

Mission Action Plan

Parish: Camp Hill-Norman Park

Deanery: South Brisbane

Period covered by this plan: 2019- 2022

Our Vision/Values

Spirituality, Hospitality, the Earth

Stage 1 - Review

Where we are starting from - a realistic summary of our context and our present situation.

Like most churches we have suffered from a failure to transmit the faith with sociological changes since the 1970s. When the priest arrived in 2018, the facilities were in poor condition. Nevertheless, there were also significant relationships of care and memory, stretching back some generations. There was a culture of lay participation and friendship, including with regular meals. There was likewise a culture of charity, , with regular collections for Camp Hill State School Chaplaincy and the Leichardt Parish, as well as involvement with the Christmas Shoebox Appeal and the Inala Pantry.

Since that time, the Church and the rectory have been substantially renovated; the street-frontage in general is much improved, with an illuminated mural and outdoor rock circle having been installed. We have also developed a native garden with a contemplative space, labyrinth, and street library, in order to present an open face to the community.

In general, the priest has emphasised arts and crafts, which he believes has an evangelical appeal. Two painters in the congregation painted a number of works for display in the Church—the Prodigal Son (after a work by Jean Marie Pirot), the Annunciation, and the Cleansing of the Temple. The priest had numerous historic works printed on large canvasses.

Likewise an excellent standard of music and liturgy is maintained. The priest has experimented with the sensitive integration of audio technology in worship, enabling even old liturgical forms to take on a freshness.

In 2021 we began a community garden, which is expanding and might in future involve a collaboration with Beelarong Community Farm (e.g. sharing of volunteers to maintain garden beds and compost). The garden provides fruit and vegetables to be used in our Neighbourhood Meal, and as a resource for parishioners.

Our weekly schedule is now well-established, having been through a few iterations in the first few years of the current priest:

Sunday	8:30 am Holy Communion
Wednesday (school terms)	10:00 am Arts, Crafts and Spirituality Group 6:00 pm Centring Prayer
Friday (school terms) (school terms)	9:00 am Gardening Group 6:00 pm Evensong 6:30 pm Neighbourhood Meal
Saturday	9:00 am Gardening Group 6:00 pm Holy Communion
Tuesday-Friday	9:45am Morning Prayer

A Calendar of Events

Since my arrival we have hosted:

- Wine and Cheese Nights featuring
 - Ben Myers, author of “Christ the Stranger: the Theology of Rowan Williams”;
 - US theologian Joe Bessler (Jesus seminar) on the parables of Jesus;
 - Justice Debra Mullins on “Practising your Faith and your Profession”;
 - Dr Tim Jauncey (Psychology UQ) on the importance of spiritual practice for wellbeing;
 - the Ven. Rod Bower (Grafton) on his life and work for social justice; and
 - Annette Brownlie, Convenor Just Peace Qld on “Towards an Independent Australian Foreign Policy.”
- three weekend spirituality workshops with Dr Patrick Oliver, on dreams, on discernment, on reading scripture with spiritual eyes;
- concerts including
 - Jaimee Dowsett singing Schubert’s lieder,
 - Joel Woods playing guitar and mandolin;

- “Centuries of Harp” by Bart Seaton, and
- “Memories from Stage and Screen,” by Louise Winton;
- Neighbourhood Meals each Friday during school terms, which have created new connections on Watson St and further afield (see discussion below);
- an annual Christmas Carols, held outdoors on the rocks in 2020;
- an annual Blessing of the Pets (St Francis’ Day) attended by local, state and federal representatives;
- cake stalls/barbeques at community events—namely the Morningside Fair, and three Perth Street Parkland Movie Nights.

Finally, external groups use the hall throughout the week—a playgroup, Messy Play, and the CM Dance School.

Communications

Our communications are:

- the weekly pew sheet;
- A website *annunciation.org.au*, including written sermons, articles, events;
- A Facebook page, and paid Facebook advertising for events;
- community letters. I have written 4 letters to the people of Camp Hill, distributed to up to 2000 people. We have trialled distributing these ourselves and also using a distribution company. The letters so far have led to some attendances at events and unexpected pastoral connections in the area, but they somewhat stalled during COVID;
- advertisements in various sector publications (e.g. Law Society of Queensland), Eventbrite, 4MBS Music Diary, and in Wednesday Weekly and Focus;

Further, our street signage has been overhauled;

In 2019, I delivered an address to the Liberal Party of Australia entitled “the humanising mission of the Church” seeking to explain the relevance of contemporary political theology to current debates, and the place of the Church as a site of “friendship and ethical formation, where we can lay hold of our humanity;”

I maintain good relationships with the local member, Di Farmer, and the local councillor, Kara Cook. Strong connections with these leaders have resulted in invitations to events and some cross-promotion.

Where we are going - a description of where we would like to be in five years' time

We will have a renewed site which is a hub for community—which is safe, compliant, and well-maintained, and yields sufficient revenue for a priest to minister full time.

