

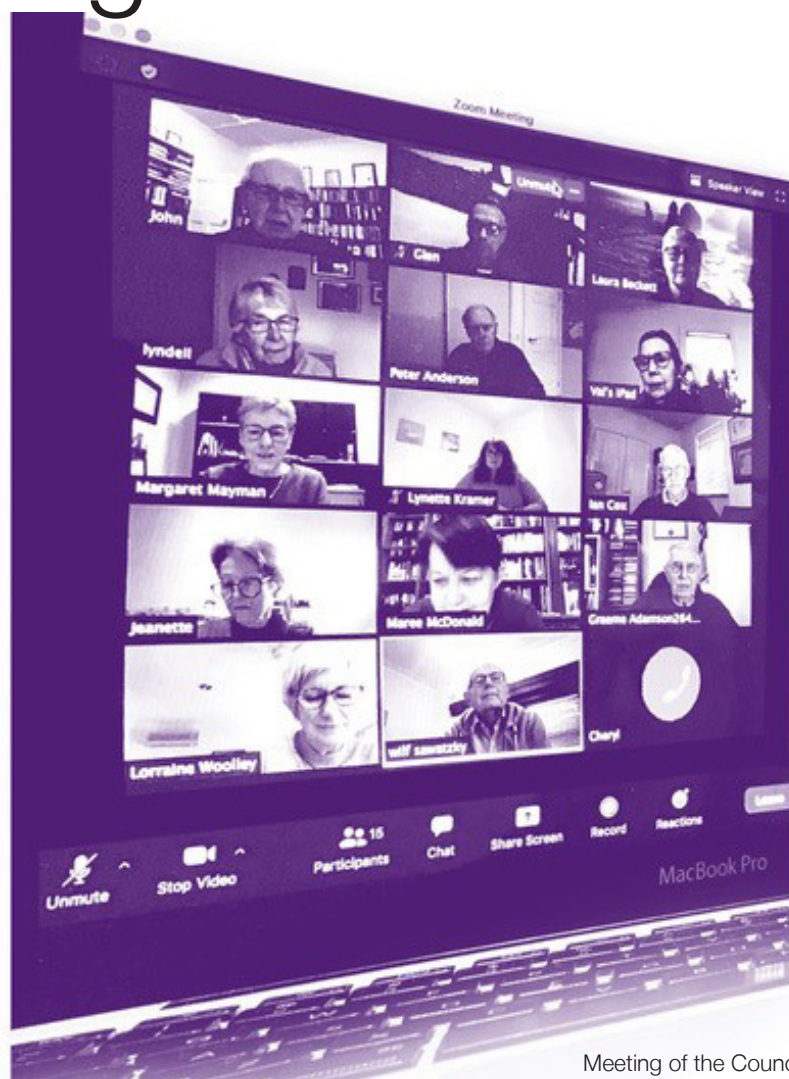
ST MICHAEL'S
UNITING CHURCH



INTERSECTION

ISSUE 2, 2020

taking on the challenge



Meeting of the Council via Zoom

...together

ST MICHAEL'S UNITING CHURCH



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Chair of Church Council Laura Beckett

Treasurer Ian Cox

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Culture of Safety (Keeping Children Safe)

Contact Person: Val Gill

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Dean: Peter Anderson

Deputy Dean: Jack Morgan

Deanery II: Church Services

Dean: Graeme Adamson

Deputy Dean: Albert Phillips

Deanery III: Contact & Care

Dean: Lyndell O'Brien

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MINISTER'S REFLECTION

The February issue of Intersection featured my induction with photos of St Michael's Church full of wonderful people looking to the future. A once in a century global pandemic was not on anyone's mind. Our lives have changed dramatically since then. There is grief for what might have been, and for the toll the virus has taken in lives and livelihoods.

During the March lockdown, we focused on returning to "normal," our hopes of being reunited with friends and family, and getting back to church. The second-wave restrictions have generated a new framing of our reality. Life is not on hold. This is our life, and we are finding new ways to be "in the moment" in this unexpected way of being. St Michael's has done this through online gatherings and pastoral care via Zoom and telephone through Contact and Care. Church Council has been busy and productive via Zoom.

As we no longer focus so intently on 'back to normal,' we recognise that what people are missing most is a sense of connection and community. However, it's worth remembering that we can feel the absence of connection even when we are in the presence of others. It takes more than being face to face.

Connection is key to our life together, and to our society. If we cannot meet in person, we must find other ways to strengthen community – to express creativity and inclusiveness despite COVID-19. We know that humans need a sense of belonging. I venture that it will take more than having online activities and events. It will depend on our living out our values – listening, empathising, and dreaming of a different 'normal' for ourselves, our city, and the earth. We won't just do this for St Michael's but for the wider community (local and virtual), remembering our vocation to build and not tear down, to draw together and not divide, to bless and not to curse – and above all to be bearers of hope for ourselves and our world.

In addition to values, spiritual practices are essential for making real our vision: gratitude, noticing and naming that for which we are thankful; encouragement, believing in one another even when we make mistakes; and kindness, for ourselves, our community and our planet enabling healing and true well-being. And all of these held together in the power that is Love.



COUNCIL CORNER

Although the Church Council has not been able to meet in person due to health and safety reasons pertaining to COVID-19 we have been meeting via Zoom technology and have had lively and productive monthly meetings. The following report is to keep all members up to date on the work undertaken by your Church Council.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

A small Working Group was established by Council to develop a draft Strategic Mission Plan for consideration and approval of the Council. This plan was based on the work undertaken by the Congregation at a Strategic Development workshop conducted by Terence Corkin in October 2019. Terence worked with forty- eight members of the Congregation to develop an outline of the church's strategic directions. The Council Working Group based the draft plan on the excellent work undertaken by the Congregation. At the August Council meeting the Council approved the draft Strategic Mission plan.

The Chair of the Church Council, Laura Beckett, has now asked the Deans to work with the people in their Deaneries and members of the congregation to operationalise the plan as it pertains to the work of their Deanery. We encourage members of the congregation to peruse the plan (detailed on page 9) and provide any suggestions to the Deans for inclusion in their specific Deanery plans.

