



Annual Meeting & Reports for the Year Ending 30th September 2021

28th November, 2021

AGENDA

1. Prayer

2. Apologies

3. Minutes of 2020 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 2022

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 Meeting

Held on Sunday 29th November, 2020

The meeting started at 11.40 am with prayer

1. Present

23 members. 9 in person and 14 via Zoom.

Apologies: None

2. Minutes

The minutes of the 2019 Annual Meeting held on 24th November 2019 were received as an accurate record of that meeting. Proposed: Russell Soderlund. Seconded: Courtney Clowes - Carried.

3. Reception of Electoral Roll

The Parish's Electoral Roll was received by the meeting.

Proposed: Colin Lane. Seconded: Peter Crafter - Carried.

4. Reports

All reports were taken as read.

4.1 Senior Minister – Andrew referred to 2020 as an unprecedented year which had brought with it fundamental changes to our culture and to our church. There have been opportunities for learning new things, re-engaging with ministry in new ways and appreciating the value of relationships.

2021 will be a time of transition. A time to focus on what God is putting in our hearts and to allow God to reveal His plans. We should embrace the uncertainty and accept the need to heal and re-gather before launching into new things.

Andrew thanked the staff, members of the parish council and all the members of St Mark's who have supported him and each other during 2020.

There being no questions the acceptance of the Ministry Reports was moved by Katherine Mitchell and seconded by Jan Aylot. Carried.

4.2 Incumbency Committee Report – Iain Johnson reported that earlier in 2020 Andrew was appointed as Vicar of St Mark's.

4.3 Finance report – Peter Crafter reported that the financial position of St Mark’s in 2020 had been unpredictable but that we were able to finish the year with a small surplus and a healthy cash balance. Staff costs for the year were reduced as a result of the receipt of JobKeeper payments.

A deficit budget is planned for the coming year due to the uncertainty and it will be reviewed after six months.

In response to a question about our Diocesan assessment, Peter advised that it has been held as the same as last year and will be approximately \$30,000.

Courtney Clowes said that the budget is conservative and cautious but that a much better outcome is anticipated as things get back to normal. He encouraged people to keep giving.

Courtney confirmed that the sale of shares referred to in the report of the 2019 Annual Meeting has occurred.

The acceptance of the Finance Report was proposed by Peter Crafter and seconded by Courtney Clowes. Carried.

Andrew gave special thanks to Peter Crafter and Andy Walker for dealing with the accounts in this difficult year.

5. Elections

5.1 Auditor

WA Nutton and Associates, of Berwick were re-elected as auditors on the motion of Colin Lane, seconded by Mark Lockwood-Porter.

5.2 Wardens

Russell Soderlund and Katherine Mitchell were elected, unopposed.

The 3rd warden, the Vicar’s appointment, is Courtney Clowes.

Gill Birkett is stepping down after six years as warden. Gill was thanked for her hard work in that role.

5.3 Parish Council

Re-elected, unopposed were Colin Lane, Ruth Johnson, Anne Anderton, Peter Crafter and Daniel Inglis.

5.4 Incumbency Committee

Elected unopposed were Iain Johnson and Lauren Lockwood-Porter.

6. Other Business

It was noted that Owen Prout’s farewell as vicar of St Luke’s will take place on 5 December 2020.

The meeting closed at 12:15pm with prayer

Senior Minister's Report

Welcome to the (almost) end of 2021! My challenge in this report is to capture the essence of what has happened in what has been almost certainly the most unusual year of my life so far. As I look back to my report to the AGM last year, I described then the weighty reality of the events of 2020 and my hope that in 2021 we would enter into a period of normality again and a chance to rebuild our community and ministries. As you are all well aware, due to the effects of the Delta variant of the coronavirus this was unfortunately not the case, and we have been through another year of disruptions, trials and setbacks. This is before we consider the impact of other serious events such as the storms that have wreaked havoc across the Hills several times this year. It is almost impossible to determine the long-term impact of these experiences on our community, and the effect that they will have on every aspect of our lives in the years to come. However I expect that we will be faced with a significant road to recovery and many changes and challenges, and I encourage you to pray and reflect on your part, and the role of St. Mark's, in this time.

Christmas 2020

The past year since our previous AGM began with our reopening period leading up to Christmas. We were able to open up to the extent of having a 'hybrid' Christmas, mixing in-person attendance with online offerings. This included the Emerald Carols on the Couch that was run as a streaming event, with a fantastic reach and impact in Emerald and the wider community. I commend the team (Gill, Stephanie, and Russell) for their work in maintaining this event last year and looking forward to a similar event this year. We are likely to have a similar format to our Christmas celebrations at St. Mark's this year, as we grappling with the reopening challenges of this season again.

