

All Saints' Church

The open door

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Where to from here...

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future." (Jeremiah 29:11)

It's always an interesting time when it comes to looking at the future and wondering what comes next. Especially in a church setting, because the way forward is really a discernment of where God is leading us at this point in time.

As we look to the future at All Saints' Gladstone we have several factors to take into consideration. There are the lasting impacts of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. Because of this situation we are seeing a reduction in numbers of those who are attending services on a regular basis, and we are constantly trying to work out new and innovative ways of meeting individual and collective ministry needs.

The several periods of lockdown over the past two years, which resulted in our having to transition to online services only, and the reduced in-person attendance numbers since the resumption of face-to-face services, have resulted in our weekly collections being significantly reduced.

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Vestry Meetings 2022

The Vestry of All Saints' Gladstone meets monthly at 7.30pm, usually on the third Tuesday of each month. The dates for Vestry meetings for the coming year are:

- Tuesday 17 May
- Tuesday 21 June
- Tuesday 19 July
- Tuesday 16 August
- Tuesday 20 September
- Tuesday 18 October
- Tuesday 15 November

Saints Alive!

Also, within the pandemic timeframe, we have had to complete some long overdue maintenance issues and this has meant that the vestry now finds itself in the position of having to reevaluate the budget and draw down on parish reserves. Added to this challenge, the cost of basic monthly expenses has been increasing year upon year. We are very blessed to have parishioners who give generously, but as we look to the future there must always be thoughts about how we act as responsible stewards.

Secondly we have seen a number of long-term parishioners move on for one reason or another. This has left our congregation reduced. On its own this is just part of the lifecycle of a parish, but when we reflect on the different roles within the church it's possible to see that reduced numbers affect our ability to fill rosters and provide all the different elements of church life that have been a part of our past. The difficult decisions that arise from this scenario all impact how we are to do things going forwards.

Of course it's very easy to say that we just have to do things as they've always been done. But that won't work - not this time. We have to be proactive about looking for new ways of doing things with the resources that we now have available to us. Vestry is just one part of the decision-making process that happens in a parish. Everyone needs to have the confidence to share their thoughts and ideas, because we all have different ways in which God leads us to envision His planning for our future. Please feel free to share your thoughts with any member of Vestry so that the team can collect and collate as many ideas as possible. I find confidence in the following verses from 2 Corinthians:

"For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal." (2 Corinthians 4:17-18)

Thank you all for the part that each of you plays in the life of this parish, and may God bless our journey ahead as we look forward with hope and expectation.

Coming Events...

1 May	All Age Worship Service at 9.30am
3 May	Archdeaconry Meeting at Holy Trinity, Windsor at 12noon
4 May	Said Eucharist 10.30am AAW Meeting Pizza and Prayer at 20 Russel Street from 6.00pm
8 May	Said Eucharist 8am; Holy Communion 9.30am
15 May	Said Eucharist 8am; Hoy Communion 9.30am
17 May	Vestry Meeting in the Meeting Room at the Office from 7.00pm
22 May	Extended Communion 9.30am Oban Presbyterian Ecumenical Service 10.30am
29 May	Said Eucharist 8am; Holy Communion 9.30am

Lost in Translation...

Occasionally the words that we use and the message that we try and convey can become lost in translation or misinterpreted by those with whom we are speaking. Last Sunday on Stewart Island I shared the following story.

Susie's husband had been slipping in and out of a coma for several months. Things looked grim but she was by his bedside every single day. One day, as he slipped back into consciousness, he motioned for her to come close to him. She pulled the chair close to the bed and leaned her ear close to be able to hear him. "You know," he whispered, his eyes filling with tears, "you've been with me through all the bad times. When I got fired you stuck right beside me. When my business went under, there you were. When we lost the house, you were there. When my health started failing, you were still by my side. And you know what?"

"What dear," she asked gently, smiling to herself.

"I think you're bad luck!"



Giving at All Saints

As a Parish we are very lucky and extremely grateful for the wonderful generosity of our Parishioners. We celebrate and thank you for your contribution to the running of the Parish, Missions, various appeals and the organisations we support.

There are different ways that you can give or contribute to the Parish.

- Internet Banking: Gifts given in this way still count towards your annual gifting receipt for IRD purposes. Our account is with the ANZ, account number - **06 0925 0171362 00**. Please use your name as the reference so the Parish Recorder can issue a receipt for tax purposes at the end of March each year.
- Envelopes: These are available through the Parish Recorder and you can make a donation using your envelopes. The amount you give remains entirely confidential and you will receive a receipt for tax purposes at the end of March each year.
- Cash: This can be put in the collection plate as it circulates during the Offertory Hymn. Cash is not able to be receipted.
- Bequest: Please speak with your advisor or trustee about leaving a bequest to the Parish.

Morning Tea Returns...

From the first Sunday in May we will once again be serving morning tea at the conclusion of our second Sunday service and our Wednesday morning service. You will be able to remove your face covering while eating and drinking in this setting. Wearing of a face covering during the services is still encouraged and communion will continue to be administered in one kind until we are advised otherwise by the Diocesan office. Thank you all for your continued patience as we navigate these ever-changing waters on a pathway to a new normal.

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these platforms...*

