

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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Ordination and Welcome of Christopher Garcia

Saturday 8 Feb saw the Ordination of our Christopher Garcia along with 18 colleagues as deacons in St Paul's Cathedral. It was a moving and heartening ceremony. Heartening in that this cohort of women (8) and men (11), signing up to be deacons in the Anglican Church of Australia at a time when many, led by segments of the media, would like to deny the importance of spirit and God connection. Especially heartening for me was amongst the new deacons, Dr Alan Smith who served as my deputy head in the '90s.

The cathedral is a wonderful place at any time, but more so when full to the doors and people of all walks and ages of life attending. Sitting in front of us was a baby in a bassinet and alongside me, supporting a candidate from his school, was a Presbyterian minister, who happened to be the son of the secretary of one of my late colleagues. Never ceasing to be amazed at how we are drawn together by His Spirit and the atmosphere created by the liturgy, sincerity and the rendition of good music -- noting that our vicar Keren contributed two pieces.

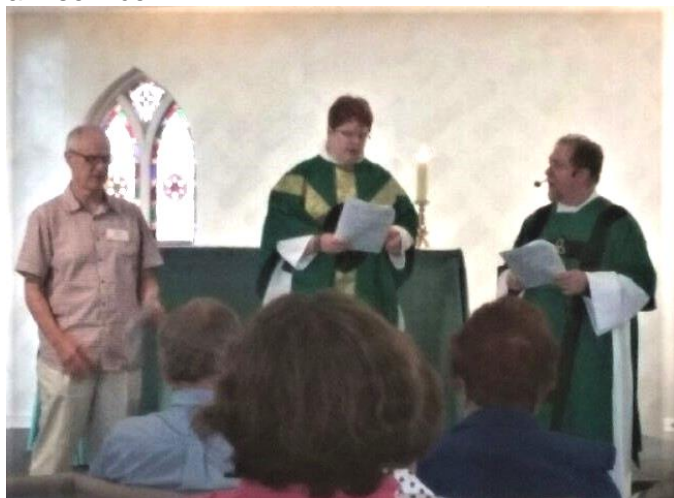
Of course, the processions are part of the pageantry for these events and at exit, our Darcy sitting at the end of a pew is reported as giving the Archbishop the two thumbs up sign with a 'well done' to which the Archbishop responded with thanks.



For me two hours of church has never gone so quickly centred around a brilliant encompassing sermon from Denise Nicholls, from Banyule, who managed to touch on so many pointers for the candidates, full of humour but thoroughly founded in the scriptures – the Gospel was Mark 6:30-34. In accepting their responsibilities, the new deacon's voices revealed the diverse cross section of backgrounds that our church now encompasses and which gives me hope that they will strongly challenge those of our faith that wish for no change.

At Chris's after party at his Oakleigh Parish, it was plain that he had made a lot of impact and the parish was very sad to see him move away. Gathering from many parts of the country were his family who along with the few from St Margaret's received a warm welcome. Amongst the few speeches, it was clear that Chris's ability to connect and support many was well recognised and a standout speech was his aunt in her support on behalf of the family

What a whirlwind week it must have been for everyone: despite the many hours on retreat, Chris had to show up at Eltham (45 mins drive) for the 8 am service.



After all the lead up and much anticipation, it was a very warm encounter to meet the Chris in person. Someone with such a scintillating background in

reaching out to people, whether through theatre production, preaching, caring for young and old and so much more. We are so joyful that he has been led our way to support Keren and us.



The photos (left) show Chris's welcome by John Human, (left bottom) Keren inducting him into the Parish and (above) receiving gifts to get him started, especially a set of keys. There have been few more wonderful weekends for St Margaret's. **Welcome to our home Chris.**

Harry Watson

No Parish Council January

There was no Council or wardens' meeting in January.

However, two important issues that have been managed by Keren and the team follow.

