



Annual Meeting & Reports
for the Year Ending 27th
November 2022

27th November, 2022

AGENDA

1. Prayer
2. Apologies
3. Minutes of 2021 AGM
4. Reception of Parish Electoral Roll
5. Senior Minister's Report
6. Reports of various ministries
7. Budget for 2023
8. 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.

St. Mark's Church Emerald
Annual General Meeting
Held on Sunday 28th November, 2021

The meeting started at 11.15 am.

1. Present

29 members. 27 in person and 2 via Zoom.

Apologies: Ruth Johnson, Jason and Jodi Bouma, Heather Maxwell, Graeme Legge, Sandra Beltram, Maureen Trotter, Anne Walsh, Catherine Oldenburger, Roy and Margaret Whiting.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the 2020 Annual Meeting held on 29th November 2020 were received as an accurate record of that meeting. Proposed: Russell Soderlund. Seconded: Colin Lane - Carried.

3. Reception of Electoral Roll

The Parish's Electoral Roll was received by the meeting.
Proposed: Anne Anderton. Seconded: Peter Crafter - Carried.

4. Reports

All reports were taken as read.

4.1 Senior Minister – Andrew referred to 2021 as an unusual and difficult year. He said that it is good to be moving forward now. The priorities for the church will be to reconnect as we reopen and to catch up with people we haven't seen for a while. It will be good to celebrate Christmas well.

We are encouraged to reflect on what God has been teaching us during the past year and how He is calling us now to serve Him. Please pray for renewal, for people to be drawn to God and for wisdom for the church decision makers.

Andrew thanked the staff, the wardens, members of the parish council and all the volunteers for their work. Peter Crafter and Andy Walker were thanked for managing the finances during a difficult year. Dave Bunn was singled out for special thanks for his work in enabling the services to be livestreamed. Andrew noted that Jan Aylott will be stepping down from the flower roster after many years and he thanked her for her service in that role.

There being no questions the acceptance of the Ministry Reports was moved by Leslie Ryder and seconded by Jan Aylott. Carried.

4.2 Finance report – Peter Crafter reported that we were able to finish the year with a surplus of \$41,976. During the year we received over \$100,000 in JobKeeper payments which was reflected in a reduction in staff salaries as shown in the accounts for the year.

The budget for 2021-22 reflects the situation moving forward with no Jobkeeper payments. It is based on a modest increase in giving and the retention of the current levels of staffing and shows a deficit of \$88,760. However, the church has a healthy cash balance and this is available to fund the planned deficit in 2022.

Peter thanked Andy Walker for all his work with the finances and confirmed that the accounts have been audited.

The acceptance of the Finance Report was proposed by Peter Crafter and seconded by Trevor Garrett. Carried.

5. Elections

5.1 Auditor

WA Nutton and Associates, of Berwick were re-elected as auditors on the motion of Peter Crafter, seconded by Andy Walker.

5.2 Wardens

Russell Soderlund and Katherine Mitchell were elected, unopposed.

Courtney Clowes is stepping down as warden as he is on a sabbatical year. He was thanked for his work in that role.

Andrew Bowles has not yet appointed a Vicar's warden.

5.3 Parish Council

Elected, unopposed were Colin Lane, Ruth Johnson, Anne Anderton, Peter Crafter, Alyson Munzel and Daniel Inglis.

5.4 Incumbency Committee

Elected unopposed were Iain Johnson and Ken Thompson.

The meeting closed at 11:45am with prayer.

Senior Minister's Report 2022

The Year of Transition

As we come to the end of 2022 I look back over the first 'normal' year since 2019. Of course 'normal' is a relative term these days, and in fact we are all moving forward into the new season that the experiences and challenges since 2020 have brought us. I have now been the Vicar of St. Mark's for more than five years, and in many respects the context in which we live and work is unrecognisable compared to what it was in 2017 when I arrived here.

I would describe 2022 as a 'year of transition' for our church as for many other organisations as we find our rhythms of life again, refresh our relationships and renew our vision for the future. There have been many blessings this year and I am grateful for them. A lot has happened since our last AGM and it is sometimes hard to remember it all. I will describe some of the main events of the last twelve months and my reflections on them.

We began our church calendar year with another time of reconnection as lockdowns ended and we resumed in-person services and activities. From the vantage point of November 2022 it is hard to remember the reality of that time, concerned as we were with vaccination status, restricted numbers and cleaning protocols. We were fortunate to have a good Christmas season together, with 'Emerald Carols on the Couch' for the second year, and the chance to gather together for Christmas Eve and Day services. Blue Christmas was also a highlight with special resonance this year. It was good to start a New Year with more confidence in staying open. The 'Refresh' retreat was an enjoyable experience of fellowship and learning together.

