



St John's Cranbourne January 2018 Newsletter

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GROWING PEOPLE, BUILDING COMMUNITY

27 January 2018

When I was about ten, over half a century ago, the summer holidays seemed to go for ever. I'm not sure where the time since Christmas has gone this year, though it's been a busy time at St John's. We have welcomed our new Senior Assistant Minister Simon Elliott with his family, some have studied the whole of the Book of Hebrews in our Summer Bible Study Series, and we have printed and are now distributing 25,000 flyers about St John's across the parish area.

I have included two copies of the flyer, because it contains items that should be of interest. You may miss it when it is delivered to your letterbox, or if you have a 'post office mail only' (or similar) label on your letterbox, you won't even get one. I'd like particularly to commend the five week Wednesday night **enquirer's/refresher course** beginning at St John's in just over four weeks' time, each session just one hour in length, starting at 7.45pm each Wednesday. Registration is not necessary.

St John's Enquirer's / Refresher Course, term 1 2018

Wed 28 Feb, 7.45pm: *Where did Christianity come from?*

Wed 7 Mar, 7.45pm: *What are the essentials of Christian belief and behaviour?*

Wed 14 Mar, 7.45pm: *What part should Christianity have in modern Australian life?*

Wed 21 Mar, 7.45pm: *How might Christians get church 'right' in Australia in 2018?*

Wed 28 Mar, 7.45pm: *An introduction to St John's Cranbourne – who we are, now we do things, our purpose & aims.*

Below I have asked Simon to introduce himself, and also to outline our plans for a third weekly Sunday service.

My name is Simon Elliott and I am the new Associate Minister at St John's. I am very excited to be here. Over the first couple of weeks that I have been in Cranbourne, I have been made to feel extraordinarily welcomed. My family and I have moved from New South Wales to come to Cranbourne after 17 years of full time ministry in Sydney and Newcastle.

My Family

I am married to Gillian. We will celebrate our 21st Anniversary this week. She is an extremely capable lady who has worked as a School Chaplain and Scripture teacher in the past. She spends most of her time looking after our family while working part time running her own business. Isaac our eldest is 18 and has remained living in Sydney, having recently begun a traineeship with the Crusader Union in Sydney's North. Elisabeth is 16 and will begin year 11 at Hillcrest Christian College this year. She will be joined by Josie who is 14 and will begin year 9. They are both wonderful girls who love Jesus and have had experience serving their churches up until they have moved to Cranbourne. Our youngest members of the family are Katy, who is two and a half, and Jonathan who is 10 months old. They are both a great blessing to our family and they allow Gillian and I to remember what it was like parenting little children again.



Ministry at Cranbourne

I trained to be a high school teacher many years ago, in the hope that I would be equipped for teaching the bible to people of all ages. Teaching the bible is one of my great loves. I believe that it is in the bible that God speaks to us, and enables us to understand who he is and how he would have us live. I therefore want to spend time to understand the word and help people to understand it, not just for the sake of knowledge but for the sake of knowing how to live.

I look forward to the opportunity to get to know people of all ages at St Johns, and under God to work alongside people to equip them for works of service, that we might work together to glorify God in this parish.

Sunday Evenings at St John's

Our Society is not what it once was. It is now far more difficult for people to make it regularly to church in the morning on Sundays. We want to provide a way for people to gather, to serve, to grow and to get to know other Christian people, at another time. My hope is that the new evening service, which will begin at 6.30pm on 4 March, will be one where people who find it difficult to attend church on Sunday mornings, will want to serve, and to feel comfortable to bring their family and friends along to hear of what God is doing in the world. As people come along to Sunday Evenings at St Johns they will find many similarities to the 10:30 service, though in time the evening service will develop its own contemporary style, shaped by the people who come along and want to make it their own.

If you would like to know more, or get involved in making Sunday Evenings happen, then please contact me either by phone or email (see above) or drop into the office during the week. I will be working from there.

Term 1 Children's and Youth Ministries

These begin this coming Sunday, 3 February, running in parallel with the 10.30am service. If your child is old enough to join one of our programs for the first time in 2018, we warmly invite you to encourage them to do so, as St John's partners with you in planting the seeds of a lively and sustaining faith, or as Jesus himself put it 'Eternal Life', within your child. What greater thing could you do for your child? We are keen to help, but we will only be able to help if you make the most of the opportunities.

For 3-5 year olds, we have *Little Adventurers*, which meets in Meeting Room 2 for the duration of the 10.30am service (parents welcome).

Our primary school children's program (*J-Kids*, which stands for

Jesus' Kid) has been recently revamped, and now has a largely new leadership team. Children should go to the *J-Kids Welcome Table* before 10.30am, so as to be in church for 10.30am, and go from there to their program – either *Bright Lights* (grades prep-2) or *All Stars* (grades 3-6).

Secondary school aged young people have their own program – *Rising Eagles* – which is held in Meeting Room 1.



The Church will keep on needing new ordained leaders

Since the last newsletter, we have heard that Jackie Belot has been accepted as a candidate for ordination in the Diocese of Melbourne. This means that after completing required studies in theology (she is attending Ridley College) and practical training, if it seems right to the wider church, she will be ordained deacon, and in due course priest. Clergy are not special people, but they are people set aside for the special task of helping others live as followers of the Lord Jesus, and caring for God's people. There is emerging in Melbourne a need for more people to serve as clergy, particularly in parish churches. The Diocese is running a 'Vocations Day' on Saturday 10 Feb in Melbourne. Wouldn't it be great if we found that the Lord was calling a second person from St John's to prepare for ordination and future leadership amongst the people of God? For more information about this day, please see me or Simon.

Concluding Comments

Anyone who has studied the near two thousand year history of Christianity will know that it has included 'peaks' and 'troughs'. Throughout the thirty-seven years that I have been ordained, we seem to have been heading into a trough (hopefully nothing to do with me!). The future of Christianity in Australia lies with the Holy Spirit, and I believe that one day there will be a turnaround (the official term is a 'revival') where almost inexplicably people will become more open again to the things of God, and to the good news of Jesus. I don't see any signs of this yet, but long to. In the meantime, may I ask you, as we come to a new year, to take your faith, and the Lord's call on your life, seriously in 2018, when there is so much opposition to Christianity. At such times, we cannot afford for anyone to be complacent, or to withdraw into fearful inactivity. Let's work together to encourage each other, rather than pulling aside and apart in uncertainty. God's love and power in the Lord Jesus is great. Let us together live out this truth in 2018 at St John's.

With every blessing,

David Powys, Vicar