

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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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

St Margaret's Anglican Parish Eltham acknowledges the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation as the traditional custodians of the land on which we worship. We commit to working for reconciliation and justice for Aboriginal people. Diversity and inclusivity are important to us at St Margaret's.

Prayer at the time of choosing an incumbent

Bountiful God,
 give to this parish a faithful pastor
 who will faithfully speak your word
 and minister your sacraments;
 an encourager who will equip your people for ministry
 and enable us to fulfil our calling.
 Give to those who will choose, wisdom,
 discernment and patience,
 and to us give warm and generous hearts,
 For Jesus Christ's sake. **Amen**

A Better New Year

In This Issue:

- New Year
- Incumbency Update
- LinC Hampers
- Taize next Sunday
- Faith Issues
- M C Café news
- Christmas Services
- 30th Anniversary of Women Priests

As we welcome in a New Year, one in which we are waiting to have a new vicar appointed, we are very grateful to have our locum Revd Linda Fiske returning refreshed from holidays on January 29th to lead us into the New Year starting that day with Sunday services including Taize in the evening and Parish Council (please note) next day.



Linda leading the search for a baby at the Christmas Children's Service.

I wonder if readers made new year resolutions? One time much discussed but missed my attention this year. Perhaps if not, we could think about our busy Parish and what makes it happen. Maybe we can pray about the future with the prayer above and also be thankful to each other for the great variety of contributions that make St Margaret's continue to flourish even if we are shrinking! Perhaps it would be good for our community and welfare if our New Year's resolution was to thank verbally those who make big and smaller things happen.

Do you know by whom the garden is maintained and the floors cleaned? And of those delivering many of the behind-the-scenes jobs from assistant sacristans, kitchen management, putting the bins out each week, banking, the flowers, labyrinth upkeep and the rosters, to making small groups like the book club function and many others. Could we resolve to give these people as well as those on the more public rosters for services etc. a little nod of appreciation? It might even be a good time to talk to a Parish Councillor or two to let them know about your views on church. Many of us know that a little thanks goes a long way to uplifting each other when the news is not always as we would prefer it.

Helen has written an update from the incumbency committee in this edition. Also there are quite a few activities re-starting one more of which is the **Taize Service next Sunday Jan 29.**

Stop Press Carolyn is not in the Office Monday 23rd she has had to delay starting 'till 30th.

Incumbency Committee Update

Dear Fellow Parishioners, an update with the process of employing a new vicar. Prior to Christmas, we were hopeful of interviewing a candidate who appeared to be able to tick most of our boxes. You could say we got excited, but alas, the candidate withdrew. So unfortunately, we now go back to square one as they say. With Christmas behind us, we are with fresh eyes looking at 2023. To that end, I have once again written to Bishop Kate suggesting we meet and endeavour to become creative with how we approach the issue.

Your Incumbency Committee has put forward some new ideas that we are hoping to discuss with the Bishop very soon.

I am sorry there is no better news, however, our dear Rev. Dr. Linda Fiske is a blessing, and after her summer break who knows what energy she will return with?

Please feel free to contact any one of the committee, if you wish to discuss this.

Helen Robertson, John Humann, Sandra Brown-Holt.

Wonderful LinC Hampers

LinC (Love in the name of Christ) Christmas Hampers

The 36 bumper Christmas hampers that we made were well received and a welcome surprise by some.

Feedback from Health Ability Eltham who provided several of the recipients was very positive with recipients ringing to thank us. Schools on our list expressed gratitude at the size of the hampers when they were delivered to them.



A very special thank you to packers from St. Margaret's, Alan, Anna, and Roger (seen above) and Leanne, those from Glen Park Gospel Church, and the Uniting Church Eltham. Thanks to Ann Hutchinson and Diana for coordinating names, addresses, the collection and purchase of food.

Lastly to the people who delivered the hampers (Ann, Maree, The Normans, the Milgates, Kate and

Diana). This is also a very important part of our Christmas Hampers as we try to reach those without transport who feel isolated and can do with the Love of Christ.

I would also like to thank the ladies of Anglicare led by Jenny Disney who generously allowed us to collect for our hampers before they started their collection. What a wonderful united role St. Margaret's plays in reaching out to others.

Diana Warrell (LinC Eltham Chairperson)

Taize Continues in 2023

We are pleased to welcome back our very successful Taize services this 2023. They will run on the last Sunday of every month except December, starting with a light meal at 5:30 followed by the service itself. The music and chants have been chosen, our musicians are ready as we look forward to January 29th. What we need now is for those of you who are interested to invite a friend or two and come along and join in. Each evening will be hosted by a Parish Councillor who will be your host for the evening. Remember the service itself is roughly only 45 minutes.

A chance to share with other like-minded folk like yourselves. If transport is a problem you may like to call me, Helen Robertson 0434 878 246 and I will endeavour to find you a lift.

Look forward to seeing you soon.