Lockdowns 3,4,5 & 6

With the exception of a short lockdown early in the year, we had a relatively uninterrupted season of stability until the end of May and many of our regular events and programs ran very successfully. Our last major worship service without restrictions was Pentecost Sunday, but since that time (the whole second half of the year) we have not been able to operate in a normal fashion. We were particularly affected by the final lockdown from August through October which of course was devastating for many other organisations and businesses around Victoria. Our staff and lay leaders have attempted to continue our various ministries as well as possible in this environment, but we have faced the reality that most of us have become jaded with online options at this point and the level of energy and motivation in general for more than just 'getting by' has been very low. I am very appreciative of all the diligent work that our staff have undertaken during these periods and for the support of our members and their dedication to following Christ through another 'dark night of the soul'. We are hopeful that (as the Government promises) lockdowns are now behind us for good, but we do grapple with the disconnection and division that this experience has sown amidst the Australian community and the affects on mental, physical, relational and financial health that will continue into the future. This includes a diminished capacity for activity in our church and other churches around the area. I expect that our own recovery as a church will be gradual, and that in 2022 we will be needing to reassess our various ministries and strategies in light of the way that things develop. I cannot really predict what this will entail but I trust that Jesus is with us and his Kingdom is still growing even if as a mustard seed.

A spot of encouragement during our last lockdown was our Thanksgiving Sunday, which allowed for a great time to recall the blessings of the year. I am thankful for the generous support that we have received to our Thanksgiving Appeal towards the refurbishment of our church kitchen and supporting our outreach ministries.

The Year of the Holy Spirit

January 2021 began what I themed as 'The Year of the Holy Spirit', focussing on our receptiveness and response to the work of Christ in us and through us by the Spirit. We have worked through various books of the Bible looking through these topics – In January the book of Joel, in Term 1 the first of our series on Acts ('Go With the Spirit'), in Term 2 a reflection on 1 Corinthians ('Living in the Spirit'), in Term 3 a return to Acts ('People of the Spirit'), and in Term 4 the book of Exodus ('To the Promised Land'). We will finish the year with a series on the teaching of Jesus himself on the Spirit in John 14-16.

In keeping with this focus on the Spirit, and reflecting on the challenges coming out of 2020, I have tried to open up our community to working together on discovering our gifts and calling. We moved forward in February with our ReVision process looking at the 'Dreams and Visions' that God has put in our hearts. This time brought out several new initiatives including the 'Prayer Culture Club' and a group devoted to developing new mission initiatives locally. As the year has progressed I have also called upon people to learn their spiritual gifts in a new way and apply them in worship and other forms of ministry. This is an emphasis that I would like to continue into next year.

A highlight for the first half of the year for me was the formation of a new 'leadership community' at St. Mark's called 'Day and Night'. This group is for those who are exercising leadership at St. Mark's or in their wider life and I have been providing some resources and guidance to help develop and grow them in their calling. I have also enjoyed running more of the Ridley Certificate courses this year – we have been through John Dickson's course on the Historical Jesus, a course on 1 Corinthians, and the 'Ministry Skills' course, which have all been well attended. The value of the online Zoom format for this kind of activity has been shown many times over.

This year we acknowledged and farewelled Bethany Vaughan in her role as a CMS missionary in Cambodia, and we wish her well and pray for her new endeavours. We then welcomed Zoe Creelman as our new link missionary as she prepares to work with the indigenous church in Ngukurr in the Northern Territory.

Staff Team

We have continued to be blessed with a diverse and committed staff team this year. You will see their reports in the rest of this booklet and I encourage you to spend the time to hear what they have been doing and to affirm and thank them. The complexity and depth of the challenges that they have dealt with and overcome this year have been indescribable and I thank God for them all.

Some notable events in the staff team this year were: the ordination of Vivianne to the priesthood, Ally Lord van Leeuwen going on maternity leave in anticipation of the birth of Tully, and the farewell of Mark Lockwood-Porter as our Parish Administrator (after nearly 2 years in the role) as he and his family move to Bendigo. Also my own period of Long Service Leave in October which was a welcome time of rest after a long period of high demands, during which Jerome served as Locum Vicar. We will be regrouping as a team as the New Year begins and making new plans for what is to come. Please pray for a renewed energy and calling for all of us.

