



Annual Meeting & Reports  
for the Year Ending 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020

29<sup>th</sup> November, 2020

## AGENDA

1. Prayer
  2. Apologies
  3. Minutes of 2019 AGM
  4. Reception of Parish Electoral Roll
  5. Senior Minister's Report
  6. Associate Minister's Report
  7. Assistant Minister's Report
  8. Reports of various ministries
  9. Budget for 2021
  10. Elections
    - wardens, parish council, auditor, parish nominees to the incumbency committee
9. Prayer

All reports except the Financial Report and Budget are to be taken as read.  
Please bring this booklet with you to the AGM.

**St. Mark's Church Emerald**  
Annual General Meeting  
Held on 24<sup>th</sup> November, 2019

The meeting started at 11.45 am in prayer

**1. Present**

42 members.

Apologies: Graeme Legge, Christina Diemar, Nicole Lane, Adam van Leeuwen, Ally Lord van Leeuwen

**2. Minutes**

The minutes of the 2018 AGM held on 25th November 2017 were received as an accurate record of that meeting. Prop. Andy Walker 2<sup>nd</sup> Colin Lane - Carried.

**3. Reception of Electoral Roll**

The Parish's Electoral Roll was received by the meeting.  
Prop. Peter Crafter 2<sup>nd</sup> Jan Aylott - Carried.

**4. Reports**

All reports were taken as read.

**4.1 Senior Minister** – Andrew explained that he would not be appointed incumbent until after 3 years as Priest in Charge, this is his third year at St Mark's. This is intended to allow deeper insights in the Parish and time to get to know the church members. 2019 was an opportunity to start working on the detailed implementation of the 'Vision', a process which would continue in 2020.

Q. What processes are in place to monitor the church's performance of our Vision and compare this to our stated aims?

A. It is the job of Parish Council to monitor all aspects of the church's activities and, after discussion, make recommendations for any desirable initiatives.

Q. To clarify – can there be a process to update the Vision documents on the website as we go so that we can present an authentic picture of our current activities to the community?

A. Yes, that is a good point to be aware of and the staff will take it into account.

**4.2 Finance report:-** Andy Walker spoke briefly about the report and explained which items were included in grouped figures. The church is in a healthy financial position and will enter 2020 with some cash reserves and no loans outstanding.

Q. We note that St Mark's holds some Woolworths shares. Is this company considered to be 'ethical'?

A. The shares were received as part of a donation, not purchased with intent by the parish. This will be discussed at the next Parish Council meeting and the shares will be sold if considered unsuitable for our portfolio.

Q. Is there supposed to be a 2020 budget in the reports? None has been included.

A. The budget has accidentally been left out of the printed booklet. We will print copies for distribution next week. The budget is approved by Parish Council at the meeting before the AGM.

Acceptance proposed Andy Walker 2nd Russell Soderlund . Carried.

All other reports were accepted as seen. Proposed Magda Lane, 2<sup>nd</sup> Leslie Ryder

## **5. Election**

### **5.1 Auditor**

WA Nutton and Associates, of Berwick were re-elected.

### **5.2 Wardens**

Courtney Clowes and Gill Birkett was re-elected, unopposed.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> warden, the Vicar's appointment, was Russell Soderlund

### **5.3 Parish Council**

Re-elected, unopposed was Colin Lane, Ruth Johnson, Katherine Mitchell, Anne Anderton, Peter Crafter.

New members are Mark Lockwood-Porter and Daniel Inglis (Vicar's appointment)

Retiring: warden Anne Anderton was thanked for her contribution.

### **5.4 Incumbency Committee**

Elected unopposed was Katherine Mitchell, Other position remains vacant for now.

## **6.**

### **Other Business**

None

## **7. The meeting closed at 12:17pm with prayer**

# Senior Minister's Report

My annual report for 2020 gives me the difficult task of summarising one of the most complicated and strange years in my life, and certainly the most challenging year in my time as a local church minister. As I was preparing this report I looked back at what I wrote for our AGM last year, and found myself grieving for the losses that we have experienced compared to what I believed would happen in 2020. Nevertheless, it is certainly right to remember what has happened and give thanks to God for his goodness.

## Before COVID

The last church year began with our Advent and Christmas season as we looked together at a selection of the 'Psalms of reorientation'. Just before Christmas we had the second of our successful 'Emerald Carols by the Lake' events, and many thanks go to the team of Gill Birkett, Russell Soderlund, Stephanie Cox and Mark Lockwood-Porter who prepared that, along with many volunteers from St. Mark's. We also had our first 'Blue Christmas' service which was well attended and seems to meet a need in our community for a time to reflect and grieve in this season.

In January and February we began the year looking at 1 John ('God is Love') and preparing ourselves for a year of new activities and new starts. However, we were shocked, as all Australia was, by the bushfires in NSW and Eastern Victoria and experienced first-hand the environmental effects with the smoke hanging over us for a significant period of time. Many of us believed that this catastrophe would be the defining event of 2020! Fortunately our local area was spared from serious fires this season (though there were some scares). We made a \$10 000 donation to Bush Church Aid as part of their response to this crisis and began to make some plans for further financial and volunteer support.

