

THE ANGLICAN PARISH OF DIAMOND CREEK ANNUAL REPORTS





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VICAR'S REPORT

Tim Johnson

In some ways 2022 has been a return to 'normal'. We have been able to return to consistent in-person church services and much-loved church events. We have not had to deal with any lockdowns and we have seen the gradual lifting of Covid restrictions. And yet things have not been normal at all. We have wrestled with the weariness brought on by the past two years, sought to catch up on lost holidays, and to reconnect with family and friends. We are all trying to find new rhythms and make decisions about where we invest our time and energy. We are much more wary of the impact of viruses and have learned that we should stay at home, rather than soldier on, when we are unwell. All this has had impacts on our church life as we have been on a slow journey of recovery and have felt the impact of lower attendances and pressure on our finances.

It has also been a year of changes, not least to our staff team. In February we welcomed Joel Snibson as our Associate Minister, along with Adele and Hannah. In November we will farewell Kirk Mackenzie, with Renee, Jasmine and Kira, after nearly 10 years on staff at St John's.

At the end of December we will farewell Kylie Pilkington after 12 years on staff, most recently as Children and Families Minister and prior to that as an Office Administrator. Kylie and her family will remain in our congregation at St John's but we will need to recruit someone to oversee our Children and Families Ministry.

Amidst all the transitions, changes and uncertainties we remind ourselves that we stand on solid ground. Psalm 18:31 says 'For who is God besides the LORD? And who is the Rock except our God?' We can plant our feet firmly on God our rock. He has sustained St John's for 155 years and brought us through many challenges. He sustained us through the Covid years of 2020 and 2021 and we are seeing signs of reconnection, rebuilding and renewal as you will see as you read on in this report. I hope you are encouraged as you read how God has blessed us. More than that, I hope you are encouraged that our feet are planted on Christ our solid ground and recommit yourself to building our church and our lives together on him.



Church Services

In 2022 we were able to settle into a regular pattern of Sunday Services again. We have three in-person services at 8am, 10am and 6pm, and a Digital Service is streamed each Sunday at 9am and available to be watched at any time from then.

It has been encouraging to see the 8am service, which commenced in June 2021 settling into a regular pattern and establishing its own congregation and identity. We have had up to 40 people attend on a given Sunday and the prayerful and reflective space has been appreciated. Our 10am service continues to be intergenerational, ranging in age from 0-99 and the interactions across the age groups is a joy. We have welcomed a number of new families this year. It is helpful to think of 10am as a new congregation itself in many ways. With changes to our service times some members from the old 9:30am congregation have joined 8am, some people are still watching the digital service, and some people have moved



to 6pm. 10am is not as big as 9:30am used to be and some people feel this difference quite keenly. It has been encouraging to see steady regrowth with the onset of Spring and we need to keep working at reconnection and rebuilding. The 6pm service has seen an encouraging number of youth attending and has also welcomed new people from a variety of ages. We are blessed with the range and number of people who attend our church each Sunday and



the ways that we are able to grow together in Jesus, encourage each other to follow him, and be equipped to witness to him in the world.

In terms of teaching this year we have covered the following: Solomon (1 Kings 3-11), Sent out by Jesus (Matthew 9-10), The Good Shepherd (various passages), Always Remember (2 Peter), The Holy Spirit (Acts 2-3), Jesus and Relationships (Matthew 18), God in the Everyday (various passages), The Kingdom of Heaven (Matthew 13), and Flawed Leadership (1 Samuel 8-13).

It was good to be able to run in-person Christmas and Easter services. The 2021 Christmas services were impacted by the threat of Covid and this affected our ability to undertake Community Carols on Coventry Oval and also impacted

attendances at all services. People were understandable hesitant to be in large groups in case this affected their ability to see their families at Christmas. Easter services saw a healthy number of people in attendance as people started to feel more comfortable to attend large events. It will be interesting to see how attendances have regrown for the next Christmas and Easter.

On September 4th, we held a Confirmation service conducted by former Vicar, Bishop Stephen Hale. Nathan & Sean Colebatch, Jess & Emily Keywood, and Abi Johnson shared their journeys of faith and it was an encouragement to hear the many ways that God has used to build faith in these young people: parents, grandparents, CRE teachers, Youth leaders, Camps, Mission Partners like CMS and Mustard, and University Christian groups.



We are richly blessed by our dedicated volunteers who serve in a variety of roles each week. It has been more challenging to find

volunteers across the board as people wrestle with weariness and reorientate their priorities. I am especially thankful to Sue Jetten and the team of wonderful musicians who serve us at each of our congregations. To be able to sing together (and to sing together unmasked!) is a joy that we are all the more thankful for because we missed it so much in our periods of lockdown.

Life Groups

Delle Matthews does a wonderful job as our Life Groups Minister at St John's. Delle works in an honorary capacity two days a week and we are blessed to have her wisdom and dedication to this key aspect of our church life. Life Groups are a vital 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 showed that we have 20 adult groups including 1 intergenerational group with 179 people altogether in the groups (see below for a report on youth Life Groups). Delle has continued to provide study resources to the Life Groups to accompany the teaching series that we have undertaken in church services. Despite some attendance challenges over winter groups remain committed to each other with nurture and support being a particularly strong feature. A number of groups report sharing the responsibilities for leading studies at any given meeting. This has been a positive, contributing to the growth of those facilitating studies.

We had one new Women's Life Group and an Intergenerational group start this year and 19 people joined a Life Group. Most of our Life Group leaders have faithfully served in that capacity for a



number of years and we value their experience and wisdom. However, some will be unable to continue into 2023. We always need to commence new groups and to be welcoming people into our existing groups as a way of growing this ministry.

Church Library

The Church library underwent a major re-organisation and cull early in 2022. The library now holds approximately 600 books including bibliographies, novels, books on Christian living and Christian doctrine, families, Bibles and some DVDs. Thanks go to those who have donated good quality books to the library. One whole bookshelf is devoted to Life Group resources which have been listed on a spreadsheet available on the Teaching page of St John's website. Delle Matthews oversees the library.

Pastoral Care

The New Testament is full of 'one another' passages which call us to mutual care and ministry: 'love one another' (John 13:34), 'Build up one another' (Romans 14:19), 'Care for one another' (1 Corinthians 12:25), 'encourage one

another' (1 Thessalonians 5:11), 'pray for one another' (James 5:16). As a church we are committed to this 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 depend on their Life Groups for this ongoing support. Life Groups really do life together as they share, pray and support each other.

