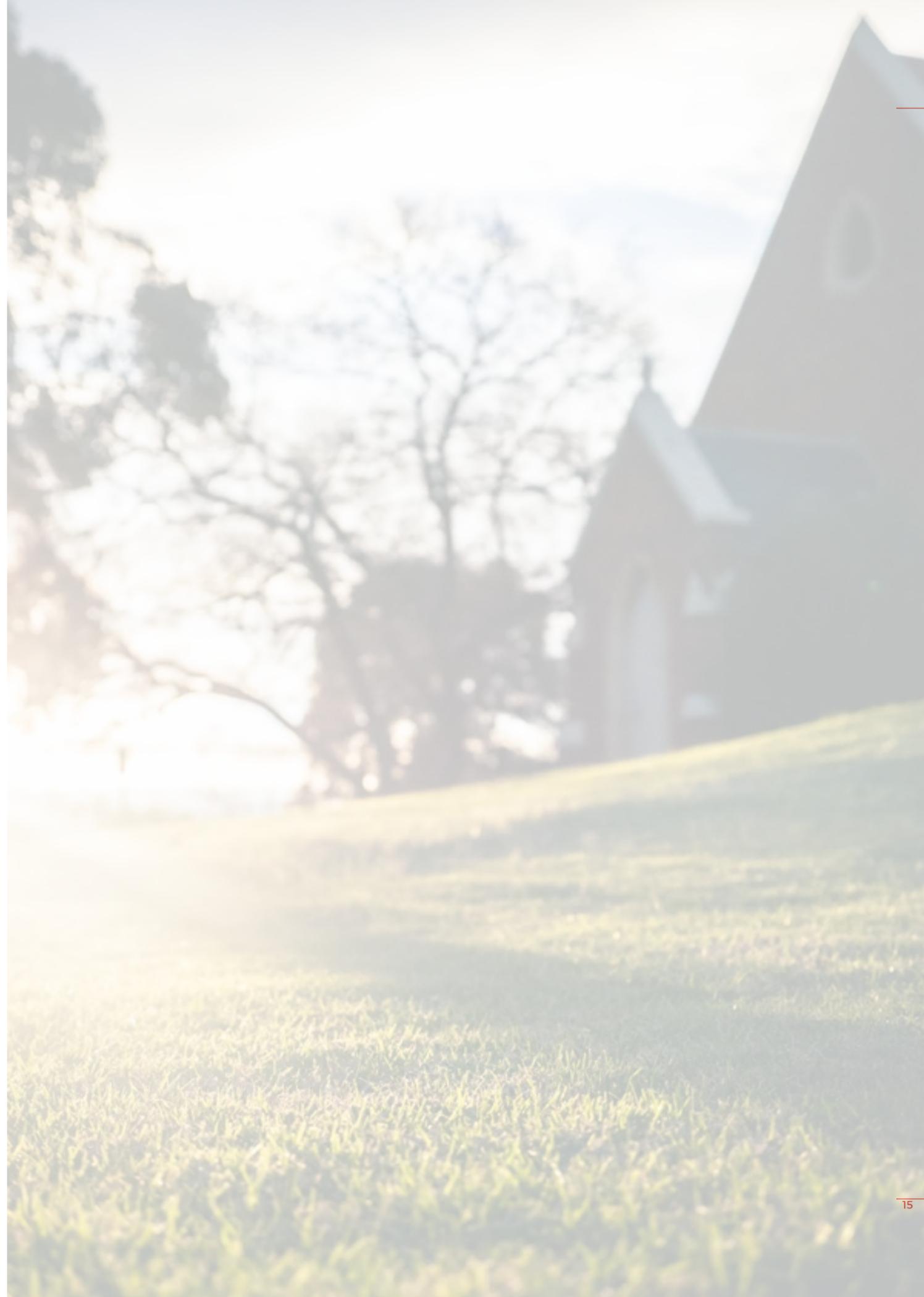
to farewell her in June and yet wonderful to see her appointed as the Senior Minister at All Saints Greensborough. Ros Rudd has also exercised a wonderful ministry amongst us as Associate Minister and this year has decided to retire from her role. We are so thankful to both Julie and Ros for all that they have contributed to the life of our church. We look forward to welcoming Joel Snibson as our new Associate Minister in 2022.