Special Thanks

As always I owe a debt of thanks and gratitude to everyone who has supported and encouraged me in a myriad of ways this year. I thank the Wardens (Russell, Courtney and Katherine) for their wisdom and generosity towards me and their heart for the members of our parish. Particular thanks at this time to Courtney as he has a 'sabbatical' year now from membership on Council. I hope that he has a time of rest and refreshment. Thanks also to the rest of the Parish council who have worked cheerfully through many Zoom meetings and kept the parish in good order in the areas of finance and governance, as well as providing much valuable input into ministry matters. Particular we are thankful for Peter Crafter and Andy Walker as they wrestle with the complexities of budgets and financial reporting.

Thanks are always due to all the volunteers who have served in many ways, often unseen, throughout the year. I want to give a particular highlight of thanks this year to Dave Bunn who has served tirelessly on running our livestream camera each week for months during lockdown and enabled us to continue meeting in this way. And also we are thankful for the Op Shop team, those who clean and maintain our property, and all those who have stepped up to participate in the worship teams and in lay preaching. Thanks to Jan Aylott as she steps down from leading the flower roster after many years.

To 2022 and Beyond

I approach the coming year having been chastened time and time again by the lack of my ability to predict the future. I believe this is part of learning to 'Go With the Spirit' and is probably the major area of growth that will come from these experiences for all of us. We may learn to trust and to ask for our 'daily bread'. I hope that in 2022 we will focus as a church on the topic of 'Wholeness' and how Christ is looking for our renewal and re-creation in all areas of our lives, and our whole world. We have many challenges to face next year, including:

- The ongoing reality of COVID and its affect on our daily lives and freedoms.
- Healing from the trauma of this long-term crisis and the wounds that it has inflicted on us.
- Learning how it is we are to worship together as a community again, with all the new possibilities that we have experienced in the past two years and the way that the patterns of our lives have changed.
- Renewing our relationships and connecting in healthy and life-giving ways as members of the Body of Christ.
- Seeking a new vision of our mission and purpose in the Hills, and reaching out with the love of God to continue to be 'a community of transformation'.

However, I encourage us not to look at a list of tasks to be completed or to be overcome by the needs and challenges around us, but to turn to God with a renewed sense of our need for grace and for his provision in all things, and allow his Spirit to guide us.

The past two years I have finished my AGM report with a quote of the same portion of Scripture. Each year my appreciation of the meaning of these words has deepened. So let me finish again this year with this encouragement to all of us:

*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

Emerald Public Services 2020/2021 (In person services)

Attendances – 95 (Average)

Communion – 85 (Average)

Weddings – 1

Funerals – 7

Baptisms – 2

Confirmation – 0

Reception – 1

Christmas Services – 160

Easter Day – N/A

Associate Minister's Report

For so many of us, life has been full of stops and starts, hopes initiated and paused, emotional ups and downs, as well as fluctuating energy levels ...and ministry has been no different. Yet we are reminded:

“Truly my soul finds rest in God; my salvation comes from him.

Truly he is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will never be shaken.” – Psalm 62:1-2

So in between home schooling (like all those with school-aged children) and juggling our unpredictable and changing circumstances due to the pandemic, ministry has continued through God's steadfast love.

Over this past year, I have continued my regular ministries of worship co-ordinating, preaching and pastoral care as it has arisen, also including a memorial service. Additionally, in this past month of October, I also filled in as locum while Andrew was on long service leave.

Initiatives / Works-in-Progress

A couple of ministries that we've been trying to get off the ground revolved around family discipleship and mission. One aspect saw 3 families coming together over meals to explore spiritual formation and mission, while another saw a separate men's and women's group formed for deeper discipleship. Hollie Boniface, Vivianne Dias and I have been working on this together, but have struggled to find momentum due to the difficulty of finding a consistent rhythm with all the pandemic disruptions. Viv facilitates the separate women's group and I am facilitating the men's group.

This men's group, consisting of 5 of us, had just begun meeting at Paradise Valley Hotel, before lockdowns set in. We will be using a course that Andrew Bowles has produced called 'Finding our Pattern of Life' to explore how we can be encouraged to live a life of transformation – let me know if you're interested in joining us!

Signs of Establishing Foundations

Another significant, and passionate, part of my ministry centres on our spiritual formation of young people. These kinds of ministries generally require a good rhythm and consistency, in order to gather traction and develop faithful fellowship – and this, of course, has been difficult in this disrupted season of life. And this, combined with low numbers, has meant that it has been particularly hard to engage our older youth (senior high school age) in some of our initiatives this year. However, despite these considerable challenges, there have been some very encouraging experiences this year.

