

Church of St John the Evangelist

Future Directions Group

“Towards 2020”

Final Report and Recommendations

Members: Chris Russell (Chairman); Fr. Keith Dalby; Di Joester; Bill Killinger; Don Yorath;

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1. Executive Summary

The Parish Council established a Forward Directions Group to consider the Vision, Mission and Objectives of St Johns as it looks towards 2020. The Group was then tasked with considering strategies to implement and resource the implementation of those objectives consistent with the Mission.

The FDG recommends has made recommendations in the following areas:

1 New Service Times and Styles

1.1 Three revised Sunday service times and styles have been recommended.

2 The Welcoming Process

2.1 A new process and format has been proposed to further facilitate the identification and servicing of the needs of visitors to the Church.

3 The Sermon

3.1 Recommendations as regards sermon length and format have been made.

4 The Readers

4.1 The FDG has recommended that Readers be carefully selected based on skills and well briefed particularly on festival services such as Christmas and Easter, to ensure high levels of audibility, understanding and meaning to the congregation.

5 The “Au Revoir”

5.1 Recommendations have been made as regards post-service greeting and socialising including availability of light refreshments.

6 Visitor Follow-up

6.1 The FDG recommends a streamlining of the visitor follow up process, follow-up events and the establishment of a “buddy system”.

7 Facilitating Time for God in the Lives of Busy People

7.1 Taking account of the increasing busyness of parishioners, a number of recommendations have been made for in situ small group establishment, long term “church plants” and on-line based communication and study.

8 Community Lunch program

8.1 The potential of this existing initiative was recognised and recommendations are made as regards the expansion and incorporation of this activity into achieving our objectives.

9 Expanded Small Group Programme

9.1 The Committee has made various recommendations as regards both existing and the establishment of, new small interest groups within the parish.

10 Establishment of a confidential “At Risk” register

10.1 The Group is recommending a more disciplined and recorded approach be made to the pastoral care of “at risk” parishioners including the establishment of a confidential “at risk” register to which names can be added by small group co-ordinators or parishioners for reference by the Ministry team.

11 Increased Pastoral care Support

- 11.1 It was recognised that this is a critical area within the mission of the parish.
- 11.2 It is likely that additional resources will be required to adequately cater for this area.
- 11.3 Reporting in general terms on the need for resourcing of this area should be a regular agenda item for Parish Council.

12 Establishment of The St Johns “Open On-Line Theo-versity”

- 12.1 This exciting new initiative, if adopted, provides on line study modules prepared and administered by Bishop Michael in theological and religious history study both for parishioners and Australia wide (or even globally), but requiring in-person retreats at St Johns during the course of the module.
- 12.2 The group believes that this programme is in tune with both the busyness of the population and also modern educational methods now in use elsewhere.

13 Establishment of a Daily On-Line Bible Study and Prayer Programme

- 13.1 This programme, while currently on trial in the parish, provides daily devotions in a structured way for parishioners requiring only 10 minutes per day disciplined time with God.

14 Future Employment of a Youth Worker

- 14.1 The group recognises the value of the appointment of a youth worker and makes recommendations as to timing of such an appointment.

15 The need for a Future Fulltime Assistant Minister

- 15.1 The FDG notes the long term need for a paid assistant as the parish expands.

16 Weekly Collection Initiatives

- 16.1 The FDG has recommended a number of initiatives to increase weekly giving by parishioners.

17 Op Shop Integration and Expansion Initiatives

- 17.1 The FDG notes the effectiveness and value of the “Op Shop” operation within St Johns and makes a series of recommendations to further enhance both its effectiveness and integration into our vision and objectives.

18 The Establishment of a Tax deductible Fund

- 18.1 Whilst it was not recommended that a formal foundation be established – the creation of a tax deductible fund be undertaken to allow tax deductible donations to be made.

19 The Investigation of Alternate Investment Strategies

- 19.1 The group has recommended that alternative investment strategies be considered.

20 The Establishment of a Bequest Programme

- 20.1 It is strongly recommended that a formal bequest programme be established to facilitate and cultivate the strong bond between many parishioners and St Johns and unite and recognise them as a group of benefactors at the Church.

The FDG has made recommendations as regards implementation of the above strategies.

2. Terms of Reference

The following Terms of Reference for the Committee were adopted by the Parish Council on 12th December 2011:

- i. To examine the Vision and Objectives of St Johns and to make recommendations to the PC as regards the relevance and appropriateness of those objectives as we move towards 2020.
- ii. To make recommendations to the PC as regards additional strategies to further develop and achieve those objectives.
- iii. To initialize and consider new initiatives and to strategize initiatives developed by the Rector.
- iv. To examine current strategies/projects and processes already in place to confirm their relevance and priority as we move towards 2020.
- v. In particular to consider the following core challenges and make recommendations to the PC as we progress to 2020.
 - a. - the servicing and engagement of all those on the Parish Roll and potential new parishioners
 - b. - the catering for the needs of youth and young families in a Christian environment
 - c. - the resourcing of the strategy and the ongoing needs of the church
 - d. - the ongoing mission as an Anglican Church within the Diocese of Sydney
- vi. To recommend a Programme and strategy for implementation of the recommendations adopted by the PC.

3. Vision and Objectives [TOR 1(i)]

3.1. Our Vision

“Believing that we are called by God as his people in this place we are committed to being a vibrant community of people of all ages, worshipping God joyfully and being actively engaged with the broader community being faithful in ministry and stewardship of the Gospel.”