After Christmas the emergence of the Omicron variant along with eased restrictions fundamentally changed our response to COVID and led to the 'living with it' mentality which we now have. However it meant that we have experienced also significant disruption in the first half of the year due to high levels of infection and the isolation

requirements for those with COVID and close contacts. This meant that many events and groups have struggled to meet and gain momentum. This is now largely a problem of the past, though many people continue to be cautious as case numbers remain high. Many of us are also quite tired and worn out from being sick quite frequently this year, and weary from mental and emotional challenges. We don't necessarily have as much energy as we used to.

Our online services have become an embedded feature of our life as a congregation, and have settled into a significant way of participation for many people. We need to be reviewing regularly how our online community is going and what it means for people to engage and grow in their faith in this way.

A Year of 'Wholeness'

This year I decided that a teaching series working through the entire Gospel of Luke might be a helpful program. I believed that a sustained period of reflection on the message and actions of Jesus gives us a fuller and more rounded picture of what Christianity is actually about and what it means to be a disciple of Jesus today. I have found this to be true for myself as I have studied Luke this year, and I believe it is for others in our congregation as well. As we move forward into difficult and challenging times to be a local church, we must have a deep and rich understanding of what we are called to be and to do.

Other Activities

I have continued my practice of providing discipleship opportunities throughout the year, particularly using online format and resources. This year I have done the 'Knowing God' course from the Ridley Certificate, as well as running the Emotionally Spirituality Course online for the first time.

As Area Dean of the Hills I have a special interest in the care of other local ministers and parishes in the area, on behalf of the Archbishop. In particular in 2022 I have been assisting at St. Luke's Cockatoo recently

with some of their administrative matters, and in the preparation of ministry reviews for local clergy. It is clear that in the Diocese of Melbourne there is an ongoing need to work on how we recruit, train and support ministers, and I have attempted to provide helpful input to Diocesan leadership about this. I will be finishing up in this role when my three-year Area Dean's appointment concludes in March 2023 and I will hand it on to someone else.

Staff Team

As always we have blessed this year by the gifts and dedication of our staff team, particularly as they have worked hard to refresh their ministry areas after the difficult times of 2021. As the New Year began we were pleased to welcome Ally Thompson as our Parish Administrator to replace Mark Lockwood-Porter. Ally has moved from her Pastoral Co-ordinator role to take up this administration position, but has retained some of her pastoral activities, which is an excellent development of this side of our office work. We also welcomed back Ally Lord van Leeuwen in May returning to her role as Communications Director after a year of maternity leave. I encourage you to read the reports provided by the staff which outline their excellent work in 2022.

By now you will be aware that the Parish Council has been undertaking a review of our staffing in light of our financial realities and our ministry needs going in to 2023. For a number of years the Council has had a strategy of using legacy donations to fund some of our ministry roles in order to maintain various programs and to staff for growth, leaving a deficit to be made up each year. However we are now in a position where we need to transition to a balanced budget and staffing levels in keeping with our actual income. We need to acknowledge that St. Mark's is now a local 'pastoral' church with limited financial resources. Sadly this will mean that at the end of 2022 we will be finishing up our Communications Director role as a staff position. Also we will be transitioning during our next budget cycle (to Sept 2023) to not having our Assistant Minister clergy role, which we have had since

the start of 2019. Jerome and Vivianne Dias are now in the process of discerning opportunities to take up Senior Minister positions elsewhere in the Diocese, and in the coming year we will be farewelling them as they take up new ministry roles. Hollie Boniface will be finishing up as our Children and Families Minister at the end of this year, and we will be recruiting a new person for that role as we retain a budgeted commitment to this part of our ministry. Change is very difficult, and the aspects of grief and loss in these decisions should not be ignored. However we do have confidence in God's provision and in the gifts he gives to all his people for the work he wants them to do.

Special Thanks

As always I want to offer thanks to everyone who has encouraged and supported me and our church this year. I am grateful to our Parish Council who have continued to demonstrate great wisdom and care for me and our congregation, in the midst of many complicated decisions. I particularly thank Russell Soderlund and Katherine Mitchell for their work as Wardens this year. Also I want to thank Peter Crafter and Andy Walker for their work on our finances and accounting. For those who are continuing on Parish Council and those who will join in 2023 I pray that you will continue to experience blessing in your roles.

Thank you to our volunteers in many areas. The Op Shop continues to be a place of great outreach and care for our community, and I thank Magda Lane and the Committee for their careful and caring work to keep it running. I always give thanks for David Bunn for his ongoing support of all our technical and livestreaming needs, and the invaluable contribution that this has been and continues to be. Thank you to Aly Munzel for taking on our communion preparation process and assuring our inventories are up to date and complete. I also want to acknowledge Shelley Conway for her dedicated background work in the office on many necessary tasks. We are all upheld by the contributions of others that are too numerous to mention.

2023 and beyond

As we move into the New Year together I am expecting that we will see further transition towards our new mode of life as a church – simpler, more local, based on authentic relationships and a commitment to equipping people to live out their faith in everyday life. It is a good time for us to renew our engagement with our local area and the needs and opportunities that exist to express the Kingdom of God in the Hills.

