

## VICAR'S REPORT 2024

**In memorium.** There have been some sad occasions for us as a community as several parishioners have died since the AGM last year and whilst some had long since moved to retirement homes and were no longer physically able to worship with us, their connection to the church and their contribution to our community will not be forgotten. We remember Shirley Bevins, Pamela Beeche, Jacqui Nichol, Roy Adams, Diana Davidson, Don McPhail, Enid Bull and Nigel Evans. We continue to mourn their losses with their families. May they rest in peace.

2024 has been a year that has seen several changes in the parish, some unexpected, some planned for years in advance.

### Worship and growing our faith

**Music.** I am constantly reminded how God provides for all our needs. Graeme Fuller, a keen organist arrived in our midst, just at the time that Antoinette Pope needed to have several months rest for health reasons. We remain grateful for Graeme's ongoing availability to remain as our chief organist, and are appreciative of Antoinette's continued work with the choir and her sage advice on the weekly hymn selection.

The numbers attending our **Sunday services at 8 am and 9.30** remain constant. We often see new people come along to our worship, and some have made St Aidan's their new parish family. A Newcomer's Lunch was held in July to provide a place for sharing a little more about who we are. There is already a large group for our next newcomer's lunch which will now be held in early 2025. We continue to have a fresh number of people being trained up to take on various ministry roles in our services and it is wonderful to see them gain confidence and flourish as they take ownership of their new role.

Mid-year the **Wednesday weekly service** moved to a monthly service followed by a light lunch. The numbers are still small for this gathering with on average 5-6 in attendance, but the fellowship afterwards is appreciated by those who can stay for this.

**Monthly communion services continue at four retirement homes**, with Waimarie added to our umbrella of care at the end of last year. Relationships with staff and residents deepen with the regular visits and I offer my thanks to the parish teams who along with clergy provide this important ministry.

I commend to you the **Small group's report**, which reflects on the ways we nurture our faith through smaller group gatherings which each have their own style and flavour.

### People

The warden's in their report will cover many of the thanks and appreciation to the groups of people that make this parish run smoothly. It is here that some of the changes I spoke at the beginning have occurred.

With gratitude to all they have contributed to the life of St Aidans, we released **Reverend Kerry Davis and Vaoa** in May to take up a new ministry in Altona, Melbourne. As a result of one less priest, I am very grateful to **Reverend Anne Priestley** who was able to step in on numerous occasions to provide valuable support across a wide range of priestly ministry. With the benefit of Anne's enduring relationship with the parish over many years, the opportunities for her to offer significant ministry is remarkably varied. I am grateful to both her and God for this recipe for pastoral success. **Reverend Christina Turner's** addition to the clergy team has been welcomed. She has taken on a variety of responsibilities and shared in ministry such as parish visiting, services, preaching, baptism preparation and blessings. It will be wonderful to journey with Christina as she takes the next step in a couple of weeks as she is ordained a priest.

The rest of the staff team have continued to work cohesively and been supportive of one another. Overseas trips this year has meant there have been periods of time when we have not had the full complement on the ground but I have been impressed by the desire to plan for contingencies and provide options so programmes can continue as usual. **Isobell Tregoweth, Izzy Hoskyn and Nic Mercer** are an integral part of the team and I love their energy and enthusiasm they bring to parish ventures. I am aware they work hard to juggle their own personal workloads in their weekday occupations, to still have the capacity to give of themselves at church. Vaoa's departure from **mainly music** at the end of term 1, saw **Dave Finn** step into the coordinating role for 2 terms before his resignation and **Hannah Scharf** take on this new role in June. We are fortunate to be able to make use of her musical experience to support this programme. Please read her report to find out more about what has been happening across the year.

I do want to make special mention of **Anne Godman** who holds the place together as the office is the central place of the hub. How she navigates all the requests, phone calls, hall bookings as well as stepping in to do tasks such as the sound desk for funeral services when a verger can't be found, is beyond me. Her creative ability is to her credit and we see the evidence of this in things like our magazine publication which is ably put together along with Isobell. Thank you Anne for keeping us and all the various projects on track and for your energy and 'can do attitude'.