3.2. Our Mission (see website)

“Our mission, given to us by God, is to present all people of this parish, mature in Christ on the day of the Lord and achieved by growing in Christ through:

- *Worship of God in word and sacrament*
- *Participation in small group ministry*
- *Music & Choir*
- *Proclamation of the Gospel*
- *Baptism and Discipleship*

- *Teaching and instruction of all in the Word of God*
- *Nurture of those within our care*
- *Seeking out the indifferent or those who have lapsed*
- *Reaching out into our community and being proactive within it to show forth the light of Christ*
- *Being good stewards of all that we have*
- *Ecumenical relations*
- *Being a welcoming community*
- *Involvement in the wider Anglican community*
- *Involvement in Synod"*

3.3. Our Goals & Objectives

- *Energise the spiritual core of St John's enabling individuals to feel God in their lives*
- *Become a more open and inclusive church, strengthening the ties between parishioners and sustaining newcomers*
- *Expand the appeal of St John's to build a more diverse parish of supportive communities*
- *Build stronger links with the broader community*
- *Promote St John's more effectively*
- *Generate increased financial resources*
- *Build our people resources*

The Committee considers that the Vision, Mission and Objectives continue to be appropriate for St Johns and makes no recommendation as to change.

3.4. Core Challenges towards 2020 [TOR 1(v)]

The Committee considered these challenges under the following main headings

- **Meeting the Needs and Desires of our Parishioners – Current and Potential**
- **Resourcing our work towards 2020**

4. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats

4.1. Our Strengths

- 4.1.1. A style of worship and service uniquely (on the North Shore) more in keeping with that of other outside dioceses.
- 4.1.2. A breadth of small groups that provide coverage of a range of special interests within a Christian context (music, flowers, Bible study, charity work including op-shop, community meals).

- 4.1.3. An outstanding clergy team that are sensitive, “real” people, “have time” and are responsive to needs, but also have superior theological knowledge sufficient to service and challenge an informed and highly intelligent congregation
- 4.1.4. An “In-house” Missioner (Bishop Michael Hough) with experience and capability in both in person and on-line theological learning
- 4.1.5. An outstanding music programme and inspirational music under the leadership of Dr Brett McKern
- 4.1.6. A congregation that is warm, caring, non-elitist and acceptant of new parishioners
- 4.1.7. A strong Women’s Group and Op Shop
- 4.1.8. Associated Play Groups and a fledgling Baby-sitting service
- 4.1.9. A Church community that leads by example and witness
- 4.1.10. A historical church with strong history and tradition
- 4.1.11. Good facilities including two halls and two large meeting areas serviced by a recently updated kitchen together with offices and a Board Room

4.2. Our Weaknesses

- 4.2.1. The older average age of our congregation
- 4.2.2. The geographical spread of our congregation
- 4.2.3. Our position within a Diocese of different theological style
- 4.2.4. A lack of endowment and financial resources
- 4.2.5. A shortage of engaged group leaders and workers
- 4.2.6. Our lack of an established youth program through from primary to tertiary ages
- 4.2.7. Small size of Bible study and prayer groups
- 4.2.8. The Mens’ Group needs to determine future focus and direction.

4.3. Our Opportunities

- 4.3.1. Appeal to Interstate and international new residents from mainstream Anglican churches
- 4.3.2. Catering for mainstream Anglicans
- 4.3.3. Attractive private schools in the area offer a source of intelligent youth from good families
- 4.3.4. The music offering has great inspirational value in our worship
- 4.3.5. The engagement of an experienced remote Missioner offers strong opportunities for Study Programs
- 4.3.6. The establishment of a structured bequest programme
- 4.3.7. Further development of teaching opportunities

4.4. Threats

- 4.4.1. Pressures on family time
- 4.4.2. Pressures of an increasingly secular society
- 4.4.3. Both parents working to maintain family objectives
- 4.4.4. Increasing pressure on the financial resources of most families
- 4.4.5. The increasing operational costs of the parish
- 4.4.6. The Diocesan vision and theological style

5. Meeting the Needs and Desires of Parishioners – Strategies [TOR 1(ii), (iii),(iv)]

5.1. Faith and Our Relationship with God

- 5.1.1. The ongoing nurturing of our parishioners' relationship with God is spread over a range of styles ranging from traditional to the modern rite. This includes the need for a BCP service early in the day, to a version of Matins or Morning Prayer for families on most Sundays and a weekly High Mass according to the modern rite.
- 5.1.2. Small group activities are also important to further develop the spiritual lives of Parishioners and all the current small groups are to be encouraged and grown. In addition a number of new initiatives are proposed.
- 5.1.3. Counselling and care of the elderly and youth needs to be addressed.

The following recommendations are made as regards current strategies in place at St Johns.

5.2. Sunday Services

- 5.2.1. The Committee considered that a range of styles should be accommodated in the Sunday services. Further there was a need to keep early services short in length and as early as possible to allow other family activities for the remainder of the day without consuming most of the morning. Hence the full range of three services should be fitted into the period between 0745 and 1115. This will require a small adjustment to the starting time of the current 0800 BCP service to 0745 which will then allow the 0930 family service to be brought forward to 0900 and still allow a High Mass to be held concluded by 1115. It is therefore recommended that the service styles and timings offered by modified to:
 - 5.2.1.1. **0745 – BCP Holy Communion**, 45-55 minutes maximum length, 9 minute sermon, Merbecke may be sung so long as it doesn't extend the service beyond 55 minutes, raisin toast & coffee to be available after the service.
 - 5.2.1.2. **0900 – Family Friendly Service** - Matins/Morning Prayer but with Holy Communion on the 1st Sunday. APBA with Max length 45 mins. The following initiatives are proposed for consideration:
 - The maximum length of a sermon be set at 9 minutes,
 - Only one reading at the 0900 service,
 - No choir required
 - Sunday School will run in conjunction with this service
 - Informal service without service booklets – services to be projected onto side screens as necessary
 - Use of robes to be simplified to Cassock and Surplice/stole only
 - Need visuality in the service during the children's segment
 - 5.2.1.3. **1015 – "High Mass"** with Bells and Incense and Choir according to the Modern Rite or BCP. Full Service Max length – Estimated Length 75 mins.
 - 5.2.1.4. **1600 – Evensong** once per month

- 5.2.1.5. **1730** – each Sunday - Youth service preceding a youth gathering of some form to be co-ordinated by an unpaid youth volunteer according to their preference (coffee shop, supper, fellowship etc.)