As Term 1 began we started our 'Year of Creation' with a series on the first twelve chapters of Genesis, delving into questions of the origins and purpose of our world. We were blessed during Lent to be joined by Sarah Johnson as she led us in the 'GEM Lent' reflections.

On the staff front, as Tanja Ungerer departed for Queensland before Christmas we welcomed Mark Lockwood-Porter as Parish Administrator, and Vivianne Dias took up her role as Assistant Curate with a focus on Mission. In February we also appointed Ally Thompson as our Pastoral Co-ordinator, to focus on some areas of our ministries that we felt needed to be developed such as small groups. I was privileged to be asked this year by the Archbishop to take up the position of 'Area Dean' of the Hills, which involves some pastoral leadership of the clergy in the local area. I was also offered the position of 'Vicar' of St. Mark's after my first three years as 'Priest-in-Charge', and I was happy to accept that appointment.

## Close/Reopen/Close/Reopen

All of what I have just written perhaps seems like more than nine months ago, as of course our year has been dominated by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic that has changed the face of our world. It became clear to us in early March that this was going to lead to a lockdown in Australia, and so we made the difficult decision to close our public gatherings. I am incredibly grateful to the Parish Council for their support during this very stressful time and for the encouragement and blessings from our members and the wider Hills community. We made the 'pivot' towards different ministry approaches (I will write more below about this) and set in for several months of lockdown. As you

know, in May/June there came an easing of restrictions and so we slowly prepared to reopen our worship services, office, and our Op Shop with a 'COVIDSafe' Plan. We owe many thanks to Anne Anderton and other members of the Parish Council who led us in those extensive preparations, which are still relevant today. However of course in July we were faced with the second lockdown which put those plans on hold. Since the 'roadmap' for reopening was announced in September we have been gathering ourselves again to slowly resume church activities. All of this change and constant need for new plans in the midst of uncertainty has been very tiring for me, as I'm sure it has been for many other leaders in community groups and businesses around the State. We have all experienced in particular the increased tension and anxiety in the second period of lockdown, which has had a far deeper impact on mental and financial health and drained our personal resources to 'bounce back'. However in God's mercy we appear to be entering a season where we can live at least a 'COVID Normal' life as a church.

## **Ministry during COVID**

### **Moving Online**

The most obvious change in our ministries during lockdown was our move towards online options. Due to quick work from our team (particular thanks must be given to Ally Lord van Leeuwen for her technical and editing work) we were able to start online worship services immediately as lockdown began. Our decision was to embrace the 'lounge room' reality of our lives and create pre-recorded services on Youtube that could bring worship to people in their own space and time. The format of this and the way people engage with it have changed over the past nine months and this is something worth doing much reflection on. Since then we have been working on the technical needs involved in producing genuine 'livestream' services which will probably be a feature of our church for years to come. Digital worship is a very complicated topic but one that we believe holds great promise for the future, as we know that our services during lockdown have connected with many new people and been a good way for people to introduce their friends and family to Jesus and to connect with St. Mark's. The possibilities for developing this ministry are endless and as we go into the New Year we will be continuing to work on this. Our other worship opportunities have included numerous Zoom services such as morning prayer and a Wednesday Holy Communion service.

Our teaching on the topic of 'Creation' has continued throughout this period. Following our series on Genesis we had our first 'online Easter' which offered many opportunities for prayer and reflection, including a Maundy Thursday service for the first time in many years. In Term 2 we studied the book of Proverbs and the wisdom that God has put into his Creation. In Term 3 we turned to the New Testament to look at Paul's letter to the Colossians and the theme of 'Renewal'. Finally, in Term 4 we are considering the Kingdom of God and the Servant Songs of Isaiah. We are looking forward to celebrating our first 'online Christmas', with Emerald Carols by the Lake preparing for a virtual format and planning being done for our livestream services for Blue Christmas and on Christmas Eve. Our hope is to share the light of Christ in the best ways we can as 'the weary world rejoices' to celebrate his birth as our Saviour.

We have also experimented with other online ministry opportunities throughout the year. One of those is the ability we have to produce a variety of content for equipping and encouraging people in their faith. I have produced a series of seminars on 'Spirituality at Home' that has been quite popular, and I intend to produce similar content in the future. We have taken advantage of the convenience of Zoom to run a number of online courses, including the Alpha Marriage Course, the Toolbox Parenting Course, and the Revelation subject of the Ridley Certificate.

Many of our regular outreach and fellowship groups have continued in online form as well. Hollie and the team have continued to connect with our Playgroups via Zoom, and Anne has continued Powerhouse Kids in a similar fashion. Jerome has launched a new group for Youth and Vivianne is leading a Young Adults gathering. All of these activities should be described in their reports. Several small groups have continued meeting online through the lockdown periods as well. Our new 'Family Life' team has worked on connecting and resourcing St. Mark's families to worship and grow at home together.

We have adopted new communication strategies during this time, including our new email newsletter and a greater use of social media to promote and communicate about our ministries.

