

Diocese of Perth
ANGLICAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA

Grace Church Joondalup



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Sunday 28 June 2009

Rector's Report

This annual report is somewhat more inward-looking than usual, but focusing on the internal dynamic of parish life is necessarily at the service of the wider ministry and mission of the Church.

There are two aspects of our life together in this eucharistic community which are currently of particular concern. The first has to do with our Anglican identity within the spectrum of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. The second has to do with building a permanent house for this local church.

Anglican Identity

Several years back, as the culture wars over human sexuality raged across the Anglican Communion, we made the decision to affiliate our parish with a group known as Inclusive Church. As members of Inclusive Church, we signed up to the following declaration –

- We affirm that the Church's mission, in obedience to Holy Scripture, is to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ in every generation.
- We acknowledge that this is Good News for people regardless of their sex, race or sexual orientation.
- We believe that, in order to strengthen the Gospel's proclamation of justice to the world, and for the greater glory of God, the Church's own common life must be justly ordered.
- To that end, we call on our Church to live out the promise of the Gospel; to celebrate the diverse gifts of all members of the body of Christ; and in the ordering of our common life to open the ministries of deacon, priest and bishop to those so called to serve by God, regardless of their sex, race or sexual orientation.

This was a deliberate attempt on our part to situate ourselves clearly in the heartland of Anglicanism's traditional generosity of spirit, and therefore to position ourselves clearly within the traditional boundaries of orthodox Christianity. We believe in 'the faith once delivered to the saints' as we live faithfully in the present and embrace with hope God's glorious future. In former times, all this was understood when we called ourselves Anglican. Today, sadly, this understanding can no longer be taken for granted. All sorts of groups claiming the name Anglican have emerged, mostly as breakaway churches from authentic Anglican churches, and now breakaway churches from breakaway churches. Unfortunately, fragmentation leads inevitably to fragmentation, for the search for a 'pure' church where everyone agrees about everything is a contradiction in terms and entirely elusive.

Just before the start of Lent 2009, therefore, we adopted more obviously the recognised symbol of the Anglican Communion. At the time of adopting the Compass Rose as our parish logo, I wrote in these terms -

First, we want something crisp and clean, easy on the eye and distinctive. Secondly, we want to make it clear that this local eucharistic community belongs to the family of the Diocese of Perth within the larger family of the Anglican Church of Australia. Thirdly, we want to affirm that the Anglican Church of Australia is one constituent province of the international Anglican Communion of Churches. Until very recently, the name 'Anglican' made all this plain. Sadly, however, we live in fractious times when breakaway schismatic groups also call themselves Anglican. Here in Perth the so-called Traditional Anglican Communion and the Anglican Catholic Church are also present, along with smaller bodies not in communion with Canterbury or other Anglican provinces. For this reason it seems good to adopt the emblem of the Anglican Communion. Designed by Canon Edward Nason West of the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine in New York City for the Minneapolis Anglican Congress of 1954, the Compass Rose centres on the cross of Saint George, with the points of the compass radiating from it to illustrate the worldwide spread of its apostolic and evangelical faith – some 80 million people, now found in 160 countries of the world. In place of the usual decoration

marking north, a bishop's mitre has been substituted as the time-honoured symbol of the Apostolic Order essential to the catholic Church. Encircling the shield are the words of Jesus, THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE (John 8:32) in New Testament Greek. The Anglican Communion is held together by bonds of affection, where the Archbishop of Canterbury is honoured as 'primus inter pares' or first among equals. Anglicans do not claim by ourselves to be the entire catholic Church, for we belong together with all baptized Christians to the catholic Church of the ages. In other words, we trace our ancestry not just to the sixteenth century reformers, and not even to Saint Augustine arriving in Canterbury in 598CE, but to first century Jerusalem and the Easter tomb.

A New Church Home

It is a commonplace truth that the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church is the baptized people of God, the Body of Christ alive and active in today's world. The Church is neither institution nor buildings. Grace Church can be very clear about this, as our church has sheltered since its inception in a variety of temporary buildings, first in Edgewater and more recently here in the heart of Joondalup. The building we currently inhabit was designed as the offices associated with the proposed Grace Cathedral.