5.3. Other Services

- 5.3.1. **0700** – each week day – Morning Prayer (Holy Communion on High Days)
5.3.2. **1730** – each week day – Evening Prayer
5.3.3. **1000** – Weekly on Thursday – Healing Service or other format (Rector's discretion)

5.4. Welcoming

- 5.4.1. The aim of a “welcoming” function as targeted in our Mission is to make Visitors or lesser well known parishioners feel unquestioningly and non-judgementally, accepted and welcome at St Johns regardless of their style or depth of Faith.
- 5.4.2. Introduce them to a person likely to maintain that friendship and “rust on” their connection with the St Johns Community of Faith
- 5.4.3. Establish a medium of future contact for passing onto the Rector (minimum is name and suburb, and if possible a visitors book entry with email and phone)
- 5.4.4. The Committee felt that it was critical that the welcoming/induction process for new parishioners did not lose a personal touch. The Church is about relationships with God through a faith community. A key reason for “a church” is for Christians to gather with others of like mind and worship with all the strength and power that force of number provides.
- 5.4.5. The Committee recommended that the initial welcomers be the sidesmen/women who have a reason to be there and can combine the issuance of the books/pew bulletin with a welcome and recognition of visitors or new potential parishioners.
- 5.4.6. The current “welcomers” team that currently operate at the door are now to be positioned just outside the door of the nave of the Church and sidesmen will make them aware of any visitors or special needs. The sidesman's table will be moved towards the West Door. These welcomers will then ensure that Visitors or infrequent parishioners “feel welcome”, are taken to their seats, and if alone, another carefully selected parishioner from the “buddy-list” (see 5.4.7) and on “alert” for that service, will be arranged to sit with them unless they prefer to be alone.
- 5.4.7. It is recommended that the “buddy” system should be instigated particularly for solo visitors. A “buddy-list” should be prepared of selected volunteers who are of appropriate personality and have been briefed/trained and that list be available to the welcomers in the nave. The Welcomer will pre-warn buddies on the list and at the service that they may be called on to sit with a visitor or otherwise assist in making that visitor(s) feel welcome.
- 5.4.8. The sidesmen would also take any required/appropriate opportunity to “drop in” on visitors in the pews to ensure they had the required books and were familiar with the service progress

- 5.4.9. It is recommended that a set of instructions for use by the sidesmen/welcomers with visitor protocols be developed to ensure proper welcoming skills are encouraged. Sidesmen should meet from time to time at the discretion of the Rector to co-ordinate and review the process.
- 5.4.10. The Committee had a strong preference that wherever possible, sidesmen/women need to be handpicked for key festivals such as Christmas/Easter/Pentecost etc. where there is a higher likelihood of visitors to ensure they have the maximum “people skills” and recognition skills to cater for visitors and occasional parishioners.
- 5.4.11. Any information gleaned during the visit will be passed to and collated by the responsible welcomer who will also “au revoir” them at the conclusion. The Committee noted that these activities need to be subtle, even subliminal and not be able to be construed as high pressure or intrusion into the visitor’s worship or time in the church.
- 5.4.12. It was recommended that the “Visitors Book” be more prominently displayed and there should be active encouragement for visitors to sign as they leave (It is recommended that there be no “Comments” section in the Visitors Book).
- 5.4.13. Future Consideration may be given to the availability of an electronic Visitors’ book however the Committee felt that a written book was appropriate at this time.

5.5. The Sermon

- 5.5.1. The Committee recommended as short a sermon length as was consistent with portraying a single or maximum two messages.
- 5.5.2. A Sermon length of **no longer than nine minutes** was recommended. This would facilitate a clearer “take-home” message and also a shorter service length that is critical to visitor endurance and also to fitting into the new proposed schedule of three services on a Sunday morning.
- 5.5.3. The Committee recognised the uncompromising message from Jesus and the delegation to the Ministry team to convey this at their discretion – however it was felt that this message was best portrayed in a welcoming and non-threatening manner and in a modern context to ensure that occasional visitors felt welcome and included and not “judged” but “challenged” in the family of Faith.

5.6. The Readings

- 5.6.1. Reading is popular and there are a significant number of volunteers – however Readers need to be assisted and encouraged to optimise quality of presentation. It is recommended that a programme of reading development be established.
- 5.6.2. In particular Readers for key festival days Christmas and Easter need to be carefully selected as our “best” readers from a delivery perspective.
- 5.6.3. The reader should pre-study the message and ensure that he/she understands the message and key points.

- 5.6.4. It is the view of the Committee that it is preferred to use the better readers more often than use 'all-comers' to fill out the schedule and only have intermittent quality reading

5.7. The "Au Revoir"

(Fr. "until we meet again", not "farewell").

- 5.7.1. The Committee suggested that rather than the congregation filing past the Ministers in the Nave – the Ministers might move outside to the bottom of the steps and mix informally with the departing parishioners.
- 5.7.2. The following initiatives were felt to have merit and the Committee recommended consideration of :
- 5.7.2.1. A trial of Raisin toast being available after both (or all three) morning services along with coffee and tea.
- 5.7.2.2. Development of a "Welcome Pack" for handing out to visitors or new parishioners
- 5.7.3. The "Au Revoir" is a role for the duty welcomers and in particular the sidesmen/women and is associated with the returning of books with recognition through the eyes, a smile and a cheery "welcoming comment". Another sidesman will take back name tags and offer a parish review or to go on the mailing list and/or an invitation to complete the "Visitors' Book" to visitors.
- 5.7.4. The Rector should be made aware of any visitors

