

Ministry Report for the 2025 **AGM**.

Overview

There is no doubt in my mind that there is a great need for vibrant, growing Christian gatherings across the world. Those who follow Christ are called to be “salt” and “light” in our local area. In our part of Sydney, there have historically been Christians active since the very early days of colonisation. You see that in the various heritage buildings which we still use. But it also has one of the smallest percentages of active followers of Jesus in Sydney. We need to keep before us the mission of presenting Jesus to people who do not yet follow him and together all growing into mature, faithful disciples.

In one sense the mission all Christian churches are on is the same one that the original disciples of Jesus were on when they started enacting the great commission of The Lord Jesus: *“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father the Son and The Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, even to the very end of the age.”* (Matthew 28: 18-20).

We still want the same outcome: making Disciples. We follow the same Jesus that we are calling people to follow. We have the same commission. But the truth is that many churches in our city have not thrived. We live in a particular part and context of this world, and we need to continue to think carefully and prayerfully about how to be most effective here. We are the Anglican Parish of Bondi and Waverley, commonly known as Bondi Anglican Church. We currently have an active and obvious ministry presence at two of our three locations, (not including The Rectory where I live, at the Ocean Street site). St Mary’s Church, Waverley and Bondi Beach Church (Historically St Andrews, Bondi Beach).

This report reflects on the last year. I also want to initiate the process of casting the vision and setting the direction for the next few years. It assumes the main mission we are on is to help more people in our area be “For Jesus” which aligns with *The Sydney Anglican Statement of Purpose and Priorities* is a good document that has been created by our Diocese in 2023 (see Appendix 1).

Within the context set by that Sydney Anglican statement of purpose and priorities, we need to clarify our Mission, Vision and Strategic Priorities for the next season of our church. I have begun thinking of our Mission over the next year or so from 2025, and I want our incoming Parish Council and our staff team to help me lead us in steering through this exciting process. We want to persuade others to join us as followers of Jesus. That can be expressed in many ways. I want to work in a non hurried, non anxious way on a fresh articulation of our Parish Purpose and Mission with you this year. That will allow us to grow in eagerness and focus in our collaborative service together.

Stories of God working

I want to tell you two stories of God working in amazing ways amongst us: In our congregations, God has called quite a few people to faith in Jesus in the last few years. I could list many, and many of you can, too. Just a few weeks ago, a 16-year-old boy emailed me at the church office. He explained that he was raised as an atheist. However, he had become interested in the claims of Jesus and the Christian faith. He researched on the web and got enough information to accept Jesus as Lord and Saviour, but then realised he needed a church to grow, and to be baptised. So we invited him along to church and youth group, and now he’s been coming to church for three weeks. This is a great reminder that Jesus is at work even where we are not aware.

The other story is an example of what has happened to several people at our church in the last year or so. A young married lady who was feeling a bit empty and wanted to explore spirituality got involved in New Age practices and opened herself up to spirituality. She asked to be shown spiritual power. She was. But it was not light, and it was not positive. She became rattled and turned up to our 10 am church when we were looking at a section in the New Testament talking about Jesus having power over evil spirits. She accepted Jesus, got baptised by us at the beach, joined a mid-week group and grew in reading, discussing and knowing her Bible. We want more of those great stories of people becoming disciples and growing. That is the really important outcome of everything else we talk about here.

2024 was the first year without Blake Hatton as the Assistant minister. He was with us for over seven years, and before that the Student minister, who helped re-plant a congregation back into Bondi Beach. Matt Graham has moved from being a community connection pastor into the role at Bondi Beach Church, as primary pastor there. It has been a delight to watch him take on the opportunities to shape and steer that Bondi Beach Church to maximise the effectiveness of what was already a congregation with a sense of being a local example of salt and light.

Wardens

Please see the Warden's separate report. I thank Emma Mulquinney, Malcolm Leithhead and Siobhan Jordan for serving as Wardens this last year. They were also the Parish Council as we resolved to not have extra members of Parish Council at last year's AGM. The financial and property load associated with this parish is quite significant. The Wardens have carried out their responsibilities in a tricky context to weigh income with expenditure with ministry objectives. There are so many needs and potential blow-outs, so it is a great result to have ended 2024 with an excess. It was a small team with a big long list.

