



St Swithun's
ANGLICAN CHURCH
PYMBLE

2024 Annual Report

Reporting on the Finances and Ministry of 2023



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Parish Council Meetings Attendance Record

Meetings held since 2023 AGM = 11

Name	Attended
Stuart Holman	11
James Pomeroy	11
Ross Millar	9
Margaret Knuckey	9
Leighton Hunziker	9
Brett Winton <i>(Treasurer)</i>	9
Peter Copleston	8
Robin Hall	8
David Milling <i>(Bookkeeper)</i>	8
Malcolm Binns <i>(resigned September 23)</i>	7
Rob Clarke	7
Peter Davis <i>(resigned September 2023)</i>	6
David Green <i>(from January 2024)</i>	2

Senior Minister's Report

2023 was a most enjoyable year of 'getting settled' at St Swithun's. As much as I 'settled into' the year, now more familiar with the patterns and rhythms of the ministry here; it seems that the members of St Swithun's also 'settled in' to me as their Senior Minister. Friendliness has developed into friendships, gracious welcomes now have a warm and easy familiarity. Cate and I thank you sincerely for accepting us into the St Swithun's family. Joey also says thank you.

Staff

I would also like to thank the amazing Staff of St Swithun's who have embraced some new ideas and approaches. They are confident in their roles and working towards our shared goals. I appreciate their fellowship, camaraderie and deep desire to serve our Lord Jesus.

	Title	Role	2023 (days/week)	2023 FTE
Stuart Holman	Senior Minister	Maturity and 9am	6 days	F/T 1.0
Andy Bell	Assistant Minister	Belonging and 10:30am	6 days	F/T 1.0
Nigel Gray	Assistant Pastor	Outreach and 6pm	4 days	P/T 0.8
Hannah Killen	Children's and Youth Minister	Children and Youth	5 days	F/T 1.0
Christina Hollister	Seniors' Minister	Pastoral Care	3 days	P/T 0.6
Emilia Oslington	Youth Worker	Youth	3.5 days	P/T 0.7
Tim Oslington	Youth Worker	Youth	1.5 days	P/T 0.3
Jean Gurusamy	Parish Administrator		32 hours	
Dineesha Welikala	Administration Assistant		20 hours	
Phil Linguist	Musical Director (Traditional)	Choir	1 day	
Peter Hamilton	Organist	Choir	Sessions as required	

At the end of 2023 Tim Oslington completed his time with us on staff, although he will continue to engage with the youth of our parish in a volunteer capacity. We thank and congratulate Tim on his four years on staff, and are glad for his new full-time teaching role at Scots College.

Wardens and Parish Council

Throughout 2023 I have greatly enjoyed working alongside our Wardens and Parish Council. I am so grateful to Ross Millar, my Senior Minister's Warden, for his partnership in the gospel, his encouragement, his wise and thoughtful insights; as well as the warmth of his friendship. I am delighted that Ross has accepted my invitation to continue in the role for just one more year.

Our 2023 AGM elected Peter Davis and Malcolm Binns as our People's Wardens. Sadly, Peter passed away in January 2024, having resigned his position in September 2023. As a man, Peter became a genuine friend as we shared several common interests, a love for a good coffee and conversation together—all with his wonderfully dry sense of humour. As our Warden, Peter's contribution was extremely valuable—even in just a short period of time. Peter's financial rigor and acumen enabled us to make some difficult and prudent financial decisions well, and in a timely manner. As Finance Warden he also developed a long range view of our financial situation, which will serve us well in the coming years. To Joanne and family, we express our sincere sympathy and continue to pray for comfort and peace.

Malcolm Binns also served as People's Warden up until September 2023, before he and Janet moved to the Wollongong area. I am so grateful for Malcolm's attention to detail and readiness to 'dig in' to matters that we might otherwise have let slip. As Finance Warden in 2022, and then Property Warden in 2023, he has served our Lord and our Parish faithfully and well. We are glad to continue to see Malcolm and Janet from time to time, appreciating their energy and commitment to see the Kingdom growing.

With the double retirement of both Peter and Malcolm, Margaret Knuckey and Peter Copleston were elected as People's Wardens by a Special General Meeting of the Parish on 22nd October 2023. Thank you so much to both Margaret and Peter for your willingness to serve and exercise your roles with careful wisdom. It has been a pleasure to serve alongside you both.

Our 2023 Annual General Meeting elected an resourceful and dedicated Parish Council, who worked together collaboratively and collegially. Margaret Knuckey, Robin Hall, Peter Copleston, Leighton Hunziker, Rob Clarke and James Pomeroy met monthly with the Wardens, Treasurer, Bookkeeper and myself. After the elevation of Margaret and Peter to the roles of People's Warden, David Green was appointed to the Parish Council in January.

On behalf of the whole parish, I would also like to thank our Treasurer Brett Winton and his over-qualified bookkeeper assistant, David Milling. They have provide excellent support and clear financial reporting information. Their ministry is greatly appreciated.

The St Swithun's Ministry Plan

2023 saw the launch of The St Swithun's Ministry Plan, which is a rolling 5 year statement of our priorities and objectives as a Church. While it is a public document (available on our website) it is primarily written for the leadership of our church—Parish Council, Staff and others interested in this aspect of our life together. In January 2023 Parish Council adopted the Plan as a policy of our church.

In broad brush-strokes we could sum up the Plan as building good patterns, foundations and maturity in 2023; developing our experience of belonging in 2024; before reaching out and inviting our community to join in during 2025-26. In this way, we prioritise becoming a “welcome – nurture - serve kind of church.”

The Ministry Plan itself is intended to be a living document, regularly reviewed and adapted to changing circumstances, always reflecting our current priorities as a church. It identifies the activities which will have the greatest impact on the realisation of our vision and values. We are currently up to Version 4.0, which will be available at the Annual General Meeting in hard copy or available for download on our website Vision page.

In an Appendix to this document we have a record of the specific goals we intended to achieve in 2023. Five possible outcomes are noted for each goal:

- (i) fulfilled and will continue to be implemented,
- (ii) attempted, evaluated and will be tried again,
- (iii) deemed not practical now but may be re-visited in the future,
- (iv) attempted, evaluated and abandoned, or
- (v) have not been acted upon.

Our staff are currently setting goals for 2024 and will communicate these with Parish Council for implementation in the forthcoming year.

Thank you

With the help of the Holy Spirit, there are many people who have supported, encouraged, and sustained me in my role throughout the year. I am so very grateful for this assistance and inspiration. Together we are a great big family serving our Lord and following in his footsteps. There is one woman, however, to whom I owe the greatest gratitude. Cate is my constant loving companion, wise counsel, sounding board brains trust, and spiritual friend, without whom I could not continue in this role. Thank you.

Stuart Holman
Senior Minister

Wardens' Report

How appropriate that this report appears during the sermon series “We Are Family”! The last twelve months have seen many developments in our St Swithun’s family, and further development along the path of the Ministry Plan inaugurated at this time last year.

Your Wardens have changed during the year. With the untimely death of Peter Davis and Malcolm Binns’ move south of Sydney, Margaret Knuckey and Peter Copleston were elected in October and have since taken on the Property and Finance Wardens’ responsibilities respectively.

Detailed Property and Finance reports appear in the following pages, but there are a few financial highlights worthy of special mention. A sizable bequest during the year has provided funds for the ongoing maintenance and repair of the organ and for the support of the Choir – the Cultural Fund continues, also, to support contemporary music. Grants from the Commonwealth Government have supported the renovation of the creche and provided equipment for Everyday English and a grant from Ku-ring-gai Council has provided equipment for the gym.