5.8. Special Guests and Casual Visitors

- 5.8.1. **Baptisms** – Given that the contact details will be known and there would be an expectation of follow-up in return for the provision of the Baptism process – Baptisms offer a strong opportunity for the initiation of an ongoing relationship with St Johns. This will largely be managed by the Rector and will include invitations to join or visit Church Play groups and Sunday School.
- 5.8.2. **Weddings** – The Committee felt that there would be a more limited opportunity after the event as most participants are just "going through the motions". However the requirement for counselling and discussions prior to the event is an opportunity to strengthen the faith position of the couple and introduce a notion of continued engagement with St Johns. This will be primarily managed by the Rector.
- 5.8.3. **Illnesses and bereavements** – The Committee felt it was not appropriate to overtly use these situations however often the sensitivity and responsiveness of the Clergy will, by example, re-engage some of our "lost sheep".
- 5.8.4. **Play Groups** (during the week) – the Rector is actively pursuing this avenue to bring young families back to the Church via Sunday School or other small group activities.
- 5.8.5. **Other Church facility users** – These are commercial "renters" of the premises for primarily non-faith or church based activities (such as "Weight-Watchers", Tae Kwon Do etc. and therefore offer a limited opportunity for engagement other than by subliminal messages via posters and atmosphere.

5.8.6. **General** - In all cases, there should be no differentiation of attitude or warmth by the Welcomers or Clergy towards “the stud sheep” of committed active parishioners and “the lost and stray sheep” that are potentially re-engaging with God or facility users with no connection with the Church. Warmth and Christian enthusiasm is catching and it is critical that these qualities are imbued in all our contacts with the Community at large.

5.8.7. **RI and Lady Gowrie visits.**

5.9. Follow-up of Visitors

- 5.9.1. Follow-up of Visitors either after a Baptism (ephemeral visitors) or new potential parishioners should be by the Rector or his delegate.
- 5.9.2. Personnel suitable/available for this role is should be identified as part of the “Buddy Team” (see 5.4.7)
- 5.9.3. Contacts should be “in-person” and not just via email or mail-out (or as the Rector sees fit) .
- 5.9.4. The follow up should include:
 - 5.9.4.1. Invitation to parish barbeques held 4 times per year
 - 5.9.4.2. Invitation to other key events
 - 5.9.4.3. Invitations to parishioners’ homes if appropriate
 - 5.9.4.4. Invitation to small group events including playgroups

5.10. Baptisms Policy

- 5.10.1. Baptism is an opportunity to engage or re-engage with young families who may have drifted from the church since they formed their own home or who may never have been engaged with the church as children.
- 5.10.2. The current practice is that some counselling occurs with parents of children being baptised. In particular the Rector looks at their geographical position to suggest that baptising their children at St Johns is not to avoid using then attending their local church.
- 5.10.3. Baptism is a right of the Community and the policy is that the opportunity for baptism is not declined on the basis of lack of church involvement
- 5.10.4. The Committee noted that the new parent couple must have an “Open Door” attitude for any follow-up within this Baptism Process to be feasible.
- 5.10.5. Whilst the Rector is the primary contact figure – the Rector indicated that it is a role for the congregation to engage with the baptismal party/family/friends at the service and provide a welcoming celebratory and tolerant, prodigal atmosphere
- 5.10.6. Introduction to the Church play-group is a good step in engaging with the new mother and her child
- 5.10.7. Introduction of the church established baby-sitting service is a further step and reason for contact for the Rector and the Church with the family.
- 5.10.8. Each of these steps will hopefully draw that family closer to the community of faith and hence then enhance and grow their own personal faith.

5.11. Weddings Policy

- 5.11.1. The Rector is the primary contact figure – and it will be at his discretion to nominate a point of contact and/or plan for ongoing engagement after the Wedding Preparation Process either with the couple or family and friends attending the wedding.
- 5.11.2. The Rector indicated that in this case, it is the role of the Ministry team to engage with the wedding party/family/friends at the service and provide a welcoming celebratory and tolerant, prodigal atmosphere.

5.12. Funerals Policy

- 5.12.1. The Committee recommends there be no change to the current policy on providing funeral services as part of the right and obligation of the Church to the Community at large.
- 5.12.2. The Committee was of a view that it was inappropriate to use grief as the basis for any further approaches beyond grief counselling and assistance handled by the ministry team although the Buddy Team would be available at the Rector's discretion.

5.13. Counselling

- 5.13.1. The Committee believed that the needs in this area could only be assessed and met as the need arose as these needs are so variable with each parishioner and in each circumstance. It is likely that this will be a very personal activity of the Rector and his ministry team in most instances and other than appropriate resourcing – it is difficult to predict future needs. It is likely however that the needs will increase in future years.

5.14. Life skills (marriage, parenting, bereavement, illness etc.)

- 5.14.1. See 5.13 above. It was noted that Mothers in particular are really struggling with many issues both in faith and in the demands of children and family life increasingly alongside busy careers. It was felt that Baptisms were often the first contact with “stray mums” and that the next port of call may be Play group activities at the church, followed by assistance with babysitting services and then growth into other faith building activities. Similarly Weddings are preceded by compulsory counselling sessions where any issues can be identified. This is identified as a pastoral role of the Ministry Team.

5.15. Reconciliation of Leisure Time and Church time:

- 5.15.1. The Group perceives that the demands on work time/income producing time are increasing and therefore leisure/free time is becoming far more precious.
- 5.15.2. It would be reasonable to predict therefor that people will be increasingly less inclined to provide a physical presence at Church activities that would eat into their non-working time.