I'm grateful for faithful and wise Wardens: Mick Fisher, Anna Greenhalgh and Alan Fairweather. David Woods, as Treasurer, has really functioned as a 'fourth Warden' in many ways and has attended our Wardens meetings given the complexity of finances over the past two years with managing JobKeeper, Diocesan Payroll and the uncertain financial environment. I'm grateful for our prayerful, pastoral and strategic-minded Parish Council: Vicki Miller, Chloe Manson, Adam Brussaard-Kerr, Dushi Arulanantham and Carol Jenkinson. Carol finished up on Parish Council in the middle of the year and we are very thankful for her many years of service not only on Parish Council but in a wide range of ministries throughout our Parish. I'm grateful to our many leaders and volunteers throughout our Parish who serve continually in ways that are both seen and unseen. We really are the body of Christ and God's Spirit is indeed with us, gifting us to serve and empowering us as we love one another, build each other up as followers of Jesus, and share his good news with our world.

It is a joy and a privilege to serve amongst you and with you as Senior Minister.



TIM JOHNSON  
*Senior Minister*



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## WARDEN'S REPORT

*Anna Greenhalgh  
Alan Fairweather  
Mick Fisher*

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The Churchwardens during 2020/2021 were Anna Greenhalgh, Alan Fairweather and Mick Fisher. We have worked well as a team with Anna focussing on finances, Mick concentrating on staff matters and Alan working tirelessly on property issues.

We are pleased to present the Wardens' report for the 2020/2021 church year, and once again, what a year it has been!

We would like to acknowledge and thank the members of Parish Council: Dushi Arul, Adam Brussaard-Kerr, Carol Jenkinson, Chloe Manson, Vicki Miller and David Woods. It has been a challenging year, with difficult circumstances faced and difficult decisions made.

We sincerely thank Carol Jenkinson who resigned from Parish Council during the year. She has been a source of energy, ideas, support and practical help for many years and her contribution to the parish will be missed.

We thank the Council for their prayerful support, encouragement and collective wisdom. Their guidance has been invaluable as we have navigated together through a variety of restrictions, limitations and quarantines, all the while seeking to 'know Jesus and make Jesus known'.

### Staff

Even though we have rarely been able to meet together this year, our staff have been a great blessing to us. Despite the many difficulties we've experienced, they have been cheerful, encouraging and resourceful, able to adapt to every situation as it arose.

We have seen some changes in staff this year. Nonetheless, the parish has been blessed by God through their dedication and ability to work together, supporting one another as they care for each of us as well as reaching out to the wider community.

Our staff team has included:

### Rev. Dr. Tim Johnson

We regard ourselves as fortunate having Tim as our senior minister and we thank God for the love, wisdom and dedication Tim shows daily.

Tim has continued to show outstanding care for and guidance of the parish. We have been blessed by his talents, amply demonstrated in searching sermons and the clarity of his mind in maintaining the focus and direction of the parish. We are also grateful for the pastoral care he shows to one and all who attend church or reach out to us in other ways. We look forward to the coming year, confident that God will bless Tim and all who are touched by his ministry in Diamond Creek and far beyond.



### Rev. Julie Blinco-Smith

Julie is a caring, supportive, enthusiastic person with a great gift for evangelism. We have been blessed to have her on staff as she has ably fulfilled her role as associate minister week in and week out, as well as showing her talents and flair with special projects and events while looking after our Life Groups this year.

That is, until the "sad/happy" moment when it was announced she was leaving St John's to be the priest in charge at All Saints, Greensborough. We were sad she was leaving as we knew we would be missing her enthusiastic, cheerful and loving pastoral care, but happy knowing she was following God's path. We wish her well, confident that All Saints will flourish in her care.

