

Presbyter's Report

How many Anglicans does it take to change a lightbulb?

[gasps]: Change??!!

One might think that being Anglican is about avoiding change. Given this denomination's historic commitment to the gospel as it has been handed on through generations; given its traditions and forms of service; and given its established and parochial place within society, this is understandable. For many, going to an Anglican Church should be like going to a McDonalds: in that you know exactly what experience you're going to get (but with hopefully not as many saturated fats). Whether or not there is any real validity in this premise, here at Trinity we have certainly bucked the trend in the past twelve months!

The first change was to our **congregations**. This happened almost a year ago, with the move from having a 9.30am and a 4pm congregation with Sunday School at both services to having 9am and 10.45am congregations at the same venue, with Sunday School combined at the later service. At the time, the reasons that we gave for this change were, among others, (a) to help us be more relationally cohesive within and between our congregations; (b) to give us more confidence and encouragement to invite others to church; (c) the logistical burden of having a 4pm service at Hillview School on a congregation that was becoming smaller; and (d) to strengthen and encourage our children's ministry by having a sustainably-sized Sunday School in one congregation, that might better allow for its growth.

On the whole, I believe this was a timely and good move to make. In terms of numbers, in February 2023 we averaged 80 people at the 4pm service and 57 at 9.30am; in February 2024 we averaged 97 at the 10.45am and 46 at 9am. These numbers show a small upwards change overall but only tell part of the story. The positive feelings and engagement have greatly improved at the later service now that it is taking place in the morning, for people feel more able to stick around and chat together rather than rush away to get ready for the coming week. I have also noticed far fewer sleeping faces during sermons at 10.45am compared with 4pm! (All is grace, however, for the Lord grants sleep to those he loves [Ps. 127:2].) We read in our reports about the good progress of the Sunday School, and I have been so pleased to see an increase of interactions between congregations during the time between services as well as people working hard and prayerfully in inviting others.

Thanks must be given to those who bore the greater burdens of this change. This includes those who have had to adjust to earlier or later service times than they would naturally have preferred; musicians who have been coming to practice in a less-than-ideal classroom setup before 10.45am; and those who have taken and continued the burden of packing down (for which the early congregation are very thankful).

For four and a half years having 9.30am and 4pm services was part of the fabric of Trinity. But how long ago that feels now as we seem so well settled into life of 9am and 10.45am. I greatly appreciate each of these congregations and the good gospel work that the Lord is doing among us through them.

The next change to note is the change in focus with **buildings**. When we met for our 2023 AGM in the upper room at Hillview, who could have predicted that our next AGM would be taking place in our very own building, and that being St Saviour's Anglican Church? The first major step towards this change in the past year was the period of discernment and pledges in July. I had to repent of faithlessness, for I did not believe that we would receive enough to meet the target for

development of 253 Colombo St. I was humbled by people's remarkable generosity and by the Lord's gracious provision that this process ended with us being able to pursue the development. We re-engaged Avon Dickie Construction for an updated estimate and proposal and things were looking very positive. I can heartily commend Alex Hinchey from ADC for the work he put in and the helpfulness of his communication. Of course we are all relieved that we are not now currently undertaking a building project, but I was confident that we would have been guided through that process well by Alex and by our project subcommittee team of Ross Anthony, Rich BurrIDGE, and John McKie, and that we would have ended up with a good outcome in the build.

If we had not gone through the pledge process in July (and everything leading up to it regarding 253 Colombo St), we would have been nowhere near the position we were in when St Saviour's came onto the market in October, and it became apparent that an offer from us would be considered. Once we had processed the emotion of possibly returning to these buildings, it did begin to feel like a straightforward choice: 800sqm versus 3000sqm; a church with upstairs offices/Sunday School versus a larger church with an adjacent hall plus a separate office building and a vicarage; a ready-to-use facility versus a building project; a known cost versus an unknown cost. Thank you all for how you contributed during this quick change in direction and discernment. Again we thank God for his provision, and again it is remarkable how generous people at Trinity have been in helping us get over the line in securing 200 Colombo St. Many thanks must go to our wardens Tim Wilson and John McKie for their steady leading through the process of purchasing the building. Many thanks must also go to David Wong our treasurer. Being a church treasurer is not simple; being Trinity's church treasurer is far less than simple! David and the wardens have acted with wisdom and discretion, and we would not be in the position that we are in, nor the building that we are in, without them.

If news of the successful purchase of 200 Colombo St was joyfully received, how much more joyfully have we found the last month of actually using the buildings! Our 'moving bee' was a time of great togetherness and joy, and it was a privilege to pray with you on that day. Our services there have been well attended and delightful, none more so than the combined service with the baptisms of Michael Winder and Ethan Wong earlier this month. It had been a long time since a gathering in that building was standing room only, and we look forward to more such events by the mercy of God in the future.