2019 ANNUAL REPORT

Given the current situation with COVID-19, and following advice from the Synod, the Council has agreed that it is not viable or appropriate to hold an Annual General Meeting of the Congregation. An AGM will be held as soon as possible following the reopening of the Church. Therefore it is planned that in early October a copy of the 2019 Annual Report will be sent to those who have registered an email address with the office. If the office doesn't have your email address registered please contact the office and they will arrange to send you a copy.

COUNCIL ELECTIONS

Given the restrictions on gatherings, it is also not feasible to schedule a Congregation Meeting for the purposes of holding an election

of members to the Church Council. Advice from the Synod recommended that current members of Council whose term expires at the end of this year, may if they wish, be co-opted to continue on Council until such time as an election can be held. In addition, the Council can co-opt members from the congregation to fill vacancies if needed.

HOUSEHOLD DEANERY

Peter Anderson, Dean of Household, has been particularly busy managing a wide range of issues including the clarification of the relationship the church has with the Property Services Group of the Synod.

Relationship with the UCA Synod of Victoria and Tasmania - Property Services

An important meeting was held with Property Services recently to clarify the respective roles and responsibilities of each party. In summary it was agreed that:

- Property Services act in an advisory role and provide a range of property and project management services. St Michael's may or may not choose to utilise these services, however Property Services on behalf of the Property Trust have the right to insist that contractual arrangements entered into by St Michael's meet their requirements.
- St Michael's is the client and is therefore free to choose and engage architects and other consultants subject to the contractual arrangements mandated by Property Services.
- Property Services can assist in the tender, selection and project management processes if required.
- It should be noted that the Synod is the legal owner of the church buildings.

Conservation Management Plan

The Church Roof project has been put on hold pending the completion of a Conservation Management Plan (CMP) which will provide a complete overview of issues affecting the church. A Working Group was established to oversee the tender, interviews and appointment



of architects to develop and implement a CMP. The Working Group consisted of the members of the Household Committee, the Minister, Chair of Council and Treasurer, with support from Synod Property Services. A CMP will enable us to apply for capital grants through the City of Melbourne and Heritage Victoria.

Tenders were received from two architectural firms and were evaluated by the Working Group. The Working Group made a recommendation to the Church Council which approved the appointment of the heritage architectural firm Purcell to undertake a number of investigations of the church and prepare a detailed report including recommended capital works and maintenance plans.

Purcell impressed the Selection Panel with their consultative methodology, extensive experience with significant heritage churches and their considered approach to documentation. Members of the Purcell team and their sub consultants will consult with members of the Council, Deaneries and Congregation. Purcell will also assist the church to seek grant funds through Property Services and Heritage

Victoria. Written requests have been made to fund the consultancy from funds available from the sale of the Manse in Camberwell.

Church Manse

The Council has procured a new Manse in Port Melbourne following the successful sale of the Manse in Camberwell. The Terms of Call for our new Minister included agreement to provide suitable accommodation within a 5km radius of the central city. The Council decided to sell the manse in Camberwell rather than using it to offset the cost of a rental property. The purchase has been cost neutral and the funds remaining from the sale of Camberwell will be sought to fund the CMP and some minor renovation and maintenance at the new property.

120 Collins Street Revitalisation Project

Investa, the owners of 120 Collins Street are embarking on a significant re-development of the ground floor lobby and open space, including St Michael's Walk. Representatives of St Michael's have reviewed some preliminary concept plans and have provided feedback to ensure that the church is not adversely impacted by the proposed works. At this stage it would appear that the gradient of St

Michael's Walk will be enhanced so that there will be greatly improved access to the church.

General Maintenance

Water leaks. There have been recent instances of water flooding from the garden on to the footpath. Old rusting pipes are currently being replaced by PVC piping.

Electrical Maintenance

The chandelier operating system and its wiring have been replaced. The associated project to prepare a complete wiring mapping diagram is almost complete.

Insurances

Insurance cover for all Uniting Church properties and activities in Victoria and Tasmania are arranged by Synod Risk and Insurance Services. St. Michael's is engaged in ongoing discussions with them regarding details of our insurances.

CHURCH SERVICES DEANERY

The Church Services Deanery has been supporting the minister in her leadership of the thoughtful, spiritually uplifting online Sunday gatherings that have been sustaining our congregation, and many others, during the coronavirus pandemic.

The majority of the Deanery committees are in hibernation, however the Music Committee has been active in supporting Rhys Boak, Organist and Manager of Music, and are currently investigating the area of copyright to ensure that St Michael's is compliant. We are grateful for Rhys's outstanding musical leadership, and for Jackson Raine's skilful recording of the musicians wonderful contributions.

The Church Council has directed that a working group, under the direction of the Deaneries of Church Services and Contact and Care, investigate how we may safely reopen the church when restrictions are eased. This is a significant project as considerable care will be required to ensure that people attending a

Church Service are safe and that government and Synod rules and regulations are followed.

CONTACT AND CARE DEANERY

During this time when we are unable to meet in person for Sunday Services or other gatherings, each of our team of 24 Contact People has continued to keep in touch with a group of St Michael's people. Our aim is to endeavour to keep the lines of communication open amongst us all and for people to feel cared for and supported.

Some St Michael's people are not able to access the Sunday services online, so we have been sending a DVD every three weeks, which includes three services. The Order of Service for each one is printed and included in the parcel and there is no charge to receive the DVDs.

The Prayer Tree Network, organised by Catherine Jones, is a small group that keep people who ask it, in their prayerful thoughts.

PROGRAMS DEANERY

The Mindful Meditation Program has recommenced online and we are making plans to offer social and educational Programs via Zoom in the near future.

MINGARY COUNSELLING SERVICE

The Mingary Counselling Service is being provided by Dr Kramer and her team of counsellors via Zoom in addition to telephone services (with the counsellors working remotely) for new and existing clients. This important outreach service of St Michael's is vital during this period of shutdown in Victoria where many people require support and assistance to preserve their mental health and wellbeing.

Thank you.
Laura Beckett, Chairperson



The Strategic Mission Plan 2020 - 2024

We encourage members of the congregation to peruse the plan and provide any suggestions to the Deans for inclusion in their specific Deanery plans.