As we approach the end of the year most of us are very tired of online-only options and longing for personal, face-to-face contact again. I hope that we are able to discern a good balance of the old and the new forms of gathering and interacting as we move forward together.

### **Connection and Care**

I think that the main challenge we have experienced as a church this year has been the disruption to our normal patterns of connection and gathering. We have been isolated in our homes and only allowed very narrow social opportunities for a long time. There is no denying that across the community and across our church this has done significant damage to the social fabric, to the closeness of our relationships, and our mental and emotional wellbeing. We will certainly be healing and repairing this damage for many years to come, and it will inform our ministry plans a great deal in 2021.

We have tried to mitigate this problem and maintain connections in our church as much as possible during lockdown. Like many churches our first thought was to pivot towards a focus on small groups, but it soon became clear that groups of this size would not be permitted to meet during lockdown. As we emerged from the first lockdown we attempted to create new groups and strengthen existing groups to allow for as many of our members as possible to meet in homes while we were waiting to be able to gather in large groups again. I thank Ally Thompson for her diligent work on this, particularly as unfortunately the second lockdown stopped this process before it had time to develop. It is clear that in the future we need to work on new and flexible ways of helping church members to connect so that we have the resources to cope with this sort of situation effectively, and build a deeper community life overall.

The pastoral care team and staff have attempted to maintain regular contact with church members who may be isolated, and keep general contact with others as well as we lack most of the normal ways of 'touching base'. Ally Thompson has co-ordinated the team to provide meals and other practical support to those who are in need during this time. There have been a number of crisis situations this year that have required special pastoral responses on top of regular needs, and I commend all of the staff and pastoral carers for their care and diligence. I also thank all of our members who have taken the time to connect with others, to go for a walk, make a phone call or text, to show Christian love to each other as the Body of Christ. I have been very moved by the amount of love that has been shown in our church this year as people have cared for each other.

We are aware that in the coming year many people will experience financial distress as a result of the recession that we are now in, particularly if unemployment grows when the JobKeeper program is ended in March 2021. This will in all likelihood affect the financial support of our church, as expressed in our Budget for next year, and the Parish Council is preparing for our response to that

challenge. However we are confident that God will provide for our needs and that our response should be to trust and do the work he puts before us.

We have worked alongside ECHO Youth and Family Services and Rotary in distributing grocery vouchers to families in need, and in partnership with the Hills Hub to provide them laptops and internet services. In June the Parish Council set up a new 'Care Fund' with the Melbourne Anglican Benevolent Society to allow for tax-deductible donations from our members towards financial and material emergency assistance to people in our area. To date this has received approximately \$11,000 worth of donations and we have given about \$2500 worth of vouchers and other financial assistance. We expect that needs for help will increase in the next year and I commend this Fund to you as a way of supporting our local community.

### **A Time for 'ReVision'**

As we have approached the end of lockdown I have been convinced that it is time for us to reconsider our plans as a church. For the past two years we have been working on our 'STM 2028' plan which has provided guidance to our decisions as we aim towards our vision to 'become a community of transformation'. However, many of those plans are now not relevant to our new context, and it is time to engage again with what God is doing in our midst and where he is leading us. We also need some new guiding principles in order to make decisions about how to use our resources effectively in the coming years. Therefore I have initiated a new time of prayer and reflection with St. Mark's leaders and members which we have called 'ReVision'.

My personal hope is that in this new season we will be able to empower and equip our members to live out your calling as followers of Jesus where he has placed you, and turn our eyes away from purely church-based activities and more towards the 'kingdom of God' and where God is at work in the world around us. Our new 'ReVision' plan will be more simple and flexible than STM 2028, with a shorter-term focus and an emphasis on bringing out the passions and values of all of our members, the things that God has placed in our hearts. The discussions that I have had so far with various groups around St. Mark's suggest that he is calling us to be a community where we deeply connect with God and with each other, and serve those in need around us.

I genuinely do not know at this point what 2021 will hold, as we prepare to resume worship and other ministries together. This year has taught me to rely less on my own wisdom and more on God's guidance each day. Please pray that we will walk in the way that he wants us to go.

### **Special Thanks**

I conclude with special thanks to those who have served, encouraged and supported St. Mark's this year. I am tremendously grateful for the wonderful staff team that I work with, their tenacity and faith being tested and shown in new ways this year. I pray that you will be 'victorious' and receive the hidden blessing that Jesus holds for you (Rev 2:17).

I also want to thank the Parish Councillors, who have been unwavering in their support and wisdom this year, and flexible in embracing our new Zoom meeting format. Thanks go to Peter Crafter and Andy Walker who have wrestled with the tremendously complicated issues around administering JobKeeper and projecting our budget for 2021. And to our Wardens – Gill Birkett, Russell Soderlund and Courtney Clowes, who have encouraged me in many ways and helped carry the burdens of leadership. We thank Gill as she stands down from her role as Warden after six years and looks forward to new things.



Thanks also go to all the volunteers who have given of their time and energy in various ministries this year, often unseen and unrecognised because of our time in lockdown. I particularly want to thank Joe Verrill as he stands down as co-ordinator of the 8am and 11am congregations after 25 years. And I thank Magda Lane and the Op Shop Committee as they have worked with their volunteers to continue that ministry and look forward to the future.