Helen

Faith Issues Discussion Restarts

The faith issues discussion group is an active parish group which meets at 7.30 pm on the **first and third Mondays of every month**, except January. It had its beginnings in the early 1990s. All parishioners and friends are welcome to attend. Members discuss a very wide range of issues which impact our faith. Encouragement is provided for all to participate in discussion within a non-threatening environment. By sharing our faith experience, our beliefs and attitudes with each other it provides opportunities for strengthening of individual faith. This can arise from new insights, confirmation and challenges.

Participants may attend as many meetings as they wish. Most discussions are one-off and so this does not necessitate back-to-back meetings. No one is obliged to speak or lead a discussion. But every encouragement is provided for active engagement. Often some summary Notes and some starter Questions are sent in advance of a discussion. They are intended to assist you at the discussion. These

are not onerous and are written in an easy-to-read manner.

Here are some of the wide-ranging issues which were discussed in the recent past: The Book of Revelation; Christ's Resurrection; The Work of ISCAST and Science and Religion; Abortion; Religious Freedom; The Exodus; Islam; Complementarianism and Equalitarianism; Scientology; Prayer and The Holy Spirit.

The discussion begins at 7.30pm and finishes around 9pm. We meet in the church which is warmed and cooled as is required. After the discussion there are light refreshments, which you are encouraged to contribute to, and served in the parish hall. Transport can be arranged.

Again, **all parishioners and friends are warmly welcome** to participate in these discussions so relevant to our faith.

The coordinator is Geoff Sandy, and he can be contacted: MOB 0434422768 or EMAIL: geoff@sandy.com.au

Geoff Sandy.

Memory Care Café in 2023

The café resumed for 2023 on Tuesday 17 January and was attended by 7 couples, including a parish member with her carer. (Many regulars are still away with family during January).

We also had our emotional assistance dog Jip and his handler at the café and we all enjoyed the afternoon with coffee, games and conversation.

The dates for the next 3 months of café openings are as follows:

FEBRUARY – 1st and 3rd Tuesday

7 Feb

21 Feb

MARCH – 1st and 3rd Tuesday

7 March

21 March

APRIL- 1st and 3rd Tuesday

4 April

18 April

Volunteer Meeting

A Volunteer meeting for volunteers at all three Memory Care Cafés in Nillumbik – Hurstbridge, Diamond Creek and Eltham will be held on:

Thursday 23 February at 1.30pm

Location: St Johns Anglican Church, Diamond Creek

All Volunteers including those interested in becoming a volunteer are welcome to attend the meeting.

We are looking forward to the ongoing success of the Eltham Memory Care Café at St Margaret's and wish all those involved a very happy 2023.

Sheila Cheary

Christmas Services Brief Report

This is a brief review of Christmas services. You may recall that we reverted to pre-pandemic services and service times. Overall, the attendance was quite a bit up on 2021 when we had just come out of Covid restrictions on church attendees but not yet added the offering of wine at communion. Starting with the Children's service numbers were well over one hundred. Our biggest service for the year. The pictures show some snippets from the story created and produced by Adrienne with a dozen of the attending small children participating in shining their lanterns to try to find where baby Jesus was. At the end of the children's story, Linda provided a little interpretation supported by the connected carols and Mandy's daughter Ella with guitar sang a solo. Afterwards Linda provided pre-consecrated communion taken by two dozen of the attendees.



Lanterns ready for looking



Will they find him in the Palace King (Michael) and Queen (Jenn)?



Will they find him in the Hotel?



Will they find him in the stable?



They find him in the manger

For the 10.30 pm Christmas Eve Carols, prior to midnight mass, there was no choir this year and some uncertainty about who might play the organ. The decision to live-stream the carol music proved to have a few technical hitches and we were fortunate that Fr Robert rescued us for those carols which were in our hymnbook. The well attended service led by Linda and surrounded by the life size figures (getting ever closer to the manger) organised by David Tuke made a revealing setting. Alas we were without incense and the other seasonal attributes. Special thanks to Linda for leading the Christmas services

including the Christmas morning Sung Communion (after what must have been a short sleep). Happy holiday Linda.

Harry Watson

30th Anniversary of Women as Priests

From a former parishioner Susan:- It was a joy to be in the congregation at the service to celebrate the 30th anniversary of women as priests in the Diocese of Melbourne. I cannot be objective about it having been deeply involved in the struggle to achieve this breakthrough. Now, 30 years later as women clergy streamed down the aisle past my pew I was overjoyed. How lucky was I to be sitting with Kathleen Toal and Peta and Charles Sherlock also deeply involved in the struggle seeing this thing which had come to pass 30 years ago. In his opening remarks Abp Philip Freier said that it was unusual to celebrate an event with many of the people who were central to the event. Yet we were there then and now,

Bishop Kate Prowd presided. From one of the first women ordained to the presbyterate to Bishop, another joy. The Revd Clem Taplin, well known to St Margaret's parishioners as theological student and Assistant Priest read a letter from Bishop Rayner, in 1992 Archbishop of Melbourne who had ordained these women.