I particularly would like to thank **Emma Mulquinney**. She has served as a Warden in our Parish for five years. Her focus on clear decision making and getting things done has been a great benefit to our church functioning well. Please pray for her, and give thanks to The Lord for allowing us to benefit from her willingness to serve. She has decided to not re-stand this year. We never want people to feel locked into positions that they have offered to serve in. Thanks so much Emma!

I am thankful that **Siobhan Jordan** has agreed to accept my appointment as Rectors Warden for another year. She has learnt some of the dynamics of being a Warden this last year. Her and her husband Jonny have had to focus on being a new mum to her son Leon in 2024, with some major early health hurdles he had. Thanks Siobhan!

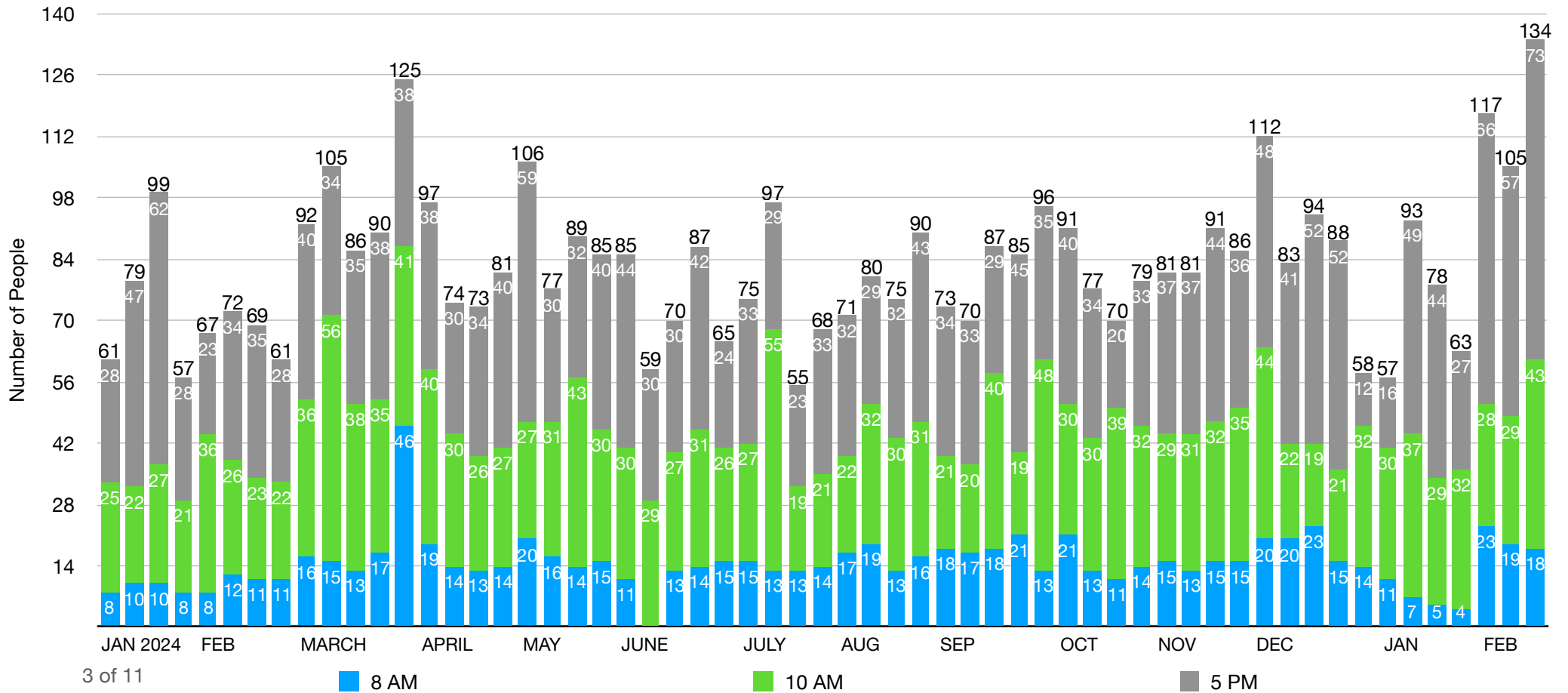
Malcolm Leithhead has also served faithfully and tirelessly on Parish Council and as a Warden, and a keen congregational participant. His skills in planning and negotiating with projects and property users and *Sydney Anglican Property* have left us in a far better state. He has been able to anticipate issues and initiate solutions in a wide range of key areas in Parish life. He is so obviously wanting to progress the Gospel ministry happening in and through our Church. Thanks Mal!

