

HOLY COVENANT ANGLICAN CHURCH

a place for everyone

BEING GREAT NEIGHBOURS

our parish dream
2023-2026

inside:

Welcome to the
neighbourhood
PAGE 02

Our vision, mission & values
PAGE 03

The journey so far
PAGE 04

Next steps
PAGE 06

Making it happen
PAGE 08

"Jesus came to tip us over into a world of absolute abundance."

RICHARD ROHR

Welcome to the neighbourhood

Holy Covenant is called to be a great neighbour. When God entered our world in the person of Jesus, the Word not only put on flesh and blood but 'moved into the neighbourhood.' A great neighbour is a source of abundance to others, a wellspring of faith, hope and love to those nearby, whether in their families, workplaces, streets or shared leisure spaces.

Great neighbours love well (Matt 22.34-40). They are curious about those who live, work and play next door. They are present when challenges emerge. They are creative about finding solutions. They are a source abundance because they help others to thrive by growing in love, joy, peace, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

Holy Covenant is different because we focus on God's abundance. Where some promote isolation and perfectionism, we encourage engagement and embracing diversity.

The parish dream is like a plan in so far fulfilling it will take intentionality, energy and money. Yet is different because it can only ever be an invitation to volunteers who are learning to share God's abundance with our neighbours.

This is your opportunity to become a great neighbour. Will you step out and discover God's abundance with us together?



THE MINISTRY TEAM

L to R - Wayne Brighton, Wendy Robertson, Lynda McMinn, Connie Gerrity, Tobias Nevile, Anne Dudzinski, Anne Ranse. Absent - Megan Arthur, Lou Passmore

Our vision - where are we going?

Vision is about who we want to be as a Christian community. It's equal parts hopefulness and reality.

We are a place where people get to be the person that God made them to be. This means that our age, ability, gender, orientation and ethnicity are all gifts to be used rather than obstacles to be overcome. They are gifts because God can and does work through us to bring faith, hope and love to our neighbours.

We want to be a place where people have agency to express their identity, their gifts are celebrated and where no one's opportunities are limited because of who they happen to be.

Our mission - what are we doing?

Mission is about where we are going. It's equal parts challenge, optimism and boldness.

We want our neighbours to thrive, whether that in our school, club, friendship circle or workplace. Thriving is what happens when people engage with God's kingdom. It takes curiosity to discover God's abundance. It takes presence to understand God's heart for our world. It takes creativity to participate in God's kingdom because most people only hear words of judgment, condemnation and fear from Christians.

Our values - how do we get there?

The fuel we need comes from **values** which get us going, keep us on track and go the distance. Our values are anchored in the life of God, the person of Jesus and the work of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus included everybody that wanted to be near. He valued diversity welcoming people from all walks of life. He showed compassion by healing those who were sick of heart, body and mind. He taught justice through his life and death. He brought freedom through the resurrection and ascension.

When we value what God values, everything that's fixed suddenly becomes flexible. Space opens and opportunities emerge. We won't tell you how to live. We'll help you to love better and more deeply.

OUR VISION

Holy Covenant is a place for everyone

OUR MISSION

We enable everyone to discover, understand and participate in God's kingdom so that our neighbourhood will thrive

OUR VALUES

**We value what Jesus valued:
inclusion
diversity
compassion
justice
freedom**



Our journey so far

The last parish plan identified a variety of goals for growth. Some were aspirational while others addressed pressure points or constraints. Many were dependent on the energy ebbs and flows of volunteers, who are often in their 70s or older.

Consequently, some things ran a little slower while unexpected things emerged. What we do depends on help from many volunteers who make Holy Covenant a vibrant place. Insights for developing these areas over the long-term growth are included in *italics*.

enhancing outreach

- **Neighbourhood fun nights** - pizza nights drew in some neighbours yet popularity is seasonal. Christmas, Easter and Halloween provided good opportunities for connection.
- **Youth Alpha** - 7 young adults were confirmed in 2021 with another group commencing in 2023.
- **Colours of God** - this ministry ceased in 2023 as retired leaders could not be replaced.

Connecting with spiritual searchers remains challenging as fewer Australians have positive experiences of church.

deepening spiritual growth

- **offering annual retreats** - post-COVID realities make retreats prohibitively costly.
- **Diving Deeper** - this ministry was merged with the *Missional Spirituality* initiative in 2023.
- **family camp** - camps have become prohibitively expensive. Parish Garden Days were developed instead.
- **small groups** - quality study groups are provided by the rector however few leaders limit opportunities for connection.

Opportunities to understand the theological foundation of Holy Covenant's spiritual outlook remain vital to our growth.

engaging youth ministries

- **develop volunteer team** - Lou became the kids' church coordinator.
- **expanding youth team** - older kids are helping out as new leaders identified.

