



Update on St Johns Directional Plan for 2020–2022

18 October 2020

In response to the initial draft of the St Johns Directional Plan for 2020-2022, the Council received nine formal submissions and multiple verbal comments.

The presiding member collated all the submissions and the sub-committee of Margaret Emil, Shawn Liew and Christine Hawkins recently met and went through each of them.

There were three overall themes that emerged from across the submissions.

1. The recognition of the diversity of the parishioners, lay ministers and non-stipendiary clergy and their strong abilities and skill sets which enable them to add substantial value to the parish overall.
2. The musical culture that is an integral part of our parish, both in worship and external concert offerings.
3. The need for increased communication between the Parish Council and parishioners.

One other item that has that has also been update is the inclusion of The Friends of St Johns as one of the notable groups associated with the parish along with St Johns Care and the Schoolhouse Museum.

There were several other points included in the submissions that made suggestions for changes or additions to the parish that pertain to the longer-term future of the parish and therefore, fall outside the parameters of this document. One of the key purposes of this paper is to separate the issues that need to be addressed during the interregnum period from those which are to be left until the induction of the new Rector. However, the original submission will be held for the new Rector to review at an appropriate time, if they wish to.

The council would like to thank everyone who participated in the creation of this final document, either by submission, suggestion or support. It will be very helpful as a guide and framework for this very important next period in our parish.

St Johns Directional Plan for 2020–2022

Updated 1 November 2020



Introduction

St Johns Anglican Church is both an historic landmark for Canberra and an active, diverse place of Christian worship which, prior to the arrival of Covid-19, had an average weekly attendance of 270, supporting five Sunday services, a monthly choral evensong, several mid-week services, mother's groups, children and youth groups, Bible studies, home groups, and more. The parish continues to adapt and work within government restrictions to prevent the spread of the virus and, God willing, looks forward to returning to its previous level of activity and services.

The Rector is charged, in partnership with the Parish Council, with the authority and responsibility (under the Bishop) for the mission and work of St Johns. This includes objectives and strategies for the work of the parish and the efficient and effective management of the resources of the ministry unit.

Parish Council oversees the management and governance of both St Johns Care (SJC) and the Schoolhouse Museum, which are co-located on the church precinct. SJC has a Management Committee and the Schoolhouse has a Board. Both include members from outside the parish.

For the last 12 years, the parish has been well led by the Rector, the Reverend Canon Paul Black along with assistant and honorary clergy and stipended lay staff. However, St Johns is about to go through a period of significant transition when the Rector begins his Long Service Leave in January of 2021, followed by his official retirement in August 2021.

Technically, the search for a new Rector can only begin when the parish becomes vacant. An additional complication has been the departure, at short notice, of the Assistant Priest in January 2020.

As the associate priest role is designed to complement the rector, we wish to allow the incoming rector to make this appointment, in consultation with the Bishop and the parish members of the St John's Clergy Appointment Board. As a result, St Johns will have a Locum Tenens and two part-time associate priests sharing the second full time clergy position for maybe a year or more.

This situation places an additional level of responsibility in terms of mission and stewardship which will be shared by the Locum and Parish Council. Therefore, Parish

Council felt the need of a formal document to outline key points of direction that should steer its major decisions and planning priorities until a new Rector is inducted.

This document does not expect to cover all aspects of parish life and its complexities but rather is to be used as a guideline for the Council and to assist in the development of a parish profile, using the following list of priorities:

1. to encourage our strong Christian community,
2. to support the Locum's teaching, sacramental and pastoral ministry
3. to continue to maintain and enhance our historic precinct
4. to maintain a secure base for the financial longevity of the parish,
5. to develop its culture of governance including the management of risk, and
6. to search for and find a new Rector to lead our parish into the future.

Values Statement - Parish Council, 16 October 2019

At St Johns we are a community shaped and nourished by God. We are given the grace to go out into the world and to live in service to others.

We believe

- God loves all people - no exceptions
- Jesus Christ is our Lord
- God is Holy Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- the Bible is the inspired Word of God
- in the forgiveness of sin and life everlasting
- worship shapes and nourishes us, by both Word and Sacrament, and teaching and preaching shapes our discipleship
- God calls both women and men equally to ordained ministry
- lay people exercise a vital role in the governance and ministry of our church community
- all baptised Christians are welcome to receive Holy Communion
- the Christian faith has profound things to offer people who are searching

We affirm

- the role of individual conscience in ethical matters where people can reasonably disagree, and are informed by Scripture, reason and tradition
- our unity in Christ while respecting our differences
- the worldwide Anglican Communion, which traces its heritage to the beginnings of Christianity

- that marriage is a lifelong commitment. We recognise that there is grace after divorce and celebrate the remarriage of divorced persons
- the desire of people to enquire and question

We value worship through

- contemporary Anglican liturgy and worship, as well as traditional choral services and traditional Anglican Book of Common Prayer (BCP) services
- the systematic reading of the Scriptures by following the Lectionary
- meaningful sermons and homilies where the Gospel of Salvation is preached faithfully and with love
- the joy of singing, including worship enriched with hymns and traditional choral services
- our history and its unique place in the national capital
- the importance of 'sacred space', art, colour, architecture, symbols and beauty which enhance worship and mediate truths beyond the human grasp