Strategic Mission Plan 2020 – 2024

Our Mission

St Michael's is a vibrant, inclusive, hospitable and community focused city church, sharing a contemporary and progressive Christian theology embracing spirituality, the arts, wellbeing, justice and compassion.

Our Vision

St Michael's vision is to be a nurturing and dynamic Christian spiritual community contributing to a world where each person and all creation can flourish and enjoy abundant life within the city of Melbourne and beyond.

Strategic Directions

The St Michael's Community will –

1. Express our community life through:

- embodying our commitment to progressive theology, spirituality and music
- encouraging a culture that is caring, respectful and inclusive
- constructive and effective communication and decision making
- effective and sustainable management of property and resources to facilitate

2. Build partnerships that are aligned with the mission and vision of St Michael's including

- theologically progressive groups
- the wider Uniting Church and other organisations working for social and ecological justice
- other civic and community groups

3. Be outwardly focused by:

- meeting not only the needs of the current membership but also responding to people in the wider/global community
- drawing people into the life of the church through the practices of progressive faith, spirituality and hospitality
- connecting with a younger demographic
- supporting members of the community through a range of outreach services including a focus on mental health and well-being
- connecting and communicating with a wider audience using contemporary technology

Strategic Goals 2020 - 2021

Church Council

- to build up the congregation in faith, hope and love
- to strengthen our community, especially during the pandemic, by connecting with our members and friends including people who join us through our various online portals
- to develop a range of partnerships with appropriate organisations so our community can make meaningful connections with other groups

The Deaneries

The Four Deaneries – Church Services, Household, Contact and Care, and Programs are currently developing their 2020 – 2021 goals to align with the Congregation's Mission, Vision and Strategic Directions.

Note: Council and Deanery goals will be reviewed regularly as we emerge from the pandemic.



MAKING THE ONLINE EXPERIENCE



Much goes into creating the perfect Sunday Gathering for our community in the best of times – beautiful music with talented artists, inspired reflections and relevant readings and hymns. When government restrictions closed the church building in mid- March, St Michael's rallied to find a way of bringing the special St Michael's Gathering experience beyond the building. Each Sunday since, St Michael's has ensured a beautifully produced online service is available for its community. These Sunday Gatherings have been watched and enjoyed

by people all over the world and the feedback regarding the inspirational content and quality during these difficult times has been overwhelmingly positive.

The St Michael's Sunday gathering is a carefully created experience. Behind each online service are hours of preparation, rehearsals, filming and post-production work. Stepping up to this challenge and adapting the way they work to keep the community connected over the past six months are a tireless trio; minister Rev Dr Margaret Mayman, videographer

Jackson Raine, and Rhys Boak, St Michael's Organist and Manager of Music who are supported by the St Michael's staff and Council.

On first hearing about the introduction of Level Three restrictions, the St Michael's team had to decide quickly how they were going to move forward. Rhys's first thought was they may have to resort to recording from home! Fortunately, access to the church and recording equipment was still allowed and Rhys, Jackson and the professional musicians were familiar with the process of creating and recording. It was Easter, one of the busiest times for St Michael's and they were thrown in the deep end, recording three gatherings, back to back. They worked out a basic plan and from there it was all systems go. Rhys combined his skills and experience as a musician and recording engineer, Margaret was preparing her liturgies and Reflections for a Wednesday rather than Sunday and Jackson was producing more complicated edits to adapt to this sudden and unexpected situation.

The pre-COVID-19 process of music selection, making the music, learning the notes, rehearsing with soloists or on the organ or piano is already time-consuming, but the addition of recording and producing the music significantly increased the workload.

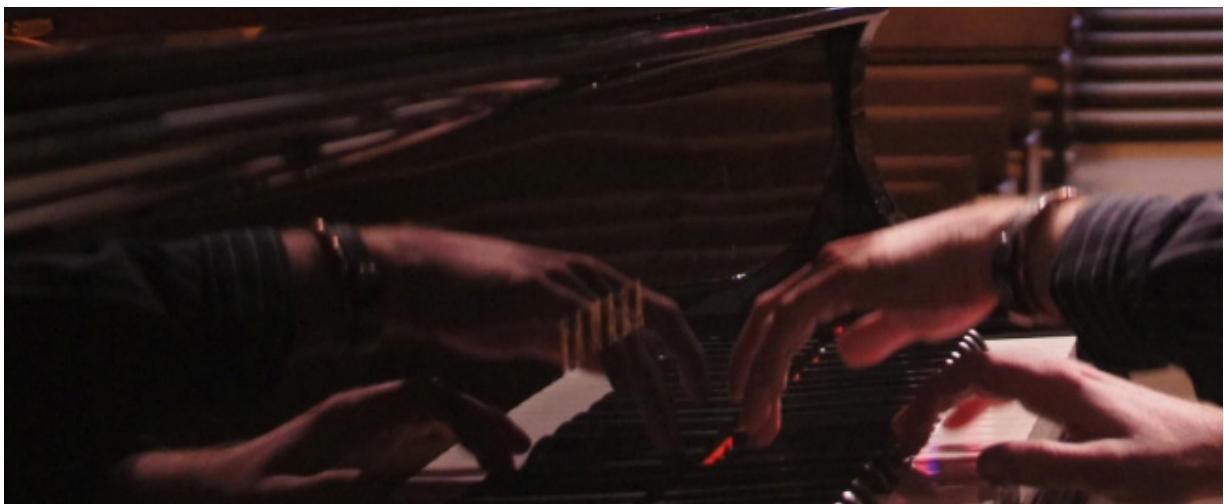
Adding to the stress is the fact there is no room for error. Unlike a live performance, experienced in the moment, once the final