It will be a place to fuel imagination and address social poverty, with an emphasis on beauty and integration with the natural world—reflecting our three priorities “spirituality, hospitality, and the earth.” This vision is in some ways monastic, emphasising placefulness, residency, and a sacred rhythm.

A residential development on part of the site might, apart from making full-time ministry possible, provide a community of people who are a constituency for the church, ideally being involved in its Neighbourhood Meals and the Church’s worship.

Our schedule of events will be well-promoted and known in the local area; and we will have achieved the capacity to livestream sermons, and to convert them to Podcast format. In general our communications will be tightened up.

Stage 2 - Prioritise

How we will get there - a description of the priority actions if we are to ‘get there’.

- **Spirituality**

In addition to our standard offerings (Saturday 6:00pm BCP Holy Communion, and Sunday 8.30am APBA Second Order Holy Communion) we will continue:

- our Wednesday morning “Arts, Crafts, and Spirituality” group, which typically involves a discussion of accessible works of Christian spirituality, e.g. by Henri Nouwen, and sometimes painting, collage, and other forms of art-based spirituality; and
- our Wednesday 6:00pm Centering Prayer. These groups are convened by Spiritual Director Jenny Norman and artist Bronwyn Rose;
- We will continue our Friday 6:00pm Evensong, which precedes the Neighbourhood Meal each week, and is the only weekly parish Evensong in Brisbane;
- These, combined with 9.45am Morning Prayer and our other mid-week activities, described below, are designed to allow secular people to maintain a “sacred rhythm”—and to break out of the “undifferentiated time” which, according to Charles Taylor, is characteristic of secularism. The Offices of Morning and Evening Prayer have taken on particular significance. In his 2021 Annual Report, the priest said:

The pandemic has confirmed my view that saying and singing the Offices will be ever more important for the Church—partly given the increasing unavailability of priestly ministry, but also the increasing inaccessibility of the Eucharist ... The sad fact is that, since the 1970s, we have failed to form our young people for participation in the Sacrament, including, indeed, the

many young people who have passed through our schools. While the Roman Catholics induct children as young as 6 or 7 to the Eucharist, we have no similar strategy—far less one which would see our young people involved in parishes.

The Offices of Morning and Evening Prayer are domestic. They were intended to be used not only in church but also in the home, to nurture and support the life of faith. Indeed, the home is I believe the first and the major seedbed of faith. The Offices are transportable in a way the Eucharist is not. I am under no illusions that proposing their renewal will seem risky or romantic: let's face it, for many people including clergy, sitting down with a Prayer Book is a chore. But here again, a modern distortion has entered into our practice; for the Offices were meant to be said or sung together. They are not solitary; rather they have a game-like character and, like tennis, a back-and-forth rhythm. The psalms and canticles were supposed to be said or sung alternately by two or more people, side to side. I can attest that when we pray them like this they are enjoyable, even sometimes exhilarating, and they go very quickly. ... I am convinced we need to rediscover this happy, gamesome quality in our worship.

Consider this excerpt from Anthony Sparrow's 1684 commentary on the Book of Common Prayer:

The Psalms we sing or say by course, the priest one verse, and the people another; or else one side of the quire one verse, and the other side another, according to the ancient practice of the Greek and Latin Church. And according to the pattern set us by the angels, who sing one to another, HOLY, HOLY, HOLY. These reasons may be given for this manner of singing by course. First, that we may thus in a holy emulation contend, who shall serve God most affectionately, which our Lord, seeing and hearing, is not a little pleased. Secondly, that one relieving another we may not grow weary of our service.

Sparrow cites several ancient authorities. The fifth-century Church historian, Socrates of Constantinople says: "we must now ... make some allusion to the origin of this custom in the church of responsive singing. Ignatius, third bishop of Antioch in Syria after the Apostle Peter, who himself conversed with the Apostles, saw a vision of angels hymning in alternate chants the Holy Trinity. Accordingly he introduced the mode of singing he had observed in the vision into the Antiochian church; whence it was transmitted by tradition to all the other churches. Such is the account we have received."

St Basil of Caesarea says: "Among us the people go at night to the house of prayer, and, in distress, affliction, and continual tears, making confession to God, at last rise from their prayers and begin to sing psalms. And now, divided into two parts, they sing antiphonally [side-to-side] with one another, thus at once confirming their study of the Gospels, and at the same time producing for themselves a heedful temper and a heart free from distraction. Afterwards they again commit the [introduction of the melody] to one person, and the rest take it up."

Another author says that this method of reciting the psalms, having been "introduced first at Antioch, ... spread in all directions, and penetrated to the ends of the earth." (Theodoret)

How, then, can we retrieve this spiritual practice, allowing it even into own homes, so that it can be a sustaining rhythm for us all? Home liturgies (perhaps promoted through our schools) are, I think, one major way to get more churchgoing Anglicans. How can we ensure that this is

not merely a private vision, but entails opening our doors to the many single people among us? Can the offices really be the basis for a common culture, as indeed the reformers dreamed?