At the end of the year, we received an extremely generous donation from a long-term parishioner. With this donation, we are establishing the St Swithun’s Christian Growth and Maturity Trust, which will manage the funds and interest earned. These moneys will be used to achieve accelerated ‘step-level’ implementation of the Ministry Plan and for new initiatives not included in the annual budget, rather than to cover ongoing operational costs. We anticipate that bolstering youth and children’s ministry beyond what has already been budgeted will be an early focus.

We are indeed blessed that the ongoing generosity of the Parish has enabled us to exceed our budget targets and to provide services and programs as we would wish.

The Parish continues to be wonderfully served by our staff, led by Stuart, and we are truly blessed to have them all with us. The Ministry team of Stuart, Andy, Nigel, Hannah, Emilia and Tim have worked tirelessly and we were sorry to see Tim leave for full-time teaching at the end of 2023. Chris provides constant, and often unseen, pastoral care to many and Jean and Dineesha work effectively and efficiently in the vital tasks of administrative support. We are also indeed fortunate to have Brett Winton and David Milling as stewards and managers of our finances.

The work of Parish Council is largely behind the scenes, but vital, in keeping the Parish running and we are grateful to all for their dedication, as we are to the many, many volunteers who participate in virtually every facet of the Parish and without whose work St Swithun’s would simply cease to run.

As with every organization today, technology is vital to our operations and the proceeds of the IT Appeal of recent years have been utilized to provide us with a largely stable technical environment. The weekly livestream of the 9.00am service attracts a large audience, often larger than the congregation in the Church.

Your Wardens have been privileged to support the implementation of the Ministry Plan for the Parish, a plan which under God's guidance sees St Swithun's as a church *for* the community and *of* the community we serve.

Ross Millar, Margaret Knuckey, Peter Copleston



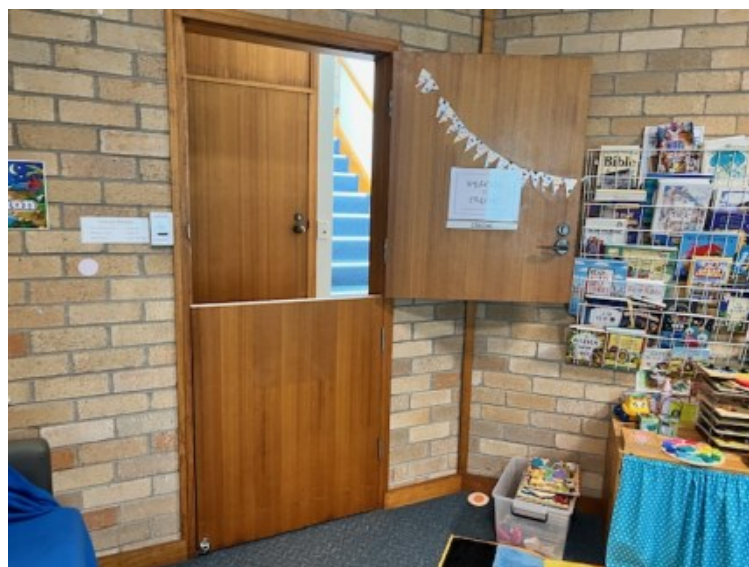
Property, Grounds and Facilities Report

The Church Building: One of the most visible improvements to the Church Building in 2023 was the refurbishment of the Creche. New windows and blinds were installed, as well as new lighting, and a stable style safety door. This has created a very welcoming and secure environment for pre-school children and their teachers, financed by a grant from the Federal Government. Our thanks to those who oversaw this project.

Other tasks completed in 2023 included: resetting the wrought iron gate, cockroach eradication and annual termite inspection, removal of mould from the South Foyer, installation of a new timber gate at the back of the church and replacement of a water-damaged carpet on the stairway to the upper room.

The lighting in the Church has been improved by using high-quality light globes which are gradually being installed as the old globes fade. The front porch light has been replaced, and electrical work done to locate and repair the cause of circuits tripping out at the back half of the building. Lights in the Upper Room are to be brightened. Planned work at the back of the Church includes cleaning of down pipes and gutters, the installation of gutter guards, and the replacement of the flashing over the junction box. Drainage issues at the back of the Church building will also be addressed. Roof tiles over the Lounge area of the Church have been replaced.

The Church Hall: Shelving was built for the collection of donations for Berkeley. Further planned work includes cleaning the dormer windows and installing brighter lights.



4A Merrivale Road: The PACE

Centre: The major development in the PACE Centre has been the creation of a gymnasium in the undercroft which was enabled by the generosity of several Youth Ministry staff, leaders and their friends and also supported with funding from a local Council grant. The gym provides a meeting place for young people on Friday and Sunday afternoons.



During December the carpet in the Ridley-Smith Room was cleaned. In January, trees overhanging the path at the side of the building were pruned, with the aim of preventing possums from using the trees to enter the roof. We are grateful to a few men from Men's Breakfast who regularly sweep leaves from the path to prevent slipping. A small fence was installed in front of the culvert outside the gate on Bungalow Ave.



4 Merrivale Road: Security was improved after an unwanted entry. The property was treated with pesticides to remove pests from the roof. A high ceiling light and switch plate were replaced. A wasp nest was removed before the window cleaning was completed in February.

11 Merrivale Road: Insurance money paid for repairs to the Rectory after a fire, including the switchboard and verandah. A leaking pipe was repaired in the front garden.

Grounds: Our landscaping contractors continue to maintain the lawns, and hedges of the Church as well as the grounds of the PACE Centre. As lawn maintenance lessens, our contractors will complement the work of volunteers to improve the condition of the hedge around the Church. New mature Photina Robusta shrubs will be planted to replace those that have died.

General Matters: Regular Council Clean-Ups enabled the disposal of unwanted items to free up needed space.

We are very grateful to Manny Shah, our cleaning contractor, and David Scharkie who assisted in much of the maintenance as our regular handyman was on a protracted holiday. We also give thanks to Peter Copleston who organized the replacement of the projector and screen in the Church. We also note the invaluable assistance in all property matters of Jean Gurusamy and Dineesha Welikala. We appreciate all their work in tidying the Church on Mondays and all of the extra things they do as they serve in the Office.

I also want to thank Malcolm Binns, for his service as Property Warden from March to October and for his assistance in compiling this report.

Thanks must also go to Leighton Hunziker for all the regular “little” maintenance jobs which he completes.

Margaret Knuckey and Leighton Hunziker



9:00am Service

Our 9am Traditional Service is now well settled into a pattern of Morning Prayer (1st, 3rd and 5th Sundays) and Holy Communion (2nd and 4th Sundays). Using *An Australian Prayer Book* (1978) and occasional use of *Sunday Services* (2001), we have a solid liturgical foundation for our worship. Our choir, also, provides excellent direction, encouragement and creativity as they lead our hymns and stir us with their anthems; all connected thematically to our sermon message for the week.

I am very grateful for so many who serve us in diverse roles each week—welcoming, reading, praying, leading, making morning tea, arranging flowers, polishing brass, running sound and livestream—and other roles besides. A heartfelt ‘thank you.’ I would particularly like to acknowledge the wonderful work of Phil Linquist (our Choir Director), Peter Hamilton (our Organist) and Chris Hollister (who does everything else!).