## **Conclusion**

November 2020 finds us in a very different place to November 2019. I am sure that November 2021 will also be very different again. As I said at the start of this report, much has changed since our last AGM that could not be foreseen. The grief of our losses in that time is real and should not be ignored. I know that many of us will find the journey onward from this point to be a struggle that requires grace, perseverance and God's comfort.

However, I would like to finish with the Scripture that I used to conclude my Report in 2019, as I believe it is more relevant than ever as we contemplate the coming year:

*Yet this I call to mind  
and therefore I have hope:  
Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed,  
for his compassions never fail.  
They are new every morning;  
great is your faithfulness.  
I say to myself, "The LORD is my portion;  
therefore I will wait for him."*

Lamentations 3:21-24

- **Andrew Bowles**

## **Emerald Services 2019/2020**

Attendances – N/A

Communion – N/A

Weddings – 0

Funerals – 2

Baptisms – 0

Confirmation – 0

Reception – 1

Christmas Services – 297 (including Glades)

Easter Day – N/A

## Associate Minister's Report

To say that 'this has been a very different year' would be a massive understatement. To report on this year's ministry, I feel invited to consider a pre-COVID-19 and mid-COVID-19 reflection ...maybe there will be a post-COVID-19 report next year!

### Pre-COVID-19 Ministry

My role continues to see me assist in the general ministry of the church through worship co-ordinating/leading, preaching and pastoral care in its various forms. I also continued to help lead the 11am Communion Service (pre-COVID-19).

Another significant aspect of my role had been the responsibility of overseeing the establishment of a new worshipping community (congregation). I had developed a process and plan for how this might be achieved and was just about to conduct a church-wide workshop as part of this process, before COVID-19 hit. However, this direction has not been in vain, as we now find ourselves in a ReVisioning process that is allowing us to consider 'what God is doing', and what 'a worshipping community' might look like, in response to that. This seems to be a very encouraging way forward that I am keen to support.

### Mid-COVID-19 Ministry

Most of the general ministry has continued on in various new forms due to the pandemic. Getting my head around the use of technology for service leading and preaching, and other ministry tasks has been a new area of development that I am determined to keep growing in. Pastoral care has involved more phone calls and connections through Zoom meetings and Zoom suppers, and I also helped in the preparations of a funeral for one of our members. In our first lockdown I was also helping lead a Morning Prayer service via Zoom.

This year has also seen me offer more direct oversight and direct pastoral care for youth and young adults. Due to restrictions and lockdowns, our Youth@10am and Youth Bible Study programs ceased. With this challenge, along with other questions around spiritual formation for young people, it became very clear that immediate and intentional nurture of this ministry was needed and I found myself very willing and passionate to respond. I have since done some work on considering a more holistic model for the spiritual formation of young people and am slowly working on seeing this implemented. We have had nearly 3 terms of an online program for youth (up to 8 attend) which I believe has been an encouraging time overall.

Viv has been supporting me with the Youth Ministry and sharing the leadership of the Young Adults ministry. The young adult small group (currently 6) have been meeting via Zoom approximately fortnightly, socially and for spiritual discussion. We have been working through a book together called 'Making Sense of God' by Timothy Keller. Both the Youth and Young Adult ministries have been conducted mid-COVID-19 and as such, I am so grateful for God's faithfulness and care of these younger communities during these times of restrictions.

### The Eternal Vantage Point

I have shared from a pre-COVID-19 and mid-COVID-19 ministry perspective, but the perspective that will give us the best view of what is really going on, will be from an eternal vantage point. God has given to His Church the privilege of being seated with Christ in the heavenly realms (Eph. 2:6), so we have both the privilege and responsibility to be attentive to God's cosmic purposes being worked out in our local context. I am honoured to be a part of our faith community, together with Andrew, the

leadership, the staff and all in our community, working together to be an authentic expression of God's transforming presence in Emerald and the Hills.

*Jerome Dias*

## **Assistant Minister's Report**

Firstly, I want to express gratitude and appreciation for the support I received from the St Mark's community when I was ordained a Deacon in February this year. I was deeply touched by those from St Mark's who attended the occasion and humbled by the love and support I was surrounded by as I commenced ordained ministry at St. Mark's.

As an Assistant Minister, my role is broad, but I have responsibilities in coordinating our approach to missions and our outreach endeavours, and overseeing our Worship Ministry. My role also includes general responsibilities in preaching, leading services, pastoral care, and supporting discipleship and equipping (particularly of women). Jerome and I also responded to the need to develop a Young Adults Ministry, and step into leading our Youth Ministry, which Jerome has reported on.

### Mission at St Mark's

I commenced this year with the aim of supporting what we are already doing in reaching out to our community, including our Family Life programs (playgroup, Powerhouse Kids, 5/6s and holiday programs), the Bereavement support ministry that Heather Maxwell has been leading, and the CareLine (represented by Sandra Beltran's volunteer work with them). A significant part of our current missional work is also through our Opp Shop and pastoral/practical care to our community, which Magda Lane, Ally Thompson (as our Pastoral Care Coordinator), our pastoral care team (and all those who make meals or supply material support), along with the support of ECHO, have been aptly engaged in.