Current Staff

Joelle Pauls, who has been facilitating Hop and Bop ministry so skilfully for just under a year now- she is full of God's grace and helps us show hospitality to dozens and dozens of young children and their families. **Kurt Ison** plays the Organ at 8am and **Ian Barnes** (on invoice) plays piano at 10 am. **Victoria Rich** as our part time Children's minister and **Laila Rich** as our part time Youth Minister have added so much value to our Parish's ability to serve children and young people. **Caitlin Joukhadar** is our new Administrator who is learning a complex job ast the same time as doing it really well. **Matt Graham** has moved into new Beach Church pastor role with energy and wisdom.

Over the last twelve months, our average total Sunday attendance across all our congregations has grown. That is good news. Sunday attendance has been an average of 106 people per Sunday since November 2024. You can look at the chart to see what that looks like for the last 59 Sundays in each of our three congregations. (In both Januarys 8 am and 10 am were combined, but attendees recorded from each congregation).

Total Parish attendance for the last 59 Sundays, not including Good Friday and Christmas Day Services.



Numbers

Attendance numbers in the table above have a positive trajectory, but note that total attendance for every week is quite variable. (This Variation from week to week is something I have noted in every annual ministry report I have done here since 2014).

Here are some numbers on guests each Sunday:

8 am: Maximum 46 on Easter Sunday, then twice getting to 23. The average was 16. The average number of guests was 3, or 18%.

10 am: Maximum 56. The average was 32 before Kids Church started and 41 after. The average number of guests was 10, or 31%.

5 pm: Maximum 73 (last Sunday, 16th Feb). The average was 38 before Youth started and 49 after. The average number of guests was 14, or 37%.

Visitors

The data on guests tells us that we were actually getting people visiting church. An average number of 27 per Sunday across the Parish. The issue is *retaining* these guests and moving them into returning newcomers and then regulars. Some of the guests are not likely to be returning, as they are not local and are visiting because of a specific event like a baptism or with friends who are local. However we still need to be offering ways for these people to have increased engagement in the church community and growth as a follower of Jesus. We can also see the importance of focussing on local guests, which will most likely occur with word of mouth and local invitations. Then once they do visit church, we set up the right tone so they have a desire to return. This has implications for a more considered and well executed welcoming and integration process.

Several ministry planning meetings last year discussed the importance of seeking to maximise this at all our congregations, and the best way to do that is to set apart teams and individuals to champion certain aspects: Welcoming and Integration, Hospitality, Missions, Music, etc. We must plan to establish systems which allow this to happen. The mid week groups are also a key to growing engagement and disciple-making with positive interactions in church life.

Tone

We are working on making all our Sunday congregational services great. Part of that is hard to define - but its about a welcoming and comfortable environment with good music, comfortable spaces, sense of safety, clearly led church and great public praying, reading of scripture and preaching that is engaging and application that is direct. We are improving in these areas in different ways across our different congregations. There have been ongoing challenges, including a limited number of musicians - particularly at our 10 am service, which has recently been addressed with Ian Barnes coming as a paid pianist. We also would like to grow participation in leading, prayer, reading the scriptures and other Sunday ministries, as well as mid week group hosting and leading.

Children

With Victoria Rich being engaged as our Children's Minister, we have seen some great outcomes over the last 5 months, resulting in the parish catering to children of all ages over the parish. For 0-5 years there is a parent room with a live feed on Sunday at 5 pm, a new program implemented for the preschool to year 6 age group at the 10 am service, and a middle school to high school youth offering Fridays 6.30-8 pm and Sunday 5.15-6 pm. All offerings have a digital check-in and check-out system.