We strive to

- share the good news of Jesus Christ
- to love our neighbours as ourselves
- be welcoming, inclusive and hospitable
- create opportunities for young people to explore life's meaning and discover God's love
- provide a safe environment for all people; particularly those who are vulnerable, for example children and the elderly.
- share God's love for all people through compassionate ministry, and the practical service of St John's Care.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- Active church congregations with a mixed economy of varying styles including family services, children and youth activities, early evening young adult service and traditional sung eucharist
- A diverse and highly skilled congregation
- Continued aged care ministry with Canon Stone
- Well known in the Canberra region
- Historical significance
- Financial security including significant trust funds
- St Johns Care brings Jesus' mission to the vulnerable to reality and raises the profile of the parish within the wider community
- Strong musical culture in both worship and concerts
- Large hall and other spaces available for community use and revenue
- Parking areas available for revenue
- Schoolhouse Museum
- The Friends of St John the Baptist
- income to allow for two full time clergy, part time office administrator and young people's worker
- large volunteer base including non-stipendiary priests and lay-ministers
- large grounds with three houses, two of which are currently leased to outside clergy
- retention of two members of clergy with long term association in the parish during the period of change (Canon Margaret Emil and Canon Kevin Stone)

Weaknesses

- Declining attendance in some congregations
- Increased operating costs (especially insurance)
- Significant and increasing infrastructure maintenance costs – church, parish centre, grounds and three houses
- Youth and Family worker roles combined into one leaving fewer staffing resources
- An ageing volunteer base – parish office, grounds and worship
- Music – the parish has relied on an honorary Director of Music and organists in an era of increasingly paid musicians

Opportunities

- Possibilities for increased use of facilities
- The retention of two members of clergy with long term association in the parish during the period of change (Canon Margaret Emil and Canon Kevin Stone)
- A dedicated young people's ministry position can increase opportunities and offerings for families
- Increasing number of nearby developments as possible new parishioners
- New educational precinct being developed by UNSW in the area.
- Increased ability to appeal to the community due to historic connections
 - o This includes the benefits of this for St Johns Care and the Schoolhouse Museum

Threats

- COVID-19 (and any other major event) ceasing worship, limiting income and altering church life as we know it
- Increased risk of tension, recognising that transition periods can be times of stress and conflict
- loss of volunteer base – during interregnums people can choose to let go of their ministry positions
- loss of existing paid staff and significant corporate knowledge they hold
- child protection and vulnerable people practices break down
- not finding suitable stipendiary clergy to hold ministry positions
- Appropriate resources for ongoing maintenance the website and Facebook page, which are our major shop fronts to the community
- Loss of parishioners during the transition to a new Rector
- Financial losses from revenue not keeping pace with ongoing costs – notably insurance and maintenance
- Decline in Trust fund balances due to volatile worldwide stock markets
- Increased risk profile
- Declining religious affiliation overall

Ministry

The interim Ministry team will be the cornerstone of sustaining St John's during the period of transition. It is this team that members of the congregations, Council, and other stakeholders will look to for support and guidance until our new Rector is inducted. While we are fortunate to have an experienced team for the interim ministry who are well known in the parish, care must be taken to support them during this time.

Locum Responsibilities

- finding honorary priests (because of the number of Sunday services)
- maintain current worship schedule
- make decisions on pastoral services as necessary (eg number of baptism services per month)
- manage relationships between different groups in the parish eg SJC, Schoolhouse, Friends of St John's, P&M, road reconstruction
- Risk Steward
- ex-officio member of all groups within the parish including SJC Management Committee
- building relationships and directions with the new educational neighbours

Parish Council Responsibilities

- ask Bishop to assure parish that the present ministry of Canons Stone and Emil will stay in place until at least the new Rector's induction
- Support for Locum, Associate Priest and other parish clergy

New Rector Responsibilities

- appointment of assistant priest and other staff
- licencing of lay ministers
- future of music ministry in the parish
- decision on the viability of all worship services
- maintain commitment to St Johns Care

Governance

A strong culture of governance protects the parish from unnecessary harm and loss and is essential as a solid foundation for growth and future prosperity. The governance framework guides how decisions are made, and what type of decisions can be made while the Parish is in transition. A strong culture of governance in St John's provides assurance to parishioners that the Ministry and Leadership teams are doing the right thing; and provides guidance to the Ministry and Leadership teams to ensure they are doing things right.

Locum Responsibilities

- provide leadership for the parish and promote healthy relationships across the parish, including PC
- the Locum has all rights and responsibilities as a rector
- the Locum is accountable to the Bishop
- financial authorisation, eg parish credit card and AIDF access
- on behalf of PC, be responsible for the implementation of parish policies eg columbarium and churchyard

Parish Council Responsibilities

- make sure the best possible people are on Parish Council/Leadership Team
- Council to be intentionally aware of the diocesan governance requirements
- new areas of potential revenue to be identified and discussed in preparation for a new Rector (but not implemented until they are in place)
- detailed review of insurance levels and premiums to be undertaken in 2020
- continue current work on risk mitigation, via the Risk Advisory Committee
- undertake planned and approved major projects (eg road) but not undertake new projects requiring major expenditure unless essential
- Oversight of all approved projects and budgets
- Regular communications with the parish

New Rector Responsibilities

- review vision, values and mission statements for the parish
- review the budget and its ministry priorities
- in consultation with PC, review all policies, procedures and committees

Precinct

St Johns holds a special place in the history of Canberra to both parishioners and the outside community. It draws many visitors but also requires regular maintenance and updating which comes at a cost. Parish Council has agreed to continue with approved and budgeted major infrastructure projects so as not to overburden a new Rector and future councils, but not undertake any further unless necessary.

Locum Responsibilities

- close involvement and decision making concerning the rectory and 1 & 7 Amaroo Street
- manage relationships for other major projects

Parish Council Responsibilities

- ensure interactions with local residents, including rise of apartment dwellings
- major projects already planned
 - the entrance and bitumen car park
 - refurbishing the rectory
 - refurbishing 1 Amaroo St
 - ongoing general maintenance
 - St Johns Care redevelopment

New Rector Responsibilities

- Investigate potential directions for the precinct