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. In a church our size there is always a multiplicity of needs and it is encouraging to see the way that church members are willing to help and serve as needed, with meals, driving people to medical appointments, prayer, a listening ear, and other practical assistance.

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. We give thanks to God for the lives of Marcia Brown, Henry Huggins, Elizabeth Jones, Damicus Bezemer, and Neil Pascoe. Even as I write these names I recall fond memories and different acts of love and service we have received from these people. 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 them and for the ways they have modelled following Jesus to us.

Local Mission

After two COVID affected years, which have impacted our local mission, and in this season of rebuilding and reconnecting, it is vitally important to continue making Jesus known in our community. Local mission has continued through St John's in the following ways:

- Alpha 2022 - An Alpha leadership team involving Neil Barras, Lachie McInnes and Adele Snibson was formed. With the generous support of the Hospitality Team, the Alpha course ran on Sunday afternoons over a hot lunch with four guests attending. The participants were Youth and Young Adults. God used Alpha to be an important time to ground participants in their faith, for healing and growth. I was encouraged by the growth and maturity of the leadership team throughout Alpha.
- Leith Park and Wattle Glen Chapel Services 2022 - Amongst the various challenges COVID brought, the Leith Park Chapel Team has provided fortnightly chapel services and pastoral care throughout the year. Joel Snibson leads a monthly Holy Communion service and talk, and the volunteer chapel team ran a Morning Prayer service on the alternative fortnight. We want to acknowledge Bev Ward's excellent oversight and growth of this team including; Kris Ryall, Jan Hollingsworth, Nola Borrie and Charlotte Chidell. By God's grace, COVID disruptions gave opportunities for volunteers to step up and serve in new ways, growing in their gifts. God has wonderfully been at work in these times and the support of the Leith Park staff has been amazing. Many thanks to Jan Hollingsworth for the pastoral support for our bi-monthly chapel service at Estia Wattle Glen. Despite the small team, these

Holy Communion services and pastoral care has been an encouragement to the residents.



- The Town Fair - On September 10th Diamond Creek Town Fair returned after two years. Under the leadership of Phil Wadeson, Dianne Cheraghi and Ross Dorman, the team returned to serve the community with our much loved hospitality tent. Our goal was to bless, serve and engage with the local community, by providing a space to rest, enjoy home made goods, kids activities and facepainting! It was a hit and many families enjoyed the kids activities and seeing Church involvement. The Persian Resurrection Church were present on the day with Farsi bibles connecting with others also.
- Food Pantry and Orange Sky Washing Van - We have continued to run our food pantry at the rear of the church building. This is a 24 hour accessible pantry where food can be accessed in an anonymous way by those in need in our community. It receives regular use and church members have kept it well stocked. On Sunday 31st July we held a Harvest Festival Food Drive and over 70 bags of non-perishable food was provided by our church members.

This was used to stock our pantry, keep a reserve of supply, and share with CareNet which provides assistance in the local area.



In March, Orange Sky (a service that provides clothes washing and drying on the spot) was launched at St Johns on Saturday mornings. Despite the promotion in the community, the lack of demand for the service in Diamond Creek meant this finished up in June.

- Memory Care Café - Carolyn Fairweather oversaw the launch of the Memory Care Café at St John's on Wednesday afternoons. Run through Health Ability and a strong group of St John's volunteers, this Café creates a space for those caring for loved ones with Dementia to have a break, receive friendship, support and to connect with others in similar circumstances. While the carers meet, those experiencing Dementia have time together with the support of Health Ability staff. It is wonderful to see those new ministry of love and care commence at St John's.

- CFA Suppers - Linda Cridland and Robyn Gorfine have continued to bless and encourage

the Diamond Creek CFA with suppers for over 12 years now. This ministry has led to much goodwill and strong relationships with the CFA. We are appreciative of their partnership with our community carols this year.

- Footy Chaplains - Kayleen O'Neil and Linda Cridland have continued in their role as chaplains to the Diamond Creek Women's Football Club. Both are highly valued and respected members of the club. This year was hard work for the chaplains and other volunteers as the club navigated many challenges related to returning from covid-interrupted seasons. Throughout these challenges, we saw some remarkable answers to prayer and a wonderful, encouraging end to the season that included some great relationship outcomes and a premiership for the senior team!

We are looking at a number of new initiatives for local mission in 2023 including starting a playgroup again and ongoing ministry in new estates in the area. Of course the first priority for local mission is prayer! We certainly can't be on mission in our local community without the leading of the Holy Spirit, who opens doors and softens hearts. We need to partner with God who is ultimately the one on mission, we continually need to be listening to His leading as He grows His kingdom for Jesus' glory.

Reconciliation Action Plan

In late 2021, Parish Council established a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Working Group to consider how our church can work towards reconciliation with Indigenous Australians. The working group members have been Tim Johnson (Chair), Chloe Manson (Parish Council representative), Rob Shackleton and Lenny Barras. The motivation for reconciliation

is biblical. Reconciliation is about restoring relationships that have been damaged and broken. Reconciliation lies at the heart of our faith as followers of Jesus. The Apostle Paul describes God's accomplishment through Jesus using the language of reconciliation in Colossians 1:19- 20:

For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

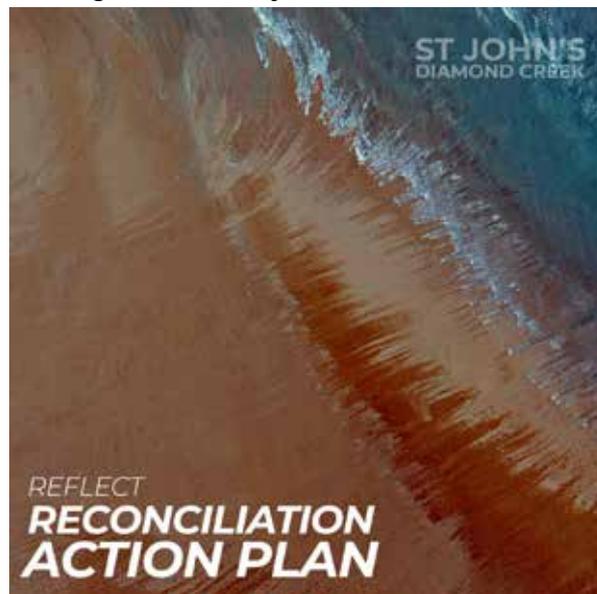
God is all about the reconciliation of relationships. He wants people to be reconciled with him through Jesus (the vertical dimension) and so enjoy peace with him and an active and loving relationship. He also wants us to be reconciled to each other and live together in relationships of love and peace (the horizontal dimension). Working for reconciliation between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians is an outworking of our gospel commitment and an expression of our faith in Jesus.