Another theme that has emerged in the past year is our desire to work together with other local parishes to share ministry and mission. We realise that we need the whole Body of Christ to do things well, and that if we share resources we can do much more together than we can alone. I expect that we will be seeing significant collaboration in some ministry areas in the coming years, particularly in Youth and Children's ministry as well as local outreach and welfare in partnership with ECHO Youth and Family Services.

My abiding feeling at the moment is of open-ness and waiting. After the past three years I no longer believe that I have the answers to our problems or that I understand what needs to be done or where to go. Many of our 'old ways', long cherished and promoted in ministry conferences and carefully taught in theological colleges, no longer apply to the situation we are in now. This can be disorienting. However, all of us are travelling through this time of change together and if we are attentive to the Spirit we should be able to discern together what God is calling us to do.

I end with an blessing from the Apostle Paul who reminds us of God's faithfulness in the midst of challenging times:

May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it. (1 Thessalonians 5:23-24)

Report of Services AGM 2022

Total Numbers for Year 2021-2022

1. Attendance- 3937
2. Communion-1894
3. Weddings- 0
4. Reception- 0
5. Funerals- 4
6. Baptisms- 1
7. Confirmation- 0
8. Christmas Services 195
9. Easter Day- 79

Ministries at St. Mark's

Warden's Report AGM 2022

The Wardens are responsible for the St Mark's staff, buildings and finances. In reality, we act as a "sounding board" to Andrew, the finance team and Parish Council on these issues.

Staffing

We would like to express our gratitude to all of the people supporting St Mark's this year – staff, leaders and volunteers. It has been wonderful to see the church emerging from the pandemic, and we know that your service has been critical to our success. Thank you for your time, effort and energy. We are constantly impressed by the dedication and enthusiasm of our teams for

the people of Emerald and beyond, and are grateful that God has blessed us so richly!

Up until recently, the only change to staffing for 2021/22 had been Jerome Dias serving as Locum at St Luke's Cockatoo for approximately three months. The reports of his service in this role have been very good and we are grateful he was able to assist St Luke's at this critical time.

However, following discussions and consideration of St Marks' future directions and plans, in early November Parish Council (via Andrew) announced that:

- Both Jerome and Vivianne Dias will complete their service with St Mark's within the next twelve months;
- Ally Lord van Leeuwen will finish in her role as Communication's Director at the end of 2022; and
- Hollie Boniface (at her request) will cease her role as Children's and Families Minister at the end of 2022.

The decisions related to Jerome, Vivianne and Ally are not only related to our financial position, but also aided by a clearer vision of the type of church St Mark's will be in the next period of its life. Hollie's decision to move on from St Mark's will enable her to consider God's call during this next chapter of her life, as the Boniface children grow up. Hollie has been in the role for eight years – which is a very significant contribution.

As Wardens we wish to honour and thank Jerome, Viv, Ally and Hollie for their work amongst us. In some ways they are victims of the Covid pandemic that has done so much damage to almost all organisations. These are gifted, creative people who, amazingly, God called to work in Emerald with us. That time is drawing to a close, but we expect that exciting new doors will open for each of them in the short term. Thank you for your friendship, leadership and serving with us. We will miss you all greatly.

Buildings

The refurbished kitchen has proved to be an effective and efficient facility for catering at St Mark's. It's great to see a community group now using the facility during the week.

In a way, this refurbishment stimulated the 2022 Thanksgiving Sunday project "Refresh" - where the stage area of the church, parts of the hall and the bathroom in the Children's Centre will be updated to better meet the needs of our programs and their participants. Gradually renewing and redeveloping our facilities is a great way to keep them clean, tidy and effective.

Can the Wardens thank Andy Walker and Colin Lane, who are both hands-on operators and co-leaders of the maintenance program of St Mark's. It's yet another job that both of them do to look after our church.

Another person deeply involved in the maintenance of our site – and unfortunately leaving St Mark's at the end of the year – is Alan Thomas. Alan joined St Mark's several years ago as an Opp Shop volunteer but soon moved on to a Centre-Link-funded position as our "Grounds Manager". He looks after the lawns and gardens, fixes things (he's quite gifted in this area), paints things and in general keeps the place tidy and attractive. He is managed by Andy Walker and will leave us once he is of an age where he no longer needs to work to receive his pension. We acknowledge your skills Alan and thank you for your work.

Finally, we have had two Working Bees this year. They were both aimed at general maintenance of our property and buildings and were important for keeping the place up to scratch. Working Bees with a good crowd in attendance get a lot of work done and are generally good fun for all those who join in.

Finances

While the details of our financial position are presented elsewhere in this Annual Report, it's important to say that St Mark's has been running deficit budgets for the last few years and, as we have strictly finite financial reserves, we cannot continue this indefinitely. The changes to staffing described above will allow us to run a balanced budget in 2022/23 and we will live within our means.

That said, there was an encouraging response to the Stewardship Campaign led by Andrew earlier in the year (and partly based on a similar campaign led by Courtney Clowes last year).