Throughout the year many small changes and new developments took place in our service. We developed new patterns for serving Holy Communion, both at the Communion Rail near the Holy Table and with two additional stations near the front of the Nave (not requiring steps or kneeling). As Covid became a constant but lower-risk virus, we received advice that we could relax the use of face-masks and gloves for our communion servers. Given all the other factors involved, they made no difference to our chances of picking up the virus while attending church.

It seems unlikely that we will ever return to sharing a common cup but will retain individual communion cups— now made of a new and environmentally friendly material (single use plastics are now forbidden). Consideration is being given to offering a choice of port alongside our non-alcoholic grape juice.

Other developments in our Service included new volunteers taking up roles as Bible readers, tech operators, service leaders, and welcomers. We also had a couple of ‘retirements’ from such roles by those allowing other younger members to step in and take their place. I expect this kind of renewal will continue in 2024.

Our weekly Livestream audience grew throughout the year. On average, we have approximately 120 screens viewing our service each week. While some screens represent more than one viewer, others will not follow the entire service. We might estimate, therefore, an additional 120 ‘unseen’ participants in our service each week. It has been a pleasure to meet some of them personally in faraway places like Salisbury (UK), Goulburn and North Turrumurra. Others have sent messages by email or made phone calls to express their gratitude. Some have made donations, as ‘members’ supporting our ministry.

When you see our tech-team working feverishly pressing buttons at the back of the church each Sunday (or just drinking coffee!), you might remember to pray for our

‘unseen’ congregation. You might also remember that the tech-team would prefer to chat over morning tea since the most stressful part of their roles is getting everything working before the service starts!

Throughout the year our attendance has remained strong and consistent, averaging 105 each week. Sadly, we farewelled some cherished members in 2023. We have also been delighted to welcome several new members and see them enfolded into our fellowship.

Rev. Stuart Holman
Senior Minister and Congregation Pastor



St Swithun's Choir

In Summary - Singing and Serving at:

- Sunday services (43)
- Helping lead the singing at a wedding and a funeral service
- Three St Swithun's Evensongs
- Swiz Messiah (10th)
- Good Friday Service of Word and Song and Easter Day Choral Service
- Choral Evensong at St Thomas's Salisbury UK
- Five Choral Evensongs and a Concert on St Swithun's Day at Salisbury Cathedral UK
- Morning Eucharist at Romsey Abbey UK
- Leading the annual Huguenots Service at St Swithun's Church
- Our second "Celebrating the Psalms" festival at St Swithun's
- Official opening of the new Gordon Quarter
- Lessons and Carols Service at the New Gordon Quarter
- Lunchtime Carols at Royal North Shore Hospital
- St Swithun's Christmas Lessons and Carols
- St Swithun's Christmas Eve and Christmas Morning Choral services.

CHOIR HIGHLIGHTS:

Evensongs at St Swithun's – We began with our Lenten Evensong at St Swithun's where we sang S. S. Wesley's "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace" and his setting of "Lead me, Lord." It is always a wonderful way to start the year with this service of reflection.

In May we sang an Evensong for Ascension and in November an Evensong for the Persecuted Church Thank you to all those who attend and support these traditional choral services and thank you to those members of St Swithun's who helped with refreshments at each of these as it provides such a wonderful time of fellowship.

Salisbury Cathedral Tour, July

Farewell Concert

Before we set off overseas, we sang a concert featuring many of the works we were singing in Salisbury. The concert was presented by the whole choir and not just those travelling, as every chorister is involved in all the music we sing overseas. It is important that we share our music with our St Swithun's family before we travel.

Tour

25 of our choristers along with our Senior Minister Stuart and accompanied by a wonderful support group of family and friends (another 15) set off for Salisbury in Hampshire, England. We were welcomed by the Church of St Thomas's Salisbury where we were able to rehearse and sing an Evensong.

The opportunity to Sing and Serve at Salisbury Cathedral was a very special experience. During our week we sang 5 Evensongs and presented a concert which coincidentally fell on St Swithun's Day 15th July. On our final Sunday we travelled to the town of Romsey where we led their Choral Eucharist at Romsey Abbey, originally a 10th Century Abbey for nuns. The people there gave us the warmest of welcomes.



Our tours are an opportunity to Serve and Sing in ancient Churches and Cathedrals where we learn so much about our past, as well as Christian struggles and perseverance. We also meet every morning as a group to study the Psalms that we are singing that day; this tour our devotions were wonderfully led by our Senior Minister Stuart. The tours also provide a time for Christian fellowship, understanding and growth, as well as providing many opportunities for evangelism everywhere we go. Many long-time friendships grow through our tours for choristers, and our friends and families who accompany us.

Our day tours were organised by Louise Kerns, and as always were truly memorable.

It is important to note that our overseas travels are always self-funded and there is no call on financial support from the parish. Occasionally, anonymous benefactors help with donations towards the cost, and we are always immensely grateful to such people.

Thank you especially to the choristers who were unable to tour, but who led the morning services while we were away.

Swiz Messiah

Our 10th Presentation of Handel's "Messiah" was held on the Saturday evening preceding Palm Sunday. The Swiz Choir was augmented by friends, family and members of the congregation who enthusiastically joined in rehearsals and the performance. This is a unique presentation of "Messiah" with our Senior Minister Stuart introducing and explaining the Bible verses from which it is taken. Thank you to Richard Kaan for preparing the presenter's script and programs.

This presentation of "Messiah" each year is a wonderful opportunity to tell the story of Jesus in both word and song to our whole community. Thank you, Peter Hamilton, for the enormous amount of work you do to accompany such a massive work, and trumpeters Andrew Del Riccio and Ben Blunt who add a wonderful spark to the presentation.

Celebrating the Psalms

Having been such a great success in 2022, Peter Hamilton put together another wonderful program of Psalms for us to Celebrate. Senior Minister Stuart led the proceedings and we had a full church (especially thanks to our everyday English students who came because they had been studying several of the Psalms). We had a wonderful time singing congregational hymns, presenting choral anthems, spoken responsories, chanted psalms and readings (even a North American Indian version of the 23rd Psalm).



Advent Services

It was wonderful to once again be able to take part in a series of lunchtime “Christmas” concerts in the Atrium area of the New Royal North Shore Hospital. Thank you to John Fullagar for making this possible. The Swiz knitters gave out knitted gifts to those listening, which were greatly appreciated.

This year a small group of Choristers helped Chris Hollister with the official opening of the new Gordon Quarter (Anglican Retirement Village), and a few weeks later at their Lessons and Carols service.

Christmas Services

Always a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the Birth of our Lord. It was great to have such a large number of choristers supporting all our major services, post covid, with 30 choristers in full voice on Christmas Eve and then 25 warming up at 8:00am for our 8:30am Christmas Day Service.

Thank you

My thanks to our Senior Minister Rev Stuart Holman and the whole clergy team for their constant and active support of this “word through music” ministry. Thanks also to Jean and Dineesha for their cheerful office and admin support.

Special thanks to our Wardens for their wonderful support and encouragement.

Unfortunately, each year we have members who need to step back from singing regularly with the choir. This year I would particularly like to thank Judith McKernan who has been an amazing support member of our choir. Herself a very accomplished and qualified musician, Judith has been involved in keeping all our phone and email address up to date, helping with cataloguing our huge library of music, keeping an eye on our finances through the office, as well as providing sage advice for the choir director when needed. Thank You Judith!!!!