On Reconciliation Sunday, 29th May 2022, we launched our RAP, which used a framework from the Walk Alongside Church Toolkit for Reconciliation developed by World Vision and Reconciliation Australia. The framework has three focus areas: Relationships, Respect, and Opportunities. Our RAP is called a Reflect RAP which is for organisations which are new to reconciliation. It focusses on preparing for reconciliation initiatives in future RAPs. Hence most of the actions in our RAP are initial learning steps and have been completed over the course of 2022. It is envisaged that future RAPs will be written to extend and build on the current plan.

Our RAP has contained 10 Action steps and has been very beneficial as we have been growing

and learning together as a community. We have undertaken the following things together:

- Welcomed Revd Neville Naden, the Indigenous Ministry Officer from Bush Church Aid to speak at our services on biblical reconciliation on 3rd July as part of NAIDOC week
- Met regularly with members of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation through a cultural consultation meeting facilitated by Nillumbik Shire Council.



- On June 19th, walked the Gawa Wurundjeri Resource Walk in Watsons Creek to learn more about the indigenous history in our local area guided by Uncle Dave Wandin, a Wurundjeri Elder.
- Undertaken the Australians Together materials through our Life Groups to learn more of our history and to think through ways to promote reconciliation.
- Recommitted ourselves to supporting mission partnerships which walk alongside and advance the wellbeing of Indigenous communities. We currently do this by supporting:
 - Derek and Rosemary Snibson (CMS) - Assisting Aboriginal Church leaders in the Northern

Territory

- David Blackman - Translating the bible and language resources into Alyawarr
- Nungalinga College - Supporting the training of Indigenous Christian leaders

In October, Parish Council approved a paper which outlined how we might best include Acknowledgement of Country regularly in the life of our church. The key principles we are endorsing are:

- Any statement should include an acknowledgement of God first
- We want to be respectful of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- It is helpful to frame an Acknowledgement of Country biblically so that it is clear that we are drawing on a Christian Theology of God and creation.

With this in mind we will be including an Acknowledgement of Country on our website, in staff emails, and on the pre-service slides.

In addition, we will include a spoken Acknowledgement of Country at some key times through the year:

- On the Sunday before January 26th
- During Reconciliation week (May 27 to June 3)
- During NAIDOC week
- At the Parish AGM
- At Easter & Christmas services as part of our engagement with and outreach to our local community

I am thankful for the input of the RAP Working Group and for Parish Council's robust engagement with reconciliation. I know that in a church as large and diverse as ours there are differing

views on these matters. I consider that we are on a journey of learning together as we continue to work through what it means to be disciples of Jesus who want to work for reconciliation in the world. I am convinced that apart from Christ and the work of his Holy Spirit we are unable to have truly reconciled relationships. As such it is Christians who must take the strong lead in this area. We are people who have been reconciled with our Heavenly Father and have been called to the ministry of reconciliation, calling people to be reconciled to God and to each other. May God strengthen us to do this work.

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, Ella Tregale, 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 2021-2022 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 \$74,993 and of this money \$71,008 was allocated upfront, keeping a reserve in case the parish didn't meet its budget for offerings and also to be used

for urgent mission needs. This initial allocation was as follows:

CMS (Beers and Snibsons) - \$15,690

Wycliffe (Symons, Fidocks, Blackmans, Liems, Josh Bartlett, and Nayudo PNG) - \$12,290

Open House - \$10,300

Ridley College - \$5,980

Breakaway Youth - \$5,490

Diocese of Morogoro - \$4,498

Bush Church Aid (Edwards) - \$2,940

Nungalinya College - \$2,350

Anglican Overseas Aid - \$2,350

Korus Connect (formerly ACCESS ministries) - \$2,350

Mustard - \$2,350

Prison Fellowship - \$2,350

Langham Partnership - \$1,080

Kid's Hope - \$990

In March the Missions Committee approved a donation of \$500 to Anglican Overseas Aid's Ukraine Conflict Crisis Appeal and also a payment of \$360 to Korus Connect to support the SRI Teacher Registration for Nerida Fidock.

Missions are promoted in a variety of ways throughout the parish. This year we have continued the 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 than this. There are currently 54 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.

Through the year we had services with Missions speakers doing the sermon and sharing about their work. We have heard from the following speakers so far this year: Tavis and Kate Beer (CMS), Neville Naden, (Indigenous Ministry Officer with Bush Church Aid), Wei-Han Kuan (State Director of CMS Victoria). We also look forward to welcoming in Term 4, Andy Corley (International director of Prison Fellowship) and Lara Ruddle and Ella Tregale from Mustard.

There have been other opportunities to build our mission partnerships as well. In February Kirk Mackenzie visited Strathfieldsaye Community Church as part of our partnership with BCA and the Edwards family there. In August Tim Johnson gave a devotion for the staff of Anglican Overseas Aid at their new offices in Collingwood. A number of our congregation members serve as volunteers and board members for our mission partners. In many ways, big and small we are working in partnership together for God's mission in the world.

Children's Ministry

After the rate of change experienced in the previous two years - trying to stay abreast of changing circumstances and adapting in-person programs for online use and back again with little notice - this year has been a welcome change, and one of the main foci of our programs has been to encourage reconnection.

St John's Kids - Children up to Grade 6

Due to reduced volunteer numbers and the demographics at our services, the decision was made to concentrate our efforts on running kids' programs at the 10am service only, in 2022.

Whilst we have seen all our pre-COVID families

attend in-person services this year, and have additionally welcomed new families in the past 12 months, attendance most of the year has fluctuated wildly as families embraced the opportunity to travel again and/or conscientiously did not attend when experiencing cold/flu-like symptoms in the family. During Terms 1-3 the number of kids at this service sometimes reached 35+, only to drop to 18 a few weeks later. At the time of this report, Term 4



can report a more consistent attendance of 30-40 children.

Within the Kinder/Primary program, children often enjoy a game or craft activity that encourages age groups to mix but are usually divided into smaller groups for age-appropriate teaching and discussion. During Terms 1-3 these groupings were Kinder/Prep, Grades 1/2/3 Grades 4/5/6. Term 4 has seen us transition the Preps from the younger group into the more structured Primary program and move to four groupings: Kinder (3-5yo), Prep/1/2, Grade 3, Grades 4/5/6.

