

Hello, my name is David (Powys), and I was born in Africa. I might have been born in India if my parents had been working there, or somewhere else.



I am the vicar of St John's Anglican Church here in Cranbourne, and this pamphlet has been delivered to your letterbox by a member of St John's because your house is inside the borders of St John's parish.

The recent talk about an 'African problem' has touched me because of where I was born – in Africa - like so many other people living in the Cranbourne area. This is an unhelpful way of speaking, firstly because people born in Africa come from many different countries and groupings, and secondly because the vast majority of people born in Africa and living in Melbourne, including Cranbourne, are kind and friendly people. We know this at St John's because many of our St John's members were born in Africa – just as others were born in India, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Europe, Great Britain.

We do have problems in Melbourne, but these are not due to one group, but rather to a broad failure to build 'community'. A healthy community spirit accepts and affirms people across difference, rather than huddling together with people who look the same and think the same. Sadly a major tendency of modern Australian life is to be wary of those who look and think differently, to connect with a smaller and smaller group of similar people,



and to be in communication only with like-minded people.

This is not healthy for individuals or for society in general.

Despite what some say, the Christian church is a community that celebrates difference, and believes that differences make its community life better and stronger. St Paul in several of

his letters now found in the Bible wrote of the church needing to be diverse. A healthy church includes people who are very different from each other, brought together by God's love for humans in all their diversity, and proud of their various cultural backgrounds.

At St John's we rejoice in our differences. In addition to our multicultural public church services conducted in English (see list above) we have supplementary monocultural services for those whose mother tongue is Dinka (2nd and 4th Sundays at 2pm), Arabic (1st and 3rd Fridays at 7pm) and Malayalam (1st, 3rd and 5th Sundays at 10am).



St John's hosts numbers of activities of general interest, and all are welcome to attend – open stage live performance nights on 2nd Friday nights (*Fathers in the Chapel*), a Monday book group, and a range of craft and quilting activities (Quilting on 3rd Saturdays and general craft every Wednesday morning). For more details please contact stjohnscranbourne@gmail.com or leave a message on 5995 9364.

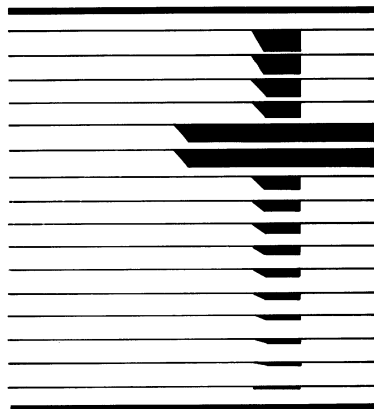


2018 will see some ministry team changes at St John's, with Simon Elliott an experienced 'forty-something' minister from interstate coming to be our full time Senior Assistant Minister, and Rebecca Awour, originally from



South Sudan, becoming our part-time Children's Minister. St John's has programs for pre-school, primary school and secondary school aged children, and all leaders are subject to checks. To learn details of coming activities, please contact stjohnscranbourne@gmail.com or leave a message on 5995 9364

In the past Australia has been described as a 'Christian Country'. This is rarely suggested these days, indeed, some now suggest that Australia is largely atheist.



This is probably not true, but what is true is that there are a whole lot of Australians who have very little understanding of Christianity. If so, this means that Australia's future is uncertain, given that Christianity has been a major stabilizing factor in the Australia of the past – a past that was good in many ways, though far from perfect.

St John's is planning a free, no-obligation series of one-hour presentations, starting on Wednesday 28 February at 7.30pm. The series will offer a short introduction to Christianity and the place of the Christian church in Australian society, and is open to all interested people. To register for the first evening (you don't need to commit to the whole series), email stjohns Cranbourne@gmail.com or leave a message on 5995 9364.

The series will have the following topics

- 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?*

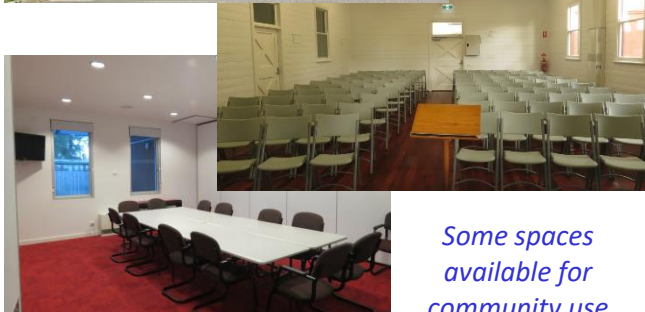
Wed 21 Mar, 7.45pm: *How might Christians get church 'right' in Australia in 2018?*

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

There will be time for questions at the close of each session, including by text message.

At the close of the series there will be courses for those interested in baptism or confirmation preparation.

St John's has four different well-equipped spaces available for use by community groups from 15 – 100 in size. There are vacancies for the coming year, and the Bookings Officer would be pleased to show the facilities to groups that might be interested in meeting at St John's this year. The community hall is a stand-alone facility. The three spaces in the Education Centre share access to a common foyer. Enquiries: 0490 845 553 or bookstjohns@gmail.com



Some spaces available for community use

This brochure is from St John's Cranbourne. St John's is the Anglican Church serving the whole of the Cranbourne and Clyde area. St John's has been operating for nearly 154 years, and for its first century was known as 'St John's Church of England'.

Our church building, office, meeting areas and community hall are situated at 27 Childers St Cranbourne. Alongside the century-and-a-half old historic church (now a meeting space), and recently restored century-old community hall, we have our new church building and Education Centre – completed five years ago this month.

St John's main services are as follows, and you would be most welcome to visit:

- **Sundays at 9am:** Holy Communion – traditional style including hymns and organ
- **Sundays at 10.30am:** Holy Communion – contemporary style with parallel programs for children and youth
- **Sundays at 6.30pm** (starting the first Sunday in March): Holy Communion – contemporary style
- **Wednesdays at 10am:** Holy Communion

If you are interested, there is more information below – about our ministry team and our church, some of our activities, a short course, and our rooms available for community use.

We hope you find it interesting.