As Wardens we wish to thank and acknowledge Peter Crafter and Andy Walker for their work in managing our finances. These two skilled men put a large amount of time and effort into planning, monitoring and managing our money. They provide a great service to St Mark's.

As a church, our only source of finance is our people. We don't receive money from the Melbourne Diocese or the government. It's up to us to support our staff and the projects on which they work.

Associate Minister's Report AGM 2022

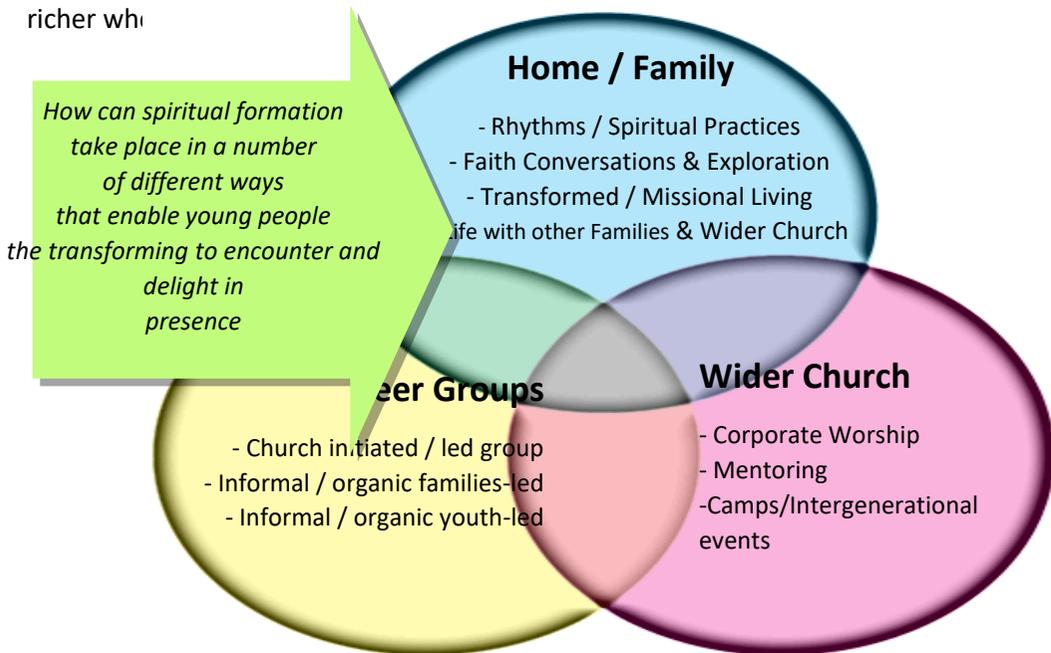
Well, there were no lockdowns this year, but we did have another house move ...ahhh! Despite that, I am truly grateful to have been able to be among God's people in person, and to engage in ministry without the same degree of interruptions that we've seen in our last couple of years. It has been a year of seeking to re-establish connection and direction, as we seek God's way ahead for St. Mark's among the people of the Hills.

As well as regular pastoral care, preaching and service leading, I have also continued to serve in a number of focussed areas as outlined below:

YOUTH: We began the year with a BBQ at our home for the families with youth, which was a wonderful time of fellowship and fun. From there, we sought to find a regular rhythm with the youth, trialling a variety of expressions running in a combination of Thursday afternoons and Friday evenings, with our small contingent of 5-8 youth. We have also combined with the 5 & 6 Program on some Thursdays to enable better connections and transitions for Grade 6 children into the Youth program – I've greatly valued Anne Benc's initiative in this. I've also been so grateful for another year of support from Sue Bush and Trevor Garratt, without whom this ministry would

be impossible to run. And when they were away in Term 3, Hollie and Mick Boniface stepped in to enable us to see that term through, and Hollie has continued to jump in to support on a number of other occasions too – again, I’m so grateful.

A Way Ahead: a more wholistic approach to the spiritual formation for young people would help to see genuine faith and transformation take place in the face of secularisation. A church run peer-group should only be one part of a richer whi



A whole community approach would hope to see more people within our community passionately and intentionally considering their role and responsibility, to declare the good news of Jesus to the next generation.

SENIOR YOUTH: It’s been a challenge to continue to engage our older youth, with our numbers being as small as they have been, but it’s been a blessing and a privilege to have journeyed with a couple of our senior youth in the second half of this year in a more mentor-like relationship. I’ve been able to casually catch up for conversation and support, once to twice a term in a local eatery.

A Way Ahead: More mentor-like relationships within our community may enable this vulnerable, yet valuable, demographic of teenagers, to experience the support and encouragement needed to navigate and integrate their faith.

YOUNG ADULTS: Our young adult group, which has had 4-5 attendees over the year, has struggled to find a regular rhythm among our differing commitments, sicknesses, distance (in trying to meet in our home in Cockatoo) and other disruptions in life. A couple of our young adults have now moved on to a new church community and so this group has presently come to the end of its season. It's been an absolute privilege and delight to have journeyed with these incredible young people during this period.

