

# Our Lady, Queen of Apostles Stafford

Parish Plan  
2024-2028



# Our Plan

Our Parish Plan is the culmination of weeks of “dreaming” by our parishioners, enthusiastic participation in our Parish Summit and the energetic efforts of writing teams and the Parish Missional Council. It sets a course for the next 5 years. This document provides an outline of the Outcomes we aspire to achieve. A more fulsome document, which details some specific strategies, is available on the parish website, or via this QR code.



We invite you to join us on our journey, share your skills and talents to bring our dream to life and make God’s kingdom come.

# Acknowledgement of Country

We respectfully acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the First Nations Peoples of this country and especially acknowledge the Turrbal and Yuggera people on whose lands this parish lies.

We pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

May we continue to walk gently and respectfully together with each other.

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# Foreword

We all love certainty and security. However, as disciples of Jesus, there are a couple of items that may rock that boat of certainty.

First of all there is the command to move from where we are when Jesus says to us “Come – follow me!”

Secondly, we are empowered and united by the Holy Spirit who guides us and gifts us for the journey. Here again, that can seem a dodgy exercise! The Spirit overshadowed a country girl out bush – a long way from the religious and political centre and told her the child will be “holy and will be called Son of God.” The Spirit drove Jesus into the wilderness. The Spirit seems to invite uncertainty! We hear “The spirit of the Lord is on me, for she has anointed me to bring the good news to the afflicted. She has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives, sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free,…”

Ultimately though, the way of Jesus which we follow is the way where love, goodness and life have overcome hate, evil and death. A life where all that divides is overcome and ALL people and all the environment live in communion as daughters and sons of the one Abba.

Our certainty in the uncertainty comes from the promise, “I will be with you always!”

In 1956, when our first Parish Priest, Michael Carew stood on a bare bit of land and started digging trenches in the dirt, I wonder what his plan was? Did a candy-striped tent figure? How challenged was he when a young Fay Robertson, with babe in arms asked him where the local Catholic Church was? – all she saw was a circus tent!

From the stability of the 1950’s to the upheaval of the 60’s and 70’s, our parish grew and prospered. Together with John Gerry, the arrival of the Sisters, and Clem Hodge, we faced huge challenges. New ways of doing things challenged us because of the changing world – the first Parish Council, a Credit Union to help struggling families. We built a church and a school, we welcomed with open arms refugees from Vietnam and created life-

long bonds. We adopted “Movement for a better World” which did what it said and “moved us out” to welcome the stranger and connect with parishioners who, for whatever reason, did not want to gather with us.

With the 80’s, 90’s and 2000’s the uncertainty of the world and the great changes in attitudes towards “church” made hard and fast plans redundant before the ink dried. We had a quick turnover of Priests – Michael McK-eaten who employed our first Pastoral Associate, our first Migrant priests, Marian and Tony, followed by Kevin Carey.

In the 2010’s and 20’s we have more challenges especially of attitudes towards “the Church” with the abuse crisis, COVID, smaller and older congregations, fewer (and older) priests. This in a world facing a climate crisis and the biggest migration of people in history, with less respect for human life. The temptation is to revert to what we used to do which can be comforting but in the long run, futile.

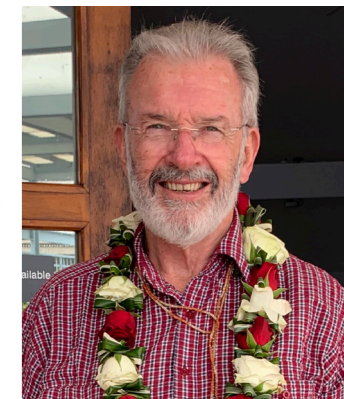
With the drive of our Parish Council, and the sense of “parish” we all have, we once again “leave our boats behind” and set a direction for the next five years. As usual, the courage of our Parish to be innovators led by Jesus’ call, and gifted by the spirit means that the majority of our congregation has been actively involved in this plan through contributing their dreams.

Remembering the old joke, “If you want to make God laugh, tell him your plans!”, we know that this plan is not set in concrete and will need to be flexible as the Spirit guides us in new times with a new priest.

No worries! As we have done in the past, so we will do in future – proclaim the Good News in ways that respond to the signs of the times.

On the journey with you, may God’s Word of life ever bless you.

Denis (with the Parish Missional Council)



# Our Vision

Our Lady, Queen of Apostles is a family of believers where Jesus is central to all we say, all we do and in how we serve our local and wider communities. We are committed to building a welcoming and inclusive parish where strong leadership and service are at the core.