Massive thanks must go to those who have continued to work hard in moving us into the buildings since the moving day. Tim and John have taken their roles as wardens seriously by cleaning toilets and pulling out trees and fixing chimneys. Rich BurrIDGE and Wayne Wright have been there almost full-time working on various aspects of the property. Ta Karati has generously given his staff to fix damaged roofing. Owning a property like this is a big responsibility, but what a joy it is to see that responsibility being shared within our fellowship. There is much for us to consider about our stewardship and use of the buildings moving forward, but what a good position it is that we are in.

There are other big changes that we can speak to: changes to our mission partners, changes within our fellowship as people enter new stages of life and health and as significant events have happened. We have farewelled our dear brothers Bevan Small and Tom Barnes into glory. Some have moved away, and we have welcomed others into our midst. Thank you to all of you for how you have continued in faithful fellowship and hospitality with each other, and in welcoming the newcomers. Thank you to all who have been regular in the word and prayer individually, as well as on Sundays, in midweek groups, in one-to-ones, and at prayer meetings and discipleship training events. We are confident in the Lord working among us as his word is shared, and we can reflect back on many good things that are the fruit of this work in the past year.

The last big change to mention is the change within our **ministry staff**. At the turn of the year we said farewell to Aimee Gray, and her presence is greatly missed in many areas as you will note in the ministry reports. We do not only miss the regular things that Aimee did, but we miss the fellowship we shared with her and the creative ideas she had for the ministry of our church. Aimee has become one of our new mission partners, and we look forward to hearing how her studies at Moore College in Sydney progress.

Likewise we greatly miss Dave Clancey, as well as Amanda and Caleb, whose absence is also felt within the ministry reports. Dave and Amanda gave themselves wholeheartedly to the ministry and life of our church for twelve full years, and that was well noted and honoured at their farewell event in December. Thank you all for making that occasion what it was, and please be keeping the Clanceys in your prayers as they settle into life and ministry in Nelson. Dave's final year with us was clearly a difficult one for them in many ways. While his time was officially reduced to 80% for Trinity, I can assure you that he continued to give 100% to our church when he was around. It was also an odd situation to still be in position whilst the nomination process for his successor was being conducted, and we are grateful to how Dave sought to allow the proper process to go about, as awkward as that would have been. We are also very grateful for our parish nominators Kyla Horne, Andy Vosslander, Mike Weller, and Tim Wilson, who gave themselves fully to a process that was long and intense at times, and likewise difficult for them to conduct while their minister was still in place. The godly and discerning approach that our nominators had, along with the support of the nominators of the Diocese, can only give us confidence for our future as James Ballinger's induction as our new Vicar approaches next week. May that confidence help us to welcome and support James and Charley and family as they settle in and begin ministering among us. Please don't expect them to be Dave and Amanda but enjoy getting to know them as James and Charley, allowing them to get to know us as we get to know them, and working alongside them in the work of God's kingdom.

I cannot mention the changes in ministry staff without giving thanks to our administrator Mackenzie Shewan. In many churches across the world you will find administrators who do the work of admin but have little connection with the ministry of the church (indeed, in many instances there are administrators who do not even attend the church they work for). This is not the case with Mackenzie, for she is more than an administrator to us. Mackenzie is committed to the gospel ministry that we share together, seen in the way that she serves and in the interest she takes in our life together. She is not employed to attend both services, nor to arrive early to set up or stay late to pack down, and yet she does. That is one example of the way Mackenzie ministers among us, evident in the past three months of diminished staffing but also across the year as a whole. Thank you, Mackenzie!

And thank you, church, for bearing through these three significant changes to our church in services, buildings, and ministry staff. As this report draws to a close and as we look to the year ahead, let us consider the things that haven't changed. We haven't changed the place that God's word has in our fellowship, in pointing us to our Lord Jesus and in speaking to us to change us by his Holy Spirit. On Sundays we have been blessed to spend time in 1 Corinthians 12-14, 1 Kings 1-12 and John 13-21. In our fellowship groups we have grappled with the whole of the book of Isaiah, and in our discipleship training we have chewed over 2 Timothy. Nor have we changed our submission to Jesus Christ, the Lord of the Church, and our worship of him has been evident in our praise on Sundays, our obedience during the week, our love for one another, our sacrificial generosity for the work of his kingdom, and our desire for others to hear about him and make him their Lord. Nor have we changed our value of the body of Christ, of our fellowship we share as we meet together regularly and spur one another on towards love and good deeds. I expect

and hope that we won't face in the next twelve months the same changes that we have faced in the past year – certainly we don't want to look for another new Vicar or to buy another church building! But let us remain committed to these unchanging things, to the fellowship of the church, to the ministry of God's word, and to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. "Not to us, Lord, not to us, but your name be the glory, because of your love and faithfulness." (Psalm 115:1)

As Dave would say, "Yours together in his service",
David