- 5.15.3. The Rector is of the view that time spent physically amongst the “community of faith” is critical to grow their relationship with God and so relying on “on-line” presence or other remote contact is unsatisfactory.
- 5.15.4. The group therefore considered four additional initiatives to bring “busy people” back into the Community of faith:
 - 5.15.4.1. The establishment of a series of geographically based “clusters through the area that St Johns services (Beecroft to Terrey Hills and Waitara to Roseville). Each cluster would have a leader who would be responsible for maintaining contact with the parishioners/potential parishioners in his/her area. These leaders would then report back to Keith and establish strategies for best serving the needs of those clusters (particularly the outlying ones) and having appropriate events to provide church community contact with each other (e.g. city based Bible study group for CBD workers as per 6.1.5)
 - 5.15.4.2. Up until 2020 it was felt that Church activities should still revolve around the St Johns Avenue location. However at the same time we should be building towards future church “plants” in areas indicating a demand after 2020.
 - 5.15.4.3. Use of the “Theo-versity” (see 6.3.1) and on-line Bible study programs (6.3.2) incorporating in person workshops at St Johns
 - 5.15.4.4. The appointment of a parishioner with marketing expertise to design a marketing campaign selling the unique features of St Johns and establishing an appropriate brand and tag-line based on those unique features.

5.16. Small groups Structure – Current Groups

The Committee felt that the Small groups were a road to the Church as a whole and those groups need to have a focus within their mission and objectives on getting people back to community worship at the Church and being part of the broad Church Congregation.

5.16.1. Bible Study Groups

5.16.1.1. These groups are being operated appropriately although attendances are small at present. In the past we have tended to just let these fall away or fold without any concerted effort to preserve them by moulding their style and activity to the needs of parishioners attending.

5.16.1.2. The Bible study sessions need continuous monitoring and if shutting down or reducing in numbers then an exit interview needs to be conducted to determine the reason and also if the Church is falling down in nurturing this area to specific to the needs of the parishioners.

5.16.2. Op Shop

5.16.2.1. The Committee noted that this was a strong and enthusiastic group. However the Committee would like to see more synergy between the Op Shop and the Parish to better achieve mutual goals.

5.16.2.2. The Committee felt that one of the challenges for the Op Shop Committee was to identify how they can further support the Goals and Objectives of St Johns.

5.16.2.3. The outreach opportunities should also be developed.

5.16.3. Mens Group

5.16.3.1. The Committee noted its advice that this group whilst supportive was largely inactive and poorly supported by the men of St Johns. The organisers of the Mens' Group would appreciate and benefit from some new and invigorated input and support to take it beyond being a small "coffee group" and recreate it as a critical and important arm of engagement with the community.

5.16.3.2. The FDG recommended that the Mens' Group be requested to provide a strategic plan for re-engagement with the men of St Johns in accordance with our mission and objectives. In particular, suggested foci could include:

- Monthly functions with speakers
- Participation in a bequest program focussed on a particular interest/personality/Rector that they could select
- Close liaison with the cemetery maintenance group
- Possible provision of a "Rector's Support team" to provide back-up to the Rector for parishioners experiencing hardship or difficulty in obtaining help in small household maintenance tasks or other areas as the rector may see as appropriate
- Fund raising activities including the provision of prizes for raffles etc. using their business contacts and associations.

5.16.4. WEGS

5.16.4.1. This is a very strong and active group and a strong contributor to both the social objectives and the financial resourcing of the Church. However the Committee felt it would benefit from establishing a "Younger Set" group within itself to cater for young Mothers and professional women within the congregation.

5.16.5. Choral Groups

5.16.5.1. The Committee noted the outstanding leadership of the Church music including choral ensembles.

5.16.5.2. Whilst it was felt that a Choir of Boy Choristers was highly desirable – the establishment of such a group must be at the discretion of the Director of music.

5.16.5.3. The Committee did not feel that a Choir was always required at all services currently serviced and may not be always appropriate for the proposed 0900 service given their short duration. However high quality choral music was highly desirable at the proposed 10.15 service.

5.16.5.4. No recommendation is made as these decisions should be at the discretion of the Rector and Director of Music.

5.16.6. Religious Instruction Team

5.16.6.1. This team fulfils a critical long term mission within the Church or providing RI to local primary schools. Currently it is under-staffed and therefore under threat of being handed over to other Churches within the area. The group recommends a high priority be given to the expanding of this team before this role is abandoned. However it is dependent on volunteers rather than resources.

5.16.7. Brass Cleaners and Church Cleaners

5.16.7.1. A small committed task focused group – No recommendations made.

5.16.8. Ladies Flower Guild

5.16.8.1. This group recently had a significant personnel change and is now reactivated under new leadership.

5.17. Community Lunch Program

5.17.1. The current Community Lunch program is an opportunity for companionship and social interaction and this program is ongoing.

5.17.2. The FDG strongly recommends that this program be encouraged and resourced as a critical outreach program to the community.

6. Future Strategies [TOR 1(ii) & (iii)]

6.1. Small groups Structure – New groups

6.1.1. Sunday School

6.1.1.1. A reactivated Sunday School is currently being established under new volunteer leadership. The Committee believed this is a fundamental group within any healthy Church and should be provided with a level of resource and priority required for it to prosper and expand.

6.1.2. Youth Fellowship/Coffee Group/Youth Group

6.1.2.1. The Committee noted the rector's observation that this would likely re-create itself from the Sunday School attendees or may become established earlier but was dependent on appropriate and enthusiastic and operational leadership from amongst the youth of the Parish.

6.1.3. Sports Based Groups

6.1.3.1. The Committee noted that a badminton group exists and there was interest in forming a basketball group.

6.1.3.2. Any such groups formed under the St Johns name should be approved by the Rector and the Parish Council and must have a Christian ethos underlying their constitution.

6.1.3.3. Clearly these groups depend on enthusiastic and organised leadership for their establishment and persistence.

6.1.4. Activity Based Group

6.1.4.1. These groups could be based around specific interests such as theatre, music, sport or overseas travel. The FDG recommends that these activities be covered within the existing group structure and under the leadership of those groups.

6.1.5. CBD Based Social Group

6.1.5.1. Such a group has previously existed and met monthly for lunch in the city. Its existence depends on the enthusiasm of City based St Johns congregation members and organisational leadership. Therefore while supported - no recommendation is made.