On 12 October 2008 plans for a permanent church building were announced in the following terms –

Back in 1987-1988 a fledgling Anglican community was founded in Edgewater as an offshoot of St Peter's Waneroo. After years of setting up Edgewater Community Hall every week in time for the Sunday Eucharist, the 1995 move to our present building was certainly cause for celebration. At that time, Archbishop Peter Carnley hoped to build Grace Cathedral Joondalup, one of two co-cathedrals (the other being St John's Fremantle) alongside St George's Cathedral Perth. As we know, for various reasons this dream has never been realized. Indeed, the vision of a great church here has probably stopped us even thinking about other options. This means we have struggled on in the present worship space, with no proper facilities at all. Given these constraints, we have undoubtedly done something beautiful for God in this community. Across these years, Joyce Geach, the only surviving parishioner from those early days, has seen it all and remained faithful through it all – as have so many others who have been part of our life at various stages. This faithfulness now looks set to be rewarded as the Diocese of Perth considers entering into partnership with Joondalup Hospital to develop our site. Initial meetings with architects and city planners and representatives of diocese and hospital have recently taken place. In perhaps as little as two years time we may find ourselves in a purpose built church 50% larger than our current worship space, with meeting rooms, offices, an outdoor paved area, and all the usual facilities. We will be located right on the corner of Grand Boulevard and Shenton Avenue, with specialist consulting rooms built around us, and a multi-layer carpark facing Central Walk. It may even be possible to remain where we are during the construction period. Should this excellent plan go ahead, we can expect winners all round. The specialists will get the extra space they need, with rooms ideally located within walking distance directly opposite the hospital. The parish will have the advantage of an attractive and clearly visible church complex, with space for future growth, and the diocese can expect considerable rental income for many years to come. This is certainly an exciting time to belong to Grace Church, as we confidently look forward to a bright future.

The world of 2008 is very different, of course, to that of 2009. What has happened to these exciting plans since the international financial crisis began to take its toll? As I indicated a little while back, although we are facing some delay I have no reason to doubt that our plans will go ahead. In my view, we are in the phoney war stage of the project. On the Day of Pentecost 2009, I offered these thoughts -

After a good deal of initial excitement about building a new church, and with detailed plans on display, it is hardly surprising that from time to time I find myself answering questions

about progress. I dare say there are some of us who will only believe there will be a new church when we see the earth-movers arrive, and after many unfulfilled schemes over the years I can't blame anyone for that! Nevertheless, my usual answer to interested questioners is that I would say we are in the 'phoney war' stage. By this I mean we are caught in that strange half light between the declaration of war and the beginning of hostilities, living through that tedious and usually anxious time when we know where we are headed but nothing seems to happen. Usually, the expression 'Phoney War' refers to September 1939 - April 1940. In 1939 Britain declared war on Germany, but by Spring 1940 many ordinary people had decided that the war was never going to happen. They stopped carrying their gas-masks, and some evacuees returned to their homes. Then, suddenly, on 9 April 1940, Nazi forces attacked Denmark and Norway, and the Battle of Britain followed just a few months later. Since discussion began between the Diocese of Perth and the Joondalup Health Campus over building medical suites for lease to the hospital, including a new church for the parish of Joondalup, we have seen two church floor plans – the second of which we have accepted. Discussions continue, and there has been no indication of any fundamental change of direction – even taking into account the global financial crisis. The fact is that these things take time. Indeed, time is necessary in order for everyone involved to think and think again. Getting such a project right is necessarily a slow business, particularly in the early stages. Once 'hostilities' begin, however, predictions suggest that progress should be fairly quick. At the moment, then, we are in the business of being patient and 'cooling our heels.' We are also in the business of simply getting on with things – worshiping faithfully, being Christ's body in the communion of the Spirit, proclaiming the gospel of hope in word and sacrament, lovingly serving the people of this city and neighbourhood.