A Way Ahead: Our church has experienced low numbers among the young adult contingent for some years and so it would be good to pray for wisdom in how to show a particular care and thought to the discipleship and integration of older teens heading towards adulthood (eg. mentoring - see above).

MEN'S GROUP: Last year I started a men's group which was meeting at the Paradise Valley Hotel, however, Allan Murray early this year agreed to take on the facilitation. I've been grateful for Allan's willingness and heart for the members of this group and for me. Our meetings have been a casual catch up that allows opportunity to share our life and faith with one another.

A Way Ahead: I imagine Allan, together with the group, will continue to assess their hopes and expectations for how this group will be a space of welcome and spiritual growth for those who attend.

LOCUM POSITION: As you may know, from late July to the end of October, I additionally took on a locum position at St. Luke's, which in some way has nothing to do with my role here at St. Mark's, and yet in another way it does. While I might have hoped to not be distracted from my work at St. Mark's I did find much of my energy and love being shared between two communities. I know that Andrew, and others, are keen to consider the ways that resources and partnerships between churches in the Hills may be a part of a bigger vision of what God is doing among us in a more regional sense. I am grateful

that St. Mark's was able to share me with St. Luke's, which I trust was blessed in some way through my time there, as I was with them.

A Way Ahead: If we can be generous, gracious and receptive in our relationships with other Christian communities around us, we may be able to be open to more of what God has for us.

A New Season Ahead

As many of you may now be aware, Viv and I will not be continuing on at St. Mark's long into the future. While St. Mark's was realistically considering how it would staff for next year, Viv and I were simultaneously sensing God's call on us to move beyond our much loved community. We do not presently know whether we will serve near or far, or when exactly we will move on, but we do know that this season, is coming to an end. We have been so abundantly blessed as God has used this time to grow us as leaders and more importantly, as His children increasing in faith. We're particularly grateful for Andrew's leadership and wisdom, which have now shaped our own ministry and leadership perspectives. We've loved being a part of the staff team with our lows and highs, and much laughter, and when the time comes, we will miss the people of St. Mark's who have become such a love and joy for our family. For now, let's look ahead for the good that God has prepared for us all, in the coming year.

Jerome Dias

Assistant Minister's Report 2022

I have loved being able to immerse myself in ministry this year at St Mark's. Alongside pastoral care, preaching and service leading, my goals have been to:

- continue rebuilding the music team after the tough years of lockdowns and bless our congregation through live worship; and
- to equip and release people in mission.

Although it feels like some of these areas are just starting to get off the ground after much effort, others have been achieved, and I'm grateful for the ways God has been at work, and for the fruit of lives changed.

Music

It's been my joy to lead our music team again this year, and to lead our congregation in live worship. I've been wonderfully supported by a small number of committed team members: Courtney Clowes, Iain Johnson, Colin Lane, Stephanie Hanscamp, Pam Sheppard, Alex Clowes and Hayley Cox—your devotion to music ministry this year has been such a blessing to our church. And of course, our sincere thanks and appreciation also to David Bunn, who has faithfully served and led the sound and media team again this year. Thankyou for enabling our sound!

However, the need for lead musicians and lead vocalists is central to the sustainability of this ministry moving forward. In facilitating worship jams, and our attendance at the Word in Song Conference (led by EMU Music), I've been providing opportunities for people to explore music ministry, in the hope of encouraging and raising up musicians, vocalists and worship leaders to join our team. Please continue to pray for the growth of this team, so that as a church, we can grow in the depth and breadth of our expression of worship through song, to the glory of God.

Mission

The Bereavement Journey - "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." (Mat 5:4)

In February, I led 'The Bereavement Journey' (a 6-week course developed by Holy Trinity Brompton, UK), and was ably supported by Sandra Beltran and Heather Maxwell as co-facilitators, and Ally Munzel who supported with set up/pack up (thankyou wonderful women!). We met in the Upper Lounge with 8 participants attending. Each session included afternoon tea, video content, small and large group discussion, and the final session provided space for individual reflection/prayer/ journalling. The group bonded deeply through shared tears and experiences of grief. From the feedback received, most found the discussion, support and content extremely helpful for

understanding and processing their grief. Following the course, the group has continued meeting once a month, at the Paradise Valley Hotel, to provide ongoing support and friendship (and has become one of our 'missional communities,' where others are always welcome to come along, where meaningful friendships are formed, and where we journey together towards greater wholeness). This ministry has been a valuable and unique way of connecting with our community and expressing our heart to see people experiencing wholeness. It has also sown seeds of vision to build our capacity as a church to help those suffering from grief and trauma to reconnect with God. It has indeed been a wonderful privilege to walk alongside and support these people, and I thank them for their openness, vulnerability, and trust.