### Rev. Kirk Mackenzie

Kirk has again shown his gifts in leading services and presenting profound and stirring sermons whether on our computer screens and TVs while we've been in lock down or in person when it has been possible. As well as the many duties he takes on through the week Kirk has been working hard behind the scenes preparing the way for Home Hubs to become a reality.

## Delle Matthews

Delle joined the staff team in October in an honorary capacity to oversee the care of Life Groups. Already well known to us through her years at St John's, and occasionally seen leading services or delivering insightful sermons, she brings a vast wealth of knowledge, experience and wisdom to the role. We thank her for her gracious offer to take on the position.

## Rev. Ros Rudd

Ros retired during the year after providing years of service to the parish in an honorary capacity conducting services at St Katherine's and pastoral visitations among other duties. Her pastoral gifts and talents have been welcomed throughout the parish.

## Kylie Pilkington

Kylie has continued in her role as Children and Families Minister. While we used to see her up front at St John's during a 9.30am service, since services have gone on-line her focus has been to continue developing and running our children's ministries in a manner suited to the current environment. While so many children's programs have gone by the wayside around the country, Kylie has made sure the children and families of our parish have been well catered for keeping them connected and engaged despite the restrictions caused by Covid.

We thank God for the loving, caring and gifted woman Kylie is, and the blessings she brings to His people here in our parish.

## Andi Fidock

Andi has been a part of our staff team in her role as youth minister this year, developing her skills and abilities. She has continued to challenge us with her deeply thought out and brilliantly presented sermons. And on top of that, she has had a guiding role in looking after youth life groups and the 6pm service. Well done again, Andi!

## Andy Barras

Andy's role as digital minister continues to be important to us as our online presence reaches out to so many people. Andy and his team continue to provide filming, sound recording, lighting, computing and editing skills that have been invaluable to the parish. During the year Andy chose to reduce his hours to 4 days per week so he could spend more time as a hands-on dad with Beatrix.

## Bel Fisher

Bel Fisher was employed from July to December for 6 hours per week to be Andy Barras's assistant, taking some pressure off Andy as she became a second person who could run the digital system to broadcast services. This became significant during those times when Covid restrictions meant we had to operate in 'staff bubbles' of 5 people maximum, and not crossing over from morning to evening services.

## Carolyn Burns

It is a great credit to Carolyn that our church office runs so smoothly and efficiently. A consequence of this is that many of us rarely see how well she handle all kinds of events and occurrences, whether planned or unplanned. It is a credit to her and a great benefit to us all that Carolyn provides such a caring and helpful welcome to all who contact our church office, whatever the situation. Carolyn continues in the role of Covid Safety Officer this year as well (as if she didn't have enough to do!).

## Behind the scenes

Henrike Brussaard-Kerr works one day a week taking care of the back office paperwork, entering transactions as well as looking after the office when CB is on leave.

Dianne Cheraghi works in the "office" (at home), performing the important role of financial bookkeeper with a gentle blend of helpfulness and guidance, making sure that the books are kept accurately and up to date.

We thank all the staff for the grace and patience shown under the endless rigours of daily life in a parish office. We also acknowledge the extra load they each have carried this year as they have been forced to work at home, only meeting on screens or rarely face to face. Each member of staff has borne the extra load with understanding and grace, and we sincerely thank them for their efforts, their forbearance, and their willingness to be servants of God, whatever the circumstance.

The dedication of each staff member has been a blessing to us corporately and individually. We praise God for the provision of a team with such

a wide range of skills, capabilities and passions. Together, with the support of their families, all our staff members have played significant roles in doing God's work in Diamond Creek and we gladly take this opportunity to thank them.



## Finance

There is no doubt about it, 2020/2021 has been a challenging year on all fronts, including financial. Going into the year with a deficit budget, the Wardens were determined to keep a close eye on our finances to ensure we were still meeting our obligations and being careful stewards of our resources. We started the year with an incredible response to our Thanksgiving Appeal, more than doubling our budget for the appeal. We were so grateful for this, as it gave us a strong foundation as we entered another year of lockdowns and challenges.