Few churches use Godly Play because they choose to teach people what to believe than how to wonder. Our inclusive and creative approach is very distinctive.

enriching worship

- **refreshing music and sanctuary teams** - new members of selection team and musicians were added.
- **revamp 5pm service** - this online group ended in May 2023 following diminished attendance.
- **digital ministry** - the website and social media platforms were refreshed while making sermons more accessible is a project awaiting implementation.
- **music director** - a member capable of developing our music teams is still desired.

Music enhances the experience of Holy Covenant and yet volunteers are in limited supply. An enriching experience is vital for our congregations to grow younger.

improving our facilities

- **improving wi-fi in Rainbow Centre** - a new internet provider and improved security resolved persistent problems.
- **improved signage** - constructing a Street Library on Dexter Street improved visibility.
- **improved green spaces** - concept plan developed with a zones based approach moving ahead.
- **renovate the Rainbow Centre** - plans were developed but the ACTPLA approval process has slowed progress.
- **enhance fundraising capacity** - transition to electronic giving with tap-and-go capacity.

People often encounter our built space first. A building and grounds that are contemporary and cared about speaks to our health and capacity to care for people.

fruitful partnerships

- **Wellbeing** - fewer sessions would be offer in 2023 with a revised advertising strategy.
- **Community Garden** - continues to attract people from our neighbourhood.
- **Holistic Care** - considerable effort has been given to studying its operations and reviewing governance in order to pursue DGR status.
- **engagement in environmental issues** - participation in a climate change survey suggests that parish policies could be refreshed if a climate change team was established.

The capacity to work with others is an indicator of our internal health, energy and creativity.

strengthening pastoral care

- **Safe Ministry** - volunteer roles descriptions prepared, screen requirements adopted, and compliance system developed.
- **recruit new pastoral carers** - the Belonging and Caring team is being refreshed yet largely focussed on people aged over 75.
- **develop new small groups** - Zoom enabled people to join together without leaving home, enabling those living in residential care or with complex health needs to remain connected.

The parish has long seen pastoral care as a responsibility shared with members helping each other. Calling new volunteers into this work remains challenging.

ministry team development

- **office role redesigned** - shifting the administrator to a manager role to better facilitate operations.
- **discovering gifts** - congregational energy and interest appeared uncertain.
- **expanding community chaplain role** - the parish needs a 'good news' person for community connections. Recruitment for 2024 will begin shortly.
- **student scholarships** - informal support has emerged for our St Mark's student.
- **mapping ministry hours** - project appeared difficult and it was displaced by new priorities.

We will need to grow many of our leaders as diocesan leadership pathways are likely to be constrained for the foreseeable future.

Next steps

Holy Covenant can be great neighbour by sharing its inclusive and generous approach to spirituality. It will stand out when many Christian communities either retreat behind the safety of stained glass or the pursuit of perfectionism.

Great neighbours are curious about the possibilities and the people around them. They are present through the challenges. They are creative when finding solutions. Holy Covenant can be place where people discover God's abundance by:

- growing into the kind of person they want to become
- sharing the gift of who they are
- developing new connections with different people
- exploring fresh possibilities for spiritual growth.

We have made much progress but there is still more to consolidate and strengthen. Many of our goals are long-term. Achievement requires commitment and curiosity as the pathway for delivery is often discovered only when the journey commences.

Many opportunities and risks confront the parish. Generational change and renewal are underway. Many of our volunteers and congregation members are over 75 and able to help as they once were. A broader horizon that's focused on sharing abundance will enable us to be great neighbours.

engaging under 25s ministry

- develop a **coordinated strategy for engagement** with kids and young adults in Belconnen region.
- develop a **new 5pm service** with a focus on those aged 18-35 years.
- enhance our capacity to offer **Godly Play**.
- promote **Fruitful Fridays** as an inclusive youth group.

deepening spiritual growth

- develop a **strategy** to help nurture the capacity for spiritual reflection and prayer among those aged between 30 and 50 with busy lives.
- offer a number of **prayer opportunities** in the parish for spiritual reflection.
- offer a range of **small group opportunities** to deepen our understanding of God's inclusive kingdom.
- develop resources for confirmation and baptism that will enable people to **share their faith**.
- rethink our system for enabling volunteers to develop their capacity for ministry.

enticing worship

- recruit a **music director** who could develop teams for music selection, playing and singing.
- refreshing **music and sanctuary teams** at 8am and 10am services by lowering the age profile and having more than one instrumentalist at every service.
- enhance our **digital ministry** footprint by making sermons more accessible beyond the sanctuary.

enhancing outreach

- develop a strategy for **neighbourhood engagement** so that we might build broader and deeper connections with spiritual searchers that live and work in Belconnen.
- encourage a **culture of personal invitation** towards our social gatherings with a focus on how faith can be shared today.
- articulate a **vision of God's kingdom** that's grounded in God's love for all creation rather than one based in fear, judgment and the pursuit of perfectionism.

