

St Margaret's Anglican Church Eltham

the Parish Matters

Celebrates parish life and reports important items from the most recent Parish Council meeting
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Dancing to the beat of God's heart 2020

God of love, your compassion for people knows no bounds.

Give us grace that we may know the presence of Jesus in us and with us:

in words of scripture,
in water, bread and wine,
in the face of each other.

Transform our lives by your Spirit

and give us your heart of compassion,

so that we may make the transforming love of Christ known to all. **Amen**

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Christmas and 2020

Normally we don't have a January issue, but at the last Parish Council Meeting it was decided that we should share some of the celebrations and joy of Christmas as well as exploring the excitement anticipated in the year ahead. Above we begin with the prayer that Keren has written for this transforming time. We begin by introducing our assistant curate who joins us full time for the next two years.

Christopher Garcia

Keren invites us to meet Christopher Garcia, who will be our Assistant Curate, and who is going to be **ordained on 8th February** at the Cathedral (a date I hope everyone has in their diary!). Below Christopher introduces himself and gives a bit of background. Please pray for Christopher as he and others prepare to be ordained. Christopher was born in Adelaide and lived there until he was 20. Christopher moved to Melbourne to study theatre and performing arts. After theatre school he worked as a performer and a theatre technician. He worked on a number of shows in the botanic gardens. This included "A Midsummer night's dream", "Wind in the willows", "Romeo and Juliette" and "Cinderella". As a freelance theatre worker he has worked at many venues around Melbourne and on a number of festivals and conferences. Christopher has a wide range of ministry and church experiences. Brought up as a Roman Catholic but from his early teens felt a deep call to fulltime ministry. As the call was further explored, he understood that



this would be best lived out in a family setting. When moving to Melbourne Christopher connected with The Salvation Army. It was here he found a place to serve God. Christopher became a Salvation Army officer and was sent to run Churches in New Norfolk, Tasmania, Pakenham and Brunswick, Vic. He also served as a chaplain in the court system, as an aged care Chaplain and as a regional youth minister across the north and west of metropolitan Melbourne.

Christopher's journey to Anglicanism has seen him minister in the parishes of St Mary's, Camberwell South, St Georges, Malvern and at Oakleigh Anglican Church.

Christopher comes to St Margaret's excited to join with the gathered people of God on our journey of faith. St Margaret's 2020 vision of "*Making the transforming love of Christ known to all. (Romans 15:13) (Ephesians 3:18)*" is one that Christopher eagerly embraces and looks forward to working with you and God to see this continually come into reality.

Keren and Christopher

Parish Council Report October

Parish Council met on Monday 16 December and we welcomed our new Councillor, Helen Robertson, who joins us for 2020.

The meeting commenced with a meal provided by the Vicar, followed by a Growing in Faith study based on a reading from Colossians.

An important exercise was to review the Vision Plan to confirm, or if necessary modify, key objectives for the coming year. The results of this will be advised to you all in January.

Our Parish Council covenant was affirmed.

The Vicar reported that St Margaret's has fulfilled its obligations to the Diocese by completion of the 340 question self audit tool on the Child Safe Church. This further demonstrates the value of all the hard work done by Keren, Mandy Stephens, Geoff Sandy and others in planning and preparation on child safety.

We reviewed action items from previous meetings to ensure items were completed. We also reviewed correspondence received, as well as an item from the Feedback Box endorsing Council's support of inclusivity.

We discussed and accepted the Financial Report, as well as reports from Pastoral Care, Property Committee and Do Justice. Early in the life of this Parish Council we intend to review and update as needed the charters or terms of reference for all committees of Council. The list of Liturgical Assistants was also endorsed prior to notification to the Diocese.

Finally we brainstormed articles for publication in Parish Matters. Watch out for the next edition to check the latest news of all St Margaret's activities.

John Humann

Vicar's & Council Appreciations

A regular item on Parish Council's agenda is to recognise and express our appreciation to many people:

As you'll see from this edition of Parish Matters, Advent and Christmas at St Margaret's in 2019 were rich, offering varied experiences. So many were involved in these events and services, and I want to thank you all:

- Advent Scroll: A huge thank you to Mitzi and David Tuke and their family for producing the beautiful Advent Scroll which shaped our journey this year. What an artistic achievement!
- Carols in the Town Square: thanks to John Humann for coordinating with our friends from the Uniting Church for rehearsals and copies of music; to those who sang as part of the choir so faithfully in rehearsal and on the three Saturdays we sang in the Town Square. And to everyone who came along to support us and provide a "rent a crowd"!
- Diamond Creakers: Thanks to John Humann too, for organising in the wake of the cancelled Liminality concert for the Diamond Creakers to perform. While numbers were small, those who came had a fabulous time!
- Nativity: Thanks to Mandy Stevens who organised the event, including the donkey, and to Rodney and the team of volunteers who came to help, and also to all St Margaret's folk who came along to support the event!
- Children's Christmas Service: Huge thanks to Adrienne who wrote and directed the nativity play, to Harry who designed and executed the sets, and to all those who took roles in the play and the service! There were many very positive comments from people as they were leaving afterwards!
- Roles in Christmas services: a thank you to everyone who read, who served as sidespersons, communion assistants, liturgical assistants, counters, musicians, organists, sacristans and sacristan assistants, and to Jen who prepared the services.

I pray this Christmas was a happy and holy one for all.

Council would especially like to acknowledge

- Keren's contribution to all the Christmas happenings into which she poured so much energy and enthusiasm to make it

wonderful celebration of the birth of Jesus.



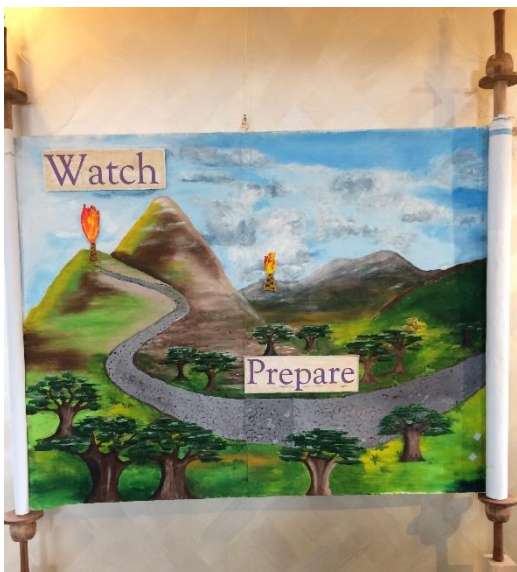
- Behind the scenes Jen in the Parish Office has produced amazing slides for services including magically animated ones, brochures, orders of services and contributed much more in terms of maintaining connectivity across the various facets and groups of St Margaret's. Many thanks.

Keren and Harry

Watch Prepare Behold Rejoice

We want to express our gratitude to Mitzi and David Tuke and their family for the incredible scroll they created to mark our journey through Advent 2019.

Each week we unfurled the scroll further, revealing the path to Bethlehem, starting with the exhortation to Watch.



The second Sunday, Prepare, we added a bit of straight path, as the Isaiah reading for the day is to "make the path straight in the wilderness" to prepare for the coming of the Lord.



On the third Sunday we were invited to Behold what God is doing, the flowering and blossoming of a once barren wilderness. We added flowers to the sides of the path.



And on the Fourth Sunday of Advent we Rejoiced in the good news of the promised Saviour, the star of Bethlehem rising in the east. On each week at the end of the sermon we were given a token to take away reminding us of the theme of the day. Thank you, Mitzi and David, for sharing your creative talents and gifts in this way and helping to make Advent a meaningful experience for so many!

Keren

Our Much-Visited Nativity Scene

This year St Margaret's provided a nativity scene at both the Eltham Town Twilight Festival and on one of the Saturdays when the carol singers were performing. Both sessions were well received but the Twilight Festival was especially successful with huge numbers of people passing by and the addition of the live donkey as a real drawcard.

The night started out badly when we were placed in a back corner of a carpark away from the main action. There were very few families in this area as the rides there were more suited to teenagers and the DJ music was VERY loud! Thanks to Sally Petty's insistence and by God's providence I'm sure, we located the coordinator out of hundreds of

people and arranged to re-locate the nativity scene to a lovely area right near the town square. It was so heartening to see the St Margaret's gang of helpers pitch in and move the entire nativity scene, hay and costumes by hand down to the town square. I couldn't help reflect that we are a fabulous bunch of people!



Once we were in the new area, we were run off our feet the whole night with young families and children as our main customers as well as a good number of adults who all got in on the fun of dressing up and having their photo taken. People especially loved the donkey and it's owner Haydi was fabulous at bringing people in – a natural showperson!.