We began Term 1 with the youth meeting in the Chapel (adjacent to the Children's Centre) and watching and discussing a TV series called 'The Chosen'. This series, which looked at the lives of Jesus' followers, allowed us to consider our own journey to follow Jesus. We were then able to follow up with Youth Alpha in Terms 2 & 3. It was at this point that Sue Bush and Trevor Garrat joined Viv and I as part of the Youth Team, and their presence has greatly enriched our group dynamics. I am very grateful for their support. We will look to complete the Youth Alpha course this Term. As the year has progressed, there have been 5 youth who have committed to Youth Alpha and to fellowship, and 3 of them have now decided to make their Confirmation – please pray for them and all our young people in their spiritual journey with God.

Meanwhile, Anne Benc has inspiringly initiated some conversations with me about the transition of Grade 5 and 6 children into the Youth community. We will be working on some socials together with these groups and be continuing to see what emerges for next year – this looks like a very promising way forward.

With regard to Young Adults we tried to relaunch our Young Adults group by having a BBQ at our place in February sometime, and also inviting older youth – this was well attended. We also gathered at another time and watched a Christian apologetics video with a couple of older youth and young adults, which I believe was an encouraging activity for those who attended. However, again, with constant interruptions, social connections and momentum have been difficult to achieve. We have, nonetheless, been able to gather a core group of 4 young adults, plus Viv and myself, who have been quite keen to study the bible (we have been looking at the book of Jonah), even though it has been done via Zoom. This particular group has not been going for very long, but they are presently expressing a very real commitment.

Looking Forward

I'm learning not to make big promises or big plans, but to consider moment by moment how to move forward in a Godward direction with all God's people. A particular hope is that we can expectantly look towards gathering and fellowship in person again, slowly reconnecting and considering our mission and worship together. I'm grateful for another year of journeying together with all God's people at St. Mark's and working together with Andrew, the leadership and staff to further God's kingdom here in Emerald and the Hills.

Jerome Dias

Assistant Minister's Report

As we have endured another year of disruptions, disappointments, disconnections and perhaps disillusionments, we have needed the gentle, steadfast and trustworthy love of God and His wisdom more than ever. It's been these aspects of God that have given me the capacity to hold fast, and stand, in the face of much uncertainty this year. I pray that your experience of God has enlarged through the trials that you have faced this year.

As an Assistant Minister, I have continued to serve in preaching, leading services, pastoral care, and supporting discipleship and equipping (particularly of women) within the church. I've had the privilege of supporting a local woman come to know Jesus and I meet with her regularly to support her discipleship journey. I also work with Jerome in our youth and young adults ministries, and have enjoyed building relationships and offering encouragement to our young people in these spaces, and being able to offer one-to-one pastoral conversations with our young women to encourage them in their continuing growth in Christ. It's been wonderful seeing God at work in the lives of our young people and young adults, and I express appreciation of Jerome's leadership of these ministries.

I also have specific responsibilities in the areas of mission and worship.

Worship

Music Ministry

We began this year re-adjusting to Sunday services with fewer musicians and vocalists, requiring us to honour our limits and offer live music on a fortnightly basis, and use worship lyric videos on alternate weeks. Adam Van Leeuwen generously offered his skills in IT and sound engineering to produce another set of worship lyric videos led by the St Mark's worship team. It's been wonderful having these resources to support our online and on-site worship services. I also want to thank our faithful team of musicians and vocalists who have been flexible and adaptive in trying new things, adjusting to a new service time, learning new hymns and songs, and supporting our worship through the year. We would also love to hear from anyone in the church who plays an instrument and/or who enjoys singing, who is interested in supporting the music ministry at St Mark's.

Creative & Visual Arts

At the end of last year, it was great to encourage Bek Inglis, one of the artists among us, to produce a Christmas art display along Memorial Avenue, and provide a 'prayer station' for passers-by during Advent. The lit nativity display at the front corner of the church was a wonderful accompaniment to this, and together were lovely expressions of the story of Christmas that we shared with our community. Thanks to Bek Inglis, Roy Whiting, Stephanie Cox, Russell Soderland, Colin Lane, and John Mechielsen for your contributions to this project.

I also welcome any contributions to the expression of visual arts at St Mark's, which could be incorporated in our Sunday services, newsletter, social media or our website. If you're a photographer, or an artist, we'd love to support and encourage your ministry amongst us.

Special Services

It's also been a joy to facilitate some special services for Reconciliation Week and Season of Creation, and I look forward to our integration of more justice causes in our corporate worship.

Mission:

My role is to support our mission to see people in our community experiencing wholeness through a relationship with Jesus, as we learn to be an authentic expression of God's transforming presence. To achieve this, my role focusses on developing our missional culture, specifically through: gospel communities; pursuing justice and serving community needs; organic and organised events; and therapeutic spaces. Undergirding all of this is prayer, and it was great to be able to integrate the 'Thy Kingdom Come' initiative into our church rhythm again this year, and have the support of the Prayer Culture Club covering our outreach.

