

Mission Action Plan

Mission

We seek to share with others our experience of God and to make of All Saints Northcote a place of permanent welcome, a refuge and anchor for the human spirit.

Welcome the Lord – worship

Reverence for liturgy and joy in music are central to our worship. The observance of season and feast has continued in unbroken service in this place for 157 years. We seek to be close to God in the celebration of Baptism and in the breaking of the bread, and to draw others into a sense of the sacred. We hold to a middle way, resisting extremes, allowing for difference and listening to new ideas, but always anchored in prayer book and hymnal, in parish and Diocese, and in the great Anglican tradition. In practising our faith here, we acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which the church is built, and respect their spiritual connection to country.

Welcome the stranger – relationship

The defining spiritual features of our community are love, tolerance, warmth and inclusiveness. We are less concerned about numbers, money, appearances, power or status than about hospitality, participation, and the gifts each person brings, regardless of their age or abilities or sexual orientation or any other personal characteristic. We love children and young people. We treat outcasts and fringe dwellers compassionately and support agencies of social action. We look for opportunities to support reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians and actively oppose racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination.

Welcome the friend – partnership

We are enriched by our connection with St Paul's Fairfield and St James the Great Thornbury as part of an amalgamated parish, and we respect the different identities of each community. We are active participants in ecumenical exchange and inter-faith activity. We value our relationship with St Philip's Collingwood and St Mark's Fitzroy. We view our partnership with the Brotherhood of St Laurence as an essential part of our mission. We seek to reduce our environmental footprint through energy conservation and sustainable practices.

Actions

We are small but the community is not declining in numbers, enthusiasm or optimism. We are not defined by the prevailing negative stereotyping of the church and are encouraged to act in ways that will support our mission.

I. Leadership and worship

Unable to sustain a full-time ministry independently, we seek to maintain full-time ministry in partnership with other churches, as part of a unified and strengthened parish.

Specific actions

- Increase our financial contribution to paid ministry from 25 per cent to 40 per cent, and review this annually with a view to increasing to 50 per cent when resources are available.
- Work towards the appointment of a full-time Vicar in 2019 through a process that will accommodate the preferences and worship values of all three Centres.

- Maintain and actively grow lay involvement in leadership, worship and governance, and seek out opportunities for people to use their gifts in ministry to others.
- Maintain high quality traditional music, including proficiency in organ playing, choral direction and singing, psalm canting, with openness to modern forms.
- Participate fully in the structures and processes of church life through the Diocesan Synod and in ongoing Diocesan training in governance and compliance responsibilities.

2. Invitation and outreach

We are conscious of many people, just outside our doors, who need and want a connection with God and a worshipping community. We recognise the need to make contact with the people around us, letting them know we are here and who we are.

Specific actions

- Identify activities already taking place in the local community to which parishioners can contribute their time and skills in the name of the church.
- Identify opportunities to connect with our local Indigenous community and contribute to wider social action to support reconciliation and Indigenous recognition.
- Continue letterbox distribution of invitational material, in collaboration with the marketing section of the Brotherhood of St Laurence.
- Encourage parishioners to contribute materially and through voluntary involvement in the operation of the BSL Store and the wider Anglican mission to the poor and disadvantaged.
- Continue to encourage Baptism within the Eucharist as a sign of belonging and an opportunity for congregational welcome.
- Maintain and extend the reach of the quarterly publication 'Saints Alive' to those with limited or occasional contact with us.
- In collaboration with St Philip's Collingwood, and with the assistance of funding from the Clifton Hill Fund, initiate forums on social and ethical issues as a community engagement strategy.
- Participate in non-party-political local environmental action and other ethical action consistent with our mission.
- Maintain visibility through a well developed website and review our regular communication materials (pew bulletins and service sheets, guides, reports) for appeal and effectiveness.
- Increase lay attendance in our church's name in local and wider ecumenism such as inter-church network activity, and in interfaith activity through, for example, Open Mosque days.

3. Church family life

We aim to sustain a healthy, positive community culture, free of petty conflicts or internal politicisation. We want everyone, including children, to know that they are welcomed, accepted and safe in the church community.

Specific actions

- Maintain a program of activities for children based on quality materials and age-appropriate stories and songs, for the engagement of children and to support the worship of young parents.
- Maintain a program of seasonal and celebratory events throughout the year, including parish concerts, barbecues and other events held jointly with other Centres.
- Recruit newcomers and coach them in supporting the worship of visitors and newcomers. Continue to welcome all who interact with us, including those coming for weddings and baptisms, recognising that people can be linked to us in many ways.
- Review the lay team for gender balance and work to remove barriers to participation where they are identified.

- Foster opportunities for continued learning and growth in the faith, through a focus on homiletics, the children's program, confirmation preparation, group studies through Lent, and at least one retreat per year.
- Apply preventive health and safety practices in relation to all physical hazards associated with buildings, spaces and equipment; meet Diocesan standards with respect to the safety of all, including young people and children through the observance of professional standards; protect the privacy of all in the church community and those who interact with us.

4. Stewardship for ministry

Contributing to full-time paid ministry and maintaining worship is our major financial challenge and our highest priority. Our capacity to do this is underpinned by maintaining our buildings and grounds as financial assets, rather than as near-liabilities. We must arrest deterioration and upgrade our facilities, amenities and rental assets, not as valuable properties in themselves but in order to sustain ministry and community life. Our community life should be conducted in an environmentally responsible way, eliminating unnecessary waste of energy and resources and adopting sustainable practices.

Specific actions

- Maintain a preventive annual maintenance program for the vicarage and address all maintenance and improvement issues promptly, including issues of energy efficiency.
- Address both immediate and underlying issues in the condition of the hall (Community Store) in order to support the continuing Mission to which the work of the Brotherhood of St Laurence contributes.
- Source energy from Greenpower-accredited suppliers, minimise use of nonrecyclable materials and avoid the creation of environmentally damaging waste.
- Carry out necessary cross-site drainage improvement, tree management and grounds maintenance to protect all four major buildings from the effects of soil instability and water ingress.
- Ensure that where practicable green plumbing is applied; for example, by installation of rainwater tanks for garden watering.
- Engage the community in redesign, development and use of the grounds to maximise, for example, the use of indigenous plants and drought-resistant species or to establish small scale community gardening.
- Carry out necessary restorative and protective work on the church building, as identified in the Conservation Management Strategy.
- Develop a long-term plan for major upgrade or replacement of the meeting room.
- Develop and implement strategies for a sustained increase in offertory giving to about \$20,000 per annum, and identify further opportunities for fundraising.