Women's Group

Hollie and I have continued to facilitate (albeit sporadically at times due to illnesses, moving house, and life stress), a space for women to be encouraged and nurtured in their faith. Our meeting on a Thursday morning with some young mums petered out due to low attendance. After waiting to see where God was at work, we've now begun a women's 'Huddle', that meets fortnightly on Wednesday nights to discuss and explore how God is at work in our lives. We're currently reading 'Longing for More' by Ruth Hayley Barton and growing in our spiritual practices to grow deeper with God.

Mission and Community Engagement Working Group

Following our Re-Visioning process last year, the 'Mission and Community Engagement Working Group' focuses on helping 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 presently include: Russell and Irene Soderland, Colin Lane, Sandra Beltran, Ken Thompson and Ruth Johnson. The group has begun a pilot 'Opp-Shop Café' which provides free refreshments, with people being available for a chat to offer friendship and support. It has been quite a slow start (perhaps hindered by the weather!), so prayers would be appreciated, particularly as we seek to break down suspicion and build trust.

The group also met to discuss what makes it hard for people to connect to God and church, and explore our response. The increasing secularisation of our culture means that relationships are, more than ever, central for being able to introduce people to Jesus and to church. This makes our everyday lives our main missional context. Improving our missional culture as a church, and equipping all of us with gospel confidence, and the ability to talk about faith, spirituality, and Jesus, is one of the most important works of the church today. Some areas we've identified for enabling this are:

- Thy Kingdom Come prayer movement for those who don't yet know Jesus
- Local mission month, as well as cross-cultural mission month
- Highlighting the missional spaces that need support (playgroups, powerhouse kids, 5/6s, youth, op-shop, etc)
- Small groups – how can we support small groups to think about their mission as a group? (How can they invite connection, encounter, growth, equipping and sending? How are/can they be supporting their members to be living missionally?)
- Equipping for people who work in secular jobs – how can they be missional at work?
- Asking church members the question: who are you discipling? (Discipleship starts before people know Jesus).
- Cultivating invitational culture, and opportunities for invitation (organically as well as organised, for example, meals with small groups for colleagues/friends, bereavement support group, craft group, etc.)
- Equipping for 'disciple-makers' & 'spiritual parents' - how do we go from being friends to sharing the gospel?
- Not being too busy – creating lifestyles where space is intentionally made for relationships.
- Day-time small groups are important and there's opportunity here (eg. stay at home mums, etc)
- Seeing something that works (eg. Bereavement Journey) helps people understand and connect with, and want to be a part of, our mission.

- Pinch points in stages of life (eg. crises, death, illness, becoming parents, etc) – being useful, and seen to be useful, for people in these situations.
- Alpha course, perhaps delivered at the small group level.

As you can see, there's lots of wonderful ideas and energy here, that St Mark's hopes to build on and take steps towards implementing in the coming years. What resonates with you?

Please also refer to Jerome's report about our time at St Mark's coming to an end in the near future. I share his reflections and sentiments.

With much love, in Christ,

Silvianne Dias

AGM Report for 2022 children's Ministry Outreach

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

Powerhouse Kids

- The Lord certainly blessed our return with all the families who had previously been attending in earlier programs, returning this year.
- The team have been adaptable and willing in serving our Lord whilst covid was hitting our community.
- It's been wonderful and special having one of our youths, also join the team.
- We have children attending from four different school communities and it's a joy to see them mixing and making friendships.
- Our total numbers are averaging around 30 if they all attend weekly.
- One of the privileges of serving in this ministry is sharing in some of these children's lives as many of them are from 'at risk' families.

- The team all get to build up trust with these families and can see the germination of 'seeds of hope' through Gods love.
- Each term we have had different themes and fun with games, cooking and craft.
- This year we are finishing with a family dinner and a celebration gift of a bible for the children to take away and continue to be nourished in God's word over the holiday season.

5/6 @ ST MARKS

- The 5/6 group this year has been a great encouragement as the group of kids has grown in number and encourage each other in many ways.
- The change to Thursday night seems to suit more families and we have had a group move up into year 5 that I have seen grow through Powerhouse Kids.
- We have shared a lot of the year alongside our youth which has been fun for the 5/6 group as well as seeing the how the old children fellowship.
- Games, food, & friends are the main ingredient with this group.
- We have had an element each term of looking outward with a missionary night, op shop visit, artist night etc.
- I was curious to see how the kids from non-Christian homes could answer what they had learnt this year about Jesus. Some still have limited knowledge and it's wonderful those from Christian homes can answer questions to encourage them along.
- Please Pray for these children that their knowledge of God will grow and that this might also influence their families and friends.

Holiday Program

- This year we ran two holiday programs both having around 30 children attending. The Easter program saw a 'fun filled' day. with Easter hats creatively made and the Easter message shared. In September we had an 'Under the Sea' theme which was fun. This was

also a great day with lots of games, craft, movie/creative story telling. Each child sculptured with clay, creating an under the sea creature.

- It was great we had a few families attend who don't come to our other programs.
- It's always a joy to work with a dedicated team of volunteers. We are very blessed to be able to run these programs sharing God's word with young hearts. Our community here at St Marks are willing to share their gifts with these children. We are always looking for more volunteers so if you hear God whispering to help in Children's Ministry please come and have a chat.

