



ST JOHN'S DIAMOND CREEK

Local Mission Report 2024

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Local Mission Strategy 2023-2024

As we reflect on local mission through the life of St John's, our starting point is that God has been and will continue to faithfully be on mission in our community. We have the joy and privilege to partner with what our God is doing in making Jesus known in our moment in 2024.

St John's mission, vision, and values are all founded on our call to 'Know Jesus and Make Him Known'. This is the basis and motivation for the array of local mission throughout St John's, a value being to share Jesus in word and action.

Equipping for local mission happens throughout the whole life of the church, including in our services, life groups, and through various local mission teams (LMTs).

Local Mission Teams (LMTs) are smaller teams, engaging in regular mission and key events that serve Diamond Creek and beyond, aiming to create opportunities for gospel engagement.

Review of LMTs in 2023-2024

Town Fair Team

For decades St John's served the Town Fair with the 'Hospitality Tent'. This has provided a space away from the business of the Fair to rest, connect over hospitality, and allow kids to enjoy activities and free face painting.

In 2023, despite much promotion and energy, the team struggled to recruit enough volunteers to serve throughout the day, to assist with engaging the community and logistics.

We will be exploring trialling other creative opportunities to engage and love our community at the Town Fair in the coming years.

I want to especially honour the hard work, love, and service of Phil Wadeson and Dianne Cheraghi, who have driven the success of the hospitality tent over the years, which has been a blessing in our community on this special day for many years.

2023 Gingerbread Making Night

On December 8th, we hosted our second 'Gingerbread House Making Night'. This evangelistic event was aimed at the unchurched to enjoy a night of fun, experience our community, and also hear a clear gospel message about the meaning of Christmas. There was a great representation of non-church goers, with over eighty in attendance.

A big thank you to Caitlyn Cox who led this event and Jo Stolfa and Krissy Veerhuis for presenting.

2023 Community Carols Team

On December 17th, we hosted our annual Community Carols at Coventry Oval.

This year had increased community participation, with the addition of local singing school performances and a local Early Learning Centre, Smartie Pants, performing. The date was shared with two other Community Carols events locally (in Greensborough and Eltham) and while attendance was slightly down from 2022, there were still over 500 locals in attendance.

It was a great opportunity to bless our community and make Jesus known. The community carols leadership team was made up of Andy Barras, Sue Jetton, Jan Loughman, Phil Wadeson, and myself.

TOGETHER – ART Show

This event aimed to be pre-evangelism, seeking to build trust and curiosity as the church celebrates what's creative while building connections in local art communities.

The community engagement was high, with the team involving various art co-ops and art groups. On the Friday opening night, 'TOGETHER' heard an address from Christian guest speaker Lindy Yeates where the community outnumbered St John's members in attendance.

The open night had approximately 150 in attendance and a further 300 throughout the two-week gallery expo. Eighty percent of the artwork was by external artists.

The community feedback was very positive with artists appreciative to be able to display and sell their art – all commission-free.

Chaired by Janet Tiller, the 'TOGETHER' committee included Isobel Fisher, Jan Loughman, and Maike Prichard, who brought a diversity of skills to make 'TOGETHER' a success.

A big thank you to the planning committee for an exceptional effort, overseeing the gallery and twenty-six St John's volunteers who assisted in making it happen.

Leith Park and Wattle Glen Chapel Services

At Liscombe House, Leith Park, the team continues to run fortnightly chapel services, including a monthly Holy Communion service.

A big thank you to Bev Ward and Charlotte Chidell who now coordinate this ministry and outreach each fortnight. The Leith Park team includes Kris Ryal, Jan Hollingsworth, and Nola Borrie who provide ongoing pastoral care and assist in leading the services.

At Estia Health, Wattle Glen, the team includes Jan Hollingsworth, Charlotte Chidell, and Janice Smith supporting St John's bi-monthly Holy Communion services.

As the Diamond Creek Uniting Church without a clergy member, I have increased my presence to now leading monthly services. In both facilities, the staff have been incredibly supportive of our presence.

The Pantry

Implemented as a COVID measure in 2020, our community pantry is currently supplied in conjunction with Diamond Valley Community Support, and generously topped up by the St John's Community, and seasonal community support from Smartie Pants Early Learning Centre in Diamond Creek.

Diamond Valley has advised of uncertainty regarding the ongoing supply for our Community Pantry, as funding at COVID levels is no longer enjoyed.

The uncertainty about our current pantry model has been an opportunity to review our best approach in addressing food insecurity in our area in line with our mission and vision.

While the self-service pantry model provides dignity and privacy, the pantry has been unable to keep up with the demand. Further, the self-service model prevents personal engagement with those seeking food relief.

Nikki Isaacs and I have been conducting a timely review considering alternative models. This includes either a St John's run model and/or supporting existing services in the community. Any new initiative will be trialled for three months pending a review.

The recent July 'Winter Appeal' has been a success, a big thank you to all who contributed this has boosted our supplies for the current demand.

Furthermore, Tobin Brothers will be donating over \$2000 towards our pantry as part of their community initiative to celebrate turning ninety. This gift will be factored into the review.

Alpha Marriage Course May-June 2024

We hosted The Marriage Course, a seven-week course from May-June 2024. The goal of this seven-week course has been to engage with felt needs within our community and be an opportunity to serve and show Christ's love, deliberately being in the 'pre-evangelism' space, a step before an Alpha course.

The course consisted of nine couples; two couples were not churchgoers. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive and the attendance consistently high. I want to thank Rod and Janice Smith for their hospitality and leadership, and Carolyn Burns and the catering team who have helped create these wonderful evenings.

We are considering next steps, including following on with a regular Alpha later this year or early 2025.

The Memory Care Café

In conjunction with HealthAbility and the Nillumbik Carers Collective, St John's hosts a Memory Care Café in the foyer and hall on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month.

The café supports carers who are caring for loved ones with memory loss, providing a welcoming space for them to share their stories and find help amongst others in similar circumstances. At the same time, those with memory loss enjoy activities, companionship, and a break from routine in a supportive environment. A big thank you to Carolyn and Alan Fairweather, who lead St John's involvement, inclusive of eight volunteers.

CFA Suppers

Linda Cridland and Robyn Gorfine have continued the legacy of blessing and encouraging the Diamond Creek CFA with suppers for over 14 years now. This ministry has led to much goodwill and strong relationships with the CFA. We continue to be appreciative of their partnership with our Community Carols in 2023.