

Vicar's Report

St. Philip's Collingwood - Annual Meeting 2021

The period we have lived through as a church community is not unprecedented. There have been plagues and pandemics in the past where many communities have lost many parishioners. Overseas I know of parishes that have been decimated in recent times by the effects of this pandemic. While this has been a very challenging time for us, and a very lonely time for a number of parishioners, we can thank God that we can be present here today in person or via zoom for our Annual Meeting.

This year has certainly been the continuation of an unexpected journey. Once again, while we did not achieve many of our intended plans, with God's grace, we as a community got through this challenging period. We have had actual and virtual visits from our Bishop and Archdeacon, and via zoom visitors from across the globe and interstate. Weekly attendance at our worship services, whether conducted entirely via Zoom, or when permitted, hybrid services has overall been good. The ability to see parishioners via zoom who have been at home, in care, in regional areas or interstate has again been a blessing. The Women's Group and virtual morning teas have also been an important part of parishioners remaining connected. Home Communion and pastoral visits when permitted, together with everyone keeping in touch by phone or in person has also reinforced our community bonds. Caring for each other, especially when people have lost loved this year, has been particularly important.

Chris Jenkinson and Jonathan Gill have again been the key lay assistants this year and have played a significant role in our worship services. Most of our on-line services were again in a morning prayer format, including Sundays and Wednesdays, apart from on feast days when we celebrated Holy Communion in church. I appreciate all the lay and clergy involvement in all the services, especially those who led intercessions, and acted as readers, crucifers, and thurifers. Jonathan also provided a reflection on the anniversary of his wedding. Thanks to all those who organised and contributed during the Seasons of creation series, especially those who provided reflections.

Fr David Moore and Rev'd Fiona Raike have celebrated Holy Communion at various times this year. Fr David has done a great job locuming recently. Rev'd Fiona Raike celebrated Mass and preached during Holy Week at very short notice. Thanks very much for your ministry and willingness to serve.

The feast days we have celebrated included, St. Philip and St. James, Corpus Christi, Mary Magdalene, Christ the King, All Saints, and All Souls. We also acknowledged NAIDOC week.

I have conducted confirmation classes with James and look forward to his confirmation service later this month with Bishop Genieve after a number of unfortunate postponements. Outside of St. Philip's I conducted seven funerals and memorial services, and I also conducted a wedding in Fairfield that is recorded in our marriage register. I have also continued to attend mandatory Diocesan training this year. Attending Synod via Zoom was an interesting experience for Chris, Debbie, Fiona and I. It required some endurance.

The leadership and work of the wardens, Stuart Ellis, Susan Lawrence, and Christopher Jenkinson, and our Parish Councillors, Helen Moore, Robert Dawlings and John Stack has been much appreciated.

We farewell today one of the stalwarts of the Parish, Stuart Ellis. In spite of the busyness of his life and work he has made a significant contribution. We wish him and Jo every blessing as they return to South Australia after many years with us. They will be sadly missed. Susan Lawrence has also been busy, but has again been a very faithful, committed and supportive warden. Chris, as my Vicar's Warden, has continued to work hard behind the scenes with the pew sheet, IT, Covid safety measures, and administrative tasks. Thanks to all the wardens for their leadership, decisiveness and contribution.

Helen Moore has continued to be a highly effective Parish Secretary, in spite of the challenges that Covid has had on her executive leadership role at her school. Robert has continued his excellent work as the Treasurer. He continues to make a great contribution in the environmental area, and his voluntary work as the Director of Music and organist has been great. John Stack has been the source of many good ideas at Parish Council meetings and continues to contribute each Sunday. Thanks to all the members of the Parish Council for freely giving of their time and energy. Debbi also continues doing a great job managing hall bookings.

Thanks also to Susan North for her work on the Church property and garden, and always being prepared to step in at short notice in any role during services. Fr David and John Stack have also put a lot of effort into the Church gardens. John and Stuart built us a greenhouse, which was subsequently knocked down by severe storms this year, but it will no doubt rise up again.

I would also like to thank all those who have helped with morning tea, preparing meals, cleaning and a range of other tasks, often behind the scenes and unseen. Everyone in the Parish has made a contribution so I thank you all. While I am generally resilient, I have found parts of this year very challenging. I have also found it has taken a toll on me and our family, and I know it has on other members of our community in their own individual ways.

In summary, we have continued to be a faithful and connected Parish in 2021. I hope and pray that 2022 will be a good year for the community of St. Philip's Collingwood, and that we can truly discern the direction that God is leading us. We are well placed on many levels to glorify God and continue to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ through our actions.

Yours in Christ

Fr. John Raike

30 November 2021

St. Andrew's Day