Child Safe Church

Thank you to all who have worked with Jen and Keren to get their Working With Children and Police Checks completed. We are now chasing up the last handful of folk who haven't completed their checks. Anyone who hasn't yet applied for the checks by the end of February will be asked to step back from rosters from 1st March until they have completed the checks.

The first training for the year will be on Saturday 7th March from 2:30-4:30pm. We are asking all those on rosters to ensure they have **attended training by the 31st May**. So far just over half of those who are on rosters have completed the training.

From now on, anyone interested in being on a roster will need to complete both of the checks prior to commencement in the role, and attend training as close as possible to engaging in the ministry. Further dates for training will be advised.

Revd Keren

Pathways

Thank you to all those who have been praying for the Mission Action Team.

We've now discerned from a raft of 8 possible candidates a **Mission Focus Group**:

People on the cusp of retirement, or who have just retired.

This demographic is well represented in our local area, and it's a group St Margaret's hasn't focused ministry towards in the past.

We attended a workshop on Saturday 1st February which helped us to start thinking about how we might develop a pathway for this Mission Focus Group: from first contact, through to staying in touch, belonging in a group, being invited to learn something about faith and "take the plunge", stepping into living Jesus' way, taking up leadership roles, and empowering others to lead.

On the first Sunday in February we distributed crocheted flowers to thank you for your prayers, and encourage continuing prayer for this initiative.

Last week saw the **introduction of the Pathways tree**, artwork and concepts courtesy of the Dabblers group.

All St Margaret's parishioners are invited to contribute by placing leaves on the tree. You'll see the roots which are fed by many things: the water of life (which Jesus gives), history of the parish, prayer, reading scripture, communion, fellowship together, love, parish groups, baptism. The trunk of the tree represents to body of Christ - his resurrected body, and his body the Church in which we share a part. The branches: half the tree is flourishing with the things that we do, but half the tree is yet to flourish, and we are asking you to take a leaf and write on it your hopes and dreams for the flourishing of our parish.

Rev'd Keren

Reports – Anglicare and Do Justice



AVPG

St Margaret's hosted the February meeting of the AVPG. Three auxiliaries in Melbourne were in attendance.

At the next meeting in Eltham we will be making arrangements for our visit in March to Whittlesea. After morning coffee we will visit the church opshop, and then have lunch with our former priest, Ruwan, at the vicarage. We will also discuss our visit to the Box Hill Sudanese Homework club to take the gifts donated by parishioners in January. This will take place on a Saturday in March..

Do Justice Group

Last year the group spent considerable time working on policies of inclusion: firstly the pathways for Aboriginal inclusion and secondly on a policy to help people with disabilities to feel comfortable in the church. The latter one needs some more discussion before it can be presented to Council.

One of the main features of the Pathways document was that the church would acknowledge the land where we meet as the traditional land of the Wurundjeri and pay our respects to the elders past, present and emerging. A statement is already included on the weekly pew sheet. Many churches and organizations (such as St Paul's Cathedral, Anglicare Victoria, Nillumbik Council) have such acknowledgements in monthly and quarterly publications as well on official emails sent from the parish.

We hope that Council will adopt our proposed policy.

For the Diary: St Margaret's has endorsed this year's Palm Sunday March for refugees. Watch for details for preparing posters for the marchers to hold.

25th February: "Exploring Climate Change"

a discussion at St Francis Xavier Parish Hall Monty from 7.30 to 9.30

(See posters in church foyer)

Jenny Disney for Anglicare and Do Justice.

Baptism of Emerson Gilbert

The Gilbert family have attended St Margaret's for many many decades. Last year Emerson joined the family and was greatly welcomed, especially those who can imagine what a delight it would have been for Ivian his great grandmother, unfortunately now in the Lord's care.

Nonetheless Emerson's mum Sheridan was well supported by her family at the baptism with Emerson's god parents being uncle Wes and cousin Erika.

Of course there was a proud grandmother Sylvia not far away in the background and part of the 'team' that love this amazing young child. Emerson was welcomed as a Christian with much applause.

A few pictures 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 Jenny Gillett/David Tuke and Harry