Gospel Communities

We are currently exploring how St Mark's can adopt a 'gospel communities' model of outreach and missional discipleship. Gospel communities are groups of people who support each other to be intentional in living as Jesus' people in their various contexts (workplaces, schools, families, social circles, etc). At their heart, they are about growing communities that are welcoming and open to journeying with people who are not Christians, and discipling one another. With the support of Jerome and our boys, and the Boniface and Bouma families, we have begun a pilot, intergenerational, gospel community. Before lockdowns, we had met for 'all in' gatherings (where hospitality was extended and shared with people outside of St Mark's), for gatherings with our core families, as well as for separate women's and men's groups centred around worship and discipleship (I lead the women's group, Jerome leads the men's group). We are learning as we go, and look forward to more continuity in the year ahead. The hope is that as the model is embedded, we can multiply and ingrain the model at St Mark's over time.

Grief Support Ministry

This year, Sandra Beltran, Heather Maxwell and I planned to deliver a grief course called 'The Bereavement Journey' in Term 3. This course offers understanding, support and guidance through the experience of grief for people who are bereaved. It also offers an optional session for exploring faith questions regarding death and bereavement. We promoted this across the Hills and with neighbouring churches, and were all set to go, with participants registered, when lockdown occurred. This was so disappointing, especially for the participants. We will now aim to run this course in Term 1 next year.

Mission and Community Engagement Working Group

Following our Re-Visioning process, a 'Mission and Community Engagement Working Group' emerged, sharing a heart for St Mark's to be: '...seen as a key part of the Emerald community, beneficial to and attractive to many because we reflect the reality of a healthy relationship with God, through Jesus.' The members of the group include: Russell and Irene Soderland, Colin Lane, Sandra Beltran, Ken Thompson and Clare Hembrow. (Anyone is also welcome to join). The group met twice after the initial 'Dreams and Visions' session to progress ideas and pray for God's leading. We will be launching a new missional endeavour in the coming months, and hope to recruit a team of people who love spending time with others and are passionate about seeing people come to know Jesus. Stay tuned!

The working group has also been keen to re-establish links with local organisations and explore possibilities for partnering with others in the community to meet local needs. Russell Soderland and I recently met with Cardinia Shire staff at the Hills Hub, from which emerged a number of opportunities for St Mark's, particularly regarding the environment and supporting local families, which we are now exploring.

Communications

I've had the privilege of supporting the Communications ministry while Ally Lord Van Leeuwen is on maternity leave. This involves producing the E-Newsletter, any promotional material, contributing to our social media and website, the visual aspect of Sunday services, and promotions support for the Emerald Carols. The highlight of the year was preparing our Thanksgiving Sunday Slideshow Video, which was a powerful reminder of God's faithful work in our midst, and the wonderful community that we share together at St Mark's.

I'm encouraged by how much God has been doing in our church family this year, even when it felt like much wasn't happening because of restrictions. Indeed, God is alive and active among us! Imagine the possibilities for St Mark's in 2022!

In Christ,

Vivianne Dias.

Ministries at St. Mark's

Pastoral care Coordinator Report

The Pastoral Care of the whole St. Mark's community of believers started well in December 2020 with a sit-down morning tea after the 9:30am church service instituted. The idea was to help people of all ages connect socially over a drink and some food. The table tennis table was a bonus and aided young and older to engage with each other. Some highlights for the year were Byron Bouma's baptism and spontaneous pray. Thank you to all the people who helped organise and pack up after morning tea. Hopefully it can continue in 2022 and with an upgraded kitchen more people will volunteer for this wonderful display of hospitality.

Pastoral care was improved by a paper copy of the Church directory given out to those people who are involved in this ministry. Cards were sent for happy occasions such as birthdays and babies, sympathy for the sick and condolence for those in mourning. Many meals were given to people but this done in a more direct manner rather than storing them in the freezer. Dry and canned food in the cupboard was not used very often as the church office was officially closed but gift cards for use at Woolworths were much appreciated by those in need.

Home visits in 2021 were very limited as the need to respect Covid rules became more stringent. Hopefully in 2022 there will be more pastoral visits in people homes.

Small groups continued to struggle with the on-off nature of the pandemic. This needs to be revisited in 2022.

Thank you,

Ally Thompson (who is hopefully in South Australia with Ken visiting their son who had open heart surgery a month ago).

Warden's Report

As Wardens we note how difficult a year it has been with regards to the constant lockdowns and the interruption to our worship and programs. That said however, there has been a number of good things happen and there is a positive air of expectancy about our church. It's good to remember that (despite the things of the world) God is in charge...

Our comments relate to our staff, our finances and our buildings.

