



THE ANGLICAN PARISH OF STIRLING

Dear Friends

As you read in the recent Pew Sheet, our Parish is on the brink of serious financial strain and the wonderful work we do with and for God is under threat.

This is principally due to our income falling well below what was expected and therefore budgeted. In the first half of 2015 our income has fallen nearly \$5,000 below expenditure and by the end of the year we anticipate the shortfall will be as much as \$10,000. It is not individual giving that is down, but the reduced number of regular worshippers at each of our Churches.

We are at a crossroad and we need to make some very serious decisions about our future.

Right now we need everyone's help, ideas and prayers.



When income falls dramatically below expenditure, there are only three viable options:

1. Reduce expenditure - Your Parish Council has agreed that we prefer not to reduce expenditure because that would reduce the quality and frequency of worship services, pastoral care and outreach. Already, our expenditure is very tightly monitored.

2. Sell assets - Selling assets for running expenses is not permitted under current synod rules, however, we are investigating selling the spare block at Bridgewater in order to fund improvements such as toilets and kitchens, while bearing in mind that if we do sell, the Diocese absorbs up to 45% and we lose that asset forever.

3. Increase income - Our preferred option.

78% of our income comes from Pledges and Open Plate.

We have asked parishioners to consider increasing their giving, but this is not the answer to addressing our longer term future. We need to seriously consider other ways of increasing income and the obvious answer is to increase the number of parishioners.

On the back of this letter are a range of ideas we are working on to:

- Increase Personnel
- Improve our Marketing
- Strengthen Existing Relationships
- Engage Members of the Local Community

We really need your ideas and input to ensure the success of these initiatives. If you have a passion for any of these ideas and wish to be involved, or you know people who can help us, or if you have been involved in something similar and wish to offer advice please contact a member of Parish Council to get the ball rolling.



The following is a list of ideas which Parish Council and the Renewal Team have generated.

INCREASE PERSONNEL

- Employ a part-time family worker, possibly ordained or working towards ordination, who could also conduct worship services and become an active member of the Parish, rather than relying on the current system of Sunday locum priests
- Develop a program of family and youth activities
- Redevelop and grow the Crafters choir

MARKETING

- Clearer signage
- More publicity of activities to actively invite people to attend services such as:
 - Friday evening Peace Services
 - Healing Services
 - Ecumenical Services
 - Valentine's Service - for people married in the last few years and Baptismal families
 - All Souls' Day Service inviting people who have been bereaved
 - Aboriginal-focused reconciliation service
 - Thanksgiving Service for local community issues
 - Blessings of Animals
 - Grandparents' / Mothers' / Fathers' Day Services
 - Anzac Day and Multicultural Australia services
 - Messy Church (for young families)
 - Carol singing

STRENGTHEN EXISTING RELATIONSHIPS

- Connect with people already associated with the Parish to encourage participation from these groups of people:
 - Occasional attendees
 - Baptismal & marriage families
 - Young families, children and teenagers
 - Visitors to markets, recitals and other events
 - People who have stopped attending Church but are open to returning.

ENGAGE MEMBERS OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

- We have facilities that can be used for purposes other than our existing religious services and may include:
 - Developing additional worship services such as Sunday afternoon services
 - Run activities for the wider community in Church halls (Suggestions include: LAN parties for youth, jam sessions for musicians, art classes)
 - Discussion groups run in Church halls open to the wider community
 - Develop other Fresh Expressions of Church to attract new people to different forms of worship such as non-traditional locations and formats.

What Can You Do?

- Do you have a passion for any of these ideas?
- Do you have other ideas you'd like to suggest?
- Do you have ideas on how the Bridgewater block could be used to grow the Parish without selling it?
- Have you been involved in something similar to the ideas above and wish to offer advice and ideas?
- Do you know people outside the congregations who are involved in or interested in these concepts?
- Do you know people you would like to invite?
- Are you still in touch with former parishioners who you could invite to return?
- Are you willing to put your hand up and say "I can do that!"?

We need EVERY Parishioner to answer this question - Are YOU willing to help us find a way forward?

If so, please speak to a member of Parish Council and let them know what interests you.

We will shortly be announcing a date for a special meeting to discuss these ideas in an open forum. Please keep an eye on the Pew Sheet for details of that meeting.

With blessing and prayers for our future,

Peter Balabanski – phone 8339 1103
Di Davidson – phone 8388 7808
Rob Field – phone 8339 2065
Katrina Matthews – phone 8339 1274
Jackie Mussared – phone 8339 6111
Jane Norris – phone 8339 5728

Libby Parkin – phone 8339 3839
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Kim Read – phone 8357 2206
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Robyn Wescombe – phone 0419 854 361
John White – phone 8389 9458

*Loving God, We are YOUR church.
Help us to find our way forward.
Help us to reach out to others and show them your love.
Help us to build with love.
Help us to believe mightily,
Hope joyfully, and love divinely.
Renew us, that we may renew the face of the earth.
~ Amen*