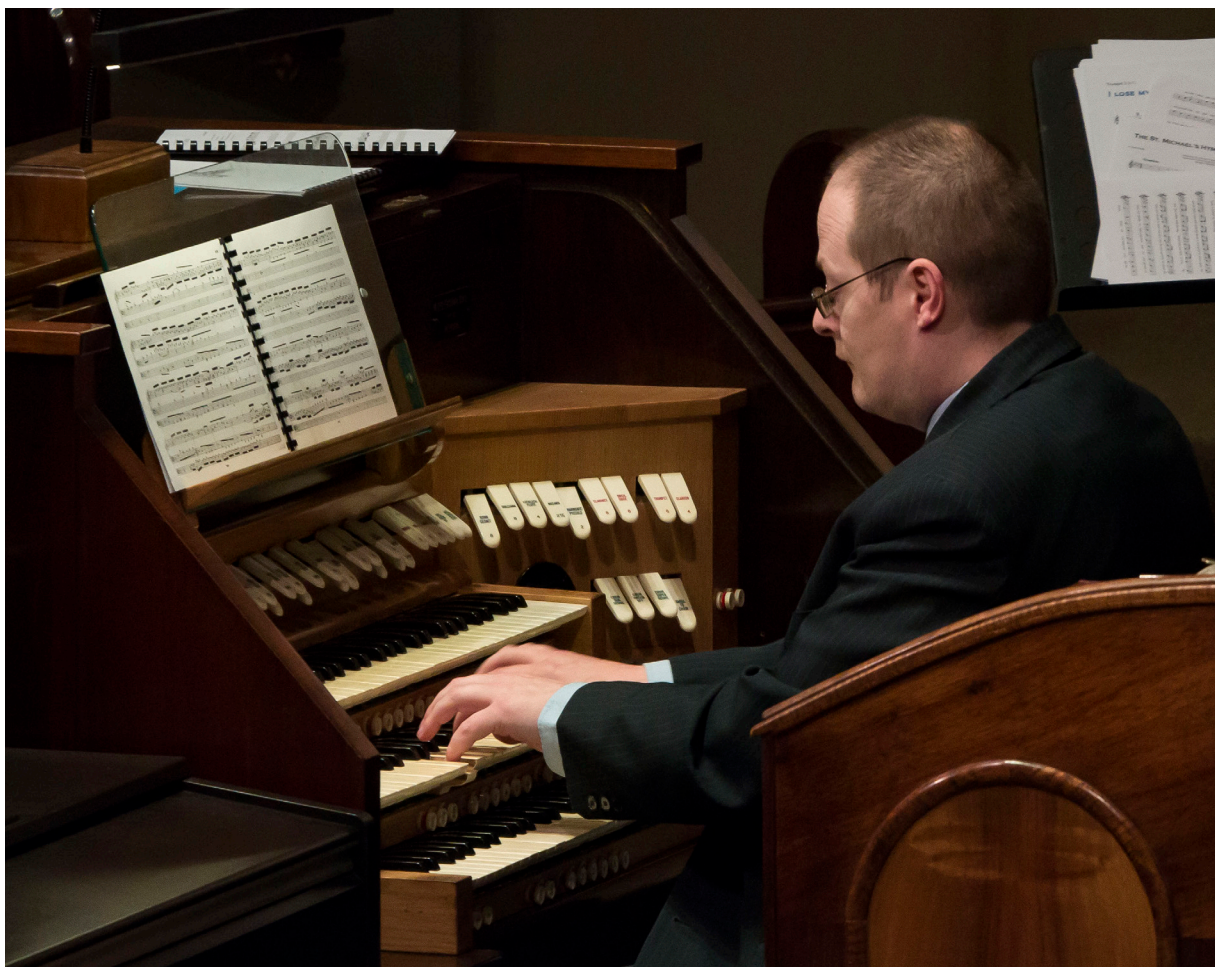


musical performance is recorded and published online, it is online for a long time, if not forever.

Filming, according to restriction guidelines has also proved challenging. During Level Three Lockdown, the large size of the church building allowed for safe social distancing, and both the church and administration buildings were fitted with well-utilised automatic hand sanitiser stations. Issues arose when only two to three people were allowed in the church building at any one time, which meant extra equipment set-up, and the musicians tag-teaming for times in the church. Fortunately the number of people allowed to produce a religious service was increased to five during the Easter period.

Then follows the post-production work. As a general guide, Rhys estimates every three minutes of music, takes about an hour of post-production work for himself. Editing the music sound, and ensuring it is clear and free of ambient traffic noise is a complex





process especially given Melbourne's trams are particularly keen to be a part of the recording process. The recordings are then uploaded for Jackson to access and add the visual content.

For Jackson, the biggest challenge has been working within a tight timeframe. Jackson's pre-COVID process would involve recording the service and editing at a time after Sunday morning. Now Jackson is recording the Sunday gathering on a Wednesday to release on Sunday morning 10am. He now has to face a tight post-production schedule that involves hours of editing. A draft video of the service is sent to a review committee on Thursday/Friday for viewing, Jackson then re-edits to accommodate notes and finally the video is uploaded to YouTube in preparation for Sunday morning.

As history shows, the hard work paid off. St Michael's community celebrated Easter from their own homes with over 1000 people viewing the gathering online. After the initial Easter shock, the team have managed to work

to a rhythm ensuring our online services reach up to 700+ viewers on YouTube and via the St Michael's website each week.

It is with thanks to the forward thinking (we didn't know then what we know now) of both Rhys and Jackson, that we were able to create a library of recorded hymns. Rhys and Jackson immediately began recording as much music as possible, each week recording the hymns in batches of five or six at a time. At the time of recording it was thought cost effective both in time and financially to create this library and then came Level Four restrictions.

This library of hymns is what is currently being used now Victoria is in Level Four restrictions, as it is not possible to record music in the church.

But the effort is fully appreciated. Comments from our community show people are really enjoying the finely produced services. The quality production, Margaret's progressive



Reflections and liturgies, meaningful hymns and the wide range of music during gatherings is certainly what makes St Michael's online services so exceptional. St Michael's has access to a great variety of visiting musicians, including our cantors which means our hymns are led by some excellent singers and accompanied by the fine St Michael's organ making for a more involved at-home church experience.

Rhys is thrilled that more people get to experience what actually happens at St Michael's on a Sunday morning, "I'm also gratified to know that those whose churches have not been able to provide a meaningful online experience, have access to St Michael's

online services in what is a very difficult time for many people". For Jackson, the fact that people are enjoying and relying on these videos can be the motivating factor pushing him to ensure each week is better than the one before.

While it has been difficult to keep the community connection going and we are missing the quality of face-to-face gatherings, it is heartening to see that the hard work of the St Michael's staff is helping people stay connected. As the world sits in this uncertainty, it is comforting and reassuring to know that St Michael's will continue to be there for its community and a wider community and that there is a talented team ensuring it can do so.