improving facilities

- complete the **Rainbow Centre renovation** in 2024.
- **implement the garden** plan especially the barbecue area and carpark resurfacing.
- create a **toddler room** in the worship centre for families with children under 2.
- replace the **seating** in the sanctuary.
- **enhance our signage** on Dexter and Redfern Street with lighting and flags.
- **enhance fundraising capacity** by utilising our property better, developing a trust fund through bequests and interest-free loans, and engagement with community based enterprises.

fruitful partnerships

- helping congregation members to understand and engage with our **wider works projects**
- enhance the **community garden** to attract people from our neighbourhood through educational initiatives.
- ensure that **Holistic Care** achieves DGR status and broadens its donor base.
- revisit engagement with **environmental care** particularly in ameliorative climate action.
- explore partnerships with other **inclusive and diverse churches** globally such as HeartEdge in the UK (<https://www.heartedge.org>).
- encourage the formation of a **Broad Church Network** in the Diocese as a way of helping our neighbours to collaborate and grow.

developing the ministry team

- recruit a new community chaplain for 2024.
- focus more on developing **long-term strategies** rather than short-term routine operations.
- encourage the development of **women in leadership** at a time when gender based divisions are becoming more prominent within the Anglican Church.
- develop home group **leaders** around the city so that we might have multiple centres of networking, hospitality, spirituality and pastoral care.

strengthening pastoral care

- recruit **new pastoral carers** to the Belonging and Caring team, particularly men.
- develop our **Wellbeing program** as a means where we care for our neighbours and enhance congregational capacity for pastoral care.

prayer for the journey

God's call to become a great neighbour asks us to discover God's abundance anew. Abundance is found by those who are willing to be curious, present and creative about those around them.

As you think about the journey, you might wish to:

- consider what energizes you most concerning Holy Covenant's vision, mission and values;
- talk to the team about your dreams for the church, for that is where abundance begins to stir;
- look around at who is doing what in the church and consider how you might help, especially if you see any gaps or holes where something useful could be done; or
- look at your financial partnership with the parish over the short and long-term horizon.

You might wish to pray the prayer below:

*Generous God,
everything we have comes from you.
You call us into your kingdom
but we are often afraid and doubt our energy and strength.
May we discover the width, depth and height of your love.
May we be curious about your kingdom,
present to our neighbours, and
creative in finding the pathway ahead.
Help us to become great neighbours
for the sake of your kingdom. Amen.*

Making it happen

Our ministries obviously come at a cost: our budget expenditure for 2023 is nearly \$360,000—that's about \$1,000 per day! This amount really only supports our 'business as usual': any new or expanded ministries will cost more. For example, each additional day per week for an assistant minister would add around \$18,000 over the year.

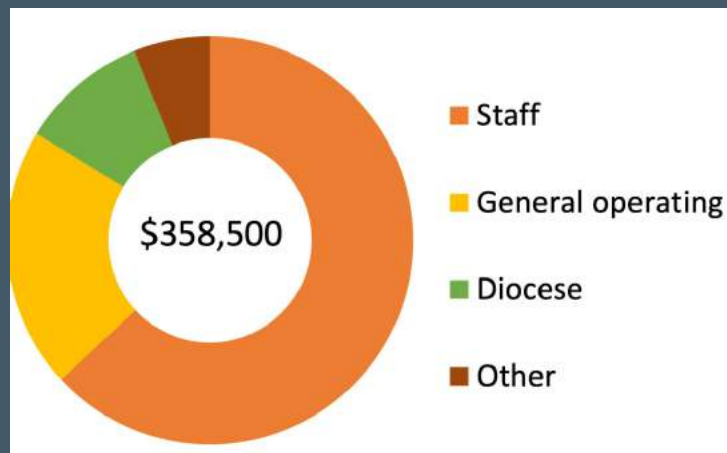
Supporting our business-as-usual activities is already a challenge: as the charts on the right show, the budgeted income is nearly \$50,000 lower than the budgeted expenses. While Parish Council is trimming the budget where it can any deficit will only be covered from our savings. Such an approach is not sustainable over the long term.

For Holy Covenant to continue to be a beacon of inclusiveness and generous spirituality—to live out our vision, mission and values—we need to give bountifully. And we might think of giving plentifully beyond the horizon: to create a 'future' fund that will enable diverse ministry options for future generations.

I wonder how you might help us make our dreams come true—not just for today but for tomorrow by:

- having a look at what you are currently giving, and see if there is any capacity to increase it. For some folks this might include checking that your regular bank transfer is still happening.
- picking one of the ministry areas that excites you and make a one-off or regular donation—perhaps there are windfalls along life's journey that could be used for this purpose.
- talking with your family about leaving a bequest to the parish—these are put in an investment fund managed by the Diocese, and earn income for the parish.
- thinking about whether you could offer an interest-free loan to the parish to help fund major projects and allow us to reduce the interest associated with borrowings.

Budgeted expenses for 2023



Budgeted income for 2023



**An abundant
community embraces
its imperfections
while reaching
outwards in
faith, hope and love.**