Staffing

Our staff started 2021 with a renewed sense of purpose and worked tirelessly to reconnect with members of our parish following the extended lockdowns of 2020. Programs and activities recommenced and our staff participated in a number of leadership community and revisioning sessions throughout the first part of the year.

All too quickly, we returned to extended periods of lockdown and our staff once again rose to the challenge of working from home in 2021, in some cases balancing the need to support their children with remote learning. Our community was further impacted this year by a number of serious storms which resulted in extended power outages. This created significant challenges to working from home in lockdown conditions, however our team continued to focus on providing additional support to vulnerable members of our community at that time. Our pastoral staff have faced particular challenges this year as the number of individuals and families in distress increased over time.

Andrew has recently taken a month of long service leave to recharge after an incredibly challenging year. Jerome supported the church as locum during Andrew's absence. Consistent with the general theme of additional difficulties in 2021, whilst supporting St Mark's during this period, Jerome and Viv undertook a long-awaited house move into our local area at the same time. And, of course, contended with yet another storm and extended power outage immediately thereafter! We are delighted to have Jerome, Viv and their family living a little closer to St Mark's.

We would like to acknowledge how much our staff team have achieved this year whilst facing so much disruption and uncertainty. Despite yet another unexpectedly difficult year, we are incredibly grateful for the resilience and hopefulness demonstrated by our staff throughout this time. Morale amongst our team remains high and we are encouraged by how God has blessed us and our community richly through their work. We would like to thank each and every member of our team – we are so grateful to you for your perseverance.

Finally, Mark and Lauren Lockwood-Porter have recently been offered a new opportunity with the Diocese of Bendigo, and Mark will be finishing up with St Mark's as Parish Administrator this month. We would like to thank Mark for his support over the last two years. He has been an invaluable member of the team and we have been very grateful for his organisational skills, his patience and his kindness. We will miss him, and wish Mark and his family all the very best for the future.

Finance

After a small surplus in 2019-20 there were concerns that 2020-21 would be affected by Covid19 and the difficulty of running regular, live services. A forecast deficit of nearly \$110,000 was presented, but we are extremely thankful that we ended the year with a surplus of over \$80,000, as a result of regular, sustained giving (thank-you everyone, in these difficult times) combined with JobKeeper and very generous giving for the Thanksgiving service.

We approach 2021-22 with excitement, but also acknowledgement that with JobKeeper no longer operating, we will need to ensure we are good stewards with our resources and have forecast a conservative budget.

From July 2021 we started some ongoing presentations relating to stewardship and giving, and how this links to broader themes of discipleship and being part of the church community. Our aim is to develop a strong foundation of financial giving to support our staff and program in the future. We will continue with these presentations and all provide more opportunities to discuss stewardship, money and giving in groups in 2022, and continue this journey. Having all church families becoming a part of giving in a healthy and joyful way is our long-term aim.

The warden's are extremely thankful for the diligent and often complicated work (especially in relation to JobKeeper) that Andy Walker and Peter Crafter have put in (with support from Colin Lane). Without their efforts and diligence the church would not be able to operate effectively, and we really appreciate this.

Buildings

Our buildings and grounds are in generally good condition. During the financial year we had two working bees and two major projects.

The first project was to paint the inside of the hall to the modern colours that follow the theme of the hall foyer. This was achieved by a dedicated group of volunteers and greatly assisted by the loan of a scaffold from Andrew Smith (thank you). A final step in redecorating the interior of the hall is to mount some sound deadening panels on the walls. Visually, these will also help break up the "solid white" of the walls.

Hopefully, by the time of the AGM, the kitchen refurbishment will be complete. The refurbishment includes:

- the incorporation of the small storeroom, adjacent to the kitchen, into the kitchen. This will allow more space in the kitchen and a bigger servery window into the hall ;
- the replacement of the existing flooring with new food grade vinyl (the old flooring was also food grade but will be "disrupted by the removal of the island bench and other cupboards);
- the replacement of the dishwasher (with the current model of the old one – now 20-25 years old and no longer able to be serviced effectively);
- stainless steel benches to replace the old chipboard cupboards; and
- a repainting of the whole facility.

The vast majority of the cost of the refurbishment was donated by parishioners via the 2021 Thanks-giving Sunday.

The new kitchen should serve the parish for the next 20+ years and allow us to comply with food safety standards for a semi-commercial kitchen.

We are very grateful for the support of a lot of people in the operation of the church. Not the least of these is the Honourable Andy Walker who continues to make an outstanding contribution in many ways.