6.1.6. Scouting Based Group

6.1.6.1. The Committee felt that Scouting was a good core interest but as a Church based group it needed to be more as Baden Powell created it – as a Christian church based group and not just scouting in a secular generic sense renting out space at the Church – this would be a differentiating point from the many groups in the area.

6.1.6.2. Like all Scouting Groups it depended on strong, skilled leadership. Whilst the group strongly believed in the value of Scouting in its traditional style – the availability of well-equipped local groups in Gordon and surrounding suburbs and the substantial resource that would be required to establish a new group means the Group does not recommend that such a group be established at this time.

6.2. Companionship & Pastoral Care

6.2.1. Companionship .

6.2.1.1. See also 5.14 and 5.17 – the Church has a strong capability to offer companionship – particularly but not exclusively to the elderly. This also overlapped with the need for pastoral care. It was important that people couldn't just "slip through the cracks" as reported by the Rector.

6.2.2. Pastoral Contact with Those in Need.

6.2.2.1. Currently the rector relies on reports from small groups and the monitoring of attendance patterns at Church to become aware of people who may be sliding away from ongoing contact with the church community and him. It was proposed to establish a two pronged system for tracking potential loneliness or distress amongst individuals who do not proactively approach the ministry team for help and companionship.

6.2.2.2. Ongoing monitoring through the small groups network with enhanced communication between the leaders of those groups and the Rector facilitated by a scheduled regular contact

6.2.3. Register of "At Risk" Individuals

6.2.3.1. The establishment of a written register of known "at risk" individuals requiring or potentially requiring support (visits, counselling or etc.)

6.2.3.2. This would be a confidential register to the ministry team but would record visits and comments as they occur and would enable frequent perusal as a memory jogger for those whom we may not have heard from recently.

6.2.3.3. Anyone could register names into the register and such a registration would not trigger an automatic contact – merely an "echo on the radar screen" which could then be actioned by the ministry team based on their own knowledge.

6.2.3.4. The register should be electronic and should be set up to automatically trigger reminders at intervals pre-set for each individual to eliminate the possibility of anyone "slipping through the cracks" once they are on the register.

6.2.3.5. Follow-up doesn't necessarily have to be by clergy but the Rector would be responsible for allocating tasks and monitoring the register as a key tenet of the role.

6.2.4. Caring for the Elderly and the Sick

6.2.4.1. The FDG noted advice from the Rector that that the major trauma was loneliness and the greatest need was for visitations especially while infirmed or sick.

6.2.4.2. The Rector advised the Committee that more resources would be required to do this adequately.

6.2.4.3. The Church Visitors did not necessarily have to be ministers (other than for small services etc.). However some parishioners wanted only Ministers but others not.

6.2.4.4. The Committee recommended that the Pastoral Care Committee need to address this critical issue and ensure that the aged are appropriately and adequately cared for and "serviced" as a valuable and deserving part of our congregation.

6.2.4.5. The Committee felt that there should be strong links and regular communication between the other small groups and the Pastoral Care Committee and the Rector to ensure that those in need did not escape the attention requested or to be offered.

6.2.4.6. The Pastoral Care Committee and the Rector should report monthly as a permanent agenda item particularly as regards forewarning of any additional resources required.

6.2.4.7. A changed and focussed resources structure was required to service this area going forward.

6.3. Remote learning

6.3.1. Establishment of an On-Line "St Johns of Gordon Open Theo-versity"

6.3.1.1. The Committee strongly recommends the establishment of an "Open University" style of study of religious history and biblical scholarship to allow parishioners and community members Australia or even world-wide to undertake a structured Bible study Course at Lay level.

6.3.1.2. The FDG propose that Bishop Michael Hough be approached as part of his St John's Mission program in conjunction with The Rector to write the course in modules to allow segmented completion by participants as their commitments allowed.

6.3.1.3. It was not proposed that this be registered through a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) into formal recognition but it would allow busy people to undertake daily study at a time that suited them in their workplace, at home or while travelling.

6.3.1.4. Each module would be charged out at a nominal fee to cover costs (including writing and servicing costs by Bishop Michael) and, once established and in demand, the charges be reviewed to contribute to St Johns revenue.

6.3.1.5. Participants would receive course notes by email and could take part in webinars and on-line lectures as appropriate with an opportunity to respond to questions and discussions under the guidance of the Ministry team. He could also be assisted in this by the Bible Study groups.

6.3.1.6. The Course should allow “work at own pace” and not be overly demanding but still be constant to maintain engagement.

6.3.1.7. There would also likely be 2-3 times per year in person retreats at St Johns to consolidate the studies . This would also enhance the objective of developing the Community of Faith at St Johns.

6.3.2. On Line Daily Bible Study

6.3.2.1. The FDG has considered and recommended the establishment of a daily subscription Bible Study to be emailed directly to parishioners and other community members who request it.

6.3.2.2. This will allow busy professionals to allocate a 10 minute slot at an appropriate time in their schedule to a short daily biblical devotion and prayer wherever they are physically situated so long as they have email access on their smart-phone, tablet, lap-top or desk computer.

6.3.2.3. This recommendation has already been part implemented by the development and implementation of the “Lectio Divina” series of Bible studies being written and circulated by Bishop Michael and the Rector at present.

6.3.2.4. It is recommended that as alternative and additional contact offering to the Visitors Book in the Narthex, a poster advertising the availability of this service be displayed with a registration form/book as follows:

“Have a 10 minute Bible Study together with notes, Actions and a Prayer emailed to you at your computer each morning – Register Here”

6.3.2.5. The FDG believes that this initiative will provide an additional method to maintain contact with visitors or infrequent Church Attendees.

7. Meeting our Needs as an Anglican Church in the Diocese of Sydney

7.1. The Challenge

7.1.1. How do we exist as a “mainstream” Anglo-Catholic based church in the atypical Sydney Diocese with Grace and with approval/acceptance and still service the Anglican community at large?

