

Vicar's Annual Report 2013

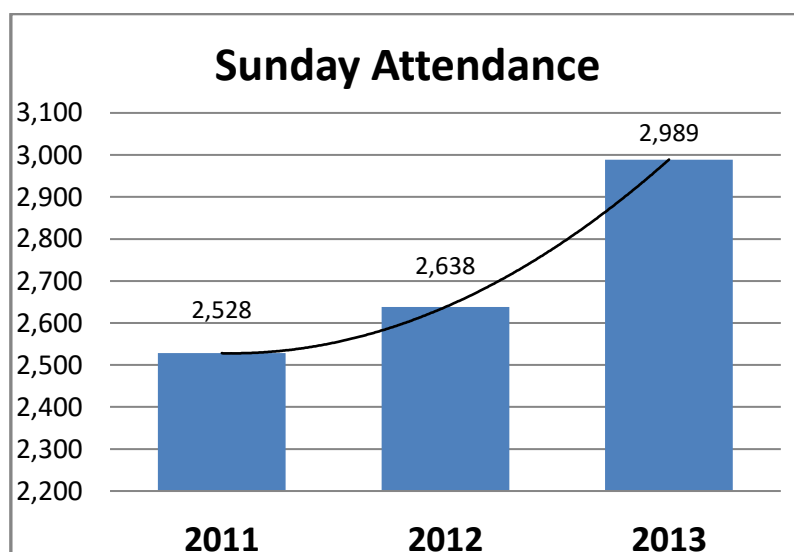
“The church is not only called to tell the good news of the coming of God’s kingdom and to share in the work of the kingdom here on earth, it is also called to embody the presence of God’s reign in human society by the way it orders and express its life.” Or as one theologian has put it: ‘the church must be the first sign of what it preaches.’
Robert Warren (The healthy Churches hand book.)

Last year I concluded my Annual Report with the statement ‘As a Parish, we step out in faith to follow God where he is leading us in the coming year to use our money, resources, skills and abilities. I prayed that we would continue to depend on God’s guidance, provision, gifts and power so as to bear lasting fruit for his Kingdom, in the place where he has called us.

Now as I reflect upon that year I see that as God’s people you have well and truly stepped out in faith and followed God’s lead and as your priest, I have been humbled by your generosity with your money, time, resources skills and abilities that as a Parish you have been the first sign of what we preach to our community. So it is a privilege to once again present my Annual Report for 2013 on the ministry of our church.

Parish Statistics:

There have been 112 public services, 105 public Sunday services, both these exclude weddings, funerals, private baptism and services in residential facilities, with the yearly total of 2989 people attending all Sunday services. Christmas Day/Christmas Eve 232 people attended across the Parish and 103 attended Easter Day/Eve services. There have also been 34 public services held at St Laurence Park throughout the year, these services also includes services held by Bill O’Brien on the first Sunday in the month in the hub at Costa House.



“Encourage one another and build each other up”

Worship:

The essence of who we are as God's people is expressed each week as we gather at either of our designated place of worship, in God's sanctuary, in God's house of praise, for the purpose of worship, to praise the Lord because of who God is – and God is so astounding that He deserves our worship whether we feel like it or not. Worship we know is for God, because creatures owe their creator praise.

The very language of our liturgy, of our prayer and our praise, reminds us of our identity in relationship with God and neighbours, upholds and nurtures our vision of how we are different and why that matters. To enrich our worship we have to continue our themed services on the first Sunday of the month, some of which have followed the Church Calendar such as All Saints Day, Advent, Mothering Sunday, Trinity Sunday, while others have had included Mission Sunday, Father's Day, Harvest Festival, Heritage Sunday and the Blessing of the Pets at Christ Church. At Holy Trinity our worship has been enhanced through two gifted musicians, on the first Sunday of the month pianist Kieran Murphy and Philip Starks who plays the clarinet during communion on the second and fourth Sunday's of the month.

While the attendance for midweek service remains low, it continues to be one of the highlights in my week. Whilst the structure of this service is based upon Third Order of Holy Communion it does however, offer the flexibility to use a more mediative type of worship with the use of Tazié music and interactive homilies with at times a Lectio divina style of a slow, contemplative praying of the Scriptures.

To enhance our worship experience we have implemented a number of initiatives.

At Christ Church we have installed a Plasma Screen on a portable stand made by Garry Green, this has enabled the use of PowerPoint for the service at Christ Church, permitting the use of multimedia to heighten our worship experience. On behalf of the congregation of Little River I would like to extend out thanks to Garry for his ingenuity and expertise in the construction of the portable stand.