MOW Banner



Dean, Abp Kay and Abp Philip

From 92 in 1992 the number of women ordained as priests is now over 900 Abp Kay Goldsworthy told us in her sermon. She recalled both the good things and the very bad things of the struggle. Remembering her

colleagues in Melbourne, Archdeacon Marjorie Macgregor who chose not to be a priest; Bishop Barbara Darling among the second group ordained as Deacon in May 1986 was priested on 13th December 1992 and became the second woman consecrated as a Bishop in Australia and the first in Melbourne in May 2008; and Revd Elizabeth Alfred retired by 1992 but by agreement she was the first in Melbourne to be ordained to the priesthood.

There were nasty letters and threats too. As National Secretary of MOW from 1987 I too received them. Speaking of her own reflections Abp Kay asked whether this thing was a novelty here for just a season, she cited the growth complementarianism as a means to keep women "in their place", and the dearth of younger candidates for ordination. She also reminded ordained women of the need to discern in their own lives what had brought them to this point and to speak it out so that other women may recognise signs in their own lives, "we are at the centre of God's purpose and purposeful" she said.

Another St Margaret's connection was a new anthem "Wisdom's Feast" composed by Revd Keren Terpstra now Dean of Sale. It was sung by the choir of girls and men during the distribution of Holy Communion. And Revd Elizabeth Smith, St Margaret's first woman theological student in 1985 was the author of words sung in the hymns.

It was a joy to catch up even briefly with so many from way back when. Dr Muriel Porter, journalist author and activist was cantor for the psalm. Muriel was one who realised early that we women needed to be on Synods and Diocesan Councils and Committees. Active inside the tent, she was one of the first women to do this. Participants were not all from the matriarchs of the struggle there were younger women and women of colour reading and intercessing, a joy to see.

In 1992 I danced from General Synod to Melbourne Synod, to the three ordinations of women as priests in Melbourne and one in Adelaide and in the middle of it all I got married. Sheer joy kept me going. Sitting in St Paul's Cathedral on December 13th 2022 I felt immensely privileged to have been part of it all.

St Margaret's has always been in the forefront of women's ordination. In the 1980's then vicar, Revd Ron Dowling helped us to see that it really was possible. In August 1984 he drove a group of us to the inaugural meeting of MOW (Melbourne). Glenn Collis, Judith Ireland and I were in that car. In February 1986 we three stepped in to convene a one day conference and Ron introduced us to Deaconess Kay Goldsworthy to work with us. Later in 1986 I became co-convenor of MOW (Melbourne) and in December 1987 National Secretary, somewhere about that time Kathleen Toal became treasurer of MOW (Melbourne) and later National Treasurer. St Margaret's had women theological students too, Elizabeth Smith and Clem Woods in my time in the parish. I left Eltham in 1990 and in 1992 I was a parishioner, lay minister and Synod Rep at St Alban's North Melbourne. We had a woman Deacon in Charge of the parish (Elizabeth Dean) who was to be ordained a priest on December 16th and as she was on retreat on December 13th she asked me to preach. The Gospel was about John the Baptist and my theme was "what did I go into the wilderness to see?", back then I sometimes did feel alone treading an uncertain path but parishioners at both St Margaret's and St Alban's were in tune and supportive.

Most felt that the ordination of women was both desirable and necessary.

Not all activists sought ordination but these anniversaries are also ours. In 1986 as women were recognised as fit for the office of Deacon women were given a choice to be lay or ordained. The ordination of women as priests consolidated this choice. The path to discernment can be just as hard whoever you are and whatever the ministry you are called to. After theological study I became a Pastoral Counsellor at St Vincent's Health and then Pastoral Care Co-ordinator at St George's Health Service. Not what I thought would happen. Looking back over the past nearly forty years it is easy to see how the struggle for the ordination of women opened the way for women to discern their own path. As St Paul said "we are all one in Christ". Let's be joyful, let's celebrate for in our lifetime we changed the Church.

Susan Sandford



Former St Meg's Priests Clem and Libby

From our Coralie: For 16 years we lived in Canberra & worshipped at St John's. In June 1989 we moved to Eltham & came to St Margaret's as a family to join the community here.

It was the first that I had become aware of the growing support for the ordination of women, especially by members of St Margaret's congregation.

We have been fortunate to have had many women as priests & other supporting staff since the first ordination of women in 1992.

It was a privilege to be in the Cathedral to celebrate the 30th Anniversary of that first ordination. There were woman represented from that first ordination up to the present day, all ages & from diverse backgrounds. It was lovely to see those whom we knew from worshipping with us at St Margaret's.

A most joyous occasion for all who attended.

Coralie Carew

Editor this edition Harry

Pics: Kevin G, Diana and Harry

This was an unscheduled issue devised by Sally and

Harry

Next ed. Copy Feb 7

Let us know what you would like more of (and less?)