Children on Sundays at 10 am: Kids church maintained consistent attendance during its first official term, Term 4 2024, and we expect the same again for Term 1 2025. We already have a new family attending, which is exciting. Our feedback surveys show that overall, our adult leaders and parents rated the program a big success, with only positive feedback. Each weekly session is designed with measurable learning outcomes, incorporating: Memory Verses: Practice key verses with actions and a take-home fridge magnet Bible Study Animation & Animated Worship: Driving an engagement rate increase Other: Nutritious food, take-home crafts, and outdoor time.

For the upcoming term, we are committed to scaling our success by standardising this proven format and continuing with our effective weekly structure. Developing Leadership: Training and encouraging senior leaders to run sessions. Additionally, 100% of our leaders maintain compliance with Safe Ministry training and working with children checks, ensuring all safety protocols are met even with parent helpers.

We are exploring connections with our **Hop and Bop** ministry, as it has many toddlers with their parents who are being told about the Children's ministry happening on Sunday at 10 am, and this connection will grow in the coming months. Please pray that we can welcome new families into the life of the church and faith in Jesus through this potential pathway.

Youth

With Laila Rich engaged as our Youth Minister since October, we have seen some exciting progress with the Youth Ministry at Bondi Anglican. This ministry has been conducted by several volunteers from our church along with Matt Graham for the previous few years. During Term 4 2024, Friday Youth Group had an average of eight youth members attending each night, with one week having 11 attendees. We could only run Friday Youth Group once a fortnight last term due to a shortage of available and equipped leaders. However, for Term 1 2025 we have recruited more leaders and have been able to run the Friday Youth Group every week. So far this term we have seen an average of 9 young people coming along for solid interaction with God's Word, good discussion and fun.

Additionally, as of Term 4 2024, we were also able to start up a Sunday Youth Program (which was not running previously). This program was immediately able to run every week due to having several available leaders. Term 4 saw an average of eight youth members attending each week, with one week having 14 attendees. So far for Term 1 2025, the average number of attendees has grown to 12.

