

The Rector's Weekly Message:

Sunday the 5th of September 2021

An important Message from Dr McKern.

It is not without sadness that, after over thirteen and a half years in office, I have decided to conclude my ministry as Organist and Director of Music at St John's at the end of September 2021. I have greatly valued being a part of the St John's community, and I have very much enjoyed working with the choirs. I thank God for the opportunity to have served the Parish for these years; I am proud of what we have achieved under God; and I will always be proud of the fine new organ that will serve the Parish so well for many decades to come.

Dr Brett McKern.

I was surprised when I received a phone call from Dr Brett McKern to inform me that he had decided to resign from the Organist and Music Director position. Brett's decision to leave was made after a time of reflection and contemplating the next stage in his life.

I know the Church has appreciated Brett's expertise and talent as the Organist and Music Director. Over thirteen and half years, he has served the LORD by developing and providing good music and singing in worship. I have greatly appreciated Brett's patience and encouragement whilst adjusting to working with a new Rector. I will miss him as a member of the Church, and also, of course, his musical abilities.

With Fr Keith and the Wardens of the day, Brett further developed this ministry of music when they created the position of music scholarship, come internship. Before this current lockdown, we were all enjoying the returning of the Choirs, lead ably by Dr McKern and Nicola Chau. Would you join with me in giving a prayer of thanks for Brett's ministry amongst us and pray for Brett as he seeks the LORD's guidance for the future? Thank you.

Dr McKern has given a months' notice. He has also prepared music and hymns for every Sunday up to and including Christmas. Would you please pray for Nicola as she 'holds the fort' until we, the Warden's and I, determine the LORD's leading for this ministry?

Brett will be hosting a Singalong on Friday evenings, during September, commencing at 6pm, to which you are invited.

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/79806835449?pwd=Nk8rYTJ5dFVlNXkzNGYvYkZTbjROdz09>

Meeting ID: 798 0683 5449

Marriage Services are now allowed.

Praise God that we are now permitted to offer the ministry of marriage again. Behind the scenes, Archbishop Kanishka, ably supported by the Regional Bishops, has been making regular petitions to the Minister of Health and other politicians to change the Public Health Orders. These changes have been welcomed by many who desire to be married. The number who can attend the Service is still tiny, five people; these changes allow couples to come and make their vows before God. The next planned marriage Service at St. Johns will be on the 30th of October, between Catriona McLennan & Insu Jang.

The Pandemic

Attached to the Rector's Weekly Message is a NSW Health Sheet regarding vaccinations. This Health Sheet has been passed on to me through the Diocese, which I have been encouraged to share. Personally, I prefer to have information from reliable sources, such as the NSW Health Department. I commend the attached Health Sheet for your reflection.

Online media isn't always as helpful at times as it should, and in some instances, has raised undue concerns for their reader/followers. Archbishop Kanishka Raffel and his Roman Catholic counterpart, Archbishop Anthony Fisher, jointly have tried to correct a concerning misconception on social media: From Archbishop Kanishka:

Online media has engaged with the possibility of vaccine passports for places of worship. As far as I am aware, there is no jurisdiction in the world that has introduced such a measure in relation to places of worship, nor have I heard such a thing being suggested by government leaders in Australia. The Minister gave no indication whether this was under consideration; however, Anthony Fisher and I both strongly put the case that mandating vaccination for attendance at Christian places of worship was something we could not support. In my view, such a step would be contrary to the nature of the gospel, the Church and our mission.

I am pleased to say that the Diocese is organising meetings for Rectors and Wardens by the various mission areas. These meetings will be designed to assist churches in preparing for the lifting of lockdown restrictions, whenever that might be. No indication has been given as to when lockdown restrictions regarding Churches will be lifted.

2022 is the Sesquicentennial year of the Parish.

I have mentioned this milestone in previous weekly messages. The Parish Council has, as an agenda item, the possibility of forming a working group. I would welcome this and look forward to members of the Church seeing how we celebrate the Sesquicentennial year. A decade ago, St Paul's Wahroonga celebrated its Sesquicentennial year. I have also been in parishes that have also celebrated their respective Fiftieth, Seventyfieth, and Centenary. In 2000, there was a Diocesan year

celebration, with the theme – 2000 years on and still going strong – Jesus. To celebrate over the whole year means a year of giving thanks for God's good providence – and looking forward in faith to what the future holds. I am looking forward to listening to the suggestions of the sesquicentennial working group if this is support by Parish Council.

ANZAC 2022

This week I attended a zoom meeting with two members of the Kuringai Council to discuss the ANZAC service of commemoration hosted by St. Johns. The operational base has been established, and I am pleased with the support and encouragement flowing from Kuringai Council for this event. I would also see this event incorporate as part of the Parish's Sesquicentennial celebrations. This event will be held the first Sunday after ANZAC Day, the 1st of May 2022.

Happy Father's Day:

Happy Father's Day to all the dad's reading this message. There will be a vast number of Father's who will not have the joy of having their family members with them during this Sunday' secular celebrations. It is part of the cost of obeying the Public Health Orders. Father's will have to look to 2022 when they may be able to have family travel home. Nevertheless, it is a time when we connect with our dad and celebrate by phone or electronically.

If your father is resting in peace, it is an opportune time to share some good aspects of your dad with your children. It can also be an excellent time to thank the Heavenly Father for your dad quietly.

St Paul's Wahroonga:

It has been announced that Under God, in 2021, St Andrew's and St Paul's Wahroonga are taking the exciting step of uniting once more in a Gospel partnership to reach Wahroonga with the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Their partnership is formed across two sites, currently gathered in five congregations, with approximately 325 adults and 130 children and youth. This new partnership is formed for God's glory, to build his Church, through the proclamation of Jesus, as Saviour and Lord. They are united in his cause. They are dependent on God. I invite you to give a prayer of thanks for this new partnership and ask the LORD to continue to bless their endeavours.

Friends, living under the locked restrictions, teaches us to rely on God and trust in his providence. The light at the 'end of the tunnel' is becoming brighter – we will come out of lockdown, and yes, we will be able to return to worship the LORD in person. We all are required to further depend upon the goodness of God. Trusting in Him, and not just our abilities:

May the Peace of the LORD be with you.

Reverend Robert Happer
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