

ST MICHAEL'S UNITING CHURCH



CHURCH COUNCIL UPDATE JULY 2022

At the July meeting of Church Council the following were among the items reported and discussed:

Belonging and Baptism

- It has been pleasing to see a stream of new people, many of them under 40, attending worship and being warmly welcomed by the congregation.
- In recent times, we have celebrated baptisms of both children and adults, and welcomed newcomers into membership. The baptisms of children have been delightful, and the baptisms of adults who are becoming members of St Michael's have been moving and meaningful occasions.
- Margaret is revising the baptism information on our website to better convey the meaning of baptism as a sacrament that is connected to membership of the Church.
- Work is progressing on a significant revision of the Staff and Volunteer booklet in order to provide a more general information source for members of the congregation and newcomers.
- The Contact and Care Committee continues to foster a culture of compassion, and to support the welcome and inclusion of newcomers. Community light lunches, which will give people an opportunity to catch up and get to know one another better, will held months when there is a 5th Sunday.
- The Programs offered after church have been well received and are recognised as important both for their content and for strengthening connections among our community.

Being a safe and welcoming church for everyone

- Following the informative presentation by Dr Chris Phillips on 'Pride in our Faith', a group is to be formed to progress St Michael's recognition as an Open and Affirming Congregation within the Uniting Church. The group will be coordinated by Chris and Council member, Val Gill.
- The Open and Affirming Project is a step-by-step process encouraging Churches to live out their welcome of LGBTIQ people (and allies, family and friends).
- The Uniting Church has issued new documentation on the safety of children and vulnerable people. Members of Council will be undertaking online refresher training to ensure we are providing a safe church environment for all.

- It is planned to use the eastern end of the Collins Street narthex to provide a safe and suitable place for parents to use if their child requires attention during a service. A small collection of books and toys will be provided, and a heater installed.
- Meetings have been held with the minister, members of the Church Services Committee, the administration team, the vergers and tech staff and Robert Cleghorn, leader of our Sunday security team, to update our protocols to ensure security within the church.

Governance and Administration

- The Property Committee is dealing with several complex issues related to the construction being undertaken by Investa, the owners of 120 Collins St. These include possible water ingress along the rear wall of the church and build-up of dust on the east side including the stained-glass windows. We are being supported in our discussions with Investa and Kane Construction by Synod Property Services.
- We are pleased that a gate has been installed across St Michael's Walk. It will remain in place during the construction to limit undesirable activity on weekend nights which has resulted in unpleasant and unsafe conditions for vergers on Sunday mornings.
- The Treasurer reported our financial performance for the month and the year-to-date is ahead of budget. The Council values the support of the congregation through offerings.

Connecting with the City

- Thursday lunchtime organ concerts are still in abeyance due to construction noise. However, it is proposed to hold twilight organ concerts on Thursday evenings once daylight-saving time is in effect.
- The Strategic Working Group developed a Council Update to the congregation on our 'Strategic Goals and Actions' which was sent out with the eNews for July 15. Since then, the group has continued to work on finalising 2023-2024 goals and actions which it intends to present to Council at its next meeting.
- Among other ideas, we will consider participation in the Open House Melbourne, Melbourne Music Week, Midsumma and other community events.
- New signs are being designed for the Collins Street notice board which will communicate St Michael's identity and culture of welcome.

*'Wherever you are on your spiritual journey,
you are welcome.'*