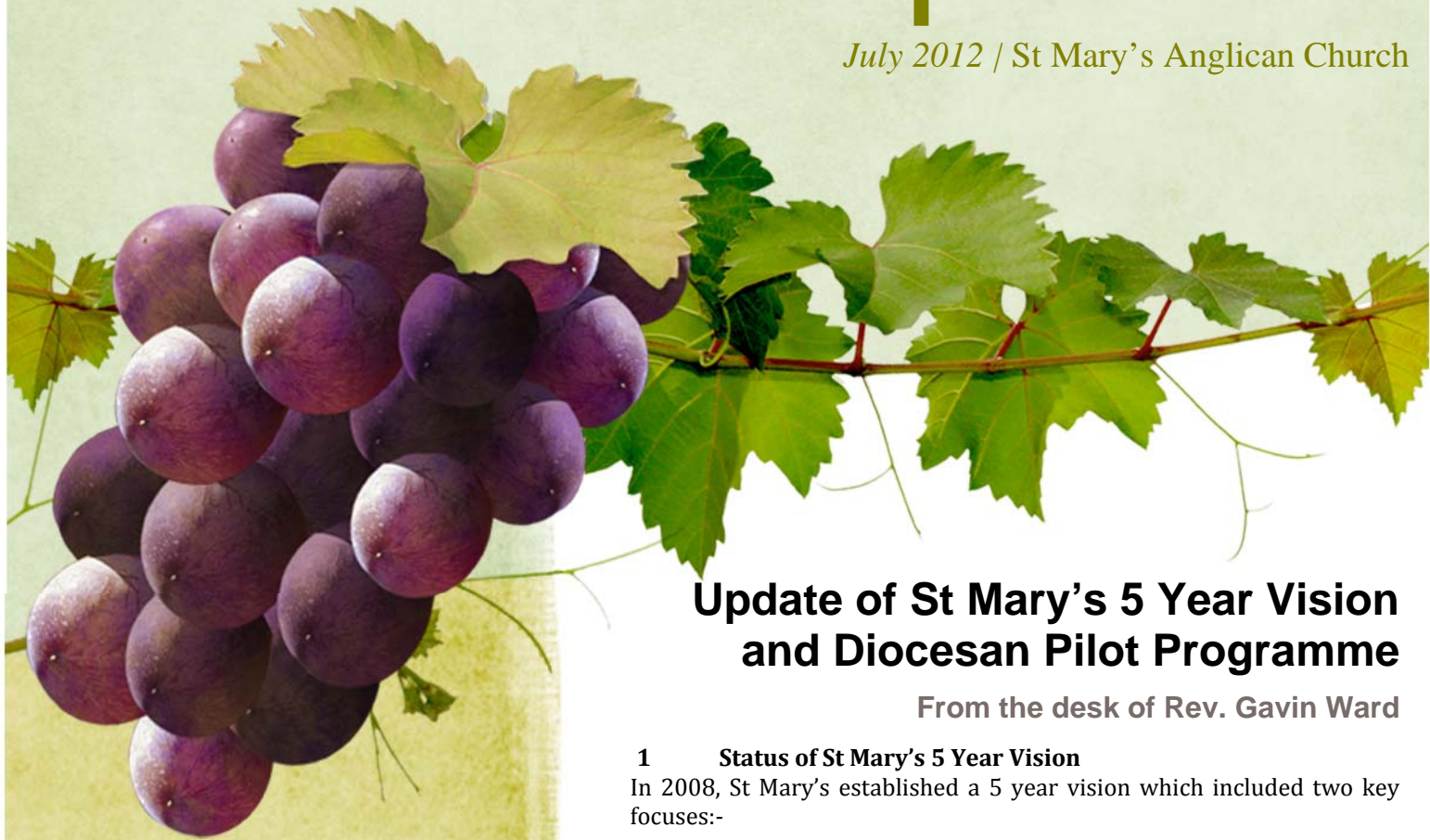


# Grapevine

July 2012 / St Mary's Anglican Church



St Mary's  
is a community...  
Loving God,  
Following Jesus,  
Sharing God's love  
with all.