7.1.2. The committee noted as follows

7.1.2.1. We comply in all respects with our obligations to the Diocese and the Anglican Church.

7.1.2.2. We offer a rare opportunity to new residents coming from outside the Sydney Diocese to worship in a “mainstream style” of church.

7.1.2.3. That opportunity to cater for those needs should be celebrated and not seen as at odds with the mission of the diocese at large.

7.1.2.4. No further recommendations are therefor made in this regard by the FDG.

8. Tradition v Contemporary Relevance

8.1. The Challenge

8.1.1. Statistically, surveys reveal that 70% of the population see themselves as “Christian” and 85% believe in God – we need to make those who we engage with feel that they do fit into “God’s Great Plan” regardless of their Journey of Faith and their comfort zone of Christian style and time commitment.

8.2. Our Approach

8.2.1. The Committee is recommending a new series of services (see 5.2) that will service the needs of the mainstream traditional Anglican Church, a contemporary style and the traditional services

8.2.2. The reduced service lengths at two of the Sunday services are more consistent with the expectations of the bulk of potential parishioners.

8.2.3. The Committee is recommending an On- Line learning and study programme (see 6.3)

8.2.4. The Committee has addressed the small group structure (see 6.1)

9. Resourcing our Needs towards 2020 [TOR v (c)]

9.1. The Ministry Roles

9.1.1. ‘Must Do’ Roles

9.1.1.1. Services, Weddings, Baptisms, Funerals, Confirmation (including at least oversight of preparation), oversight of the spiritual life of the parish

9.1.1.2. Strategic Planning (in liaison with the PC and wardens)

9.1.1.3. Visitations, tending the sick and bereaved, follow up of new parishioners, teaching of youth, financial awareness of parish affairs, Bible studies and theological lectures

9.1.2. “Should Do” Roles

9.1.2.1. Involvement in small groups, functions attendance,

9.1.2.2. Home and Hospital Visits;

9.1.2.3. Follow-up of new parishioners;

9.1.3. “Could Do” Roles (which could be delegated)

9.1.3.1. Scripture teaching in schools

9.1.3.2. Office administration

9.1.3.3. Sunday School operations

9.1.3.4. Small group constitution and running

9.1.3.5. Accounting

9.2. The Ministry Team Needs

9.2.1. The Committee recommends the eventual appointment of a full time assistant minister subject to the availability of honorary assistants and part-time appointments (such as Father Rob).

9.2.2. Welfare as Mission

9.2.2.1. The Parish has, under Fr. Rob Sutherland, commenced a new mission field within the Australian Defence force, seeking to assist in the healing of Spiritual Wounds of Combat. The purpose of Fr. Rob's ministry is to develop a paradigm for ministry to such people that can then be taken up by other parishes, and/or diocese.

9.2.2.2. It is also envisaged that such a programme is not necessarily confined to the military but could be expanded to the Police, Fire, SES and other such emergency service groups. This ministry has the capability of being extended, and expanded, and the committee heartily endorses its continuation.

9.2.2.3. The areas being explored, are as follows, but not confined to:

- Conducting a "Welcome Home" Retreat on an Annual Basis
- Providing Counselling opportunities
- Continuation of Fr. Rob's role as a part time Chaplain to the Army specifically working in this area of concern.

9.2.2.4. As the role expands it is envisaged that other agencies are brought in such as Legacy and the RSL.

9.2.2.5. There is a committee advising Fr. Rob made up of members of the parish invited by him to that role.

9.3. The Lay Team Roles

9.3.1. The Employee Team

9.3.1.1. Office Administrator (1)

9.3.1.2. Youth work (1)

9.3.2. The Part Time Volunteer Team

9.3.2.1. Office admin and support (1-2)

9.3.2.2. Maintenance

9.3.3. Occasional "on call" volunteers

9.3.3.1. Visiting personnel as support to the Ministry Team

9.3.3.2. Parish Council Members and Wardens

9.3.3.3. Organising Committees (Fete etc.)

9.3.4. Future Directions Strategy Implementation

9.3.4.1. It is recommended that the Implementation of this strategy, as adopted be monitored by Parish Council.

9.3.4.2. Further, a Future Directions Director will be appointed by the Rector to be responsible to implement the changes making use of volunteers for each major element of the strategy as adopted and he/she shall report quarterly to the PC. These areas are likely to be:

- Welcoming, farewell, and visitor liaison

- Readers and Sidesman co-ordination and training
- Small Groups liaison
- On Line Programmes
- Collection Initiatives including Pew Sponsorship
- Tax Deductibility, Donations and bequests
- Other Fund raising including events
- Op Shop Liaison

9.4. Diocesan Support

- 9.4.1.1. Insurance
- 9.4.1.2. Liability and Risk Advice
- 9.4.1.3. Property Services
- 9.4.1.4. Investment vehicles for reserve funds

9.5. Community Support

- 9.5.1.1. Grants for Capital Works from Government and NGOs
- 9.5.1.2. Commercial & Business Sponsorship and Support

9.6. Resourcing the Fabric and Operations

9.6.1. The current budget funds the “Must Do” Activities of the Parish to the level available. However additional funding for the proposed additional activities will be required. These will include as follows:

- 9.6.1.1. Full time assistant minister (~\$120,000)
- 9.6.1.2. Full time youth worker (~\$70,000)
- 9.6.1.3. Funding the marketing and expansion of St Johns on line learning programme (\$50,000 pa)

9.7. Sources of Funds

9.7.1. Collections

- 9.7.1.1. The Group recommends the following initiatives to increase giving levels
 - Recommended regular percentage increases in weekly offerings by Parishioners
 - The establishment of a “guaranteed anonymity” system of Direct Debit giving to expand automatic giving levels regardless of weekly attendance. The FDG feels DD will not significantly expand whilst there is any possibility of the level of giving by a parishioner not remaining completely anonymous as it is in “the plate”.
 - The Church makes available a method for direct debit parishioners to place a slip/envelope in the offertory bag and the sidesman to record on the tally sheet the number of direct debit givers in the service.
 - As an added incentive for a minimum Direct Debit – option for the rental of a “family pew” or “half pew” for each of the morning services?