At Holy Trinity through the generosity of the Diocese who bestowed to the Parish four stained glass windows originally from Holy Advent Anglican Church, Armadale, for the cost of installation, the cost two of which were covered by donations from two parishioners. One of which the 'Presentation of Jesus in the Temple,' was donated by the Glare family in memory of their late mother and grandmother, Katrine Brown.

The 'Apocalypse' window which is located over the door and 'New Jerusalem' window in the Sanctuary are a pair and were originally a thank offering to Holy Advent from Veronica and Frank Key who were married at Holy Advent Armadale on 8th January 1944, during the second world war which lends some understanding to the symbolism in the Apocalypse window which incorporates the helmet, the breastplate and the sword for the fight from the book of Ephesians. The other two windows the 'Presentation in the Temple' gifted by Violet Gayer in remembrance of her husband Charles Edward Gayer a priest called to higher service on 22-6-35 and the 'Resurrection' gifted by Muriel in remembrance of her parents Henry Seaton Lynch Vestry man 6-4-1924, Ada Eliza Lynch 6-3-1947 and her brother Herbert Reginald 23-8-1912. These windows along with the refurbishment of the carpet also reflect on our part a gesture of praise and a desire to glorify God through the enhancement of our worship space.

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St Laurence Park:

As mentioned earlier in the statistics St Laurence Park provides another significant area of ministry within the Parish with the Chapel of St Clair 9:30 am on the fourth Thursday in the month, the Chapel at St Catherine's 11:00 am on the first and third Thursday of the month and 6:30 pm on the first Sunday of the month in the hub. To raise the awareness within St Laurence of its Christian roots, we invited Bishop Philip Huggins in August to preach and preside at St Catherine's Chapel, this was followed by a sumptuous afternoon tea provided by the kitchen staff at Costa House.

This pastoral outreach to those at St Laurence Park would not be possible without the assistance of volunteers, therefore I would like to take this opportunity to thank those members of our Parish who assist with these Chapel services, especially at St Catherine and a special thank you to Bill O'Brien who has been taking and leading the worship on the first Sunday of each month for around 30 years.

Parish Opportunity Shop

What a roller coaster of year it has been for the Op Shop team, moving at the end of 2012 into the hall, continuing to operate alongside of a building site and then moving into the new building complex in August. As this ministry to our community has continued to grow from its humble beginnings, this year not only has the Op Shop contributed to the running cost of the Parish they have also chosen to support Nungalinga College as their dedicated mission.

Now that I work from the Parish office I see for myself the dedication of Dawn Teesdale who works tirelessly and selflessly as our Op Shop coordinator, on behalf of the Parish I thank you along with your mighty team of volunteers for whom we could not do without. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all those who assisted Dawn in moving the Op Shop both times, thank you.

Building for Mission: From Humble Beginnings to Full Parish Outreach

In January we began our 2013 "building for mission" project which was all about building a home base for life-changing ministry and mission. At the launch of our Building for Mission Joy Leggo stated, "The buildings won't change anyone: but what happens in them will." Together as a Parish we stepped out in faith with a \$400,000 grant received from the Diocese which did not have to be repaid and with enough term deposits having been lodged with the Anglican Development, to enable us to take out a loan of \$230,000 with the Anglican Fund to meet the shortfall the building contract was signed.

On August 27th as a congregation we celebrated with Bishop Philip Huggins and the Archdeacon Neil Hicks, the opening and dedication of our Building for Mission.

Through the hard work and dedication of the Building committee whose membership consists of Gregory Medwell, Helen Glare, John Thompson, who achieved the strategies, set out in the "Parish Vision" detailed for the committee when the construction contract was signed off on the 9th of August.

In John Thompson's words 'we appreciate that other members of the congregation may have applied a different emphasis on stages within the project, and we respect their views, but to us there is no doubt the facilities we now have available will build up and strengthen

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that common affection binding us all together here at Holy Trinity to “Praise God and do his Good Works”.

The completed works including the windows are there for all to see, plus ancillary support works such as electrical, drainage, water, and toilet facilities, all important and necessary. The work of the committee on this project is now completed and belongs to the annals of history, but their endeavours and the facilities created are for the present and the future as the Parish continues to grow and foster Community Outreach.