The Saturday was quieter but still a steady number of people and a mother and daughter came up to express their thankfulness that there was a Christian presence amidst all of the general celebrations at this time. There are a huge number of wonderful people to thank for this event. To the main helpers – Alan White, John and Jan Humann,

Diana Warrell and her lovely granddaughter, Avis Perrit, Sally Petty, Rae Kerr and others who came and helped out on the night and created a big, supportive crowd. Thanks to Diana for a wonderful poster to advertise the event. Special thanks must go to Rodney Millard and his son for all their help in transporting and setting up the nativity scene and especially to Rodney for engineering the stable so that it can now be set up in literally three minutes and stored easily in the shed during the year. This is a huge time saver so is very much appreciated. Finally, thanks must go to our vicar Keren for her support of this event and to the Nillumbik Council and Chamber of Commerce for including us in the town Christmas celebrations. We will definitely be doing something similar next year and the donkey will be back!

Mandy Stevens

Carol Singing in Eltham Square

Vicar Keren has conducted three Saturday morning carol singing sessions in Eltham Town Square in the lead up to Christmas. This is a repeat of last year's successful performances by our Combined Churches Choir and is by invitation of the Eltham Chamber of Commerce and industry.

The choir is an amateur group comprising members of St Margaret's as well as the Eltham-Montmorency Uniting Church and interested singers from the community. We sing traditional carols and modern Christmas songs, the latter ably led on guitar by Steven Bruinsma from the Uniting Church. Keyboard accompaniment is provided by Rev Robert Street and sound equipment and set-up is provided by Steven's group, the Tanjil River Band.



Hearing carols sung in the Town Square is a significant way to broadcast the true message of Christmas amongst the competing messages at this time of year. It is a great outreach activity and is also a good example of St Margaret's work beyond the walls of the church.

Sincere thanks to all involved, especially our faithful supporters.

John Humann Coordinator

Reports – Do Justice and Anglicare

In the last three months parishioners have responded generously to a number of appeals from Anglicare and Do Justice for help for disadvantaged people. All appeals have been for new comers to Australia.

Firstly on St Margaret's Day parishioners bought food items for the Asylum Seekers Resource Centre. 14 boxes were filled with food which was an amazing reaction to as there had been only a week's notice given. This donation came at a time when LinC was appealing for foodstuffs for the 22 baskets it fills and delivers to people in Nillumbik and Banyule just before Christmas.

Secondly, the day that the food from the 5 other churches in the LinC organization in Nillumbik and Banyule was delivered to St Margaret's, the LinC president decided that some of the items could be delivered to refugees living in Eltham. With some wonderful donations from individual members of the Eltham Refugees Support Network (St Margaret's has two representatives on this committee, including Helen Robinson who is the chair, and MASSG) Christmas hampers were prepared for 12 individuals including one asylum seeker) and 7 couples. A wonderful effort showing that Christmas is certainly a time for giving!!



Packing at Jenny Disney's are Vicki and Gillian members of the Eltham Refugee Network

Thirdly, parishioners are most generous in their giving for the children attending the Saturday morning Sudanese Homework Club at St Peter's Box Hill. A large box has already been filled-once-with pencils, biros, A4 and A5 exercise books. The

appeal will continue until January 19th and the Anglicare Auxiliary members will pack the items ready to take to Box Hill.

Thank you all for your donations.

Next meetings:

Do Justice Saturday 1st Feb, 10am Dendy House
Anglicare Auxiliary: Tuesday 21st January, 10am in Hall

Anglicare Victoria Partnership Group (AVPG) will meet in Eltham on **Wednesday 5th February**. Come, have lunch and hear about how Anglicare is helping disadvantaged people 12.30 to 2.30 (Just let Jenny Disney or Jo Norman if you intend coming)

Jenny Disney for Anglicare and Do Justice.

Vale Maureen Lillian Christie

Family and friends from Probus, St Margaret's and Academic life joined to celebrate Maureen Christie's life. From country New South Wales to completing her education as a mature aged student and gaining her PhD from the University of Melbourne, Maureen lived a full and active life. A steadfast friend to many, a mentor in her academic life and a past secretary and president of Eltham



Probus Club. A mother, grandmother, and great grandmother Maureen was an amazing woman; she was caring, maternal, and generous. We at St Margaret's will miss her cheerful smile and warm personality.

MAUREEN LILLIAN CHRISTIE
4/8/1943- 13/12/2019

Sally Petty

Children's Christmas Eve Service

Woven amongst familiar carols and following the lighting of the advent wreath the Christmas story, written by Adrienne Watson portrayed, looking down from heaven, how the twisting flashing stars re-energised and supported the angels in delivering the Christmas story. A few pictures of the story are on the next page.

Next Parish Matters Submit By

The closing date for articles for the next Issue of PM is the **first Tuesday of the month** for publication on the next weekend

Ed this edition Harry Watson
Pictures by Keren, Sally, Harry and Deidre Reid