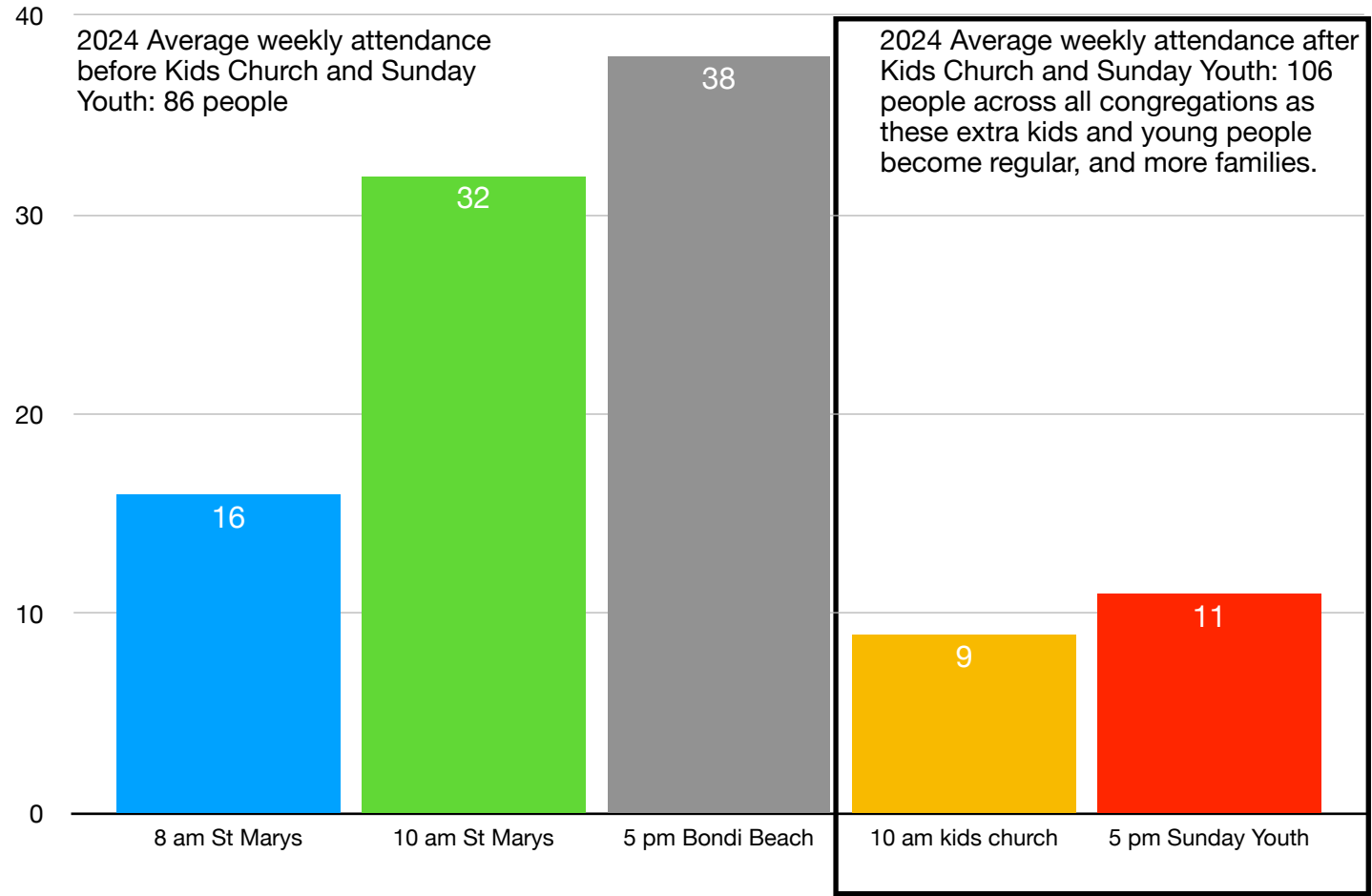
We have had great feedback from parents for both the Friday and Sunday Youth programs, with many saying their children felt welcomed into the youth groups and cannot wait for youth each week.

The plan is to help build connections with children and Young people's families, and so reach out through the programmes, and grow connections through local groups and schools- eventually looking at the feasibility of running SRE at Rose Bay secondary College. Laila has started her SRE training modules and we have started talking to Youthworks about the process and strategy involved in this plan.

Safe Ministry

We are compliant with all Safe Ministry requirements. We are seeking a Safe Ministry Rep. Victoria is provisionally filling this role, but it is not best practice to have a ministry worker do this.

2024 Average Total Sunday attendance before and after Kids and Youth Ministry



8 am church at St Mary's

The excellent Organ playing and choosing of hymns by Kurt Ison helps maintain the quality of a traditional Prayer Book service. We have experimented with a few traditional Anglican services of Hearing God's Word without the Lord's Supper. This has been received well, and has the added advantage of other people leading the service apart from an ordained presbyter. The sermon series is most often the same as the other congregations but shortened to fit into an already richly theological traditional liturgical service.

As you can see from the attendance data, although we are losing people through old age, moving away and death, there has been some new attendance and guests to maintain a 16 people average. We pray we grow through the reputation of a solid but friendly traditional service.

10 am church at St Mary's

As you can see above, the numbers have slowly improved in the last few months. We have benefitted from Ian Barnes coming as our pianist in the last few weeks as an answer to prayer. We have a growing sense of community but must focus on welcoming and integrating newcomers using hospitality, church connections and planned pathways into church life. The "Historic building with a Living, Loving God" is a helpful line we have used to gain interest- and we can help people see that the neo-gothic architecture of St Marys houses a solid vibrant and attractive church community with a relevant message. We want to develop and execute a few regular events that we can invite guests and newcomers to help create clear next steps to greater engagement.