- The FDG recommends an Advent/Christmas promotion of adult families giving one present to each member (with givers for each member drawn out of a hat) and the additional money normally expended by each person being donated to the Church either into general revenue or towards a specific Christmas project they wish to support such as Community Lunches, Community Support to the Needy, On Line Learning, Mission work etc.
- The FDG recommends that the congregation be made further aware of the Tithe giving program and that tithe giving be further encouraged in the Church Community in a Sensitive and low key way.

9.7.2. Facilities Rental

- 9.7.2.1. Maintain commercial rates for hire and parking

9.7.3. Fetes

- 9.7.3.1. The annual fete is a significant contributor to the income each year and therefore is difficult to relegate to a biennial event as has been proposed.
- 9.7.3.2. It is noted that many sponsors are becoming disenchanted with annual requests and our spread of sponsors needs to be widened to maintain the level of support currently being enjoyed
- 9.7.3.3. The fete also provides strong contact with the wider community who visit the event.
- 9.7.3.4. Constant attention needs to be given to new initiatives to maintain momentum and growth including increased sponsorship.

9.7.4. Op Shop

- 9.7.4.1. All agreed that the op shop was a significant and ongoing source of funds and Community engagement.
- 9.7.4.2. The FDG recommends that whilst the Committee should continue in controlling the activities of the Op Shop, due to the significance of the monies involved and the potential for expansion - ultimate control of the funds should continue to vest in the Parish Council.
- 9.7.4.3. In this regard - large sums of money (say >\$5,000) should not be left in op shop accounts – but should be part of the budgeted income for the church and taken into Church revenue and appear on Church Balance Sheets.
- 9.7.4.4. The Committee noted the very significant initiatives of the Op Shop Committee to lift income by seeking sales outside of the normal church based outlet.
- 9.7.4.5. The FDG strongly recommended further expansion of Barbara Spooner's program selling better items at auction or similar to maximise returns on items of value.

9.7.5. Donations

- 9.7.5.1. The FDG has previously considered the establishment of a Foundation to provide a vehicle for donations but recommended against proceeding on the grounds of diversion of effort and likelihood of success

9.7.5.2. However the FDG does recommend the establishment of whatever tax deductible fund (in addition to the St Johns Music Association) we are able so that there is a vehicle for those who require this. It is likely this will only be available for educational buildings, scholarships, recognised charity work but not for the running of the Church or the expansion of anything other than teaching facilities

9.7.6. Investments

9.7.6.1. Currently St Johns uses the Diocesan “Glebe Trust” for investments. The FDG questions whether this is most appropriate vehicle given its investment history and recent losses.

9.7.6.2. The FDG recommends alternative investment vehicles also be investigated to optimise the returns in trustee approved investments.

9.7.7. Bequest programme

9.7.7.1. The FDG recommends the establishment of a major bequest program (as per report on the Foundation proposal), possibly championed by the St Johns Mens’ Group and possibly initially based around parishioners who were at the church under Roy Wotton (who are now getting on in years) and could be known as “Wottons Men” with appropriate recognition and an honour board.

9.8. Professional Fund Raising Consultants

9.8.1. The Committee recommends against the use of professional fund raising consultants.

On behalf of the Future Directions Working Group.

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light pink background. The signature is stylized and appears to read 'C.L. Russell'.

C.L. Russell
Chairman

22nd June 2012

10. Recommended Implementation [TOR 1(vi)]

Item No	Description	Action by	Functional Responsibility	Date	Comments	KPI
5.2	Service Times and Styles	FD Director	Rector	Immediate	Subject to consultation period with congregation	Attendance increase (total) within 3 years to 80 @ 0745; 100@ 0900; 60@ 1015
5.4	Welcoming	FD Director	PC	2013		Biennial survey
5.5	The Sermon	FD Director	Rector	Immediate		Service length
4	The Readers	FD Director	PC	2013		Biennial survey
5.7	The "Au Revoir"	FD Director	PC	Phased over 2013		As for welcoming
5.8.7	Visitor Follow-up	FD Director	Rector	Immediate		As for welcoming and Au Revoir
5.15.4	Facilitating Busy People	FD Director	PC	2013		Achievement & participation
5.17	Community Lunch program	FD Director	Organising Group	Ongoing		Attendance growth by 20% pa in Yr 1,2,3
6.1	Expanded small groups	FD Director	PC	Phased	as leadership is available	Number of groups growth
6.2.3	"At Risk" register	FD Director	Rector	Immediate		Establish and monitor/report to PC
6.2.4	Pastoral care	FD Director	Rector	Immediate		Establish and monitor/report to PC
6.3.1	St Johns Open Theology	FD Director	Bishop Michael	2013	6 month development period	Enrolment – initial and then 15% growth pa
6.3.2	Daily On-Line Bible Study and Prayer	FD Director	Bishop Michael	Immediate	Ongoing	Registration mail list growth – 15% pa
9.3.1.2 & 9.6.1.2	Employment of a Youth Worker	FD Director	Rector	2015-2016	Dependent on youth program development	Employment and growth in youth group
9.6.1.1	Fulltime Assistant Minister	FD Director	Rector	2018-2020		Employment
9.7.1.1	Collection Revenue initiatives	FD Director	Wardens	Immediate		Collections (per person) growth > 5% pa
9.7.4	Op Shop Initiatives	FD Director	PC	2013		Contribution to Church revenue + \$100,000 within 3 years
9.7.5.2	Tax deductible Fund Establishment	FD Director	Wardens	2013/2014		Establishment and growth by 15% pa
9.7.6.2	Alternate Investment Strategy	FD Director	PC/Wardens	2013/2014		Report to PC