As we had anticipated, our giving showed signs of being impacted by the pandemic as we struggled to meet our budget for giving each month. This caused some concern with the Wardens and Parish Council as we considered how to best manage this.

We continued to keep the Parishioners updated with regular video messages, emails and even a letter to try and clearly state our financial position, which saw some improvement in our giving, but unfortunately, we finished the year quite behind.



Restrictions continued in Melbourne, and with those, the public use of the facilities was also affected along with our many church-run programs. We had anticipated these problems and made allowances for them in the budget.

All staff in the Melbourne Anglican diocese, while paid for by the parish they work in, are employed by the Melbourne Anglican Development Corporation. Fortunately, the MADC was successful in obtaining the second round of JobKeeper payments and in passing the payments on enabled us to continue employing all staff at their pre-Covid hours.

As we saw last year, JobKeeper has made a significant impact to our bottom line. These payments, along with other savings in expenses, mean that we have closed the year out with a surplus. Even though the past year has been challenging in so many ways, by the grace of God our parish finances continue to remain in good shape. This has enabled us to plan our budget for the year to come, which includes building maintenance and renovation projects, allowances for continued impacts from Covid and changes in staffing.

Once again, we are grateful for the tireless efforts of Treasurer David Woods and our able bookkeeper Dianne Cheragi in their continued management of the complex financial matters that continue to arise from the pandemic. The work they do goes above and beyond the titles of the positions they hold. What they do is invaluable to the parish.



## Property

We offer a special thank you to the many 'unseen' people who take a special pride in keeping our church facilities in good condition. They come and go throughout the week and tend to tasks that require attention.

We all expect to turn up and have the place looking great and being cared for, often without thinking how it all happens. So, a big thank you to our volunteer 'Workforce Angels.' We appreciate all that you do!

Following is a summary of items undertaken this year. Various policies and procedures were implemented, including:

- Working at Heights Policy
- Manual Handling Guidelines
- Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Contractor Induction Handbook
- Contractor Induction Checklist
- Risk Register form for camps, activities etc
- All MSDS (Material Safety Data Sheets) for substances used in the church and office have been collated.
- The crèche was relocated to one of the rooms off the main passageway adjacent to the Worship Centre, a more visible and secure location for the children. The new crèche room has been renovated and will have new carpet laid shortly and a television monitor installed so services can be viewed. The library is also getting new carpet.
- The sound / recording studio was relocated and established in the former crèche room.
- The timber surround around the sound desk in the Worship Centre was constructed.
- Storage boxes for the white foldable tables were constructed.
- All lights throughout the church building and office area have been converted to LEDs and the hot water service for the office and flat was exchanged for a more efficient one, both through the Victorian Energy Rebate Scheme.

Every month, an Essential Safety Measures inspection and report is undertaken on all physical aspects of the church buildings, the processes involved, the testing and tagging regimes etc, all designed to keep the area, as well as the

people using the facilities safe. St Katherine's and St Michael's buildings are now included in these inspections and reports. Appropriate work or processes are then put in place to rectify any areas needing attention.

For the last few years, a committee has been investigating the possibility of refurbishing the toilets at St John's. This investigation has come to fruition this year. The current toilets have been removed and work is being undertaken to enlarge the space and modernise the facilities. This work should be completed before the end of this year.

It has been an honour to work together with so many wonderful people in this church and this community. Now let us continue to trust in God and strive on to the praise and glory of His name, as we seek to be more and more involved in the life of our local community, showing God's love to all.

ANNA GREENHALGH,  
ALAN FAIRWEATHER  
MICK FISHER.