Our younger St John's Kids (under 3yo) have been enjoying the new Crèche indoor and outdoor space this year. Late last year, plastering and painting the former dark brick walls brightened the room and this year the playground dirt and tanbark were replaced with artificial turf, and Lenny Barras

repainted the mural wall, creating a much more attractive and usable outdoor space. Plans are still underway to install a sink in this room, for washing hands and providing drinking water, and to add decal wall/window art.

Margaret McNicol oversaw our Kinder/Primary program for most of this year but finished up in her role at the end of Term 3. Margaret has a generous heart for kids and families and has poured herself into St John's Kids, and other ministries, over many years. We have not farewelled her from kids' ministry, but support her sabbatical as she prayerfully considers what capacity she would like to be involved in the future.

Robyn Gorfine continues to oversee our Crèche program.

Kids involvement in services

We want kids to be involved in the life of the church, not just be spectators to what happens outside of their specific program. So, as well as a focus on kids and families reconnecting with each other post-COVID lockdowns, we have encouraged increased involvement of kids in our worship services. We have included Grade 5/6 kids on our bible reading roster, some of our Grade 6 kids are being apprenticed on the tech team, and a family with three primary-aged children now assists with Communion/Sacristan duties.

Picnics and Peak Experiences

To further encourage opportunities for connection, not just of kids and families but across the wider church, Church Picnics were added to the calendar for each term this year.

Additionally, we reinstated our program of in-person Peak Experiences for Primary-aged children. Peak Experiences are memorable events intended to build relationships and community,

encounter God, and encourage children as they gain a greater understanding of a relationship with Jesus. During lockdowns over the past two years, these were conducted online, and we experimented with post-10am service and pre-5pm service family events, as well as age specific events. This year's events have included a Grades 4-6 Bush scavenger hunt, BBQ dinner and sharing time around a bonfire, and a Grades 1-3 Games, devotion, and dinner at the church. Plans are underway for Grade 6 event to encourage transition to Youth activities.

Mainly Music

Most families who attend this music-based ministry program are not from St John's, so it provides a connection with, and pathway into, the church, as well as providing a safe, welcoming environment for parents and children to connect and build relationships with one another. For our team members, it is a place to serve God by loving others and to be a part of what God is doing in the local community.

We are currently running one session, on Wednesday mornings during term time for 18 families with 28 children. As with other programs, attendance has fluctuated greatly post-lockdowns due to travel and illnesses. The average attendance so far this term is 21 children.

After a COVID lockdown delay last term, we saw a new partnership come to fruition at the beginning of this term with a visit to Mainly Music by residents of Wattle Glen Aged Care. The visitors delighted in watching the kids play and dance, and readily joined in the singing and actions themselves. It was reported to us that the residents were still singing when they returned home and happily talked about their visit with others. Another visit has been scheduled for 9

November.

Sue Jetten continues to lead this ministry.

Going Bananas

After 20 consecutive years of Going Bananas, it was very sad to have to cancel our 2020 and 2021 events. So, it was with great excitement that Going Bananas - Anchors Aweigh! was able to relaunch this year. This program continues to live out our Vision aim of being an Intergenerational Community, Loving like Jesus and Sharing Jesus, with team members ranging in age from 12-70+ working together and learning from each other,



to deliver a highly engaging program which, this year, focussed on Jesus as our anchor, our treasure, and the one who sends us out on his mission.

Anticipating the possibility of volunteers having to pull out without much notice due to illness, we capped the program at 96 kids (eight groups of twelve) - this was down from the 140+ number in 2019. Indeed, both COVID and Influenza A did impact our team. Only one pre-booked family had to pull out of the program due to illness, although they were replaced by kids on our waiting list.

Following the success of 2019, we again engaged a coffee van, to encourage parents to linger, after signing their kids in, and to engage in conversation with each other and staff. Families and team were further blessed by the generosity of a parishioner covering the costs of cuppas for all three days.

The core team this year were Sue Jetten, Tania Grinton and Kylie Pilkington. The full team of group leaders and assistants, craft/science/games leaders, tech team, first aid, welcomers, hospitality, etc. numbered approx. 60.

SRI/Kids Hope

SRI (Special Religious Instruction) and Kids Hope are both programs that take place in schools. Both support students' wellbeing needs.

SRI takes place in a group setting, giving kids an understanding of the values and beliefs of the Christian faith. Post-COVID, we were able to resume this program at Kangaroo Ground Primary School early in the year, and currently have three instructors involved - Nerida Fidock, Isobel Fisher, and Deb Wadeson.

Kids Hope is a one-to-one mentoring program for kids experiencing vulnerability. The model for the program is for one church to partner with one school, which in our case is Diamond Creek Primary. The school, in partnership with parents, nominate children most at need and each child has one mentor that sees them for one hour a week. Due to ongoing post-COVID caution about letting outside groups into the school, we were not able to resume this program for Terms 1-3 this year. However, at the time of writing this report, we have just been given the go-ahead to resume. This is an answer to prayer, as we were thinking this may not get up and running again until 2023. Barry Gunning continues to oversee this program, liaising with the school, mentors, and our staff team.

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We would like to take this opportunity to recognise all the unnamed volunteers who continue to dedicate time and energy to children's ministries.

It's a privilege to witness each of them speaking God's truths into the lives of others. There is a need for additional team members to fill roles in these ministries. Please pray expectantly for volunteers, knowing that God can do abundantly more than we ask for or can think of.

Kylie Pilkington has done a wonderful job in her fifth year as our Children's and Families Ministry. Sadly, it is her last in this role as she has indicated her intention to finish at the end of 2022. She has served us faithfully on the staff team for 12 years in total, as she worked in our church office as an administrator prior to her current role. Her life and ministry have all testified to Jesus and displayed love and care for our children in powerful ways.

Youth Ministry

2022 saw a transition in our leadership of the Youth Ministry as Andi Fidock finished in her role in May and Cam Berndt commenced as Youth Minister. Our sincere thanks go to Andi for the way that she has loved our young people and helped them to grow in faith. Her commitment to the youth ministry was further displayed by her willingness to remain as a volunteer youth leader throughout the year to ensure a smooth and strong transition. Cam has made a good start in his role. His focus has largely been on building relationships and supporting the leaders as they minister to the youth together.

Youth Life Groups

The primary way the youth meet is through Life Groups. The general structure of the groups consists of games/activities, a check in for each person, prayer and bible study/discussion. Our key aims are to have fun together as we build relationships, to provide a safe space to talk about how we are and what is going on in our lives, and

most importantly to connect with and learn more of who God is for us in Jesus.