## Update of St Mary's 5 Year Vision and Diocesan Pilot Programme

From the desk of Rev. Gavin Ward

### 1 Status of St Mary's 5 Year Vision

In 2008, St Mary's established a 5 year vision which included two key focuses:-

The first was to establish discipleship pathways to enable those seeking to understand the Christian faith to come into a relationship with God through Jesus; to grow in their faith and then begin to serve Jesus both within the Church and in their own lives. It was also focussed on enabling everyone to grow deeper in their faith and discipleship through various activities including Home Groups, Prayer Retreat Days and other courses and activities.

In addition we sought to provide a clear pathway for youngsters to be nurtured in their faith, from infants through pre-school and primary school years to youth and then young adults in the workforce. Ministries such as Playgroup, God's Gang, Youth United and Young Adults have either been strengthened, adjusted or begun to establish this at St Mary's so that parents know their children (and family) will be well cared for and nurtured in their faith.

The second key focus was to plant new congregations in this growing community of Sunbury, specifically reaching out to those for whom going to church is not part of their thinking. The specific target was to plant at least one new congregation by the end of 2012.

After some further thinking about this, we realised we couldn't do this with our existing staffing. Therefore in 2010, we had a Parish meeting and together decided to employ a Congregation Planter to specifically focus on this initiative. Through your generosity with increased giving, and the receipt of two Grants from the Diocese each year over the past two years, Kim Beales (together with Kate and Amelie) joined us at the start of 2011.

The Prayer and Praise with Pre-schoolers (PPP) Congregation and the Youth and Young Adults Congregation have therefore been able to be developed under Kim's leadership and there are some very exciting things happening as God works in both congregations (see separate article by Kim).

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## Youth & Young Adults Community


This is a community which meets for a monthly church service at 7.30pm on the first Sunday of each month. In addition the Young Adults meet weekly at my place for a Home Group of Bible Study, prayer and fellowship. There are over 20 Young Adults connected with this Home Group.

Our youth and young adults community has an average attendance of 50 people. On 1st July we celebrated our first birthday since our initial pilot service. Having taken a leap of faith, the youth and young adults service has become an important place for young people to worship, use their gifts and invite their friends. For the remainder of 2012 we have booked an outreach event on the third Sunday of each month, and a small team meets for prayer and creative brainstorming on weeks when there are no services. In these ways we have stepped beyond our monthly gathering to being a community that is meeting regularly

A small team has been developing a vision document. One of the aspects of our vision is about working out how to be a community for others. We hope this year to grow to 70 through connecting with new people. Please pray for this.

A part of our initial vision was to become a centre for the discipleship of young people in our geographical region. A family from Romsey have been regularly attending our service, and one young adult from Romsey has been attending our young adults group each week. This is an example of beginning to serve a need in our region.

The young adults have been growing in leadership. Over the last year a number of people have led services and shared testimonies for the first time. It has also been exciting to see people grow in their musicianship through being part of a band. I have been intentional about helping people have a role in each of our services, so that there is an atmosphere of participation.



Last weekend, the Young Adults group had a retreat at Bullengarook with over 20 in attendance. This was a real time of blessing and growing the community of young adults in our midst.

Please pray as we continue to seek God's Vision and serve Him in the Youth and Young Adults Community.

*Rev Kim Beales  
Congregation Planter*

## Update of St Mary's 5 year vision & Diocesan Pilot Programmed.....*continued*

Kim continues to do a great job with the two new developing congregations he's leading and with many of you who are working alongside him.

While there is still much work to be done, we have come to the point of needing to focus now on where God wants to lead us for the next 5 to 10 years, specifically with the challenges we have before us in this growing community of Sunbury and reaching out to people with the Gospel. In many senses this will be a continuation of where God has been leading us but we will need to think through this over the next 6 months.

### 2 Diocesan Pilot Programme

Early this year, as the Vestry and I began to think about all this, we received an invitation from the Diocese to take part in a Diocesan Pilot Programme. This programme, funded by the Diocese, provides assistance and training for Parishes with an average weekly attendance of between 75 and 150 to grow strategically. After the Wardens and I met with the Diocesan representative (Ken Morgan), we decided to take up the offer of this Diocesan assistance.