There is a growing sense of community and hospitality, with spontaneous, warm, gracious interactions. I am seeking people who will help in this, and appreciate greatly those who are already helping here. I want to thank all who help every week in food, hospitality, bible reading, praying, welcoming and adding to the warmth and good tone at 10 am. You know who you are.

5 pm church at Bondi Beach

It has been a great year at Bondi Beach Church. It started with farewelling the Hatton family to their new ministry role. With this we spent 10 weeks in transition, where we intentionally stripped things back, focussed on culture, reassessed priorities and determined next steps. This process led to the hard decision to close our 9:30 am Sunday morning *Little Souls*. As the year progressed, many new people joined the church community along with some old friends rejoining. We said goodbye to lots of friends as they moved locations or went back home overseas, all a normal dynamic for a transient community.

Over the 12 months, 28 people have joined the community to become regular members, 5 rejoined the church community, and 22 moved on, 18 of which were for geographical reasons. So, all in all, God has done great work, and there is excitement about what God has done and is doing among us. We have been developing various ministry teams over the year, and it's great to have a team of 5 service leaders, people who provide dinners, general hospitality, welcomers, tech, music, youth and general help. The plan is to continue to develop these teams and work together for Jesus,

Matt Graham, the Bondi Beach pastor says "I'm ever thankful to the prayers who gather most Thursday morning to pray for our local area, church and ministry partners. I am thankful that there are many testimonies of God's goodness, even in some hard times. I am thankful that people are enjoying coming to church and willingly serving in so many ways. I am excited that people are inviting friends and that, nearly every week, new people are hearing the gospel and engaging with God. We will continue to honour God by prayerfully working to make our Sunday services great, building a disciple making Christian community that seeks to connect missionally with our local area in creative ways – all for Jesus."

Hop and Bop

Hop and Bop has gone from strength to strength under Lovisa and then Joelle Pauls' facilitation. Two times a week we have 50 or so people come along to hop, bop and hear about Jesus as they have fine coffee, tea and morning tea. We love them and bless them and people in the Bondi community love it. Its a service, and there have been great positive public awareness of Bond Anglican over the years because of this.

Special Religious Education

Bondi Beach Public and Bondi Public. This continues steadily and faithfully with Julie Gaetjens, Doreen Teo, Matt Graham, Martin Morgan at Bondi Beach and Bondi Public Schools. Victoria Rich and Laila Rich are being trained in SRE modules to grow our capacity and be ready to teach classes as the opportunity arises at local public schools and Rose Bay High.

St Mary's Child Care Centre

The connection between the Parish and St Mary's Child Care centre continues, and there is a growing sense of collaboration. The CCC has been based in St Mary's Hall for many years and we are now using that space on Sundays for kids church. I chair the CCC board, and we have four Parish reps (David Rogers, Del de Kantzrow, Susan Leithhead, Greta Sanmuganathan) who want to carefully grow that healthy connection.

Mission outside our Parish.

We continue to support International Mission to Jewish People, Compassion, Pioneers in Indonesia, Open Doors, Living Water Church, Redfern and give regularly as a church to these groups and encourage parishioners to pray and support mission. I would like to find a champion for mission in each one of our congregations to help us all keep informed. The more informed we are, the more prayerful, encouraged and encouraging we can be about what The Lord is doing in other parts of the world outside Bondi.