As it was last year, we maintain three groups:

Our youngest group has up to eight youth attending and is led by Andi Fidock and Adrian Pain. Together they have been rotating studying John and a video based Old Testament survey.

The middle group is led by Scott Pilkington, Jacob Sgarlata and Ella Tregale. Regularly we see around seven youth attend. It is worth noting there are a number within this group that exhibit strong leadership potential. Together they have been working their way verse by verse through Mark, as well as a practical discipleship series designed by Ella.

Our oldest group is led by Nerida Fidock and Isobel Fisher, and consists of our two year 12 youth. Unfortunately, this group has been unable to meet on a regular basis due to health reasons, but they aim to meet once a month via Zoom.

The first two groups meet on a Sunday afternoon and combine together for games at the beginning before splitting for the rest of the meeting. This provides the youth with the opportunity to build relationships with the majority of the youth, as well as to split into smaller groups which allow for the fostering of stronger connections and discipleship. Not to mention having greater numbers for running activities is way more fun!

One of the main benefits of running youth Life Groups on a Sunday is also the strong attendance to the Sunday@6 service. The number of youth attending Sunday@6 is the strongest it has been in at least 10 years.

Friday Night Youth Events

In addition to our Life Groups, we aim to have two Friday night events per term. The purpose of these

is largely to have fun, meet with the rest of the church's youth and provide an entry point to invite friends to engage in our community.

One of these events is Youth Unite, a regional youth event that centers around fun, worship, learning about Jesus and connecting youth across the northern suburbs.

Northern Churches Youth Camp

After being unable to run camps for the past couple of years, we were finally able to run a camp with two other churches from the northern suburbs- St James, Ivanhoe, and St Mark's, Templestowe. Andi Fidock oversaw this camp before she finished in her role.



Youth engagement at camp was strong, and the feedback received was overwhelmingly positive. One of the chief aims of running a combined churches camp was to foster stronger relationships with youth outside of their usual sphere of connection. Since camp we have been able to meet up with the St James and St Mark's youth groups on multiple occasions at two Youth Unite events as well as a combined event at Bounce in Heidelberg. This has led to the strengthening of relationships and is something I look forward to continuing with in future.

The youth culture at St John's is strong, as demonstrated through positive relationships, a firm connection to the broader church and a genuine desire to know, love and serve our God.

Digital Ministry

Andy Barras has continued to serve us well as Digital Minister in 2022. Andy combines technical expertise, strong strategic thinking and a heart to see people know Jesus and be strengthened in him. After holding the fort for two years of lockdowns Andy was able to take a month off this year we were blessed to have Isobel Fisher step in to relieve him and keep the digital service streaming.

After two years of periods with digital-only services 2022 has consistently allowed in-person services and so the digital service has been running concurrently and finding its new niche.

From January 16, we moved the digital service to 9am, to separate it from the 10am service and not compete. In May, the style of the service was reshaped, reducing the time down to approximately 40-45 minutes. It now focuses more on engaging with the talk, including a primer



question before leading into the bible reading and talk, followed by a really well themed song, prayers and a concluding short discussion or posing some questions to take away.

As always, our digital service will remain agile and ready to adapt as needed.

Through our YouTube, Facebook and Instagram, we have been producing content aimed at a non-churched audience. This included short video

stories of Diamond Creek's history in the lead up to last year's Thanksgiving Services, highlighting St John's place in our community for over 150 years. This year, content included short snippets from talks, trimmed down for a fresh audience. One of the big challenges in the business world for social media is creating content for social media that's fresh and engaging, but at St John's we're sitting on a plethora of fresh content every week! Repurposing the talks from the preaching team has helped to use the work done by them in preparing their messages in new and efficient ways.

It continues to be a priority to recruit new members to the tech team, and it has been great to see a collection of new youth step into roles at 6pm, under the new leadership of Joel Pilkington. The 8am service is developing a roster of its own now too, with Margie Baxter as the main operator, along with Sanjeev Rajathevan, and Kathy Harris. Tech at 10am now includes a couple of kids serving, including Ella Dorman, Asher Knuckey and Nathan Young. Josh Cox and Jon Tait have also joined the team, assisting Andy Barras and Mick Fisher.

Tech upgrades this year have included re-laying cables in the worship centre and installing new spotlights, greatly improving the lighting uniformly across the stage.

Looking to the Future

Over the course of 2022 we have been working together on a new church Vision. Our current vision ran until 2022 and it is timely to consider what our vision as a church will be as we face a new post-covid or covid-normal world. The challenges outlined at the start of this report must also be taken into consideration as we face the future.

With this in mind our Parish Council approved the following mission, vision and values in October.

Mission: Know Jesus. Make Jesus Known.

Vision: Reconnect and build a multiethnic and intergenerational network of congregations, Life Groups and mission initiatives for Diamond Creek and the northern suburbs

Values:

- Pray expectantly
- Apply the Bible to every part of life
- Serve God and one another
- Share Jesus in word and action, locally and globally
- Equip leaders from all generations

The mission remains constant and unchanged. Our values are only modified slightly. Our new vision acknowledges that the impact of Covid and lockdowns has led to a sense of being disconnected and isolated. We need to rebuild community and recommit to being together in-person. This is not about reclaiming the past but looking forward, building new ministries, and taking on new mission opportunities in a changed world.

We also want to increasingly reflect the ethnic diversity of the northern suburbs as people from other nations and cultures join us. We anticipate that Diamond Creek itself will become more culturally diverse and we need to prepare now for that reality.

We are a church for all ages, from 0 to 100+. We want to harness the strength of this rich diversity by relating with, and ministering to, each other. We will invest in children and youth ministry to grow new generations in faith. We will help adults to grow as disciples of Jesus as they face each new life stage.

Our church currently gathers as three in-person

congregations and a digital service. Life Groups are a key means for discipleship, nurture and accountability within a large church and enable us to best exercise our commitment to mutual care. We have a number of existing mission initiatives in Diamond Creek and we want to expand these throughout Diamond Creek and into the northern suburbs.

We are a well-resourced church located in the north-east, near one of the fastest growing areas of Melbourne, the northern growth corridor. We feel a responsibility to reach out and share the good news of Jesus in Diamond Creek and also in the areas around us, to help develop strong and vital church communities for new and developing northern suburbs.