Through the generosity of donations from Lara District Community Bank and Give Where You Live, along with the donations of groceries from the congregation, the local Country Woman’s Association and the Meredith Masonic Lodge we have been able to incorporate within this Building Development a designated Food Cupboard and refrigerator. This has enabled us to take this ministry of outreach which begun all those years ago by the dedicated Ladies of the Holy Trinity Guild, to a sustainable model of caring for the most disadvantaged members of our community.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my deepest thanks to those on the Building committee for their dedication and commitment and also to Joy Leggo whose gifts in raising the necessary funds through grants and developing the Parishes Building for Mission fund, have enabled the project to be completed. Also it would be amiss of me if at this time I did not acknowledge and give my heartfelt thanks to SuzieTrajkovski from the Diocese, Archdeacon Neil Hicks for his amazing support and wisdom, Mark Marbani the project manager, Frank Dong architect but above all I extend my deepest gratitude to Paul and Denis Marinovic the construction company who brought our vision into reality.

The second stage of our Building works the update of the Kitchen at Holy Trinity has just been approved by the Diocese; works will begin in coming weeks and will be finished by Christmas.

S.A.L.T. Serving and Learning Together

Small groups play a significant role in the life of a church as they assist not only in the development of the relationships but also as they enable the participants to engage with scripture so they can make connections between their faith and daily living.

This year to progress our small group ministry I approached Philip Starks to be the coordinated. Through Philip’s ministry we have reflected upon the movie ‘The Way’ which highlighted the necessity to have fellow companions to walk with us on our life/faith journey. And just recently we have completed the Alpha course which was run on a Tuesday afternoon and evening with around 20 participants. On behalf of the small groups I would like to extend out thanks to Philip for time and dedication to this ministry.

Stewardship

all that we have,
A vibrant, growing church
Changing lives and
Reshaping futures
All that we do.
For Jesus Christ!
At the time.

Although in September last year we began our three year Spirited Generosity campaign, this year when Joy Leggo and I discussed Stewardship, we both agreed that during this year of 2013, money had taken up a great deal of our focus, do we build, can we afford it, can we get enough term deposits to secure a loan, can we afford a loan, should an upgrade of the kitchen be included in the building works, can

“Encourage one another and build each other up”

we save some money here or there on the building, can we re-pay the loan, will the Parish of Lara and in particular Holy Trinity be okay We acknowledge with heartfelt thanks that so many from the Parish have also given so generously to our Building for Mission Campaign during this year. Having raised through donations & pledges just over \$100,000 as a Parish we stepped out in faith and turned a long held dream into a reality.

Yet with a loan & interest to re-pay, alongside the daily operational costs in running the Parish, in many ways our work had just begun, consolidating our finances and developing a clear repayment plan for our loan is a priority for the 2013/2014 financial year. Therefore it was imperative that we once again approached the task of stewardship and to ask people to prayerfully consider their commitment again this year. As Joy said, 'All that we have, all that we do, all the time is helping to sustain a vibrant growing church, changing lives and reshaping futures for Jesus Christ.'

Mission

In Robert Warren's book "The Healthy Churches Handbook," he explores the five marks of a healthy church the first mark: energized by faith the second mark: outward-looking focus. Warren states that "Churches with these characteristics are deeply attractive because the focus is not on themselves, but on God's goodness and reality and on the world around them. They are, indeed, living the two great commandments.

ABM states that Mission is creating, reconciling and transforming action of God. And that there are Five Marks of Mission to help us think about God's mission locally and globally.

FIVE MARKS OF MISSION

1. Witness to Christ's saving, forgiving and reconciling love for all people.
2. Build welcoming, transforming communities of faith
3. Stand in solidarity with the poor and needy
4. Challenge violence, injustice and oppression, and work for peace and reconciliation
5. Protect, care for and renew life on our planet.

This year the Parish Mission group has begun due in most parts from a request made at last year's Annual Meeting at Holy Trinity this group meets on the second Saturday of the month at the home of Vernon and Joan Cohen. Comprising Wendy O'Brien, Philip Starks, Annette Wendleman, Denis Scott, Vernon Cohen, Joan Cohen and I all of whom are passionate mission focused individuals with the desire to raise the awareness of mission within our Parish through:

- The development of a Parish Mission statement: "The Mission of this Parish holds a balance between outreach to the local community and contribution to the wider world ministry according to the Great Commission."
- Assisting the Parish to choose a Parish Mission to support for the next two years through research and by then nominating ABM St Margaret's Hospital PNG which was accepted by both Vestries within the Parish.
- Philip obtaining the latest news and updates of St Margaret's Hospital which has been published in the Pew Bulletin, future updates will be sourced by Philip
- Display boards on the wall in foyer and easel have been set up in the Narthex of Holy Trinity
- Christmas Shoe Boxes, of which 70 boxes were delivered to the Samaritans Purse from the Parish