With COVID-19 dramatically effecting our outreach programs, we've been forced to re-think traditional avenues for outreach. The Family Life team have reported on how they have done this. There has certainly been an emphasis on personal relationships and follow-up with people connected to our programs, which have been greatly valued among members of our local community. COVID-19 has also brought to the fore the value of ministries such as the CareLine, where the presence of Jesus is brought to people who are isolated and struggling through a caring conversation which is just a phone call away. The CareLine also links vulnerable people to local support services and churches (such as St Mark's), where they can receive ongoing support and the blessing of a caring community. We had a recruitment drive for CareLine volunteers during April and May, and ran an information evening for those interested in knowing more. Some who attended then participated in the CareLine training. We continue to support Sandra's ministry through the CareLine, and will continue to promote the CareLine locally in our community.

With the heightened awareness of grief within our community, Heather Maxwell, Sandra Beltran and myself have been exploring an appropriate approach to help meet this need, and hope to run 'The Bereavement Journey' – a short course for those processing their bereavement, early next year (whether online or on site), which will tie in to the ongoing Bereavement Support Group facilitated by Heather.

St Mark's again participated in the 'Thy Kingdom Come' prayer movement this year. This focussed, 10 days of prayer before Pentecost helped us to develop rhythms of prayer for our friends, family members and colleagues who are not yet Christian. I always find during these times of prayer, that I become more alert to how God is at work in the lives of my non-Christians friends and family members, and more open to responding to the opportunities God provides for conversations about Jesus. I hope this is your experience too.

Apart from these wonderful missional opportunities that we are responding to as a church, we each have missional opportunities all around us, even when in lockdown. The resource that Ally Lord Van Leeuwen developed about 'Sharing the Love of God in Lockdown' (see <https://www.stmarksemerald.org.au/category/st-marks-blog/>) provides a great summary of ways we can think about how we can actively participate in what God is doing around us, even when restrictions limit us. In the coming year, I hope to help us keep thinking about what it could look like to be a community on mission together, and to be families on mission together. To explore further about how we, as a community who love Jesus and love each other, are showing the grace of the gospel through our lives and relationships. And to perhaps challenge us to think more deeply about what it means to be 'a community of transformation.'

*"Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone." - Col 4:5-6*

### Worship Ministry

Andrew has reported on Worship Services this year. My role in overseeing the worship team commenced last year, and involves supporting, resourcing and equipping our musicians, vocalists, and artists, leading the musical direction of our church, equipping people to be service leaders and worship leaders, and inspiring the congregation in their connection with God.

In February, we held a 'Summer Jam' for our musicians and vocalists to enjoy freely worshipping together, and learn some new songs. These 'jam sessions' also provide an opportunity for anyone in our congregation who wants to explore their musical and vocal gifts to 'give it a go' and perhaps begin exploring their further involvement in our worship ministry.

During lockdown we have been focussing on engaging the participation of the worship team in the digital ministry space. This has largely occurred through our Worship Recording Project, in which our worship team records songs to be used in our online services. Adam Van Leeuwen is producing these songs and videos, and I'm grateful for his support, his engagement with this project and his generosity in giving so much of his time. It has not only been a blessing for us as a worship team to express our heart of worship and work together, but has also been a blessing to the congregation to 'see' members of the team leading them in worship online. Keep looking out for more St Mark's songs in our online services! It has also been a delight to see more people in our congregation, particularly young women, using their gifts in leading intercessions and bible readings online. We love releasing people to lead others and contribute to the Body of Christ.

I've also enjoyed helping us to use other means of worship during lockdown, for example, our Maundy Thursday Facebook Livestream reflection and meditation, which engaged over 300 views, and opportunities for lament, mindfulness and gratitude during our online services.

In the coming months, as we begin to slowly open up as restrictions ease, I look forward to reconnecting as the Body of Christ in awe of our glorious and gracious God. And as our church space becomes again a place of gathering before God, I hope to engage the creatives amongst us in re-beautifying our worship and stage space next year.

*"Let your steadfast love become my comfort..." - Ps 119:76*

*"Lord, You have been our dwelling place..." - Ps 90:1*

**- Vivianne Dias**

# Ministries at St. Mark's

## Communications

At the start of 2020, the communications ministry had plans for a gradual transition to new online initiatives, like an e-newsletter, but I certainly wasn't expecting to be rapidly catapulted into a new 'online' frontier. What an exciting and invigorating year it has been for all church communication workers. At St. Mark's, it has been somewhat daunting at times, with huge learning curves around many a corner, but a truly wonderful time learning new skills and achieving significant goals. Like that epic first online service!

A lot of the communications role this year has been taken up with all elements of producing online services. From filming, collating, editing, embellishing, researching copywrite laws, uploading to YouTube and publicising.