I would like to offer my special thanks to the wardens **Desre Simpson and James Parkinson**. James you have always offered carefully considered advice, and been a fantastic support to me as vicar and to the vestry team. Your readiness to put your hand up to take on oversight alongside a full-time job, did not go unnoticed. Thank you for your 6 years on vestry, for the many hours and commitment you have given to the role of warden. Desre thank you for hearing the call of the people and for being willing to be the people's representative on vestry. Whilst you step back from this role, I know vestry will be pleased to have your ongoing input for a little longer, as you offer yourself to be re-elected to vestry. Thank you for being willing to come along to those early morning meetings, and for your ability to roll your sleeves up and get what needed to be done, accomplished. I have enjoyed working with you both over the years and on

behalf of the parish, thank you. The wardens in their report extend thanks to the **2024 vestry** and I add my appreciation to the team for their cooperation and input over the year.

Before I round off this section I wish to acknowledge our theological students. Kathleen Pullen who joined us for a couple of weeks from England, but notably our St John's student **Kate Shrigley** who has comfortably stepped into various roles with ease. I know she will be a real asset and blessing to her new parish in Torbay as she leaves us to be ordained a deacon and take up her curacy. Thank you for being part of this parish as you journeyed towards ordination.

### **Caring for ourselves and looking beyond**

St Aidan's continues to be a parish that is **actively engaged with Mission**.

2024 seemed to be a year, when there appeared to be a greater number of health-related events resulting in large numbers of parishioners supporting family members and friends as they care for one another. Some of this care is ongoing and it will be important to recognise the needs of those around us in the pews, and to sensitively offer support whether that be a listening ear or something practical. With an aging parish individual needs increase proportionality. People's mobility can be an issue as often the desire to regularly attend church does not change, but transport can be a problem. We are grateful to the many people who offer rides to those who are no longer able to drive.

I commend to you the **Mission and Outreach report** which covers the many groups and activities that St Aidan's engages in. Whilst we can't hope to be all things to all people our heart for sharing God's love out beyond ourselves is evident to see.

The **annual Garage Sale** was once again a success. Thanks to the leadership of Liz Fraser who steered the small committee and the over 100 volunteers who worked tirelessly in the lead up and on the day. We achieved a tremendous financial result raising over \$43,000. It is the extraneous things however that also make the Garage Sale a success, the community spirit that is enhanced by working together as a team, the relationships that are deepened, and the connections that are made with the wider community as people bring in items and often share personal stories of family members who have passed away hence the donated items, or the house moving that is underway. We cannot underestimate the value of these less obvious benefits.

Our usual **annual social events** took place parish picnic, Quiz, Shrove Tuesday pancakes and St Aidan's lunch to name a few but this year saw a new venture as we acknowledged the public holiday of **Matariki**. Under Anne's careful leadership various activities were offered, from climbing Mount Hobson to see the star cluster just before dawn, to sharing a cooked breakfast in our new Gathering Area. Reflective activities were available in the church as we remembered those who were no longer with us but recognised their impact on our lives.

I note the readiness to adapt to changing times by two of the ladies groups. Women's Evening Fellowship (WEF), renamed as **Evening Fellowship** to provide a group that men alongside the

women in the parish can attend together. The AAW (Anglican Association of Women) also adapting and becoming **Afternoon Fellowship**. I congratulate both groups on seeing a need for adjustment and putting that change into action.

### Our church and buildings

The **Gathering Area Kitchen project** was successfully completed and officially blessed on Palm Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> March. Stryde who undertook the work, were wonderful at managing the site and despite a couple of funerals during the building phase, the work was completed without a lot of interruption to parish life. I think you will all agree that the asset that we now have provides a wider scope for our activities, and now that sterilisers have been mastered, the hospitality team along with catering groups appreciate the improved facilities. I remain disappointed and saddened that as yet, we have not managed to configure a useable space for the **library** and get that back functioning. My hope is that will be accomplished early next year.

**The installed cameras** that were mentioned in last year's report have been a real asset with a number of suspicious behaviour captured on film which helped solve a number of mysteries.

Thank you to the maintenance team Simon Lee, John Glenie, David Cotton and with the recent addition of Keith Simpson who along with Simon Hackett Pain work hard to ensure our physical buildings and equipment are working well. A major piece of work that Simon has been working on for now over a year is the moving of our electronic files into cloud-based storage. His patience as the staff team sort through and reorganise over 16 years of documents and photos has been stretched, but this task is now virtually complete. Thank you.

I refer you to the property report for other details of work undertaken across the year.

### In conclusion

I commend to you the many **reports** that have been written and will be received at the AGM and I thank you all for contributing in the many various ways that you do to the life of this parish.

As my ministry with you comes to an end early next year, it is good to know to whom I am handing the relay baton.

My prayer is that God will lead both you the parish, and Sarah in the next chapter of St Aidan's life as you continue the ministry and mission in the community.

With all my blessings

Reverend Louise Anderson

Vicar