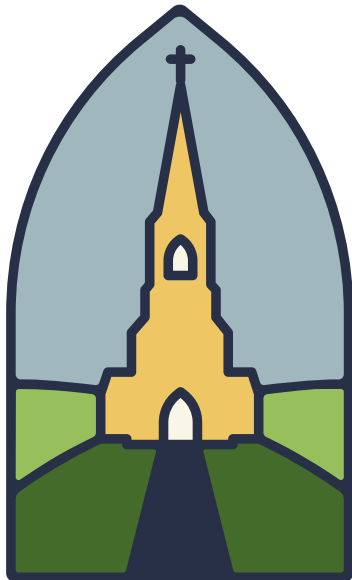


**ST JOHN'S**  
**ANGLICAN CHURCH**  
**CANBERRA**

**Strategic Plan:**  
**2023-2028**

# St John's Parish Strategic Plan (2023 – 2028)

This parish strategic plan provides high-level guidance to our parish leadership for the period spanning 2023-2028. It does this by clarifying our mission, identifying some key objectives, and giving clear direction for more detailed work to be undertaken by parish council. It will be reviewed annually and modified as circumstances require.



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## Why are we here?

When John the Baptist began his preaching ministry on the banks of the Jordan River, it heralded a new age in the history of God's dealings with his people, and the imminent revealing of Jesus Christ as Israel's Messiah.

Since 1845, St John's has long sought to extend the Baptist's ministry in a different and ever-changing, context. We are no longer in the remote wilderness of the 'Limestone Plains' of the 1840s. Yet we do exist within the spiritual wilderness of secularism, with its many unfortunate spiritual, social and relational side-effects, and its absence of an

ultimate hope. Heralds of the good news of Jesus Christ are needed just as much as ever.



The fourth gospel tells us that John the Baptist insisted that he was not himself 'the light' (i.e. 'the Christ'), but that he came to 'bear witness' to the light.<sup>1</sup> As a church that carries John's name, we share his conviction that we are not the content of our own message. We do not exist to draw attention to – much less to serve – ourselves. Rather, we are witnesses to the light: God's saving love in Jesus Christ.

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<sup>1</sup> John 1:7, 8

Our vision is therefore:

*to bear public witness to Jesus Christ, the source of life.*

This can be expanded into a more detailed mission statement, that outlines the particular ways in which we hope to fulfil this vision:

*We bear public witness to Jesus Christ through Anglican worship and pastoral ministry, loving community and outward-facing mission.*

We seek to point people to Jesus, drawing on the best of our Anglican identity and its Christ-centred pastoral and liturgical tradition – *Anglican worship and pastoral ministry.*

We recognize that in our individualistic age, the quality of our relationships is an important means of receiving and sharing the good news – *loving community.* And

knowing that Jesus has commanded his church to announce this news to all nations, we take seriously our sacred obligation to share the gospel of Jesus Christ in word and action – *outward-facing mission.*



## **Our mission objectives**

We rely entirely on God's blessing for this work to advance. Yet we are responsible for ordering our life together in a way that takes seriously our identity and duty as a Christian community. Therefore, St John's commitment to bearing public witness to Jesus Christ will determine the ministries we prioritize, the team that oversees them, the budget and governance structures we adopt, the way we use our facilities and space, and all the significant decisions of the parish.

By the grace of God, by 2028 we intend to have the following ministries and objectives in place, trusting that His Spirit will use these efforts to help many in Canberra and beyond to see, hear, and deeply enter into, the good news of Jesus Christ:

## Ministry goals

- A wide range of **worship and pastoral services**, all of which are recognizably part of the Anglican tradition.
  - This will include a concerted effort to keep alive the 1662 Book of Common Prayer tradition, as well as more contemporary liturgies, so that a wide range of people can be reached and disciplined.
  - It will also include ministries designed to nurture the discipleship of children and youth.



- Significant ministries of **evangelism and catechesis (i.e. foundational instruction)** that deliberately invite people into the Christian faith, and then establish them in its basic beliefs, practices and spirituality.
- A strong **commitment to world missions**, equating to 6 percent of our annual budget (with the aspiration to reach 10 percent in about 2031).
- An excellent, parish-led **emergency relief centre** that offers practical love to all – openly doing so in Christ’s name.
- Strong relationships with the developing university, and a ministry presence within the emerging campus.
- A ministry in the form of a **lecture or seminar series** that draws on the resources available in Canberra to publicly engage the intellectual and cultural and worldview challenges faced by Christians.





- Initiatives to create a close community **culture** that includes not only strong friendships within our various congregations, but also a sense of identity, cohesion and love within the wider St John's community.
- A **staff team** that enables

us to sustainably oversee these ministries, as well as provide cradle-to-grave pastoral ministry and outreach.

- **This staff team will include:**
  - **three full-time clergy;**
  - **other part-time ministry workers** to enable ministries of pastoral care, families, children and youth, evangelistic ministries and chaplaincy services (e.g. St John's Care or UNSW).
  - additional **staff** support to address our growing operational and administrative load.