My thanks also to:

- Our organist Peter Hamilton for his incredible musical contribution, compositions and support. His ability to master the three grand pipe organs on our tour was amazing.
- Peter Gilkes for always being ready to step in to direct the choir.
- Richard Kaan our Cantor, Evensong leader, Verger and logistics organizer.
- Wendy and Brian Watson, our amazing Librarians.
- Brian Watson for Chairing the 2023 Salisbury Cathedral Tour and our organizing committee; Julie and Richard Hobson, Trish Kinghorn, Louise Kearns, Richard Kaan, Rob Clarke and Belinda Robinson and Peter Hamilton.
- Brian Watson for his monthly compilation of “Hyfrydol” our choir newsletter which is now published on the Swiz Website.
- Pamela Summers for office support especially providing the text of our Anthems every week for the Service outline.

- Lois Fortescue, our Mistress of the Robes.
- Jenny Kaan, our social and pastoral director.
- Sue Barling for organizing our monthly collection for St Andrew's Hyderabad in India.
- All our Swiz Singers who joined us for our Swiz "Messiah"
- To Chris Hollister and David Barling, for their welcoming and front of house efforts for all our Evensongs and Concerts.
- The wonderful volunteers that serve refreshments for our Evensongs.
- Our Choir Patron, Allin Cousins, for his constant, thoughtful encouragement.

Thank you to each and every chorister for always being ready to change and adapt to everything that has been thrown at them through the last few years. It is only through the efforts of every chorister to giving of themselves and serving our Lord and our Church that combine to make our "Choir".

Our Mission as the "Choir of St Swithun's Church Pymble" is to serve God and our St Swithun's family faithfully, so my report finishes with the final portion of the chorister's prayer that we pray at the close of every rehearsal.

"Grant that what we sing with our lips, we may believe in our hearts, and what we believe in our hearts, we may show forth in our lives."

Phil Linquist
Choir Director



10:30am Family Church

2023 was a wonderful year for our Family Church community. Over the course of the year, we continued to see new growth in our service, but also a consolidation of our community that enabled us to begin to grow closer to each other. I am so thankful for everyone who serve our community each and every week – our drawing together as a community is founded on the love and service of our brothers and sisters.

As per 2022, one of our great strengths each week is our time spent in community over morning tea after the service. It is such a joy to see our intergenerational family getting to know each other more deeply and see the many kids enjoying our church space as they play after SwizKids. The overall feeling of our service is joyful – and we’ve enjoyed sharing that with other brothers and sisters from our other services when they’ve visited on a Sunday morning.



A particular highlight of 2023 was the baptism of Ann Marie and Harriet Leung Morrow in November. It was such a joy seeing our sisters publicly declaring their faith, and for our community to come around them in joyful support. It was a wonderful morning that we loved sharing with other friends and family who joined us.

We have seen growth particularly in our families demographic, as new families move into the area and come see what Swiz has to offer, or families returning after a long Covid season – we are thankful to have a loving, welcoming community to engage with families when they arrive.

Our families ministry involves Creche, SwizKids and Junior Youth, with Hannah, Emilia and Tim running those respectively. It has been a particular joy to see a few of our youth decide to train on as Junior Leaders in SwizKids over 2023. This is an important step in our discipling of youth, but also for maintaining and growing our families ministry through this service and community.

We also were able to utilize the translation skills of some of the people in our service to live translate the entire service into Mandarin. We have seen growth in this area, of those of Chinese background who don't yet speak fluent English, and so to be able to welcome them into our service, and have them understand everything that is said, prayed and sung, is a real blessing for us all.

If you have not visited us yet, but would like to see for yourself what God is doing to grow this part of our community, then please come and join us for a week – or two! We'd love to have you with us.

Andy Bell

Assistant Minister | 10:30am



6pm Night Church

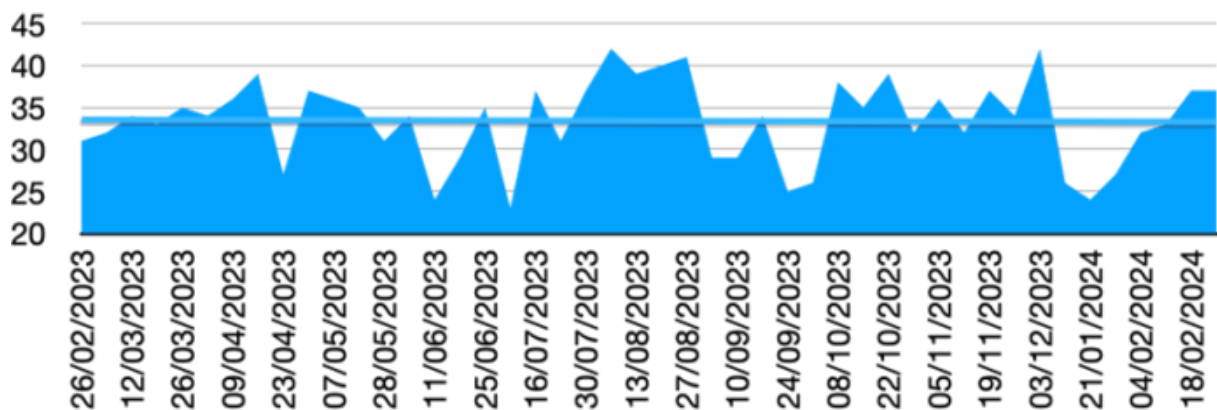
Following modest growth in the 6pm congregation towards the end of 2022, it seems to have plateaued in 2023. We averaged 34 attendees at our 6pm service throughout 2023. We are encouraged that a handful of young people joined us through the year and that they have been inviting friends along.

The congregation is blessed with a goodly number of talented musicians who enjoy leading our worship together. The composition of the congregation continues to be a lovely mix of mainly baby boomers and 20 somethings. More work lies ahead in 2024 to establish a clearer sense of identity and a wider-reaching sense of community.

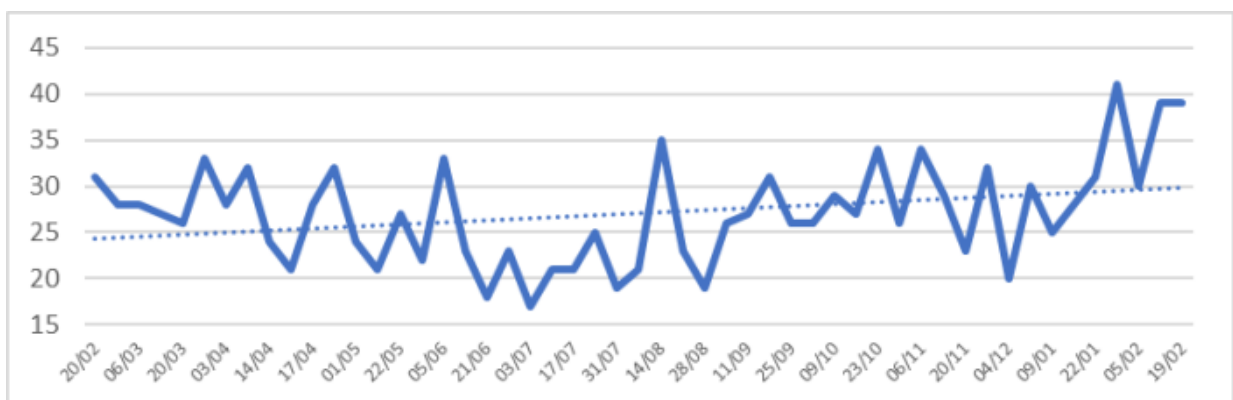
Nigel Gray

Assistant Pastor | 6pm

6pm service attendance 2023



6pm service attendance 2022



Children's Ministry

In 2023, Swiz Kids & Creche continued to provide joy-filled Sunday morning programs alongside the 10:30am service, fostering a welcoming space for children to grow in their faith journey.