The new look, online newsletter has also been established, which has been well received and helpful for its interactive elements. Being able to produce surveys, and other online forms used by staff to connect and gain understanding of what is going on for our church community. A lot of my role, is also facilitating and training other staff and volunteers in the use of online methods of communicating, and I have to applaud the team, for their willingness to learn new programs, and becoming competent with useful programs that help them do their roles and stay connected with their groups. Social media groups have been a major part of families staying connected, and have provided opportunity for outreach and evangelism.

On an internal level, this year, we have upgraded our internal staff communications, becoming competent 'teams' and Zoom users.

The learning of new communication methods will continue throughout the coming months, as we move to streaming and pre-recorded service elements. My greatest encouragement and passion coming through this year, is the value of digital platforms in the expansion and promotion of God's Kingdom. The vision moving forward is to use these tools for more evangelical and discipling opportunities.

Ally Lord-van Leeuwen

*'And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.'*

Col 3:17

## Pastoral care Coordinator Report

I started my work in Pastoral care for St Marks in the middle of March 2020 and very quickly Covid 19 took over our lives. All the responsibilities I expected to take; developing small groups, welcoming new members, managing volunteers and supporting the Rev Bowles in events and courses evaporated in the fear of disease and death.

What I have done is; work through each members' Elvanto contacts and updated as necessary, created a church directory (only distributed to those who do pastoral care), encouraged the existing small groups to keep in contact, created a few lists of church members so that we can ascertain that each person has been contacted, continued the card ministry done by Miriam Davies, regularly contacted those people who actively do pastoral care in a voluntary capacity, sent cards of encouragement, visited people, responded to emergency care and prayed with people. I have rather reluctantly become the contact person for the food in the refrigerator and hopefully it is a much easier source of help to both contribute to and take from.

I have really enjoyed doing the pastoral care and hope that even if I haven't phoned each member personally that they will have felt loved and valued by someone in our church community. Before I came to this job there was a lot of pastoral care happening at St Marks already and I want us to appreciate all the amazing people who have done this work voluntarily for years and continue to be a light for the Lord in our community.

Perfect Love drives out fear. God is love... God drives out fear. Let us, as the Lord's workers, confidently bring in the harvest without fear.

Ally Thompson

## Warden's Report

**James Chapter 4: 13 – 17** <sup>13</sup> Now listen, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money." <sup>14</sup> Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. <sup>15</sup> Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that." <sup>16</sup> As it is, you boast in your arrogant schemes. All such boasting is evil. <sup>17</sup> If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn't do it, it is sin for them.

This year the parish focus was intended to be on continuing to work towards the STM 2028 Vision. While the overall vision is still clear: "establishing a community where God's transforming presence is experienced", the steps towards realising this vision have been dramatically affected by COVID-19 and lockdown.

From a financial perspective St Mark's has continued to be blessed by many faithful givers. These offerings, together with government support through the Job Keeper program, has allowed the parish to achieve a small surplus for 2019/20. Our original financial plan was for a significant deficit. The parish has adequate financial resources for the coming year - however, after that, our financial outlook is unclear. Again, James Chapter 4 seems appropriate...

Since March, our staff have adapted rapidly to online services and ways of supporting parishioners remotely. We are extremely thankful for their efforts and service during this time. The disruptions of lockdown make team work more difficult and threaten morale. We are very pleased with how they have dealt with these challenges.

From a buildings perspective, the main task this year was the re-roofing of the Children's Centre – with steel roofing replacing the old, leaking cement tiles. The new roof will serve that building well for a long time to come.

Gill Birkett takes sabbatical leave from her role as Warden this year. She is a gifted, creative leader, skilled in identifying and addressing strategic issues. The remaining Wardens will miss her and we thank her for this aspect of her valued service to St Mark's. We hope she will return to this role one day.

In June this year Andrew Bowles completed his third year as Priest in Charge at St. Mark's. After an Incumbency review we were very pleased to announce that Andrew has now been appointed the Vicar of St. Marks with a 10 year appointment. Great news!

All in all, St Mark's has a lot to be thankful for and given the difficult year it has been, we have "got through" quite well. Our mission remains as being an authentic expression of God's transforming presence in Emerald and the Hills. Now and in the future, we pray that many will seek to know God, experience spiritual healing and grow in their faith. We believe St Mark's can be a key part of that journey.

Courtney Clowes, Russell Soderlund and Gill Birkett.

## **Children's Ministry Reports**

### **Children and Families Ministry Report**

To our St Marks' Members,

In a year like no other, I am so thankful for God's provision for ministry to children and families at St Marks. This year has seen our ministries flex and adapt to our restrictions around social gatherings, trying new methods of engagement in the online space and also go back to some old ways of connection with craft packs and mail outs. Thankyou to everyone who has supported Children's ministry by giving financially, praying, encouraging and volunteering.

Hollie Boniface

Children and Families Minister

#### **Playgroup**

We started the year strong with three playgroups happening on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. The first lockdown pushed us to experiment with playgroup online for the first time ever, our groups meeting together weekly over zoom to hear a story, show and tell and sing some songs. We then realised the need for families was connection and moved to a more personal model of messaging, calling and posting craft packs and letters to our families which was well received. When we were able to, we met physically in parks or sometimes driveways to have a face to face chat. I think this has been effective in maintaining relationships with our playgroup families and need to offer a huge thankyou to our playgroup leaders who have risen to the new challenges that have arisen from online ministry and a more pastoral care approach.