- We will continue to use our outdoor worship space throughout the year (e.g. for Blessing of the Pets, Christmas carols, a Medieval/Corpus Christi Meal). Here the gathered church, generally shrouded by a building, becomes visible; and
- There may be capacity in future to provide a space for day retreats at the Church, involving for instance heads of local schools, CHAC and Churchie.

2. Hospitality

- We will continue our Neighbourhood Meals, hopefully with an expanded piazza and benches, proximate to the outdoor worship area. The meals offer the possibility of friendship in a time of loneliness: some 25% of the Camp Hill population lives alone, according to the last census;
- The Neighbourhood Meal is also a way into the worshipping community, modelled on the medieval fraternity: its weekly rhythm offers a way into worship, itself pointing to *koinonia* and the Eucharist. A mediating structure between the secular and the sacred like this appears more necessary than ever, at a time when the tide has gone out on cultural Christianity. In this connection Rowan Williams says that, in the medieval conception until 1400,

Charity is the manifestation of what Bossy calls ‘the social miracle’—the extraordinary processes by which sectional loyalties were from time to time interrupted and overcome by a sense of integration, of belonging with an entire social body extending far beyond one’s choice or one’s affiliations of interest and ‘natural’ loyalty. In terms of institutions, the immense popularity of fraternities in the later Middle Ages witnesses to the desire to move beyond kingship loyalties and hierarchical structures towards a state of highly formalised friendship, a reciprocal and egalitarian community. ‘In some cases,’ Bossy writes, ‘the incorporation of persons of differing status was a formal object of the fraternal institution.’ This was cemented by common ceremonies which invariably included regular celebratory meals, but which also stressed that essential building-block of social civility, the formalising of mutually respectful and affectionate greeting. ...

The fraternity was the worshipping community, responsible for organising liturgical provision and pastoral care. And in terms of events, ‘charity’ was honoured and secured by major public festivals—notably, by the end of the Middle Ages, the summer holiday of Corpus Christi—involving the public renunciation or transcendence of violent rivalry. (Lost Icons: Bloomsbury: London, 2000, p.55)

- Logistically, we have a dedicated team of cooks who provide raw materials according to a roster. We will continue to explore ways of offsetting costs by harvesting our own vegetables (see “earth,” below);

- Likewise we will aim at increasing attendance at these meals, ideally to 20-30 persons weekly, while devising ways to cater for greater numbers. Our connection with OzHarvest, which provides fruit and vegetables discarded from retail outlets, may prove useful here;
- We will continue our schedule of six public events (Wine and Cheese Nights or concerts) monthly from Easter to Advent (a pattern which allows a change of emphasis from Christmas to Lent);
- The hall could in future yield more revenue if it had working and legal toilet facilities including especially a disability toilet and access ramp—and if it opened onto a safer, resurfaced carpark. These might be promoted as a space for community groups and children’s birthday parties. In particular greater daytime usage would help our revenue.

3. The Earth

- We will continue as the Brisbane City Council Compost Hub for Camp Hill and Norman Park. The Compost Hub brings tens of people onto the site daily—offering further possibilities for events promotion. We use the on our gardens, including our community garden;
- Our Gardening Group continues to meet Friday and Saturday mornings, establishing and tending our new community garden. The garden will hopefully expand and perhaps occupy a corridor around the carpark area, and around the existing hall. We have this year yielded a good crop of pumpkins, and otherwise we are growing herbs, tomatoes, rock melons, and rosellas. We have variously used all of these in our Neighbourhood Meals;
- In future, the garden could include plots for children, and we could invite the involvement of local schools and residents. When the gardens are more established, there might also be some collaboration of some kind with Beelarong Community Farm; and
- Jenny Norman (spiritual director) has proposed combining meditation with bushwalks periodically through the year—given the proximity of Whites Hill and Minnipi Parkland; and
- Our Arts, Crafts, and Spirituality Group has already undertaken reading in theological ecology, namely “Earth, our Original Monastery: Cultivating Wonder and Gratitude through Intimacy with Nature” by Christine Painter—and will continue to do so.

4. Communications

Communications will be vital to our continuing growth.

- We will step up our efforts (post-Covid) to promote the Neighbourhood Meal, our worship, and our mid-week small group. Online advertising will continue to be significant (e.g. Facebook, Google Ads, Meetup, and the Church website);
- The priest will write four community letters to the people of Camp Hill annually, developing an open and welcoming community profile—and to promote our events programme. A signed letter from the priest appears to be an approach which is personal enough to overcome the decline of word-of-mouth marketing, and also avoids the mendaciousness of so much letterbox material;
- The priest will take up the offer from the Principal of CHAC to advertise Church events in the CHAC newsletter and online publications. Schools are especially significant as places which are on the threshold of the Church and vibrant sites of community life in a time of communal fracturing;
- We will improve our signage, with a further outdoor noticeboard, and a noticeboard located at the Compost Hub;

Finally, it will be necessary to devise or acquire a sound programme of faith formation, in a situation where there are few good materials. This is increasingly important for the Church at large, given the decline in knowledge of Christianity generally.

Chris Tyack

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