Throughout the year, Swiz Kids delved into four main series:

- Mark: The King of God's Kingdom
- Acts: Mission Impossible
- Genesis: Who's Abraham?
- Galatians: The True Gospel

We are grateful for the invaluable contributions of Janet Binns, a key member who generously supported our ministry during the initial months of the year. Although Janet has since relocated, her impact remains significant. Our team of dedicated leaders has grown from 4 to 7 regular adults across both the creche and kids' programs. Additionally, we have welcomed 3 junior leaders, fostering a culture of leadership and service among the youth of Swiz.

We are thrilled to report a steady increase in family and children's attendance, with new families joining us throughout the year. Our collaborative HUB Holiday Program, conducted in partnership with St Andrew's Roseville, was a resounding success, drawing children from various local schools and developing cross-community connections. We strengthened connections with locals by distributing free fairy floss on Halloween as an outreach aimed at those not yet connected to the church.



As we embark on 2024, Swiz Kids is poised for continued growth and impact. We are witnessing the formation of friendships among the children, and our current series focuses on addressing their big questions about God. These questions, sourced from the kids themselves, have served as our curriculum for the term.

In closing, we remain committed to our mission of making disciples, and I look forward to seeing what kingdom work God does through us at Swiz Kids."

Special Religious Education (SRE)

Pymble Public School is a valued partner in facilitating SRE to students. We are thankful for the relationship we have with the principal, Bruno Diodati, and our new liaison, Lauryn Sharp. In partnership with Gordon/Pymble Uniting, we were able to teach 14 classes last year.

The teachers were ever faithful in their service and unwavering in their desire to share the love of Jesus with the students. Stepping into 2024, please be praying for our teachers each Wednesday afternoon: Hannah Killen, Andy Bell, Nigel Gray, Anne Marie Leung Morrow, Sarah Hunziker, Margaret Fullagar, Robyn Joyce, Courtney Hayden, Prue Feather, Cheryl Turner, Line Forrest, and Di Dalziel.

God has graciously provided us with just enough teachers to cover all 14 classes this term, which is partly due to volunteer teachers like Line & Di stepping in from other churches and schools to help us for this first term. So in saying this, we are not covered for all of 2024 and would really value it if you'd consider learning more about becoming a volunteer SRE teacher or helper into 2024 to help local kids hear about Jesus.

Please pray for the team teaching each week at Pymble Public School on Wednesday afternoons and that God would provide additional teachers for this essential ministry for our Church.

Hannah Killen
Children's & Youth Minister



Youth Ministry

Friday Nights Throughout the year 2023, our youth group held weekly meetings on Friday evenings, from 6:00pm to 8:30pm. Our gatherings were structured to include various activities, starting with games to break the ice, followed by a hearty dinner, a Bible talk, and discussion groups. We began the year with a series of talks centred around 'The Cross,' where we explored the powerful significance of Jesus' death and resurrection. In the subsequent term, we delved into the book of Exodus, followed by Philippians and Matthew's Gospel in term four focused on the 'Upside Down Kingdom' and how it relates to our lives today.

Our youth group had an average attendance of 11 teens each week. In June, we organized a girl's night for all the youth girls, where we spent time building deeper connections and enjoying each other's company. We also had some exciting social nights throughout the year. For instance, we went to Strike for a mini-golf outing, had a 'win the prize' games night at the PACE, and celebrated Christmas with a memorable party at the end of the year.





Senior Youth 2023 saw growth in our community at Senior youth bible study for years 10-12. It met and continues to meet on a Wednesday night between 7:00–9:00pm. We regularly saw between 5-7 youths each week which was a shift from between 3-4 in the previous year. We have seen growth in the depth of relationships and personal faith among the youth. It's fantastic to see peer encouragement in faith among our senior youth. We studied the Sunday series passages together which gave us a good chance to delve deeper into the passage after hearing the sermon together on Sunday morning.



Junior Youth Sunday Junior youth for years 7-9 continued to meet on a Sunday during the 10:30am Family service. We met in the upper room for games and bible study. Welcoming some new members to our group this year was a highlight as well as some newly invented games. Including 'Proverbs with Pumba' where we got to sort the 'wisdom from the folly'. We also got skilled at 'code names' together and 'the dot' game.

Onward On June 23rd, we gathered in Chatswood for 'Onward', an event designed to equip Christian teenagers with the knowledge and tools necessary to engage in apologetics and share their faith with others. The evening included Bible talks, singing, and practical teaching. We had a great turnout and even enjoyed some Starbucks during the break!

KYCK In 2023, we had the largest group of teenagers attend the Swiz Youth KYCK event that we've seen in 4 years! A total of 13 high schoolers attended and we are grateful to God for that. We had an amazing time up in the Blue Mountains, enjoying fellowship and cosy fire time, and playing an epic capture the flag tournament. However, the highlight of the event was the session times at KCC, where we studied and discussed Mark's Gospel together. We had some great conversations during those times and a particularly special prayer session on Saturday night.



Summer Camp It was a great privilege to collaborate with St Paul's Chatswood in organizing an amazing summer camp for our youth. The camp was held from 21st to 24th January at the Collaroy Centre and turned out to be a huge success. It was delightful to witness the young people from both our groups supporting each other in faith and building lasting friendships. The theme of the camp was "We are Family," and it inspired us to encourage one another towards acts of love and kindness.

The Youth Team



Ministry Systems

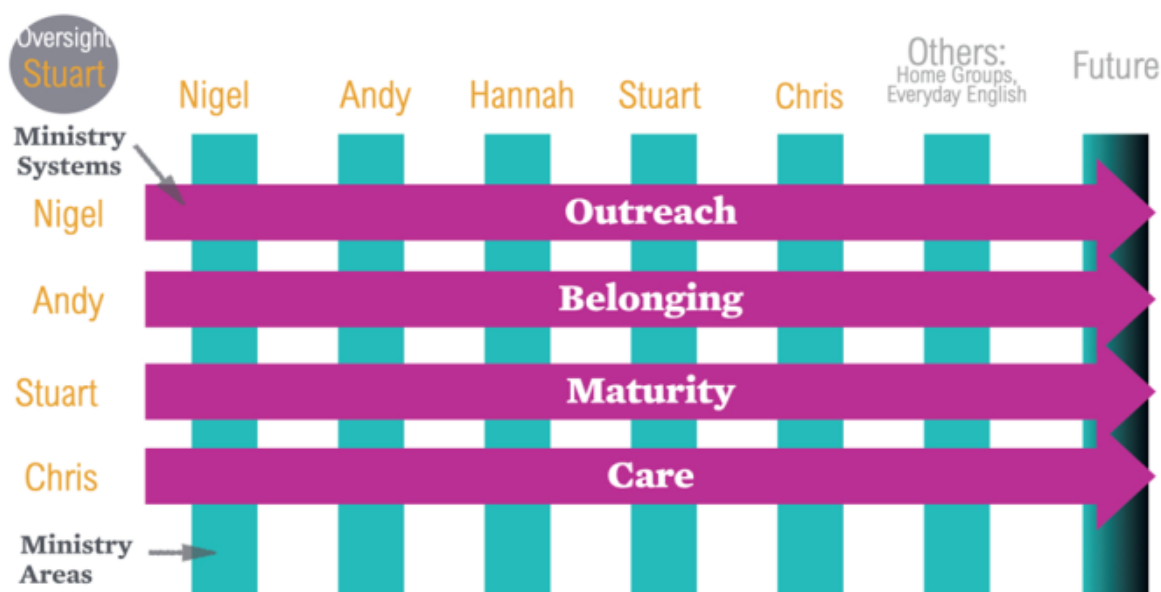
Just as a human body has ‘systems’ that operate throughout the body—a nervous system, a skeletal system, etc— we have framed the ministry of our church in terms of ‘Ministry Systems’ which operate across each of our ‘Ministry Areas’. This helps to build a purposeful and cohesive church, rather than allowing us to be isolated in our silos—whether by Church Services, demographic groups or interests.