#### **Kids Connect and Sparklers**

At some stage this financial year, God laid on my heart to have a name change from Kidschurch to Kids Connect. Keeping our same values of connecting with God and connecting with each other and providing space for that to happen on a Sunday morning alongside our worship services. During lockdown there has been a great collaboration between the outreach ministries of Powerhouse and the 5/6's and Kids Connect, with Anne Benc and team providing opportunities for kids to connect with their peers online while I have focussed more on our Sunday worship services.

Highlights for me have been:

- Seeing the input from families who have volunteered to do a reading or prayer, act out or read a Bible story.
- Reno Rules. Big thanks to Leslie Ryder for all her enthusiasm in getting this project happening, and a thanks to the congregation for the encouragement along the way and for cheering on our acting!
- Worship at Home kits that have gone out to help families engage with online services. A big focus this year has been on equipping parents to grow faith at home through exploring prayer, Bible reading and faith in action together.

#### **Parenting Toolbox**

It was wonderful to be able to offer Parenting Toolbox (the early years) in an online format. At a time when parents were longing for connection, St Marks was able to provide a way for parents to be supported and equipped with parenting skills. Again, I offer my thanks to the St Marks members who supported Parenting Toolbox with financial support, attendance and prayer.

- **Hollie Boniface**

## **Outreach**

### **POWERHOUSE KIDS, 5/6/ @ St Marks**

It has certainly been a different year as I sit to write this report.

As I reflected on how our outreach programs would survive when Covid hit, I realised God is always at the centre using life's challenges to further his Kingdom.

I have been able to connect and have more personable conversations with the families we have during the 6 months past than I ever would if our programs were running. Phone chats or pastoral needs have been paramount during this time of isolation.

A key point I learnt early on was if we were not reaching out to keep connected how do we expect these families/children to stay connected with St Marks.

### **5/6 @ St Marks highlights**

We were fortunate to get a full term in with our 5/6 group. A delighted vibrant group moving through from our Powerhouse Program joined this year.

Term 2 & 3 we had Zoom chats on a Friday afternoon with a small group who wanted to catchup.

The time was always reflection on a biblical message and playing a game online together. Very different to what our normal high energy games are at the Church. Most importantly we had our outreach families eager to connect.

### **Powerhouse Kids highlights**

We started the year off with a fantastic team and group of children. Unfortunately, our final week we had no choice but to cancel our family dinner as the first lockdown commenced.

Easter was a great opportunity to deliver Christian packs to our children. Hence our correspondence by email and pastoral calls began for what has now been on going still to today.

Term two we commenced Powerhouse on Zoom. This proved to be a great way to see some of the children in a totally different setting and letting them share more personally about life in ISO. Stories, games, & Just dance all taken to a different level.

Term three we teamed leaders with children outside our Church and began the letter writing program. This brought great joy to many families where I was getting messages of thanks from the parents. We also brought back Zoom for those who were very keen to attend.

Its been wonderful to get to know these families in a more pastoral way and I pray that we at St Marks can continue to shine Jesus' love during these uncertain times.

**For we are Gods workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. Ephesians 2 :10**

- Anne Benc



## Opp Shop Report

The opp shop has been serving our community for over 30 years, this has been made possible by our army of volunteers who have served faithfully during this time. This year has been unprecedented due to COVID 19 which has forced the closure of the shop since 21 March 2020.

We have implemented the appropriate COVID safe systems but are waiting for the state lockdown to end to enable us to reopen which at this stage will be 23 November 2020. We have and will continue to support the Emerald SES and CFA, Clematis CFA and local youth services in the Emerald area.

We again thank our volunteers and St. Marks for providing the premises so that our important work can continue, and we look forward to a post COVID recovery for all.

Of course, we thank GOD for his provision and guidance during a very difficult year.

### - The Opp Shop Committee

## Synod Report

**There was no Synod in 2020**

## Financial Report and Budget

**Accounts** - 2020 has been a challenging year for all of us. There has been significant uncertainty around COVID-19 and the associated lockdowns. That said, we have ended the financial year with a small surplus.

The surplus is largely due to JobKeeper payments received centrally by the Diocese from the Federal Government and passed on to parishes through not debiting salaries for some months and paying over the remaining amount to parishes at the end of the quarter.

Staff salaries are paid centrally by the Diocese with the cost passed on to parishes in the form of a debit. Staff costs were lower than expected in 2020 because of JobKeeper and the fact that the diocese did not debit staff costs for every month of the year and not all the staff team were in place for the full year. EFT giving has held up well despite the lockdown.

The Statement of Assets and Liabilities (balance sheet) shows that the Church has a healthy cash balance due in large extent to previous ECHO funding of our outreach programs. This is available to fund the planned deficit in 2021.

**Budget** - 2021 will continue to be challenging and there is still significant uncertainty.

There are three main variables affecting the 2021 budget: giving, the availability of further JobKeeper incentives and staff salaries.