GRATEFUL, GENEROUS GIVING

The community life and mission of St Michael's has been sustained for generations by the generous gifts of members and friends. During COVID, these gifts have enabled us to create spiritual community online and to reach out to others who are searching for meaning and an experience of spirit in these troubled times.

Without the usual collection of offerings on Sunday mornings, people are changing the way they give. Gifts sent by mail, by electronic banking, or via online giving on the website are received with gratitude and dedicated to our shared work.

For regular or one-off offerings – make an online deposit to
St Michaels Uniting Church | BSB:083004 Acc: 515113338
or go to <https://stmichaels.org.au/giving/>

Church | Community | Common Good



THOUGHTS FROM THE COMMUNITY

What has us smiling during these difficult times is the positive feedback we are receiving in response to our Sunday Gatherings online and online resources. It is fantastic to hear how people are finding the connection with us and to each other. Even though we are apart during this time, we are still able to be together.

‘ Thanks for another moving service, and also thank you for the Thursday morning online conversation. I may not make every Thursday but I hope I can continue with you all the discussion of how to meet people across difference - much appreciated. ’

‘ Thankyou all so much for the wonderful videos you have produced in recent times. They have bought me a lot of comfort and contentment. ’

‘ Thank you team for another online service. We really appreciate the time and effort which you put into each service. ’

‘ Thanks for your most relevant Services, thoughtful, sensitive and appropriate words, reflections, poems, music - organ, cantors and camera work. ’

‘ To Margaret and all who are making Sunday worship both possible and wonderful. I really appreciate your messages but also the terrific liturgy and music. I hope there might be a way to continue this connection after isolation restrictions are totally lifted. ’

‘ We have thoroughly enjoyed the services. We have found Margaret both interesting and insightful and she always gives us something to think about. The music is wonderful and we really appreciate the quality of the cantors and musicians each week. It is a joy to hear such beautiful singing and playing. ’

‘ I have thoroughly enjoyed tuning in to your Sunday services during the pandemic. They have been both moving and thought provoking and a delight to listen to. The soloists and the organist have been truly uplifting. ’



“ The service has been such a rich experience—the music, the language of hymns and prayers, the poetry, the silences, and the thoughtfulness of your reflections—have all spoken to me. To be able to participate in a continuing online service and for our spirits to be fed would be “manna “ in the desert. ”

“ Once again we have taken part in today’s service and been enriched and strengthened by the liturgy, the music and Rev Margaret’s preaching. Please pass on our thanks to all concerned. We are especially enjoying the Contemporary readings that are chosen each week. Each one brings a fresh perspective and gives us something to ponder and act on. ”

“ The beauty and pastoral care of today’s service is balm in these frightening times. ”

“ Well delivered! I haven’t attended a service for a very long time and really enjoyed the online service! Listening to topic, story of the day and the wonderful pianist, hymns made me feel like I was there! Wonderful well spoken! I will be looking forward to next weeks service. ”

“ How can I thank you and your team for all the work, effort and thought that goes into producing each service weekly and more during Easter ... I have so appreciated the format style with the inclusive language of the service, the contemporary readings, the professional musicians, singers and your insightful homilies. ”

“ These services have been a real inspiration to me and have brought such comfort and hope. ”

“ Thank you for beautiful words to lovely music, blessings to go deep and your words of hope and encouragement. ”

“ To Rev Dr Margaret Mayman, Musicians, Readers and Technicians, we write to thank you for the most inspiring Worship Services from St Michael’s. ”

CONNECTING WITH CARE

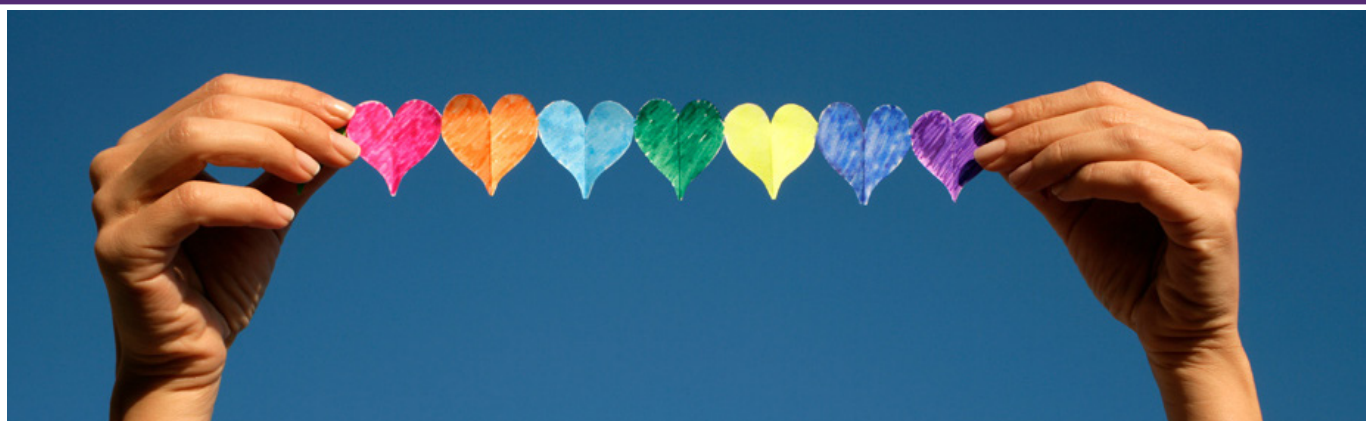


The St Michael's Contact and Care Team is an important service to our community. It provides support and care for those who are unable to attend church and church events, maintains friendships and keeps the community connected. Since the introduction of restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic, the team has become a vital outreach of St Michael's. The number of people requesting contact has increased, the team has grown, and their way of operating has had to be changed.

Lyndell O'Brien, the Dean of the Contact and Care Deanery tells us that, until recently, the Contact and Care volunteers had a variety of means to connect. They kept in touch with, and looked out for, people at church

on Sunday, through regular home visits, and phone calls and sent care packages of DVDs and St Michael's news to those unable to attend or without access to online services. They also responded to requests for Contact and Care support, as did the Prayer Tree, a small group of caring people committed to sharing the load with those going through difficult times. A number of informal friendship and social groups have also grown within the congregation; people who would meet for lunches, movies and book groups.