Katherine Mitchell

Courtney Clowes

Russell Soderlund

Children's Ministry Reports

Children and Families Ministry Report

As we come to the end of 2021, it feels difficult to look past the last 3 months of lockdown and remember what happened earlier in the year when things were a bit more normal. But in reflecting, I am grateful for the opportunities we have had in children and families ministry to deepen relationships, build community and explore Jesus together.

Playgroup Ministry

Two St Marks Playgroups have met weekly during school terms this year. We are always receiving enquiries for new families to join, and this year is no different with many families needing to connect. Playgroup ministry is unique in the way that it reaches out to parents and children with the love of Jesus and enfolds them in a safe space of community. Worries and dreams are shared along with tea or coffee and advice or consolation is given. In this space, with our leaders having a Christian perspective and godly wisdom, they can speak God's truth and love. Children are welcomed with songs, stories and crafts, also experiencing God's acceptance and welcome of them. I'm so grateful for the leaders of these groups, and also for the Grandparent leaders who have stepped in to support these ministries to run well this year.

Worship Happenings

It has been difficult to get a momentum with the Kids Connect and Sparklers aspects of worship this year. With the snap lockdowns, limits on capacity and parents being vigilant in keeping sick children away from our group gatherings when they are unwell, we have struggled to maintain much consistency in attendance or parental assistance to lead these worship groups. Earlier in the year we had some all age sessions for children alongside the 9:30am service. It was great to see the older children and youth supporting the younger children to engage in community and connect with God through Bible teaching, games and prayer. During lockdown, all families received a worship at home kit with activities that correlated to the weekly online services. It has been good to see these in action through parents sharing on the Family Life fb page.

A real highlight for me has been the continuing commitment of all of St Marks to foster intergenerational relationships and support intergenerational worship. I believe we move closer to authentic Christian community when we can put our own preferences aside for unity in the body of Christ. Seeing children serve morning tea, and lead elements of our worship services; watching adults play table tennis with youth and children or greet them with a greeting of peace; observing our services and spaces change to accommodate and welcome all ages into communion with Jesus and each other, just fills my heart with joy.

As we look towards Christmas now, and another year ahead, I don't have any real certainty of direction in what these ministries will look like. But I am certain that God is with us, present, caring and guiding. He is so good!

Hollie Boniface

Outreach

POWERHOUSE KIDS, 5/6/ @ St Marks & Holiday Program.

The start of this year was looking positive with all our Outreach programs taking off with lots of enthusiasm, happy smiles, and joy. Covid was less disruptive, and Children were able to socialise in many things they enjoyed doing. It all came to a grinding halt in May and during Term 3 we started to fatigue a bit and relive last year's Lockdown.

I have been challenged by God to be still and wait during this year as we can plan to engage and deliver our programs, connecting and sharing Gods love with Children but it may not be how we intended as he knows the bigger picture. Its sad to think these children have missed out on so much social interaction and I see it as a great opportunity for St Marks to reach out even more displaying Jesus' love, nurturing and caring ways for those who are struggling after these times of a Pandemic.

Powerhouse Kids Highlights

This year we started out in Puffing Billy Park Emerald. We enjoyed having time with some of our regular kids playing games having treasure hunts and creating fun. This attracted other children in the park to join in. Once we commenced back at the Church, we even had one of those children join us.

Term 1 was such a blessing to be able to spend the time back together after last year's long absence. Lovely to see all the children return and adapting to the new Covid safe rules. Managing to get most of the term in with no disruptions. Term 2 we had 4 weeks before we were locked down once again. Fortunately, we had some great biblical stories, games craft & cooking during the first half of the year. In Term 3 we sent Letters and delivered a couple of zoom sessions to help keep the connections and relationships active.

5/6 @ St Marks

This year our program saw a large growth in our numbers and has been very busy & noisy some Fridays. This high energy group love games and food. Term 1 & 2 we had some awesome fun.

I have been privileged to see some of these kids come right through from Prep to now Grade 6, many from non-Christian families. It's very encouraging when these kids can answer a biblical question and show they are listening to God's word. Our Prayer is they will also apply it to their lives.

Holiday Program

In April this year a very keen group of children came along to our Holiday program. Themed animal antics we shared lots of stories of different animals and what God can teach us from these animals.

The time we spend throughout the day doing different activities gives leaders a chance to really have good discussions and share our Christian values. It was wonderful to have some young youth helping and being great role models to the younger children. This program was a blessing to parents in our local community given they have been navigating difficult times. However, little did we know there was more difficult times (lockdowns again) ahead during this year.

I close with these questions to ponder...Why are we here? How do we do things different and what have we learnt?

Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is Gods will for you in Christ Jesus. (1 Thessalonian's 5 16-18)

- Anne Benc

Opp Shop Report

Unfortunately another difficult year for the opp shop due to COVID restrictions and Lockdowns.