ANNE

Children's Ministry Report 2022

-Sing and Grow Program - Kids Connect and Sparklers - Playgroup

Dear St Marks Members,

How wonderful to be able to reflect on another year of God's goodness in children's ministry. It has been a wonderful joy to be able to journey alongside children and their families as they grow in faith, develop understanding, and take steps in serving Jesus. Current research suggests that as high as 94% of Christians came to faith as children (under 18 years), highlighting the importance of being able to share the good news of Jesus and develop strong faith in children. I believe that St Marks continues to support and value children's ministry through finances, encouragement, and inclusion.

In Kids Connect and Sparklers this year, we have been able to move continuously through the book of Luke alongside the learning of the wider church. Using the Saddleback Kids curriculum videos, projected onto the big screen in the hall, we have laughed and gained greater understanding of Jesus' life and ministry. As always, we seek to engage all the senses through games and movement, cooking and eating, listening, speaking, smelling (occasionally!). The older children received the book "Diary of the Disciple", a

modern retelling of Luke's story in a similar style to popular fiction novels for that age group. The Sparklers have made use of the "Green Room" for their break out group, although I think we have grown out of that space now and will have to return to the children's centre next year!

I love how the children are encouraged to be an active part of our St Marks community. Whether that's dancing and moving during our worship times together, taking part in serving through Bible reading, prayers, music, media, morning tea or collecting communion cups; being able to connect in this way is so vital for faith development and having a sense of belonging. When adults display grace, patience and give encouragement, it shares a strong message of Christ's love in and through his church. We grown ups also observe and learn: how to be spontaneous in joy, courageous in trying new things, hospitable and generous with our gifts. This is the heart of intergenerational ministry that St Marks has been journeying for a long time: multiple generations growing in faith together.

Playgroup ministry has continued every Tuesday and Friday at the Children's Centre, with preschoolers and carers alike keen to make connections and enjoy craft, songs, stories and of course plenty of play! Post covid, there are so many families who desire social opportunities for their children and friendships for themselves. St Marks Playgroups are openly Christian, we love the opportunity to share the love of Jesus. It is truly a wonderful thing to see teenagers and adults at church, who started their faith journey in playgroup. Families love the space at the Children's Centre, it is so welcoming with the safe space in the yard to play in and all the resources that we have. We are incredibly blessed to have this space and not have to set up and pack down each week as many playgroups do. The upgrade of the bathroom will be a very welcome improvement to making the space hospitable and safe.

I personally have some sadness as I write my last children's ministry report for St Marks. But overwhelming that is so much joy for being able to serve here for the past 8 years. Thankyou for your constant support in many ways, and especially thankyou to the volunteers who offer their ideas, resources and so much time to the children.

Blessings Always,
Hollie Boniface

Communications Report AGM 2022

Digital ministry has been running smoothly this year. Much thanks to Vivianne Dias, who covered much of the role while I was on maternity leave. Since returning to the role mid-year, the focus has been initially on seeing social media, along the lines of social ministry. With an online congregation of between 20 and 30, it is important to view and support the creation of digital material that is faith building and supports discipleship. The staff team and volunteers have responded well to these needs, producing streamed services that are increasingly inclusive of online participation. Also, by running online courses, and providing online resources such as guided meditation. There is still a lot we can do to assist the flourishing of viewers spiritual health, and as my role concludes, all knowledge and resources I have gleaned from study is being passed on. If this is an area you feel called to assist in, I know our Ministry team would love to hear. Digital ministry is so much more than promotional posts on Facebook. It is about engaging with others online with a missional or disciplining focus. I also wish to celebrate the new volunteers we have had come into streaming and media presentation roles. It has been wonderful to see a truly intergenerational ministry team. Praise God! Much of my role the second half of this year has been focused on training, and setting up user friendly systems, doing all artwork and promotions for Emerald Carols, as well as producing the fortnightly newsletter. Behind the scenes a new website is also currently under construction, which I pray will be ready for launch in the new year.

Ally Lord-van Leeuwen

OP Shop Report for St. Marks AGM November 2022

We are Grateful to GOD for the opportunity to serve our community for over 31 years.

The shop has experienced strong sales in the last 12 months and have donated over \$56,000.00. to our regular services as well as one off donations from our emergency fund.

The shop has been operating since Nov. 2021 without any further COVID lockdowns.

During the last year we have also donated clothing and other goods to Mukti for Sri Lanka and a local charity that supports homeless people in our area. It was great to finally honor our volunteers with a lunch to show our appreciation and was well attended.

Again we thank our faithful volunteers for their willingness to serve and enable us to support our local community in so many ways.

GOD has blessed the Op shop in so many ways and we give thanks for his blessings!

Thanks,
OP Shop Committee.

Pastoral Care Report for AGM November 27, 2022

Pastoral care has mainly occurred within Small Groups however there are some needs that are targeted through the Pastoral Care Team.