Since the introduction of COVID-19 restrictions, the team has had to adapt some of the ways they work and connect. Aware that this is a difficult time with people easily feeling isolated and forgotten about, the



Would you like to connect with others for regular support and care?

The members of the Contact and Care Team are available to talk with or assist people who are experiencing difficult times. All matters remain confidential. If anyone would like to participate in the Contact Program, by having a Contact Person keep in touch with you, or receive DVDs of Sunday Gatherings, please contact the St Michael's office with your request.

team has been putting in every effort to help people continue to feel connected, supported and cared for. With people unable to meet in person, volunteers are on the phone, sending messages, visiting when restrictions permit, but always connecting with those who would like it. Lyndell says, it has been "important to keep these lines of communication open, so that people don't lose touch with each other".

The last few months has seen a greater need to keep connected in different ways, mostly of necessity by 'remote' means. With this increased need, a larger team of Contact People was necessary. Those already in contact roles were asked if they wanted to be involved in an expanded program, who they already kept in touch with and if they would like to expand their contact group. New team members were recruited and the team of 13 almost doubled to 24 members. Each person enjoys being a part of this vital Pastoral Care role on behalf of St Michael's.

Lyndell has enjoyed many long chats, as she personally phoned or emailed as many as possible of the members on the Church Roll, as well as non-members who are part of the community, to check in and see if they wanted to participate in the program. Those who wanted to participate were matched with a Contact Person. The team members are

currently in regular contact with 246 people. In turn, they are supported by Lyndell and Rev Dr Mayman with regular phone calls and updates on proceedings during these uncertain times. DVDs of Sunday Gatherings are still sent out to people without access to our online gatherings and the feedback is, that having them to watch greatly helps them to continue to feel connected.

While this has been a difficult time for many, the good news is that friendships have grown, and social circles have actually broadened. A number of people have commented that they think they will know each other a lot better after this!

Both the volunteers and those they are in touch with, feel connected. They enjoy their phone chats. For the brief window when restrictions had eased, small groups met for lunch and enjoyed getting to know each other better. While we are back to phone calls at present, the community looks forward to returning to visits and small gatherings again, as soon as it is possible.

St Michael's appreciates the effort each team member is making and thanks them for playing such an important role in the wellbeing of our community.

PARTICIPATING IN ST MICHAEL'S ONLINE COMMUNITY

GATHERING WORDS

Love draws us to together in community.
Love asks us to see beyond appearances.
Love invites us to let go of fears.
Let us join with the Sacred source of life and love,
the Divine Presence with us here and everywhere.



GATHER WITH US: SUNDAYS ONLINE

Bring the church into your home. Reflections, prayer and music come to you every Sunday. BYO coffee optional.

Everyone is welcome to our Sunday gatherings... wherever you are...sheltering at home or doing essential work. Join our progressive, inclusive gatherings - inspiring reflections, prayers, readings, and beautiful music from the team at St Michael's.

Participate your own way: by watching, listening, praying, and singing along to the hymns.

To join us for online Sunday Gatherings through our latest videos at 10am.

Please go to: <https://stmichaels.org.au/the-church/gatherings-reflections/#servicevideo>



LISTEN IN: ST MICHAEL'S PODCAST

Happily there is more to your Sunday. Follow up the Sunday reflection with St Michael's podcast.

Featuring Rev Dr Margaret Mayman and St Michael's videographer and podcast host, Jackson Raine, in conversation. The St Michael's Podcast asks some intriguing questions about the Sunday Reflections.

Available on Soundcloud or via our website:
<https://stmichaels.org.au/the-church/gatherings-reflections/#podcast>

VIDEO CHATS AND STAYING CONNECTED

Rev Dr Margaret Mayman was only a few weeks into her ministry at St Michael's when the stay at home orders were announced. This meant she had had only a few Sunday services before we were forced online and barely had a chance to meet and get to know the St Michael's community. Another way to meet and greet was needed. We have embraced technology to maintain the connections that are a vital part of the church experience.

Margaret has been continuing her pastoral work with phone conversations and weekly Zoom meetings, where members of the community are welcome to join in and chat. It's been amazing to see members of the St Michael's community picking up their tablets and smart phones and staying in touch with us.

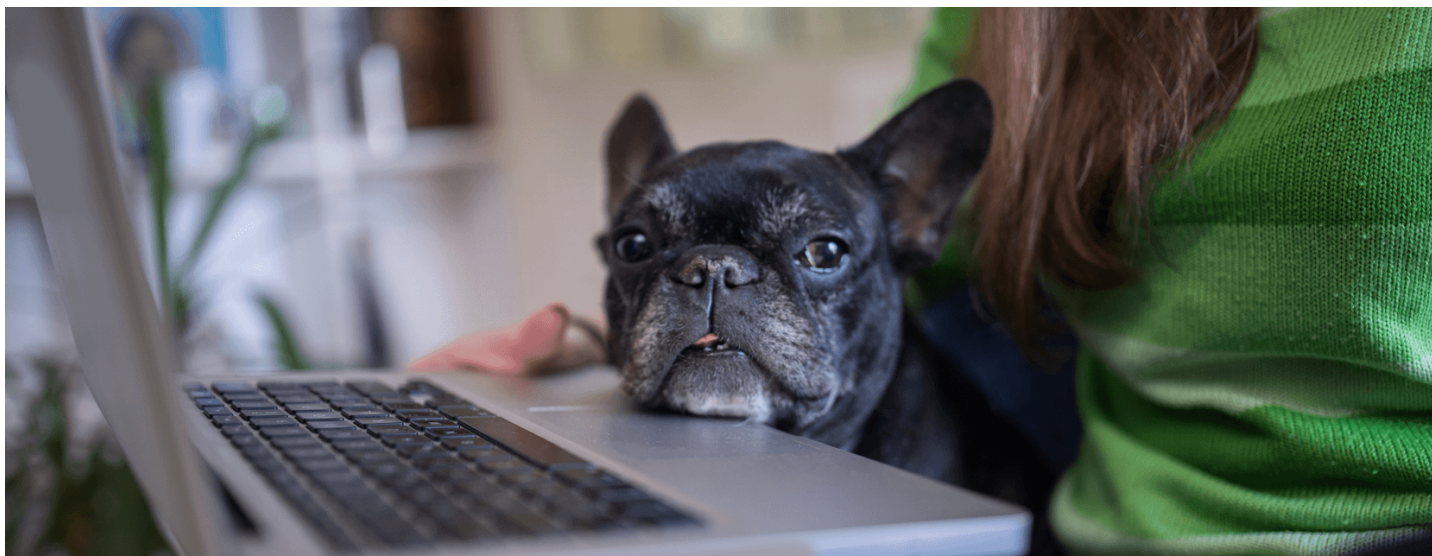
The premise of the Zoom meetings is to discuss Sunday's reflection, but as frequently happens, conversation and ideas flow and diverge. From what keeps people inspired, what provides