We wish to thank our volunteers for their willingness to serve and be flexible during this difficult time. Our community has missed shopping with us and we are all praying that since restarting earlier this month we will not have to endure any further lockdowns.

Once again we have had to cancel our annual volunteer lunch which this year would have celebrated our 31 st year of operation. We were able to deliver a small parcel to each volunteer and we thank Ann Murray for her handmade contribution to this gift.

We again acknowledge and thank our volunteers for their faithful service.

Opp Shop Committee

Synod Report

Synod was held on 13-16 October 2021 as a 'virtual' meeting because of COVID. There was no Synod in 2020, because of COVID. Virtual Synods are now permitted following a special Synod meeting in April 2021. Matters discussed at this year's Synod included church legislation, the receipt of reports, including financial reports, and a number of motions. Participation in the online process was strong and the online voting procedure worked well.

Reports were submitted included reports from each Episcopate within the Diocese, which included reference to the impact of the cycle of repeated lockdowns and relaxation of restrictions on the church, including lower attendances and financial stress. A review is being undertaken of church properties across the diocese. A report was submitted reviewing regulations governing the appointment, employment and retirement of clergy; changes are expected to be enacted in 2022. A report was tabled recommending simplifying and making more transparent the process of electing the Archbishop; this will be addressed in 2022.

There was consideration of financial reports comprising the accounts for 2020 and the budget for 2022. There was a surplus because of JobKeeper, received by the Diocese to enable parishes to meet payroll obligations, and property disposals. The Diocese took external professional advice at all stages of the JobKeeper process, including a review by the auditors. \$14.3m has been set aside in the accounts to deal with Professional Standards issues (this reserve has been built up over a number of years). Due to COVID, the parish assessment rate has been held at the same level for 2020/21. A deficit budget has been tabled for 2022, with concerns about declining parish income. There are ongoing concerns about the payroll function; steps are being taken to address this.

Motions included preventing violence against women, Afghan Refugees, Medevac Refugees, funding for Diocesan support for Children's and Youth Ministry, persecution of Uighur Muslims in China and a proposal to develop a plan to remove obstacles to disability access to churches. Presentations included a video on church planting.

AngliConnect is a new interactive IT tool being progressively rolled out by the Diocese between 2021 and 2024 to enable easier access for parishes to connect with the Diocese and its resources.

- Peter Crafter

Financial Report and Budget

Accounts - 2021 has continued to be challenging for all of us. There has been significant uncertainty around COVID-19 and a series of lockdowns. That said, we have ended the financial year with a 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 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.

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 and the receipt of JobKeeper. This is available to fund the planned deficit in 2022.

Budget - The following table compares the budget for 2022 with actual figures for 2021. We are submitting a deficit budget in order to continue our programs and maintain 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.

Giving is expected to increase following the recent stewardship campaign and the end of lockdowns when the Church can resume its normal activities. Staffing levels are budgeted to remain at a similar level to now. Staff costs will however increase significantly compared to 2021 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 2021. For this reason, the 2021 accounts did not include a full year's staff costs, whereas the 2022 budget does include a full year's staff costs for the present staff.

Profit & Loss			Statement of Assets & Liabilities	
	Actual	Budget		Actual
	2020-21	2021-22		30/09/2021
Income			Assets	
Cost sharing	\$0	\$14,796	Cash at bank	
Ext funding	\$10,124	\$0	Total assets	\$409,620
Ministry income	\$23,597	\$44,000	Liabilities	
Giving	\$309,206	\$326,880	Contra accounts	\$442
Other income	\$98,892	\$0	Payments in Advance	-\$39,405
Total income	\$441,819	\$385,676	Emergency Fund	-\$2,019
Costs			GST receivable	\$6,179
Assessment	\$40,580	\$42,000	Payroll liabilities	-\$40,934
Ministry costs	\$22,798	\$24,000	Welfare in Trust	-\$7,309
Missions support	\$23,412	\$32,688	Total Liabilities	-\$83,046
Overhead costs	\$33,742	\$33,000		
Property costs	\$25,281	\$30,000	Net Assets	\$326,574
Salaries	\$254,030	\$312,748		
Total costs	\$399,843	\$474,436		
Net surplus/deficit	\$41,976	-\$88,760		

Notes to Accounts:

Income

- Cost sharing – contributions from Opp Shop etc. for utilities.
- Ext funding – Carols.
- Ministry income – contributions from Opp Shop.
- Giving – offerings and EFT giving (mainly EFT).
- Other income – government incentives (mainly JobKeeper) in 2021; none expected in 2022.

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.