*Wardens*

**Mission Partner: Amount Given:**

**CMS (Beers & Giffords) \$15,690**

Wycliffe \$12,290

(Symons, Fidocks, Blackmas, Liems,  
Josh Bartlett, and Nayudo PNG)

**Open House \$10,300**

Ridley College \$5,980

**Breakaway Youth \$5,490**

Diocese of Morogoro \$4,510

**Bush Church Aid (Weickhardts) \$2,940**

Nungalinya College \$2,350

**Anglican Overseas Aid \$2,350**

Korus Connect \$2,350

**St Helena Collge Chaplaincy \$2,350**

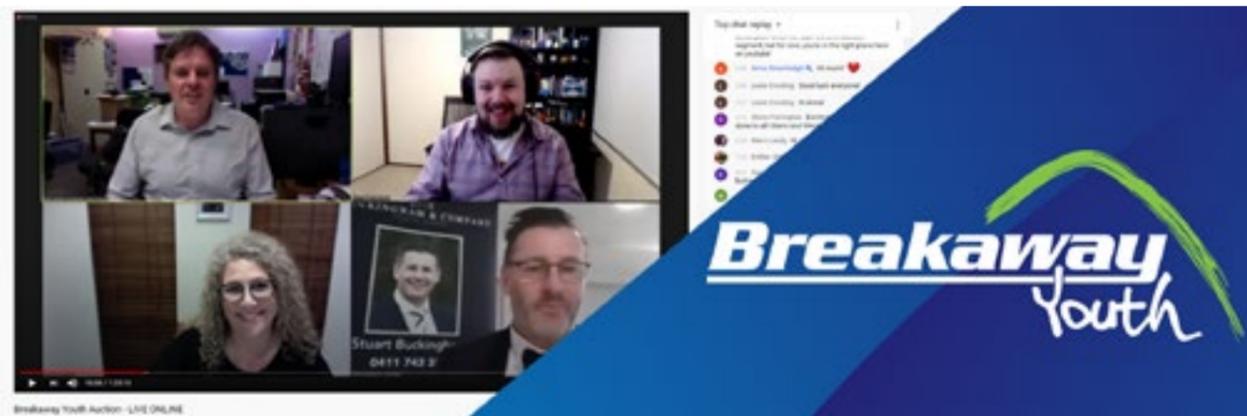
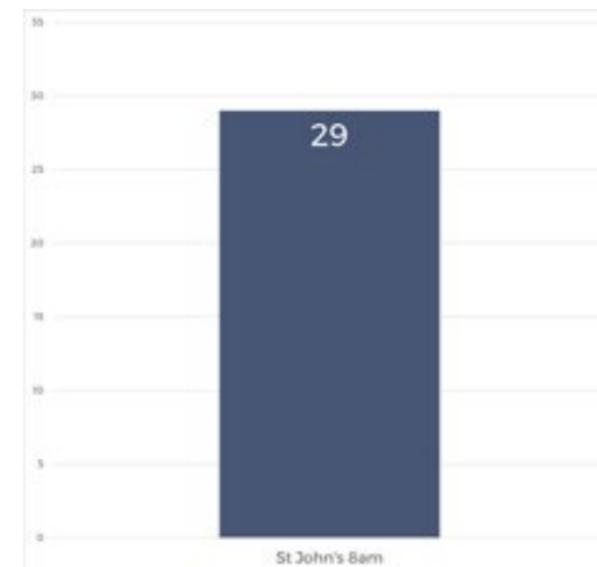
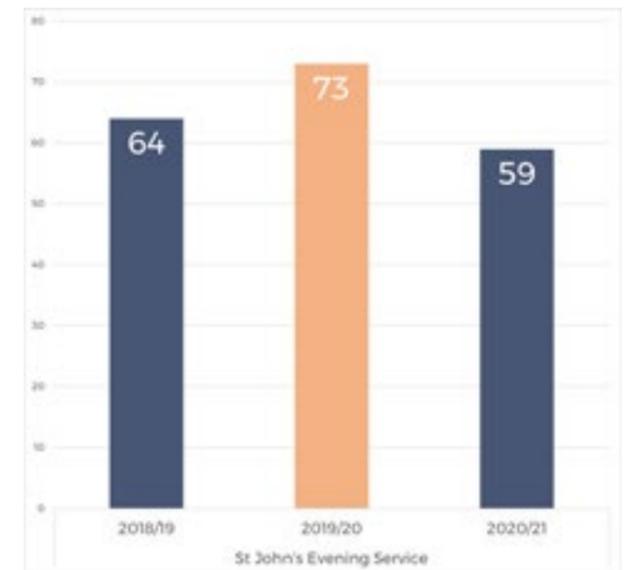
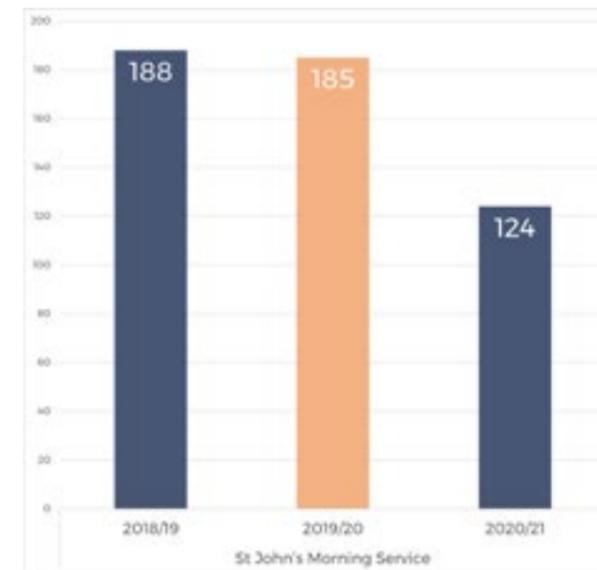
Prison Fellowship \$2,350