Specifically the Pilot Programme provides us with a person (Ken Morgan) who will meet with me and the some of the staff over the next 12 months to assist us in two ways:-

- 1st – To help us increase our outreach efforts in one specific aspect of our current ministry; and
- 2nd – To assist us in our strategic thinking for the next 5 to 10 years.

#### *1st Increased Focus of an Existing Ministry*

In regards to the 1st form of assistance we prayerfully considered which ministry area would benefit most in the short term with some specific strategic assistance. We came to the unanimous decision to focus the Pilot Project on Kim and Ros Armstrong's work with young families. We have existing connections with young families through Playgroup and the PPP congregation. We also have many young families coming to us for baptisms and weddings. There is great potential for growth through appropriate connections with these families and their networks.

The Pilot Programme entails us developing a Mission Action Team (Kim is already doing this). This team will consist of some staff and key lay leaders. The team currently consists of myself, Kim, Ros Armstrong, Kate Beales and Klara Hahne. One member of Vestry will also be on the team and two others are considering being on the team. The team will attend a workshop on 11 August titled "Pathways" which will help us explore how we can connect with other young families in the community through logical pathways and relationships.

In addition the Pastoral Staff Team (Kim, Cath, Ros and I) will attend 2 days of training in early August. We have already attended one full day of training in May.

This initiative is an extension of the current vision God has for us. As we specifically apply some increased effort into connecting with young families our prayer is that the PPP congregation will grow and ultimately be planted into some part of Sunbury, becoming part of the community in their midst.

*2nd Strategic Thinking and Visioning for the Parish*

In the regards to the 2nd form of assistance from the Diocese, I will be regularly meeting with Ken Morgan in a coaching role to assist us in thinking through the longer term planning for the Parish. As we continue to grow beyond 150 we will begin to transition from a smaller family type church to a larger church. This will mean we will need to change and adjust in the way we do things. In conjunction to meeting with Ken, I have been doing some reading that is helping me think through what these adjustments will need to be. In many ways we have already been making these adjustments through the employment of staff and some restructuring of the way Vestry operates. The Wardens, Vestry and other key leaders will be involved with me as we think through all of this.

**3 What does all this mean for St Mary's?**

St Mary's has been averaging a weekly attendance of around 140 to 160 for many years but has not grown beyond that number. This is typical (supported by substantial research) of churches with one full time pastor, minister, vicar etc.

Since we have employed Kim, our average weekly attendance has grown to around 190 (as reported in my Annual Report to last year's AGM) and has the potential to grow much higher. This is not something we seek for numbers sake. I am not a numbers driven person, but rather a kingdom driven person. My desire is always to see people come into a relationship with Jesus and to then grow in that relationship with Him. However God has seen fit for us to grow in numbers and we need to be in a position, structurally, to be able to serve Him as he calls us to in this community of Sunbury.

In terms of St Mary's current ministries, everything will continue as at present. Kim will continue with his ministry to Young Adults and the Youth and Young Adult congregation, specifically as it continues to grow and connect with an increasing number of young adults in our community. Both Sunday morning and the Wednesday congregations will continue to meet and grow as they are and Home Groups will continue to be the hub of how we grow as God's people.

What we learn from the Pilot Programme will be of great assistance, and help us in many areas of ministry as go forward, including youth, young adults, retirees, the disadvantaged etc.