This vision will stretch and challenge us, especially as we transition our staff team and reduce staff hours for financial reasons. It will challenge us all to consider what part we need to play in making the vision a reality and seeing the life and love of Jesus made evident in our church and wider community. We have such good news to share. We know the joy and privilege of being the church gathered together. Despite the challenges we will continue to trust God, to love and serve one another, and push outwards in mission to a world that needs Jesus.

Thank you

I'm grateful for our godly and passionate staff team: Kirk Mackenzie, Joel Snibson, Kylie Pilkington, Andy Barras, Delle Matthews, Carolyn Burns, Andi Fidock, Cam Berndt.

I'm grateful for faithful and wise Wardens: Mick Fisher, Anna Greenhalgh and Alan Fairweather. Anna is finishing in her role as Warden because she has reached her term limit of 6 years (Treasurer

first and then Warden). She has been a wise and dedicated servant of Jesus and our church. She has encouraged and challenged us about our stewardship and I am grateful personally for her encouragement and support.

David Woods, as Treasurer, has really again served as a 'fourth Warden' and has attended the Wardens' meetings to help with financial and other decisions. He dedicates many, many hours each week to ensure that our finances are well managed and we are very blessed to have him serve us.

I'm grateful for our prayerful, pastoral and strategic-minded Parish Council: Vicki Miller, Chloe Manson, Adam Brussaard-Kerr, Dushi Arulanantham and Sirelle Fisher. Sirelle and Adam are both finishing in their role on Parish Council and we are very thankful for them both.

I continue to consider it both a joy and a privilege to serve as your Senior Minister
In Christ,



TIM JOHNSON
Senior Minister

WARDEN'S REPORT

*Anna Greenhalgh
Alan Fairweather
Mick Fisher*

The Churchwardens during 2021/2022 were Anna Greenhalgh, Alan Fairweather and Mick Fisher. We have worked well as a team with Anna focusing on finances, Mick concentrating on staff matters and Alan working tirelessly on property issues.

We are pleased to present the Wardens' report for the 2021/2022 church year, and once again, what a year it has been!

We would like to acknowledge and thank the members of Parish Council: Dushi Arulanantham, Adam Brussaard-Kerr, Sirelle Fisher, Chloe Manson, Vicki Miller and David Woods. It has once again been a challenging year, as we attempted to recover from the pandemic and look towards the future.

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 challenges, all the while seeking to 'know Jesus. Make Jesus known'.

Staff

Once again, our staff have been a great blessing to us. Despite the challenges of returning to in-person services and all the changes this has entailed, they have been cheerful, encouraging and resourceful, able to adapt to every situation as it arose.

After a long period with few changes in staff, we have seen more 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:

Revd Dr Tim Johnson

We continue to thank God for the wisdom, integrity and purpose shown by Tim as our Senior Minister. 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 all who attend St John's 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.



Revd Kirk Mackenzie

Kirk's gifts in leading services, presenting engaging and challenging sermons, and caring for and supporting members of the 6pm congregation have been wonderful for us here at St John's. As well as the many talents we observe when he's out in front of church services, Kirk has been nurturing and guiding upcoming leaders within our congregations.

All these talents made Kirk the perfect choice for him to be appointed as the Priest-in-Charge at Plenty Life church. We wish Kirk and his family well, while acknowledging that we'll miss them.

Revd Joel Snibson

We welcomed Joel and his family to St John's early in 2022 when he joined the staff team. Since then, Joel has thrown himself fully into the activities of the parish, leading services, preaching, and all that's involved with being an associate minister. We thank God for Joel's skills and abilities as he concentrates on leading the 6pm service in the coming year.

Delle Matthews

Delle has been overseeing Life Groups for a year now. We thank God for her gifts of pastoral care, guidance and wisdom in this role, and for the support she gives to Life Group leaders. We also occasionally see her leading services or delivering challenging sermons, sharing her vast wealth of knowledge, experience and wisdom with us. We thank Delle for taking on the position with such dedication.

Kylie Pilkington

Kylie has had a great year as Children and Families' Minister. We have a growing group of young people involved in children's ministries, and Kylie and her team have done a great job caring for and teaching them well. Kylie has also been busy caring for families with children who attend St John's.

After many years of service to St John's in a range of positions, Kylie has announced she will be stepping down from her role at the end of the year. We thank God for the loving, caring and gifted woman Kylie is, and the blessings she has brought to His people here in our parish.

Andi Fidock

Early in the year Andi announced her intention to step down from her role as Youth Minister. Nonetheless, she has continued to have an important role in creating a smooth transition to her successor, Cam Berndt. On top of that she has challenged us with her deeply thought out and brilliantly presented sermons. We thank God for the work Andi has done and wish her well with her ongoing studies.

Cam Berndt

Cam has taken to his new position on staff as Youth Minister with energy and commitment. His leadership and planning of youth activities and his dedication to care for and support the youth of our parish are a great blessing to us all. We are glad to support Cam in the work he is doing with our youth.

Andy Barras

Andy's position as Digital Minister continues to be important to us as our online presence reaches out to so many people. Andy and his growing team of volunteers continue to provide filming, sound recording, lighting, computing and editing skills that have been invaluable to the parish.

Carolyn Burns

Carolyn is often the first contact people have with our church, and her gentle and caring nature is invaluable in this position. CB also does a lot of the planning and rostering that is so necessary in our church. Many of us rarely see how well she handles 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 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 from time to time. Megan Street and Scott Pilkington also stood in during a period while Carolyn was on leave, as did Tania Grinton while Henrike was on leave.

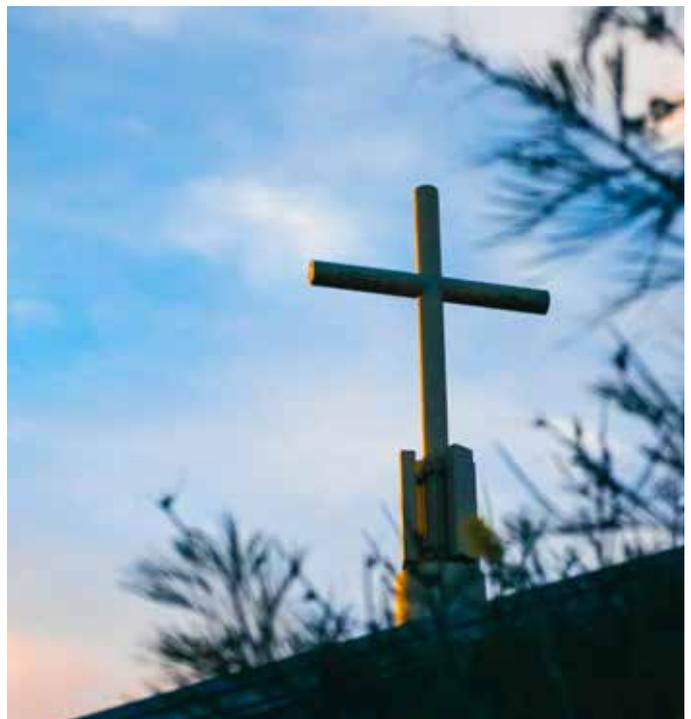
Dianne Cheraghi works in the “office” (at home), performing the important role of financial bookkeeper with a gentle blend of helpfulness and guidance, making sure that the books are kept accurately and up to date.