**Langham Partnership \$1,080**

Kid's Hope \$970

# Parish Statistics

Numbers never tell the whole story, but here are some statistics about our in-person attendances at church. These attendance figures show the full year of services for 2018/2019 but for 2019/2020 they only include only services from 1 October 2019 to 15 March 2020, while 2020/21 includes 23 in-person services throughout the year for 10am and 5pm, and 5 for 8am.

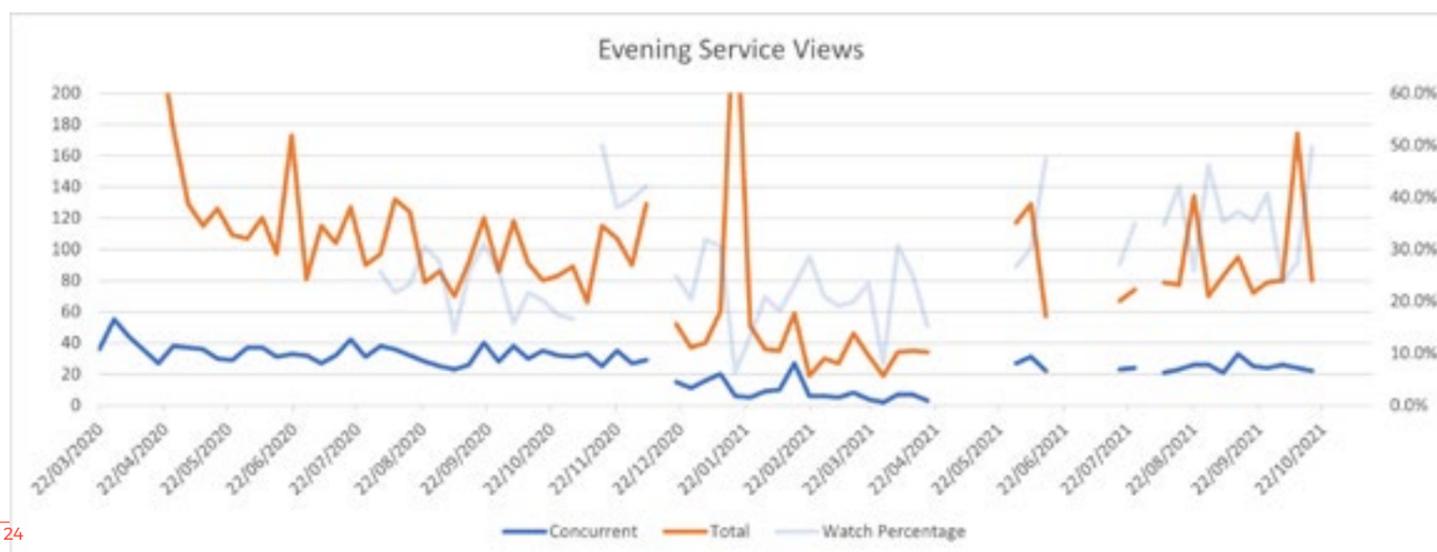
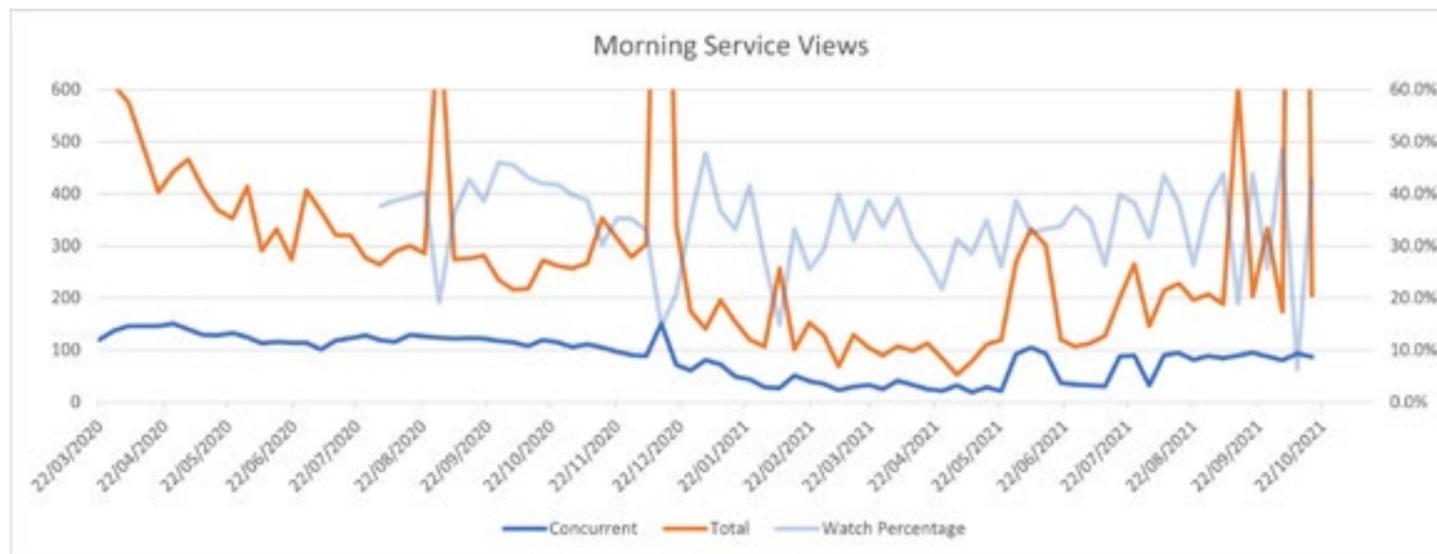


Since beginning online services, we have been tracking views as an approximate guide to attendance, however this has some things to be aware of. Firstly, services can be viewed at any time, so total views will increase over time as people watch older services. You can see this at work with a general trend downwards from older to newer services. The figures used are a snapshot, usually taken around 7-14 days following the service.

Secondly, each view represents a device, not a person. While multiple people can watch together on one device, not all do, and some will watch on multiple devices at the same time (eg on a TV and a phone, to participate in the live chat).

We also began tracking Watch Percentage (how long, on average, each viewer watched the video for) in August 2020, which gives us a clearer picture of the level of engagement for each service.

The evening service was discontinued digitally in early 2021, and only returned during lockdowns, hence the missing datapoints. Some services have been picked up by the YouTube algorithm to be shown as "recommended" videos, hence the large spikes, however you'll notice a corresponding drop in the watch percentage on those videos.



2020  
2021

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