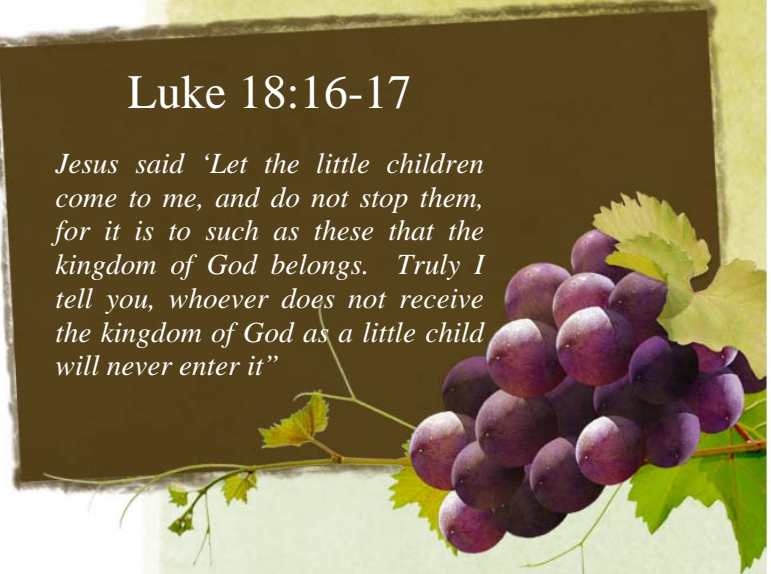
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**Parents and Pre-schoolers Community (PPP)**

**Luke 18:16-17**

*Jesus said 'Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them, for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it'*



This is a congregation which meets for a church service and fellowship at 4pm on the last Sunday of each month in the hall. Last year we prayed that we would have 30 participants. In the latter part of 2011 numbers were fairly low, yet in recent months God has answered our prayer. The PPP community has consistently had numbers of around 30 people (including helpers).

Currently the PPP is the most effective of the two communities in doing outreach. Most of the families attending PPP don't go to another service, or are new in their faith. PPP has been successfully reaching new people, who are discovering the gospel, and learning about the Christian life. In August we look forward to baptizing two members of the PPP congregation at the PPP service. In August I will attend a training workshop (with the Mission Action Team) about developing intentional pathways so that a parent with pre-schoolers whom we don't yet know might find a connection to our community. Currently our playgroup and women's group enable regular contact for families. I have also been intentionally connecting with families who have had their children baptized. We help parents know about the PPP community and recommend this as the primary way we are helping parents to fulfill the baptism promises they make on behalf of their children.

Please pray as we continue to seek God's Vision and serve Him in the Parents and Pre-schoolers Community.

*Rev Kim Beales  
Congregation Planter*



## Update of St Mary's 5 Year Vision and Diocesan Pilot Programme... *continued*

### 4 What does this all this mean for me?

I ask you to pray as we continue to step forward with God's Holy Spirit as our guide and strength. Pray for those who are leaders in the Parish and prayerfully consider how you might become involved in what God is doing in the Parish.

Many of you who were here in 2010 pledged to increase your giving to allow us to employ Kim as a Congregation Planter. We also received two annual grants from the Diocese (in the order of \$15,000) to assist us financially. We can no longer rely on these Diocesan Grants. St Andrew's Uniting Church is applying for Grants from within their own network to assist us with part of Kim's salary as it pertains to his work with the Youth and Young Adults Congregation.

In order to continue this work God has placed before us, I ask each of you to prayerfully consider what you may be able to contribute additionally. The increase is not significant (as you have already been generous). If each person who regularly attends St Mary's was to increase their giving by the cost of one cup of coffee per fortnight (ie \$3/fortnight) we would achieve this financial goal. For some this will be a struggle while others will be able to be more generous. All I ask is that you prayerfully and humbly before God, commit this matter to him and respond as God prompts you.

We have a rich history as a Parish of being generous towards God's work – here in Sunbury, in other parts of Australia and around the world (including Cambodia and of course Chibobo in Zambia). Let's continue to be a generous people and watch as God's hand moves and works in people's lives.

In addition, God may lay upon your heart to become involved in this new initiative, on Vestry (as the leadership of the Parish) or to use your gifts and abilities in another way that contributes towards His vision for us.

God has clearly placed each of us in this growing community of Sunbury for a purpose. We all live here because we've grown up here or chosen to move here. Whatever the reason we live and worship here in Sunbury, God has drawn each of us here for this time; for His time. We must honour what God is calling us to do and take the next step. God is doing this anyway and we just need to follow his lead.

Please speak with myself, Kim, Cath or one of the Wardens or Vestry if you have any questions about this or would like further information.

*Rev Gavin Ward*  
Vicar



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