When people walk into our community, they will immediately feel welcomed. We are a community of people of all ages, ethnicities and demographics - children, families, couples, teenagers, young adults, adults and those in their twilight years.

We dream of making Jesus visible in our everyday lives in our encounters with each person as we use our skills and talents for the benefit of all.

We dream of a Spirit filled church where the Eucharist is central, where worship is joyful and life-giving and where each person is nurtured in growing to their full potential and developing a deeper relationship with God.

# Our Mission

To follow the example of Jesus in word, deed and service.

# Our Values





# Whole of Parish

As a parish we promote active roles and leadership opportunities for our community members. We aspire to bring our many skills and talents together in a way that energizes our parish. We recognise two areas that require coordination for our plans to be successful:

- strong consistent communication and
- strengthening and valuing the work of volunteers.



# Volunteering

## Outcome

- Our volunteer base for all ministries and groups is strengthened so that those who encounter us are inspired to be part of our parish and have clear ways to connect and get involved.



# Communication

## Outcomes

- A permanent Communications Ministry coordinates and manages communication tasks within the parish, developing a public relations strategy and spearheading an evangelisation program.
- A comprehensive Communications Strategy is established to initiate processes for maintaining regular contact and dialogue with stakeholders within the parish utilising a variety of platforms for disseminating and advertising key information, news and appeals to parishioners.
- An integrated Public Relations plan is developed and enacted.
- High quality communication is a hallmark of our parish.
- Parish-school relationships are visible and collaborative.





# Worship

Our Worship Ministry Helps everyone have special and life changing encounters with God through prayer, liturgy and communal worship experiences. Our parish Worship ministry will invite people into a personal relationship with Jesus through a variety of worship opportunities punctuated by excellent music ministry, engaging preaching, and interactive environments. Our goal is to see more teens and young adults involved in our church, coming to Mass and excitedly taking part in church activities.



# Outcomes

- Mass is a Celebration, a social, engaging and inspirational experience for all encouraging active participation in liturgy by the whole congregation.
- The parish offers a variety of liturgical and devotional experiences that are co-ordinated and well planned.
- There is increased participation in regular Children's Liturgy of the Word.





# Faith and Formation and Evangelisation

This ministry exists to nurture and deepen the spiritual growth and understanding of the members within our faith community and to share the Good News both with members of our faith community and those outside it, inviting all to encounter Jesus Christ and embrace the Christian faith. We aspire to provide a nurturing and inclusive environment where children and their families can grow in faith, deepen their relationship with God and strengthen their bonds with each other and the community. We seek to inspire, empower and guide our younger generation, particularly teens and young adults on their faith journey, equipping them to become passionate and active followers of Jesus.

## Outcomes

- An annual calendar is developed offering a variety of appropriately age-based formation opportunities to deepen personal faith and spirituality.
- Parents are supported in the faith formation and development of their children.
- Our expanded sacramental team ensures a comprehensive sacramental program that is faith filled and engaging for all.
- Our parish can articulate what we mean by evangelisation and develop a strategy to bring the Gospel to people's lives.



# Community Life

Community Life Ministry cultivates a desire to belong within our faith community by offering experiences of connection and participation. This ministry celebrates the gift of Jesus' presence whenever two or more are gathered. We aspire to provide a nurturing environment where our teens and young adults actively engage with our faith community and develop a sense of purpose. At the core of this ministry is building strong intergenerational relationships and connections among parishioners to enhance the sense of belonging.

## Outcomes

- Our parish is an inclusive, welcoming, intercultural and intergenerational community, accepting of diversity, aligning with our commitment to welcoming all members of the community wholeheartedly including LBGQT+ individuals and those from various backgrounds.
- We promote and offer community and social activities to all age groups on a regular basis reinforcing the parish's vision of an active and vibrant community.
- Links between school and parish are reinvigorated and strengthened.





# Service

Our Service and Outreach ministry will show radical love to those in the wider community who may feel marginalised, disconnected, and vulnerable. We will extend the love, empathy and compassion of our faith community beyond its walls and into the wider community. This ministry will facilitate opportunities to be the hands and feet of Jesus within the community and beyond.



# Outcomes

- Our Parish's energetic Care for Creation team challenges parishioners to consider their impact on the environment and respond both individually and collectively.
- Our parish social justice group responds to community issues.
- In partnership with Romero Centre our parish supports the integration of refugees into our community
- Our parish promotes personal connections with a variety of community groups.
- Our parish has flourishing and effective support programmes.





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