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- The support of the Op Shop nominated Mission Nungalingya College with a lunch on October 5th with guests speakers Joy Frier and The Reverend Dr Joy Sanderfur's former dean of Nungalingya College where around 30 people attended, the Social Committee provide a cold lunch and Parishioners provided the sweets, a special thank you to the Social Committee. A retiring offering was collected of \$260 for Nungalingya College
- Attendance at the Leprosy Movie night Sunday October 13th Readings Waurm Ponds along with the Investigators.
- The promotion of CMS Summer Under the Sun to congregation to begin in mid-November 2013

Local mission:

- Dawn Teesdale, Lola Lewis, Helen Glare and I have attended the Emergency Food Meeting at the Geelong City Council Chambers

Social Committees

Throughout the year the Holy Trinity Social Committee presented a number of fundraising activities along with Little River, which has provided a valued support to the Parish.

Although high on our agenda for the Social committee is the raising of funds to assist with the operational cost of the Parish during the notice time in one of the services at Holy Trinity Helen Smith raised our awareness of the impact that fundraising activities have on others. Through Helen's initiative of raising money by taking photos of the families at the institution where Helen works, Helen spoke about the amazing impact she saw in this modest act upon the inmates and their families.

I would like to extend my deepest thanks to the Social Committee at Holy Trinity and the Parishioners at Little River for their continued support to the life of the Parish and for all their hard work throughout the year.

CRE

This ministry of outreach to the children of our local communities in Lara by Wendy O'Brien at Lara Lake Primary School and Little River Primary School by myself, who teach grade 5/6 continues to be essential part of our ministry. An example of the significance of this ministry came to light this week with a request for baptism from a mother of a child in Lara who through CRE has come home and asked to be baptised.

Therefore as a Parish through the CRE partnerships we have this year supported two CRE teachers, along with providing funding for the Children's books at Little River and the morning tea for teachers at Lara Primary School, Lara Lake Primary School and for the first time this year at Little River Primary School.

Minister Association

This year although we have tried to hold our meetings on a rotational basis at each centre the business of Church life often gets in the way and at times these meetings have not been as well represented by each denomination as we would like. However, the importance of developing these relationships is vital in our witnessing to the community of our ecumenical relationship that exists between us.

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Combined Churches Lara Carols

This year the weather was kind to us and we were able to hold the Carols at St Laurence Park, these Carols provide an amazing mission outreach opportunity for the Churches of Lara, one we pray that will continue to grow and develop over the coming years.

In conclusion:

I would like to thank all who have been for me a sign of God's kingdom, all those tireless workers who help to maintain the Parish Plant. From those who set up for worship, who clean the churches, buy and arrange the flowers, the Sunday PowerPoint operators, the many trips to the tip, the mowing of the lawns, the working bees on the garden, moving the groceries from the church into the food cupboard, those who helped move the furniture out and back into the church after the installation of the windows and new carpet, and the list goes on. Thank you.

Thank you to the Vestries, the Wardens, and to Helen Glare who retires this year as our Parish Treasurer, our deepest gratitude to your wisdom and dedication in all that you have done in your time as our Parish Treasurer.

To Gregory Medwell Vicar's Warden at Holy Trinity from the Parish our deepest thanks for all that you have done for our Parish through the Building Project.

And once again thank you to poor George, for your constant love and support throughout the year.

To conclude, in Paul's second letter to the Thessalonian's, Paul reminds the community of Thessalonica that perseverance and focus will yield good works and a strong community—not grumbling and chaos. Paul in 2 Thessalonians was speaking to some Christians who were using their conviction concerning the Second Coming of Jesus as an excuse to drop out of life. Since they believed Jesus would be coming at any time, they decided it did not make sense to do any work. They wanted to just sit and stare at the sky. Paul was concerned about their behavior since they did not know the day or the hour of the Lord's return. And even if the Lord were to return immediately, surely he would want to find them working. Therefore, with the completion this year of our Building for Mission, we would be mistaken to think that our work is done; to the contrary it has only just begun.

Therefore, may we as God's people continue to encourage one another and build each other up.



The Reverend Shirley Littras
Priest in Charge
The Anglican Parish of Lara with Little River

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