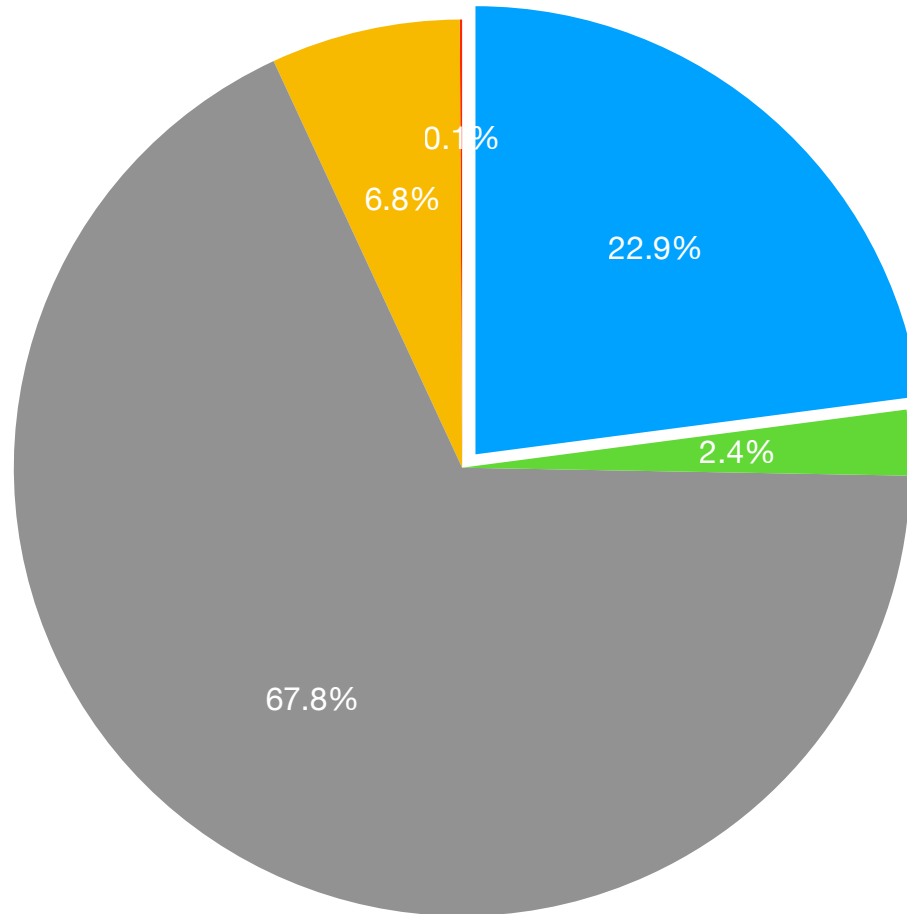
Budgets, Buildings, Bottle-necks

The striking thing one notices about our Parish is how many physical resources we have. We have Three church buildings, three halls, two preschool areas, three rectories (one of these, at Birrell Street is leased to Speech and Occupational Therapists) All of these buildings are functioning but all are needing constant attention, maintenance, repair and monitoring. We are able to raise far more income through these properties than we can through offerings, and we are relying on this property income in a way that is probably not healthy or sustainable. With our positive trajectory of growth in numbers across the parish, we should expect to see a growth in offering income from people moved to give with a cheerful heart. I am planning to teach specifically on generosity soon as one of the disciplines of being a Disciple of Jesus.

This situation is a conundrum. As the wardens report says, we need to grow the proportion of offering income to allow us to pay staff from more offering income and rely less on property income. This will free up property income to do some significant upkeep on the buildings we have. We are still in the expensive process of re cladding St Marys roof in welsh slate. The initial Eastern section has already been done and looks great and functions well. The remainder will cost about \$420,000 to do the roof slates and gutters. A grant has been applied for \$100,000 but this job is expensive and we need to form a fundraising team with a clear focussed plan and develop relationships with community stakeholders.

The potential to do a major development on some of our property to generate significant income is there- but it seems unlikely to happen soon, after a long attempt to do that in the last 6 years. The Sydney Anglican Property group will be consulted regarding this potential.

\$849,595 Total Parish Income 2024 Sources



● Offering & Donation Income ● Grants ● Property Income ● Ministry Activities (H&B) ● Finance Income

2024 Offering Income of 22.9% or \$194,686. This fell way short of the staff expenses in 2024 of \$298,458.

The budgeted Ministry Staff expenses for 2025 is \$339,052. We have a whole lot of other expenses mainly to do with buildings - but we can pay for this from our significant property income if we have more offering income. Let me ask you directly to think about giving a percentage of this budgeted staff stipend and salaries.

The Numbers are simple.

10% of \$339,052 is \$3,390. If 100 people gave \$3,390 this year, we have paid our ministry workers for the year. That's \$282.54 a month or \$65.20 a week. Could you do that, or more than that cheerfully?