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 we have gradually gone back to “Covid normal”. 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

We faced another challenging year on the finance front. Going into the year with another deficit budget, the Wardens were determined to keep a close eye on our finances to continue being careful stewards of our resources and ensure we were still meeting our obligations. We again started the year with a fantastic response to our Thanksgiving Appeal, which gave us a strong foundation to begin 2021/2022.



As we had anticipated, our giving continued to show impacts of the pandemic as we struggled to meet our budget for giving at the start of the year. We had a few strong months in the middle of the year but towards the end of the year our giving was well behind budget. The Wardens attempted to keep the parishioners informed with regular updates to try and clearly state our financial position, both the good months and the bad, which saw some improvement in our giving, but unfortunately, we finished the year quite behind in our giving.

Warden's Report

2021/2022 saw the end of the Government's JobKeeper scheme, which although expected and budgeted for, had a significant impact on our bottom line. We did not make any changes to staffing this year, keeping all staff on their existing



hours, but as the year progressed and we started to plan the budget for 2022/2023, questions around staffing had to be put forward. Around this time, Kirk advised Tim and the Wardens that he had applied for and been offered the position of Priest-in-Charge at Plenty Life.

The Wardens requested a series of budgets to review and compare our possible responses to this major staffing change, all influenced in part by the timing of the change. By God's grace, Kirk was accepted into the role in time for the Wardens to narrow down the possible budgetary responses to his placement and present our

recommended option to Parish Council, which was to not seek a replacement for Kirk in an effort to try and reduce what was looking like a sizeable budget deficit. This decision was not taken lightly, but in consultation with Tim and our wonderful Treasurer, David Woods. Although we have been able to continue to meet our obligations this year, we have seen a reduction in our cash reserves and as good stewards, we must try and stop doing this.

2022/2023 is presenting as another challenging year in many ways but we are confident that with continued prayer and support from God and the congregation, we will make it through.

Once again, we are grateful for the tireless efforts of Treasurer David Woods and our able bookkeeper Dianne Cheraghi in their continued management of the complex financial matters that continue to arise as we recover 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 and we are thankful for their knowledge, tenacity and support.

Property

Throughout this year, as in the past, there have been many people who volunteer of their time and skills to assist in maintaining and improving the buildings and gardens of the church. The Wardens and all members of the church take this opportunity to thank those people. Their support, in so many ways, is greatly appreciated.

The reporting year commenced with the toilet upgrade project being completed on time (a week before Christmas!) and within the set budget. The new facilities have been a great improvement from the former ones and have been appreciated by many.

In conjunction with the toilet upgrade, the library

and crèche areas (both inside and out) were improved. New carpet was laid, split system air conditioners were installed, new doors and windows added and synthetic grass laid in the playground. A special thanks to Lenny Barras for painting the playground wall and cubby house. Since this work was completed, the door handles have been raised to stop escapees!

Three productive working bees have been conducted with many gardening needs addressed. Thank you to all those who have attended. A special thanks to Philip Wadson for his commitment to caring for the lawns and gardens on a regular basis at St John's and to Bruce Harman for attending to the lawns and gardens at St Katherine's and St Michael's.

Trolleys have been constructed to house chairs in the hall and to make them easier and safer to transport around the building.

The carpet in the foyer and hall had a much-needed steam clean. A successful trial of steam cleaning the material of a few pews was also undertaken. To clean them all would be an expensive exercise (approx \$4,000) which may need to be budgeted for in the future.

Recently the gutters, fascias and downpipes of the whole church complex, including the bell tower were repaired and painted. The exterior of the office building will be painted in the next few months. The bathroom and toilet areas of the flat, below the offices, have also been recently painted.

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 included in these inspections and reports. Appropriate work or processes are then put in place to rectify any areas needing attention.

Early in 2022, the Diocese conducted an Occupational Health and Safety Inspection throughout the three church complexes as well as an audit of all our Essential Safety Measures (policies and procedures). The inspector was very satisfied and complimentary of the way these areas were documented and issues addressed.

We have been blessed with wonderful facilities in which to meet and to share with the community. It is an ongoing commitment to maintain them, which we can all be involved.

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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 & Snibsons) \$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 \$4,498

Bush Church Aid (Edwards) \$2,940

Nungalinya College \$2,350

Anglican Overseas Aid \$2,350

Korus Connect \$2,350

Mustard \$2,350

Prison Fellowship \$2,350

Langham Partnership \$1,080

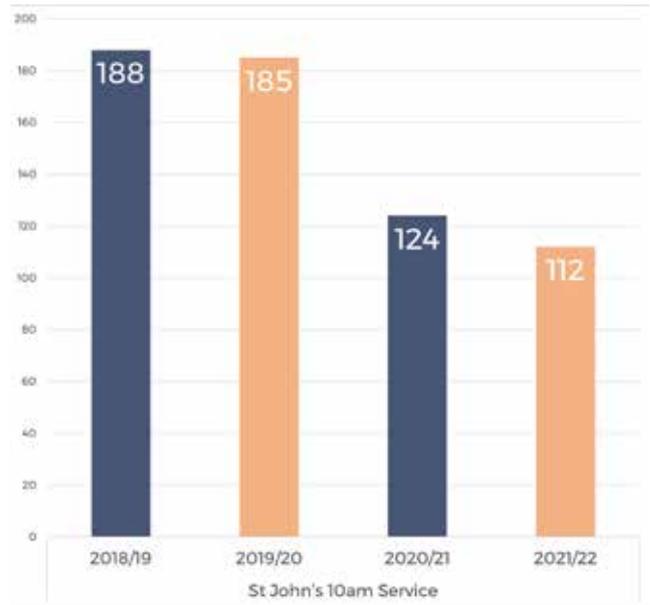
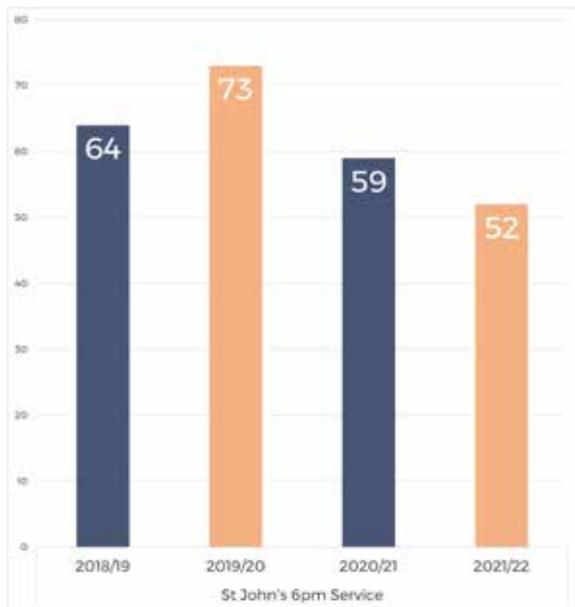
Kid's Hope \$990