At St Swithun’s we want to focus on four such systems, each led by a member of Staff:

1. Outreach (Nigel Gray)
2. Belonging (Andy Bell)
3. Maturity (Stuart Holman)
4. Care (Chris Hollister)

Each of these systems should be present and effective in every ‘Ministry Area’ of our church. We might add many more areas of ministry to our current suite of St Swithun’s ministries, but the health of each ministry would still be driven by Outreach, Belonging, Maturity and Care. This is how we ensure that we are always moving towards our Vision of Welcome | Nurture | Serve.

Our Ministry Systems have particular programs that especially serve their purpose across the church. For example, Home Groups are part of the Maturity System, Balance Classes are part of our Outreach System, Welcoming is part of our Belonging System. The organisation of our Ministry Reports reflects these groupings.



Pastoral Care

St Swithun's is a very caring church and many members of our church family lovingly provide care and assistance wherever they recognize a need.

This year, in an effort to improve our care and ensure no one is overlooked we initiated a new pastoral care program which we have called pastoral partners.

Representatives from all three services were invited to become pastoral partners. Basic training was provided and the pastoral partners were commissioned at their particular service and introduced to the congregations as the "go to" people if anyone is in need of help of any kind.

Pastoral partners were encouraged to communicate pastoral needs to Stuart/Andy/Chris, so the staff are aware of and can pray for those particular pastoral situations in their pastoral care meeting every Thursday.

Pastoral care is the privilege and responsibility of every member of our church family and it can be as simple as a phone call, a catch-up over a cup of coffee, sharing a meal or just lending a sympathetic ear.

Let's all "look out" for each other as we travel our "pilgrim paths", trusting in our gracious and loving Heavenly Father, ever grateful for his blessings and goodness to us. We pray he will help us in our efforts to serve him by welcoming, nurturing and serving his people both in our church family and the community beyond.

Chris Hollister
Seniors' Minister



Seniors' Ministry

Seniors Seminar Series

In the first half of the year we introduced a new initiative, Seniors Seminar Series (SSS). This comprises occasional information sessions on issues that are important to older people. Our first two sessions dealt with negotiating the aged care system (always a daunting and time consuming experience) and we heard from experts in the fields of residential care, home care and financial advice. These seminars were very well attended and we plan more on various topics for next year.

Nursing Home Ministry

It was with great reluctance that we decided to discontinue our monthly services at BUPA, St Ives. Attendee numbers had dwindled considerably and it was just not a practical expenditure of our time. However, our ministry to the residents of Wahroonga House continues once a month with a small but faithful group gathering for the service on the third Tuesday of the month.

Mid-week Holy Communion Service

This service of Holy Communion caters for those people who are unable for whatever reason to attend church on a Sunday. The service is followed by lunch and a time of fellowship and socializing which is enjoyed by all. This year we were delighted to welcome, each month, a busload of residents from Roden Cutler Lodge to the service. Some residents are joined by their family members who appreciate this opportunity to worship with their loved ones.

Seniors Balance Class

Our twice-monthly (first and third Tuesdays) balance classes continue to attract more older people who realise the great benefits of good balance in the prevention of falls and their often serious consequences. Our wonderful physiotherapist, Robyn Dearnley, puts attendees through a thorough regime of exercises aimed at keeping them confidently on their feet and moving well. Lunch is served after the class on the third Tuesday and the time of fellowship is enjoyed by all.



The Big Day Out

Our seniors big day out this year had a nautical theme. A large group enjoyed a lunch cruise on a paddle steamer on the Nepean River. Unfortunately, the weather was not conducive to boating but that did not dampen the enthusiasm or enjoyment of the participants as they were “wined and dined” and enjoyed each other’s company.



Service of Solace and Consolation

We held our annual Service of Solace and Consolation on the second Friday of December. This service recognizes that Christmas is always a challenging time for those who have lost loved ones or have loved ones in care. The service is always well attended and appreciated by all attendees. A time of fellowship and sharing was enjoyed over lunch in the hall.

None of the activities for seniors in this church and beyond could function without the dedication and willing help of a wonderful team of volunteers who cook and serve meals, provide musical accompaniment to services, assist with balance classes and set out furniture. I thank you all for your gracious generosity and servant hearts in giving your time and gifts to enable these activities to take place.

Chris Hollister
Seniors’ Minister

Maturity Ministry System Report

The Maturity Ministry System aims to grow mature disciples of Christ, who make mature disciples of Christ. Such maturity is evidenced by a person's engagement in welcoming, nurturing and serving others; from conversion to glory. This maturity grows as we personally engage with God in both corporate and individual settings.

The Maturity System oversees the preaching and teaching of God's word at our services and the bible study discussion materials provided to our Home Groups. Broadly, these are corporate activities that feed our maturity but what about our personal lives with God?

A living and private devotional life is central to our growth in Christian maturity. The Growing Disciples program (www.growingdisciples.net.au) was developed to assist in building a regular practice of reading the bible, praying, and exploring other spiritual disciplines. While the course had been running for three years already, 2023 offered an opportunity to 'relaunch' it as a personal devotional resource for the members of St Swithun's. Currently there are more than 250 daily subscribers, with about 100 of these identifiable as members of St Swithun's.

In November of 2023, we offered course participants a Soiree (a fancy afternoon tea!) at which to share their experiences of the course. This provided us with valuable feedback and an understanding of how our materials are being used day-by-day. For example, as an online course, we discovered that many St Swithun's users had trouble connecting up or were unaware of the depth and diversity of the resources available on the website. In response to this, the course and the website have been significantly modified from 1 March 2024.

Other important contributors to the maturing process of a Christian are the ministry and leadership opportunities available to them, and the training provided to enable them to succeed and grow in each. For example, when a Christian first teaches a Scripture Class or does a Children's talk, they will learn much from the process. If they accompany some friends they invited to an evangelistic course, they will certainly grow in their ability to converse about their faith. Hence, we mature as we serve.

I am grateful for the support, encouragement and partnership of Robin Hall, Andy Bell and Nigel Gray in developing materials for our Maturity Ministry System.

Stuart Holman
Senior Minister | Maturity Ministry System Leader



Home Groups

Home Groups are the beating heart of any church. They are the place where we most *feel* that we ‘belong’ to St Swithun’s, as well as a place of significant growth in our faith and Christian experience. For this latter reason, they come under the umbrella of our Maturity Ministry System.