As a both-and church in an either-or world, this is where we stand. While seeking to remain faithful to sacred scripture and the living Christian tradition we seek also to remain wide open to all that is yet to be. We are always in the business of simply getting on with things – being Christ together as a welcoming and nurturing worshipping community of Anglicans, living and proclaiming the Good News of God in loving service to this city and neighbourhood.

Fear not little flock, for it is the Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

David Graeme Wood

B.A., B.D., M.A., Ph.D

Churchwardens' Report

We can look back on another year for Grace Church in which we have continued to grow as a community of faith.

The year was marked by the announcement of the joint venture with Joondalup Hospital that will see the construction of a new worship centre on the block adjacent to our current building.

A preliminary plan of the new building has been displayed for comment and has generated great interest and excitement about the possibilities for the life of the Parish that the new centre will offer. No doubt there will be more discussion and planning activity in the coming year.

We welcomed Fr Michael as Priest Associate and our liturgical life has been enriched by his involvement as presider and preacher. We also welcomed Bishop Kay Goldsworthy, who joined us for our Christmas Mass and obligatory champagne supper.

The Lenten studies on the person and life of Paul gave us new insights into the man and the cultural and historical context of his mission.

As a Parish we have edged closer to financial independence, but we need to build the discipline of our weekly giving to achieve our ultimate aim.

Our social activities gave us enjoyment and continue to be important in building our closeness as a community.

The women of the Parish continued to dine out regularly, and to meet to discuss books read (or not).

The men finally got their act together, forming J.A.M. (Joondalup Anglican Men) to share a breakfast and a film night. Barry Simpson was a popular guest speaker at our first breakfast, sharing his passion for Tamla Motown music.

We supported Daisy House with food offerings throughout the year, and with hampers at Christmas.

We are thankful for Fr David's inspiring leadership and humour, which does much to remind us of the joy of being one in Christ.

Helen Matusik

Allan Griffiths

Children's Worship

At present, we have a team of 5 volunteers, all with the required working with children clearance, who take Children's Worship. Indeed, we are in the process of expanding this team, and any volunteers are welcome! Each Sunday, we regularly have between 4 and 6 children attending, with those numbers swelling occasionally when there is a baptism or another event where service attendance increases. Indeed, lack of numbers of children in the congregation contributes to a 'small group' atmosphere during the Sunday morning session.

We generally use ideas from the web site 'sermons4kids' which has ideas for the reading's emphasis that week. The teachers who prepare the material to be covered often supplement these suggestions with ideas of their own. This is then presented by the church member running the session. Overall the session consists of a biblical verse, reading or idea which is then followed by an activity, either discussing or making something linked to the main teaching point. We try hard to link the biblical teaching to the children's own experience, often asking for them to share their own ideas. Children's worship provides a wonderful opportunity for some of the teachings of Jesus to be incorporated into an everyday context, which the children may be able to emulate in their own lives that week.

Naomi Fitzgerald

Book Club Report

Membership varied from ten to twelve over the last year. Many of our members disappeared on short or long holidays but we have never had a meeting of less than six people.

We usually pick about twelve books from a long list of kits and perhaps, we have been a little more successful in choosing books popular with most people this year. Many of them have been Australian. Wanneroo Library has created kits of books which promote thought and discussion. In the past, these books have been free, but from July onwards, there will be a fee of \$100 per club, which given our numbers and a levy of \$10 each should not be too hard to raise. After the first lump sum, we intend to put \$2 in the kitty at each meeting.

Not only do we enjoy our discussions, but we feel that the comradeship is an important part of church life.

Mary Straiton

Joondalup Anglican Men (J.A.M.)

J.A.M. was formed this year to enable men associated with the Parish to meet regularly for fellowship and to share common interests. The inaugural meeting was a breakfast at which Barry Simpson shared his passion for, and memorabilia of, Tamla Motown music. It was enjoyed so much we may ask Barry for an encore. The viewing of the film "The Boat that Rocked" brought back memories of the music and culture of the sixties. We have drawn up a list of various activities (J.A.M. sessions) for the year, and we encourage all men of the Parish to join us. Watch out for notices at Church and on the website.

Allan Griffiths