Parish Statistics

Numbers never tell the whole story, but here are some statistics about our attendances at church, in-person and online.

Through the pandemic, in-person services were suspended from time to time, so 2020 and 2021 include fewer Sundays in these statistics.

2018/19 includes 52 Sundays,
2019/2020 includes 24 Sundays,
2020/21 includes 23 Sundays,
2021/22 includes 45 Sunday.



The 8am service started in June 2021, so the 2020/21 stats include 5 services, while the 2021/22 includes 43.

Many of the attendees now at 8am have moved from the 10am and branch churches, contributing to the drop at 10am between 2020/21 and 2021/22.

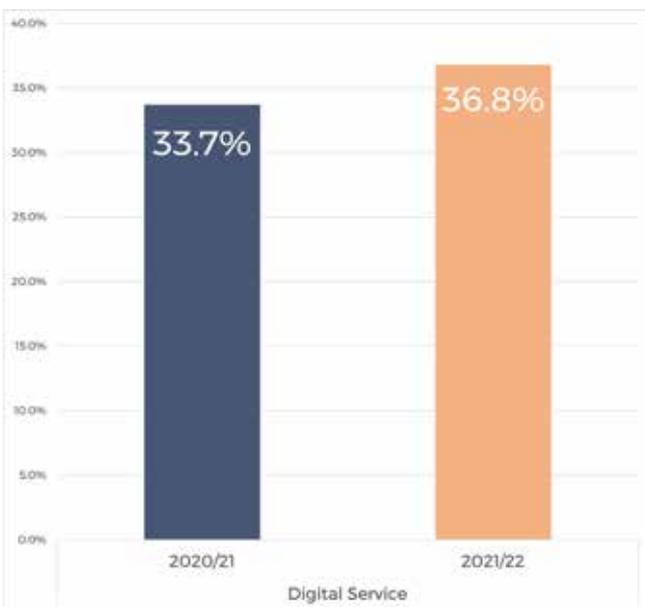


Tracking digital attendees remains a challenge, but we've focused on two main metrics: Watch Percentage and Concurrent Views.

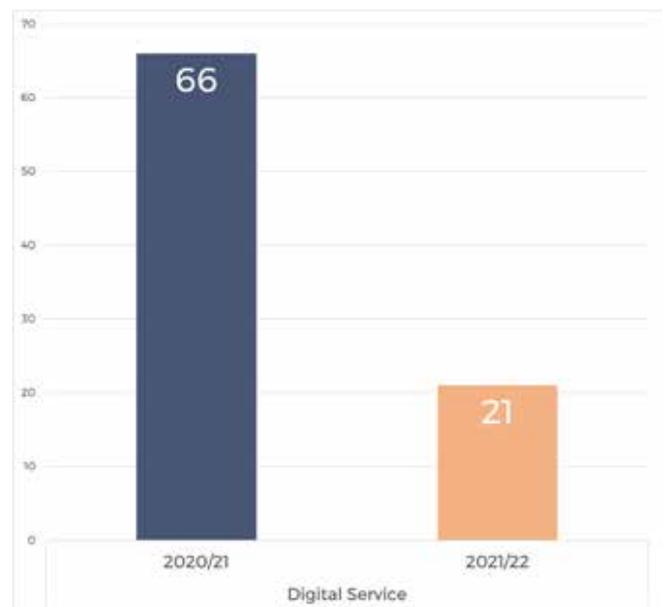
Watch Percentage tracks how long, on average, a viewer watches for. So the more of a service someone engages with, the higher the average percent.

Concurrent Views looks at how many people are tuning in 'live'. We also track how many views a service gets in total, with a number of people watching through the week. This number will continue to grow, the longer a service is available, as people can go back and watch any previous services at any time.

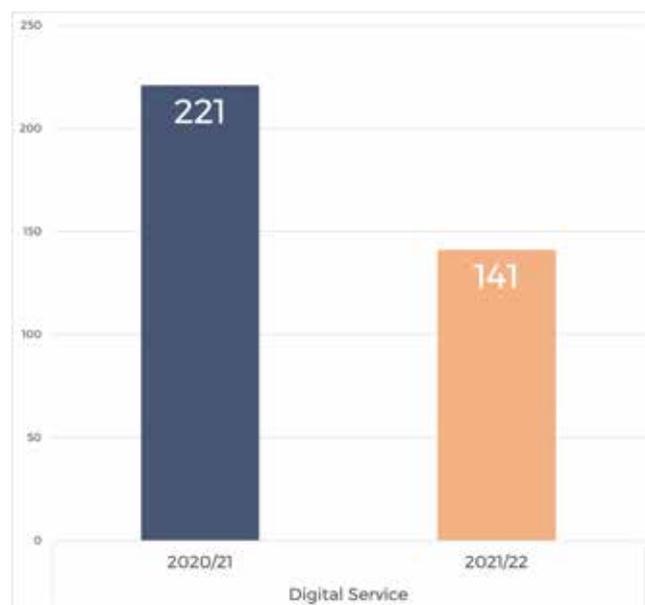
The concurrent viewership has greatly reduced in 2021/22, as we moved into the post-lockdown era of the pandemic, while watch percentages have grown substantially since re-launching the digital service in May 2022.



Watch Percentage



Concurrent viewers



Total Views

2021
2022

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