1. Cards

Roughly 86 birthday cards have been sent since last AGM by Miriam. We have also sent Get Well, Sympathy, Encouragement, Thankyou, Moving Home and, New Baby cards.

2. Meals

Meals have been given to people who are unwell, or, have a family member unwell or have had an emergency. We are very grateful to the people who have made the meals.

3. Pantry

Since starting her job as Administrator Ally T has had only one person come in for food from the pantry. Some items have been given in pastoral care visits, but the remaining food has largely consisted of chickpeas and beetroot! Ally M diligently makes sure that the tins are not passed their 'use by' date and most of the food seems to get too old before it is taken by the needy. Subsequently it gets divided amongst the staff! Thus, it has been decided to shut the Pantry and all left over tins have been given to St. Luke's.

4. Food Cards

To replace the food pantry, it's been decided to purchase Woolies and Richies food cards valuing \$25 and \$50. These will be stored in the safe and available for emergencies. This will make it much easier to cater for people with food allergies and they don't have a 'use by' date!

5. Prayer

We would love to offer prayer with laying on of hands to people who are unwell. So this will be offered to those who write in requests in the Prayer Chain and to others who we hear about.

Thank you!

AllyT

SYNOD REPORT 2022

We attended Synod from 12 October to 15 October. The meeting was partly online and partly in person. The Saturday session was the first in person meeting of Synod since 2019.

A number of reports were tabled including the Diocesan accounts and budget. The Diocesan accounts are in deficit after setting aside a substantial further provision to meet potential claims resulting from historic child sexual

abuse. A concern is the imposition of Land Tax if part of a Church property is used for revenue earning activities (e.g., rented out from time to time).

A report on the Jumbunna Episcopate (which includes St Mark's) noted that there are eleven vacant parishes and that it is increasingly hard to find vicars, and to find locums for interregnums, that there are increased pressures on clergy as a result of the pandemic and increasing financial pressures in several parishes.

Motions discussed included issues such as gambling, prevention of violence against women, the environment, gender equity, children's and youth ministry and accessibility and inclusion. There were also presentations on child safe standards and safe ministry.

Legislation included a Clergy Bill, updating matters relating to the appointment of clergy, the terms of their employment and increasing the proportion of clergy from diverse backgrounds (including female clergy), a bill to update the process of electing the next Archbishop of Melbourne, involving a Board of Nominators and an election Synod, a bill to allow electronic meetings to be conducted (making permanent a change introduced during the pandemic) and legislation relating to safe ministry and child protection.

Financial Report and Budget 2022

Accounts – the Church has reported a deficit for the 2022 financial year due to the fact that giving has not increased as hoped and staffing levels have been maintained, without the benefit of JobKeeper payments received in 2020 and 2021. Staff salaries are paid centrally by the Diocese with the cost passed on to parishes.

The Statement of Assets and Liabilities (balance sheet) shows that the Church has a healthy cash balance although reduced from the previous year's cash balance of \$410,000, primarily because of the deficit for the year. The cash balance is available to fund the planned deficit in 2023.

Budget - The table below compares the budget for 2023 with actual figures for 2022. We are submitting a deficit budget in order to continue our programs at similar levels to now. It is possible to proceed with a deficit budget because of the cash balance brought forward from previous years.

It is hoped that giving will increase following the recent stewardship campaign. Staffing levels are budgeted to remain at a similar level to now. Costs will be kept under review by the Parish Council.

Profit & Loss			Statement of Assets & Liabilities	
	Actual 2022-22	Budget 2023-23		Actual 30/09/2022
Income			Assets	
Cost sharing	\$7,200	\$20,067	Cash at bank	\$274,265
Ext funding	\$11,500	\$0	Total assets	\$274,265
Ministry income	\$29,893	\$26,769	Liabilities	
Giving	\$312,788	\$313,123	Contra accounts	-\$6,012
Other income	\$1,609	\$107	Emergency Fund	-\$1,216
Total income	\$362,990	\$360,065	GST receivable	\$2,321
Costs			Payroll liabilities	-\$34,197
Assessment	\$45,467	\$55,224	Welfare in Trust/Other	-\$13,336
Ministry costs	\$25,583	\$7,861	Total Liabilities	-\$52,440
Missos support	\$31,260	\$31,312	Net Assets	\$221,825
Overhead costs	\$32,701	\$36,859		
Property costs	\$17,043	\$26,205		
Salaries	\$315,686	\$279,288		
Total costs	\$467,740	\$436,749		
Net surplus/deficit	-\$104,750	-\$76,684		

Notes to Accounts and Budget:

Income

- Cost sharing – contributions from Echo, SJ Counselling and the Opp Shop for utilities.
- Ext funding – usually Carols, but assumed to net with cost in 2023.
- Ministry income – contributions from the Opp Shop.
- Giving – offerings and EFT giving.
- Other income – budgeted to be insignificant in 2023.

Costs

- Assessment – financial contribution to the Diocese; based on latest demand.
- 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.

ANDY