spiritual and emotional solace in difficult times, to what is on people's 'to read' list, we have learnt a lot about our community. It's also been an opportunity for people to share their responses to the Sunday reflections.

Zoom Chats take place every Thursday and are hosted by Rev Dr Margaret Mayman and a member of the St Michael's Council. We encourage people to drop in if they feel comfortable. If the idea of a video call isn't your cup of tea or you are all Zoomed out, you can phone in.

For those who still feel a little daunted by the idea of video chats we also have a fantastic Zoom user guide available offering a little tech advice: <https://stmichaels.org.au/the-church/prayer-tree/attachment/super-easy-zoom-guide/>

This is a great way to stay connected, meet some friendly St Michael's faces and discuss the good things in life.



Topic: St Michael's Zoom Chat

When: Thursdays | 11am

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83464077308?pwd=NnlrWFA4VIN2bEEvcE4vRUhnblpudz09>

Meeting ID: 834 6407 7308 | Password: 000405

From you smartphone – one-tap link: +61731853730,,83464077308#,,1#,000405#

Join by landline telephone (audio only): 03 7018 2005

ONLINE MINDFULNESS MEDITATION



In the face of a tough year, St Michael's has been providing people with connections and resources to help with uncertainty during the pandemic. One of the much-used resources has been the free online Mindfulness Meditation sessions, a collaboration between St Michael's and experienced meditation teacher, Karen Ellis.

Karen usually runs a regular Mindfulness Meditation session at St Michael's after the Sunday Gathering. After the closing of the church building due to government restrictions, a number of people were missing their weekly guided quiet time. We wanted to give everybody the ability to continue their practice and provide another channel to help

manage the stresses of staying at home.

The two free Online Mindfulness Meditation Sessions can be viewed on our website. Understanding people's own time restraints and meditation abilities you can choose between a Rapid Relaxation (15 minutes) for a shorter deep relaxation or a Full Meditation (30 minutes).

Both sessions encourage slow breathing and an increased awareness of being in the present moment. They are a wonderful tool to reduce stress, increase positivity, regulate emotions and maybe even improve memory. If you haven't already tried it, now is the time.

Choose your session. Find a space. Take a breath.

Meditate here: <https://stmichaels.org.au/the-church/mindfulness-meditation-sessions/>

COUNSELLING AND VIDEO CALLS

Like most Melbourne establishments, the Mingary Counselling Service had to close temporarily as of 5pm on 23 March in accordance with COVID-19 government restrictions. Psychology is an essential service, which meant we could still operate but had to convert our counselling service to be accessed remotely ensuring the safety of all Mingary clients and staff.

An incredible team effort from the clinical supervisors, St Michael's administration staff and the Mingary counsellors meant all the necessary conversions were handled professionally and smoothly. As a result, our vital service has continued to operate and remain accessible for all clients (new and continued), especially during this time of heightened stress and anxiety.

First, we ascertained that the Australian Health Practitioners Agency (AHPRA) would allow the counsellors to offer sessions by telephone and or video, under the strict conditions of their internships. We then revised the administrative procedures for making appointments, billing, maintaining confidential records and the

management of high-risk clients. In lieu of face-to-face counselling session we now operate all sessions via either telephone or Zoom video, while the administration team remain on hand to book appointments and help with queries.

After a short bedding in period, everything came together to work seamlessly from remote locations. Both clients and counsellors continue to feel supported. Clients are able to maintain their regular counselling sessions and access administration with any queries. Our counsellors maintain regular individual and group supervision sessions with clinical supervisors, Dr Liza Ng and Dr Gerke Witt, who have been supporting and guiding them remotely.

We would like to reassure our supporters and clients that we will keep adapting and managing operations during these difficult times so that we maintain the high level of service for which Mingary Counselling Service is known.

- Dr Lynette Kramer



mingary
COUNSELLING SERVICE

The Mingary Counselling Service offers Zoom video or telephone counselling sessions.

If you are seeking extra support, relief from stressful experiences, assistance with major life changes or help reducing anxiety, fear and uncertainty, call the Mingary Counselling Service to make an appointment today.

Level 2, St Michael's Place, 120 Collins Street, Melbourne | Phone (03) 9654 5120 | www.mingarycounselling.com.au

VALE



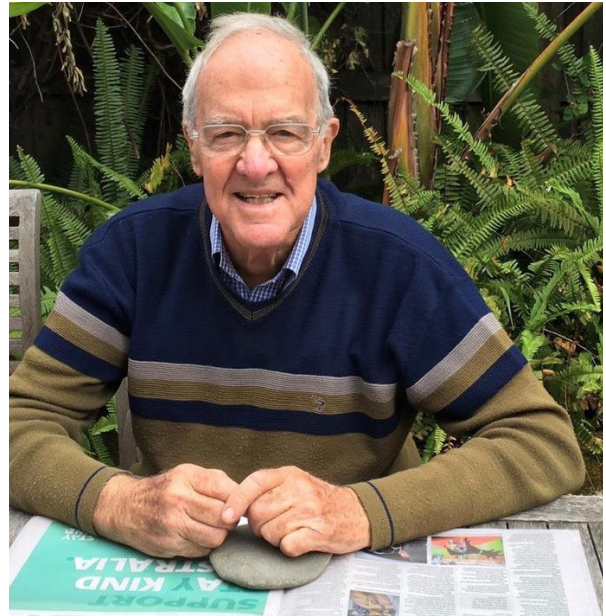
DOUGLAS (DOUG) STEWART

Doug and his wife, Pam, became members of St Michael's in 1984. They lived in the United Kingdom for approximately fifteen years. Upon their return to Melbourne, they renewed their memberships and became very involved once again.