But it is unlikely we have 100 people regularly giving this year. So if 50 people giving \$6,781 a year, That's \$565.09 a month or \$130.40 a week. Could you do that cheerfully?

Remember we have the added blessing of buildings that can pay for themselves, if we release that property income and agree to support the ministry work by our offerings. Come on, we can do this.

The Challenge

We should be positively seeking to use the resources we have to be salt and light and help make disciples in this area. That is happening, but it is sometimes hard. We will need to be prayerful. We will need to be generous. We will need to be thankful to The Lord for all he has given us and be willing to say no to some things and yes to others with the wisdom that God gives.

As I mentioned, I want to embark on a non anxious, unhurried re-framing of our vision and mission or purpose. I want the Parish staff, Parish Council and Wardens to be the spearhead of this as we focus our attention on what God is doing as we serve Jesus and make more disciples for him and run church gatherings that are great. It will be about how we can best show we are "For Jesus". As we continue to grow in numbers and maturity, my prayer is that we will all exhibit the fruit of the Spirit and have compelling church gatherings that make us naturally want to invite others.

To do that we need to take church on as a serious part of our lives. My prayer is we will have a great 2025 becoming even more clearly light and salt for Jesus. Come and chat with me, or our church ministry staff and the Parish Council or Wardens anytime about anything you think will help or if you think I can help you. Please can I also ask you to spend some time to pray about the things and people mentioned in this Report.

Martin Morgan
With the Ministry Staff and Parish Council.

APPENDIX 1: PURPOSE AND PRIORITIES FOR THE DIOCESAN FELLOWSHIP - July 2023

“For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake” (2 Corinthians 4:5)

“We’re for Jesus”

Our continuing purpose as Sydney Anglicans is given to us by God in the Scriptures. This purpose is to make disciples by:

- proclaiming and commending Christ
- establishing them in the life of the church
- equipping them for compassionate service in the world
- sending some to serve beyond our Diocese
- prayerfully seeking God’s work in all things

As an expression of our love for God and our neighbours, our Diocese is a fellowship of churches, schools and organisations, all of which are shaped by the gospel and share our disciple-making purpose. The churches (including those that meet in gaols, schools, and aged-care and retirement village settings) are the foundation of our Diocesan fellowship and have unique opportunity and responsibility for the work of making disciples since they are communities gathered by the gospel. We seek God’s work amongst us to multiply Christians, multiply churches, and multiply leaders. To these ends, we long to see our fellowship marked by healthy communication, collaboration, and coordination.

The following is a list of areas of focus, particularly thinking about the next five years. This is not intended to be a list of everything that’s important to us, and we acknowledge that there are a number of existing areas of priority/work that warrant ongoing attention and effort. Rather these are some areas where we believe we especially need to grow/change. Each in their own way the priorities below will express and foster our commitment to the purposes outlined above- multiplying Christians, multiplying churches, and multiplying leaders.

Our highest priorities are:

- 1) the ministry of the word
- 2) prayer
- 3) mobilising and motivating all Sydney Anglicans to be disciple-making disciples

Our other priorities (in no particular order) are:

- 4) encouragement of deeper collaboration between churches, schools, and organisations- including a more collaborative approach to the use of our property assets
- 5) healthy and flourishing churches made possible especially by the retention, strengthening, and accountability of Rectors through:
 - a. re-focussing of Regional Bishops (and the provision of better support for Bishops in their role)
 - b. professional supervision and professional development for Rector well-being
- 6) recruitment and training of new ministry leaders, including but not limited to:
 - a. leaders for particular kinds of churches (church plants; larger (or “hub and spoke”) parishes
 - b. leaders (both women and men) of ministry in particular communities (indigenous; cross-cultural; blue collar; marginalised areas)
- 7) growth and strengthening of ministry amongst children and young people, especially through better leveraging of links between schools and churches
- 8) media and engagement: strengthening internal communication with better systems/processes for sharing stories and resources; and strengthening external communication through a significant reinvestment in Anglican Media
- 9) church planting: establishing new fellowships in Greenfields areas (with accompanying investment in land and buildings) and other areas (with creative approaches to beginning new ministries/communities).