We are submitting a planned deficit budget in order to continue our programs and staffing at current levels in the expectation that things will improve over the next few months. It is possible to proceed with a deficit budget because of the healthy cash balance brought forward from previous years.

Although the deficit is a challenge, there are several areas of potential upside: we have assumed that JobKeeper could deliver up to \$60,000 over the next few months (\$39,000 has already been received) and that giving will increase depending on when we can re-open the Church.

Staff levels are assumed to remain the same as now. Staff costs are budgeted to increase significantly compared to 2020 because the budget assumes that the Diocese will debit the full cost of staff salaries for every month, whereas the diocese did not debit staff costs for every month of 2020 and not all the staff team were in place for the full year. For these reasons, the 2020 accounts do not include a full year's staff costs, whereas the 2021 budget does include a full year's staff costs for the present staff. Staff costs include superannuation, housing and other benefits.

We will review the budget in six months' time as things become clearer and will make changes if they become necessary to secure the Church's financial position.

Profit & Loss			Statement of Assets & Liabilities	
	Actual 2019-20	Budget 2020-21		Actual 30/09/2020
<b>Income</b>			<b>Assets</b>	
Cost sharing	\$10,350	\$19,000	Cash at bank	\$312,664
Ext funding	\$11,689	\$12,000	<b>Total assets</b>	<b>\$312,664</b>
Ministry income	\$39,102	\$25,000	<b>Liabilities</b>	
Giving	\$275,734	\$300,000	Contra accounts	\$691
Other income	\$147,854	\$60,000	GST receivable	\$8,916
Total income	\$484,729	\$416,000	Funds held in trust	-\$22,523
<b>Costs</b>			Payroll liabilities	-\$19,727
Assessment	\$29,626	\$27,033	<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>-\$32,643</b>
Ministry costs	\$38,486	\$44,500	<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>\$280,021</b>
Missos support	\$50,947	\$27,640		
Overhead costs	\$46,714	\$46,650		
Property costs	\$62,177	\$21,200		
Salary costs	\$247,912	\$358,200		
Total expenditure	\$475,862	\$525,223		
<b>Net surplus/deficit</b>	<b>\$8,867</b>	<b>-\$109,223</b>		

#### Notes to Accounts:

##### Income

- Cost sharing – contributions from Echo, the Opp Shop and the Toy Library.
- Ext funding – contribution from Carols 2019.
- Ministry income – contributions from outreach programs, including Kids and Youth.
- Giving – Sunday offerings and EFT giving.
- Other income – government incentives (JobKeeper), donations and sale of shares.
- 

##### Costs

- Assessment – financial contribution to the Diocese.
- Ministry costs – cost of running Church programs, camps, Carols, worship etc.
- Missos support – the Church's tithing (missionaries etc.) and donations to external projects.
- Overhead costs – costs of operating the church, including utilities, insurance, IT.
- Property costs – capital costs, repairs and maintenance.
- Salary costs – clergy and staff salaries, superannuation, housing and other benefits.

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**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS:**  
**ST MARKS ANGLICAN CHURCH EMERALD**

### **Report on the financial report**

I have audited the accompanying financial report, being a special purpose financial report of St Marks Anglican Church Emerald, which comprises of the Balance Sheet as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020, the Profit & Loss Statement, Cash Flow Statement and notes to the accounts comprising a summary of significant accounting policies, other explanatory information and the committee's report.

### **Committee's responsibility for the financial report**

The committee of the association is responsible for the preparation of the financial report, and has determined that the basis of preparation described in Note 1, is appropriate to meet the requirements of the *Australian Charities Not-for-Profits Commission Act 2012*. The committee's responsibility also includes such internal control as the committee determines is necessary to enable the preparation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

### **Auditor's responsibility**

My responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on my audit. I have conducted my audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Those standards require that we comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial report is free from material misstatement. An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial report. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgement, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the association's preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view, in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances but not for the purpose of expressing the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the committee, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial report.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my audit opinion.

As part of an audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards, I exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. I also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material

misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.

- Obtain an understanding of internal controls relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Association's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the committee.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the committee's use of the going concern assumption of accounting and conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Association's ability to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in the auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion. My conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of the auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Association to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether, the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

I communicate with the committee and management reading, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during the audit.

### **Independence**

In conducting my audit, we have complied with the independence requirements of the Australian professional ethical pronouncements.

### **Auditor's opinion**

In my opinion the financial report of the association has been prepared in accordance with the *requirements of the Australian Charities Not for Profit Commission requirements*:

- a) giving a true and fair view of the entity's financial position as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020 and of its performance for the year ended on that date; and
- b) complying with Australian Accounting Standards as referred to in Note 1 to the financial statements.

### **Basis of accounting and restriction on distribution**

Without modifying my opinion, I draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared to assist St Marks Anglican Church Emerald to meet the requirements of the *Australian Charities Not for Profit Commission*. As a result the report may not be suitable for another purpose.

W NUTTON



REGN COMPANY AUDITOR 7915  
10<sup>th</sup> October 2020