## Implications

Outlining mission objectives is easy. Making them happen is hard – especially where they place demands upon our time and resources. In particular, the goal of employing more ministry staff and increasing our support to world mission will require us to be generous givers and careful stewards of the resources God has given us.

## Finances

We need a stronger income stream to compensate for our ageing volunteer base as well as to meet other ministry priorities. While commercial ventures might be of some help, our aspiration is to fund permanent ministry positions through the regular giving of parishioners, leaving other income and trust funds focussed upon special (often capital) projects relating to our site.





## **Site and buildings**

Parish Council has developed a schedule of projects to enable us better to pursue this mission (see Annex A). It is important for us to review our site, enabling it to be put to optimum missional use in support of ministries aligned with our changing local area.

This schedule will be reviewed and updated periodically, and prioritized according to new information and insights. Proposed projects range from relatively minor adjustments to make better use of our worship space, to larger discussions about our goals for our site, and the necessary facilities that will best meet our ministry objectives.

As we advance this work, we do so very much aware that we are custodians of a special site – a ‘sanctuary in the city’. Any adjustments for the sake of our mission need to be consistent with St John’s unique charm and character, heritage obligations, and missional imperatives. Significant projects will be presented to the wider parish as they emerge.

## **Governance**

This new season of activity will require a strong and clear governance structure that enables us sensibly to prioritize and oversee this body of work. Under the oversight of Parish Council, we will undertake a series of adjustments to our normal business, including:

- A greater focus at Parish Council meetings on strategic matters that pertain directly to our mission – allowing more routine items to be addressed by committees or the Executive, as required.
- Improved communication with the parish, via regular communiques.
- Establishment of a Resources and Investment Committee, to monitor the financial and human resources of the parish and explore ideas for income generation.
- Tasking the Risk Advisory Committee to evaluate and audit parish council, as well as track performance against our stated objectives.
- A more central coordinating role for the Projects Committee, to ensure any capital works projects are carefully selected and well managed.
- An annual ‘Parish Orientation Day’ to keep parishioners informed of parish activities, including Parish Council’s workings and priorities, and to encourage greater participation.

## **Personal implications**

This plan is not written for shareholders or board members, but a community of Christians, committed to living as the body of Christ. The voluntary contributions and ministries of our whole community – not merely the ‘ministry workers’ – have always been central to this parish, and are likely to become even more so.

There are a number of ways parishioners could meaningfully support this vision.

- Generosity with your time and expertise – whether through offering your professional skills as a member of one of our committees, or even Parish Council.
- Generosity with your financial support (see Annex B).
  - Regular donations enable us to fund our existing ministry positions, support global missions, and cover the many costs associated with this site.
  - Additional contributions to our New Ministries Fund will allow us to employ people in ministry roles that have thus far been out of reach.
- Generosity with your prayers.
  - Our resources of time, money and wisdom are limited. But God is infinitely rich in all that we lack. Let us pray for God’s Spirit to be mightily at work among us.

## **A parish prayer**

*Our loving Father, we long to be a part of what you are doing in our world, and to bear witness, as John the Baptist did, to Jesus Christ – in worship, word and deed. We humbly recognize that unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labour in vain. Therefore, direct us in those paths that will bear fruit for your sake, and thwart all that might distract us. May your Kingdom come, and your will be done in our midst. **Amen.***





# Annex A: Project Schedule

## Next 6 months

- **Minor alterations** to allow effective use of the worship space (including expanded Wi-Fi coverage/camera capability for livestreaming; improved flower vestry storage; adaptations for children and seniors etc).
- **St John's Care** internal redesign (while awaiting new building ideas)
- **Parish site concept** (broad statement of vision for the site itself)
- **Needs analysis** for building requirements (identifying gaps and shortcomings; to include SJC)
- Modest **upgrades to kitchen**

## Next 12 months (other)

- Identify improvements/simplifications for **carparking** (including long and short-term options).
- A **study** to determine revenue streams for income to support ministry
- Review of **IT support** to the parish (including SJC). To include security, cost-effectiveness, communications, data holdings.
- Engage **consultant** to explore building design options, consistent with parish site concept, needs analysis, and revenue ideas.

## Next 2-3 years

- **External seating** to make the site more hospitable to public.
- **180 year birthday** celebrations for church and schoolhouse.
- **Playground** design and build
- Expanded capture and display of **historic legacy**, especially with reference to the Schoolhouse, churchyard, visual displays and historic archives. Potentially to include info on early relationships to indigenous Australians

## **Annex B: Financial Support**

Your financial support is critical in ensuring that our current ministries can continue, and for any future expansion.

**Regularly giving** a percentage of your income (preferably via automatic transfers, reviewed annually) is an enormous help. It is what pays for our staff team, our site, our missions budget and other routine expenses.

- Payment details: BSB 702 389, Account 05209450

For those who feel able to do so, **additional donations** to our *New Ministries Fund* will enable us to work towards increasing our number of clergy and other ministry staff.

- Payment details: 'New Ministry Initiatives', BSB 702 389, Account 05210057.