For these reasons, the encouragement and training of our Home Group Leaders is so important to the health of any group. During 2023, two leadership seminars were offered (two parallel meetings in the same week) but not all leaders attended, making training only partially effective. This, however, led to an important discovery. As Stuart visited each of our Home Groups, it became apparent that many groups have a shared or rotating model of leadership—meaning that leadership training was required for several members for each group, rather than one or two. Consequently it was decided that leadership training and development was best located within the group, as it meets. This will be the model going forward into 2024, with perhaps two ‘coordination’ leaders meetings throughout the year.

A lack of Home Group leaders generally suggests that we need to develop a ‘leadership pathway’ that develops and trains new leaders for our groups. This pathway will include identifying suitable people, giving them opportunities to lead, encouragement and feedback from their regular leaders, and further ‘Master Class’ opportunities with Stuart.

During 2023 we had 15 Home Groups in operation, as well as our Friday Women’s Bible Study and Men-in-the-Morning (Thursdays). There were a total of 254 members registered in these groups, although it would be fair to say that weekly attendance would be closer to 50% of this number.

The development of our Home Groups ministry will be a key priority for 2024 and beyond.

Stuart Holman
Senior Minister | Maturity System Leader



Women's Friday Bible Study (WFBS)

It was decided that WFBS would return to meeting in the PACE Centre for 2023. There is good ventilation, accessible toilets and generally a more pleasant meeting place.

Although now living in Orange it was good to welcome back as one of our speakers, Marcia Cameron, who started this Bible Study group 30 years ago.

Attendance throughout the year was usually somewhere between 40-50 with some extras viewing on Zoom.

We are grateful to Jenny Liu and Pamela Summers who provided the technical expertise for Zoom and overhead facility.

Rosemary Osbourne, in spite of challenging health issues continued as our musical accompanist. Gillian Thompson graciously deputised as pianist when Rosemary was unavailable. With funds from our bank account plus a generous gift from a benefactor we were able to purchase a keyboard for the PACE Centre.



Group Leaders for 2023 were:

Kay Bruce and Penny Sewell, Christine Edwards, Catherine Halsall, Ann Powell and Robyn Jones, Susan Smart and Margaret Knuckey, Alison Smith. These committed, capable women created the Biblical Studies for the year and invited the various speakers. My grateful thanks to each one of them and for the Pastoral Care of their individual groups.

Books of the Bible studied during 2023 were James, Daniel, signs in John's Gospel and a fascinating look at some of God's faithful witnesses throughout history. These included Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Thomas Cranmer, Esther, Martha and finally Mary, the mother of Jesus.

World Day of Prayer was hosted by Corpus Christi and 18 members from St Swithun's attended. Ann Powell once again coordinated our Quiet Day with creativity and sensitivity.

Our guest presenter in August for our Open Day was Jan Corbett Jones. Jan has conducted Pastoral Care seminars at St Swithun's in the past but on this occasion spoke about her role as a Prison Chaplain and the work of Kairos in our women's prisons.

We have continued to have guest speakers of a high standard while some of "home grown" speakers, Ann Powell, Margaret Knuckey, Christine Edwards and Catherine Halsall have capably led various studies. We were delighted to welcome three new guest speakers. Jo Kadlecek, Kirsten Philips and Christine Olliffe. God blessed us with their expositions.

Christmas Lunch was a colourful affair with decorated tables and delicious Christmas goodies. A Bible quiz produced much discussion at the group tables and was a fun way to end the year.

Women's Friday Bible Study (WFBS) is held every Friday morning during school term meeting at 10:00am in the PACE Centre for tea/coffee before the study commences at 10:30am.

All women are most welcome .

Fran Durand
Coordinator



Belonging

At St Swithun's, we are aiming to be an open Christian 'village' that shares our lives together. This will connect with the families of Pymble who yearn for an inclusive community, where everyone is known and valued—including people from every culture and subculture, every kind of family unit, from multi-generational households to singles. As a church, we will know that we are succeeding in our aims if we are building relationships of Christian love within our community and inviting others to join in our family and share that same love. The Belonging system can be seen to be working when our whole church, each and every generation across all our services and other ministries, when we all feel known and valued, and have our home here in this community. This aim will take some time for us to achieve, but we already have a good platform to begin from, and a church full of willing brothers and sisters to grow in.

2023 was a year of developing and recruiting our Belonging system and our Belonging Committee. James Pomeroy, Jane Pape and myself met throughout the year, to prayerfully consider how we might construct a committee that will give a wide scope across our services as to how we might help our church become a place where everyone feels a deep sense of belonging. The Belonging Committee met for the first time in late February, and we made some good initial progress into how we would like the year to unfold, with excellent discussions around how our services can become more a part of the one big church family that we are.

We covet your prayers throughout the year, as we begin to implement this system into our church life. Please pray that new members will be welcomed well and incorporated into church life easily. Please also pray that our existing members who don't yet feel as though they belong, will begin to feel much more that way as the year progresses. The Committee will meet a few times this year, with events to be announced as decided – with the shared hope that we will see more people feel known and valued in our community by the end of the year.

Andy Bell

Assistant Minister | Belonging



St Swithun's Men's Breakfast

Men's Breakfast continued to meet together for our 39th year. Some of our breakfasters have been there since the first meetings. What a joy it is to meet together, praising our Lord.

Thanks to David Barling and his team of helpers for making sure that we had chairs to sit on, food to eat, and tea and coffee to drink while we listened to a range of speakers



from many backgrounds. We have prayed together, fellow-shipped together, and sung praises to the Lord. James Allington and Ian Worton have been particularly helpful in finding arrangements suitable for men's voices.

Brian Watson has been as busy and cheerful as ever, looking after monies we have collected at breakfasts and BBQs, and forwarding contributions to TCEA and KCEA to support scripture teaching at Turrumurra and Ku-ring-gai High Schools.

Members regularly give talks, although no-one should feel obliged to speak. Our guest speakers during the year, some of whom have become firm friends of the breakfast, have included Graham Morrison (Berridale and Snowy Mountains Parish), Penny Sewell, Bill Sewell, Cameron Jones, Janet Cousens, Chris Hingley, Peter Taylor, Craig Roberts (Youthworks), Simon Roberts (BCA), Scott Walters (Opportunity International), Michael Adams (UNE), Jude Simion (Philo Global), Andy Tuskan (KCEA), Kirsten Philips (Kambala), Warwick Lloyd (Caleb Foundation), Hannah Killen, Margaret Knuckey, Glen Elsegood (Army Chaplain), Roger Chilton, Jean Gurusamy and Phillip Linquist.

Many readers of this report will recognise that some of the speakers listed above are the children of current or former breakfasters. We're working on having some of the grand-children speak.

We want to thank Stuart Holman for his attendance, and his enthusiastic support during the year. Thanks are also due to Neil Spencer for standing in as chairman when necessary.

Men-in-the-Morning Bible Studies have continued on the first and third Thursdays throughout the year. Stuart and the group are reading through the books of Samuel, under the general theme of Men Behaving Badly.

Men-of-Swiz lunch-time BBQs have been held in the Undercroft of the PACE Centre on a bi-monthly basis, providing an opportunity for men to fellowship together. Holding these events at lunch-time gives an opportunity for those who are unable to come to breakfast to be able to join us.