Doug and Pam enjoyed attending many of the after-church discussion groups. Doug was particularly interested in environmental issues, attending many of these information sessions and discussions. He enjoyed the progressive perspectives of St Michael's worship.

Doug passed away on 12 June 2020 and his funeral service took place at St Michael's on 22 June 2020. Thirty of Doug's family and friends attended his funeral service, which was conducted by Rev Dr Margaret Mayman, who had been able to get to know Doug during recent hospital visits.

We continue to hold Pam and her family in our thoughts and prayers.



GORDON ROBERT

Gordon became a member of St Michael's in 2003. He quickly became involved in many aspects of the life of the church. He was a very warm and friendly man, which were most important attributes to have, in undertaking his roles as a Door Usher and Week-Day Tour Guide.

Gordon was elected to Church Council in 2012 and served as a councillor for five years. During those years, Gordon was a member of the Communion Teams, serving Communion to the congregation every second month.

Gordon passed away on 30 June 2020. His funeral was held on Friday 10 July 2020 at St Michael's and was conducted by Rev Dr Margaret Mayman.

We hold Gordon's four children and their wider family in our thoughts and prayers.

VALE CONT.



DOREEN BERRY

Doreen became a member of St Michael's in 1981. She was very involved in the life of the church community, serving as a Door Usher for many years and participating enthusiastically in many church programs. She was very keen to extend her learning, both within the church environment and in the general community. She also volunteered her time in the community to assist other people.

Doreen loved the Arts and was a committee member of the St Michael's 'Arts for Rights' program.

Doreen had a lovely sense of humour. She had many friends at St Michael's and beyond, with whom she enjoyed sharing happy times, visiting, eating out and sharing a variety of experiences.

Doreen passed away on Tuesday 1 September 2020, at the age of 92. As Doreen wished, there will not be a funeral. Her nieces and nephew have arranged a cremation, with her ashes to be spread on a family member's farm, at a time when it is possible for this to take place.



On the Death of the Beloved by John O'Donohue

Let us not look for you only in
memory,
Where we would grow lonely without you.
You would want us to find you in presence,
Beside us when beauty brightens,
When kindness glows
And music echoes eternal tones.

When orchids brighten the earth,
Darkest winter has turned to spring;
May this dark grief flower with hope
In every heart that loves you.



COVID-19 RESOURCES

As we deal with the ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, St Michael's staff and lay leaders are working to keep our community safe and connected.

We have provided some resources to help you with your mental and emotional wellbeing in these challenging times.

These can be found on our website: <https://stmichaels.org.au/the-church/church-building-temporarily-closed/>

PRAYER TREE

We are a group within the Contact and Care Team here to support you, during this difficult and often concerning time.

We extend a commitment to pray for you, or someone known to you who is facing personal challenges. All requests are treated with confidentiality, sensitivity and respect. Kindly ask permission from the person/s concerned, if the prayer is not for yourself.

To request prayer, please contact the St Michael's office (9654 5120) and ask for a message to be forwarded, or speak with Catherine Jones directly.

Meanwhile, please join us, as we pray for all the many concerns COVID has created.

'A Common Prayer'
by Michael Leunig

'Dear God,
These circumstances will change.
This situation shall pass.

God give us strength.
Strength to hold on and
strength to let go.
Amen'



BEQUESTS

Have you considered giving to St Michael's?

Every gift, no matter how large or small, can make a lasting difference to the ongoing work of St Michael's. If you have been thinking about making a bequest to St Michael's please contact the St Michael's office for a Bequest brochure and information.

Leave a lasting gift to the community you care for and who cares for you.



Spring in nature comes without prompting.

Spring in our hearts can be cultivated!

- Margaret Mayman

ST MICHAEL'S UNITING CHURCH: KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE



St Michael's has committed to implementing the Keeping Children Safe policy of the Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of Victoria. This commitment ensures the creation and maintenance of a child safe culture to ensure the care, protection and safety of all children and vulnerable adults. Working with Children Checks are required from all ministers, appointed leaders and volunteers.

We have appointed a Culture of Safety Contact Person, Val Gill, who is available if you have safety concerns.

Please contact Val: Telephone: 03 9654 5120

Email: office@stmichaels.org.au

'The Room of Ancient Keys'
by Elena Mikhalkova

Grandma once gave me a tip:

During difficult times,
you move forward in small steps.
Do what you have to do, but little by little.
Don't think about the future,
not even what might happen tomorrow.
Wash the dishes.
Take off the dust.
Write a letter.
Make some soup.
Do you see?
You are moving forward step by step.
Take a step and stop.
Get some rest.
Compliment yourself.
Take another step.
Then another one.
You won't notice, but your steps will grow
bigger and bigger.
And time will come
when you can think about the future
without crying.
Good morning.



OUR PILLARS OF ST MICHAEL'S PATRONS



*We would like to acknowledge our
Pillars of St Michael's patrons:*

Gladys Baker
Barbara Bedford
Leslie Bradley
Judy Bruce
Geoffrey Clarke
Marilyn Cobain
Irene Curren
Marlene Drysdale
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Joan Isabel Garrett
John Grutzner
Jan Hart
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John Dewar Milne
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Marie McVeigh
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Sylvia Rhodes
Smeeth Family
Norman Strugnell
Patsy Stubbs
Kay and Klaus Wiegel

Are you interested in becoming a
Pillar of St Michael's?

Phone: 9654 5120 or download an
application form: www.stmichaels.org.au



Keep connected by phone or computer.
Keep your routines, look for nature, eat well, rest, exercise, journal,
practice gratitude and first and foremost; be kind.
Take care of yourself and those around you. We all deserve it.

Gather Apart, Worship Together Online @ St Michael's



Inspiring, Inclusive, and on the Internet

www.stmichaels.org.au



SUNDAYS | FROM 10AM