Thanks to all the breakfasters, and to the Swiz staff for their continued support and encouragement. More men are always welcome.

Christopher Clark
Chairman



Art & Craft For All

AIM: To provide a friendly welcoming Christian environment for men and women from our church and the wider community to explore and encourage one another in the areas of Art, Knitting and other Crafts. We meet on the first Wednesday of each month from 9:30am-12 noon in the church hall. We spend a time of pleasantly relaxed creativity and conversation together. We enjoy delicious morning tea provided by our members on a voluntary basis. All are welcome to come when they can and leave when they must.

ART: SUSAN SMART

Our group of artists have again enjoyed painting together during the year, with numbers averaging 8 participants each month. We continue to present a still life arrangement for sketching or painting, and some people work on their own projects.



We acknowledge Henry Harrison for his generous donation of beautiful watercolour cards, which are extremely well-received at the Mini Mission Market each month, also his framed paintings of Salisbury Cathedral, which was visited by the choir in July. Henry is also encouraging others in creating original watercolour cards.

Ros Shillito has this year kindly offered encouragement to beginners in watercolour painting, which is much appreciated.

CRAFT: MICHELE THOMSON

Our numbers have fluctuated this past year for many and varied reasons, health, moving, family commitments, holidays, etc. Despite a drop in numbers crafters have knitted and stitched enthusiastically, reaching out to many with their gifts of caring and love. We now liaise with 'The Yarn Group' of St Ives Neighbourhood Centre, who assist with many of our projects. We also thank those who knit or sew at home for their help, which is much appreciated.



In 2023 knitted gifts have been distributed to the following:

- **RNSH Hospital School** – bears, dolls, and a few octopuses,
- **New Guinea** -baby jumpers, baby and children's dresses to the clinic on the island of Kiriwina,
- **Children's Hospital ICU** – beanies and bears,
- **Ku-Ring-Gai new Australian citizens** on Australia Day – green and gold knitted socks and bears.
- **Ukraine** – beanies and jumpers, which got there before winter.
- **Crown Road Public Shool** – 200 Christmas socks containing a Bible verse.
- **Children of St Swithun's** – Christmas socks containing a Bible verse.
- **RNSH, Christmas Choir concert** – knitted angels, socks and bears were given out to those listening.
- **Comfort Gifts** – angels and bears. **Mothers Union** – Baby gum-nut bonnets.
- **Roden Cutler Lodge** – poppies to cover Army-style hats for the ANZAC Service for the residents.

Sincere thanks go to all the crafters and kind people who have donated wool and materials, making this Christian reachout to our community possible, by the Grace of God.

Susan Smart
Coordinator



Bridge For All

We continue to meet once a month with the numbers about 16 which means we need 4 tables. We would welcome any new players from any background, but we are not able to give basic tuition.

We always hope to reach out into our community, and can cater for any who feel they, or their friends, would like to come along. We meet in the Lounge at the church at 10:00am on the first Monday of the month. We all gather for coffee at about 11:00am and something is always purchased from the Mini Mission market that month to keep us happy. I have found that most folk like to keep the date regular, so that although the first Monday is often a holiday we still meet for our cards. There is no commitment to turn up every time, so it is a very relaxed and happy way to meet together.

Jenny and Richard Kaan
Coordinators



Outreach

Once again, it is very difficult for any one person to write a comprehensive report on all the outreach that a church has been involved in over the previous year. This is simply because every member of our church family has outreach opportunities of many and varied kinds throughout the year. Some of these opportunities we grasp, others we miss. Some we hear about, others we don't.

As a church, it's important for us to remember that outreach is not limited to what is organized and/or done by members of the staff team. The job of the ministry team is to support and "equip the saints for the work of service" (Ephesians 4:12), including outreach.

We rejoice to hear reports of church members taking the initiative to share the good news in different ways.

Amanda Drake, for example, has been organizing get-togethers in which six to eight ladies 'binge' watch multiple episodes of the TV/movie series *The Chosen*. This series is a dramatic depiction of the public ministry of Jesus that has been catching the imagination of millions across the world. The ladies have enjoyed drinking tea, watching, eating and watching again, all interspersed with discussion and prayer. They also went to the movies together to see two episodes on the big screen. Amanda has now even set up her front room like a cinema! In an age when big crusades are no longer the thing, could it be that small numbers and big or small screens are an effective alternative?

Parishioners have been grasping opportunities to share the gospel with fellow retirement accommodation residents. In the Fernbank Retirement Village, Ann Powell and Anne Deane run a monthly Friendship Hour of hymn singing, bible reflection, prayer and afternoon tea which was well-attended through the year. Robyn Jones has also begun a group along similar lines at McQuoin Park. Building on the interest in Fernbank, the two Anns ran a shortened form of the Christianity Explored course. This relaxed and easy context seem to offer scope for more

We rejoice, too, that there are undoubtedly many, many evangelistic encounters that go unreported. The Bible tells us that God's Word is "the power of God unto salvation" and so we trust that the seed being sown by Swiz folk will bear fruit in God's perfect timing.

All the participants in the two Hope Explored courses run in 4 Merrivale Road during the year were established parishioners. Some signed up to refresh their faith, others to better equip themselves to share the good news with family and friends. Whatever the motivation, we all enjoyed and benefitted from looking at what Luke's gospel had to say about the themes of hope, peace and purpose.

Nigel Gray
Assistant Pastor

T48

T48 is a Christ centred gym for young people that has derived its name from 1 Timothy 4:8, For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.

It is a Swiz Ministry whose mission is to offer an inclusive space for Christians from local churches to build up in maturity, grow a diverse community, and connect with others across contexts.

Launched in June 2023, T48 commenced with dedicated youth gym sessions every Friday from 4:15-5:15pm, alongside adult sessions held on Sundays from 3:00 - 5:00pm. Despite being in operation for less than a year, we've witnessed remarkable growth and engagement within the community. With an average attendance of 10 youth on Fridays and 15 adults on Sundays, T48 has become a bustling hub for physical fitness and spiritual enrichment. Each session is filled with the energy of both familiar faces and newcomers, creating a welcoming environment for all.

Beyond the physical workouts, T48 serves as a space for meaningful connections and relationships to be built. Participants not only engage in physical training but also have opportunities for spiritual discussions, fellowship, and mutual encouragement.

As we look ahead, our vision for T48 is to continue expanding our reach and impact within the local community. We aspire to deepen the spiritual growth of our participants, strengthen bonds of fellowship, and extend our outreach to even more individuals seeking community. With God's guidance, we are excited to see how T48 will continue to transform lives and glorify His name in the days to come.

Hannah Killen
T48 Team Member



Everyday English

2023 was a successful year of consolidation and growth – consolidation of teachers and helpers into an experienced group to deliver the programmes and growth of student numbers to 35 or 40 each week with new students joining each week. Students come from a variety of countries including China, South Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Iran.



The objectives of Everyday English are to invite our neighbours from non-English speaking backgrounds into our community, teach them English to enhance their experience of Australia and to experience Christian love in their daily lives. Everyday English is conducted every Thursday morning in school term time in the PACE Centre, Church Hall and Lounge. It is structured into three classes:

Advanced Class: This past year has been one of comings and goings. We welcomed Sue Chilton as a teacher and farewelled students as they more easily returned to see family in their homelands – some for a month but others for a year. Class numbers were variable, with a core of four throughout the year. Some students left the class for employment.

We continued to try to build students' confidence and ability in conversational English, alongside vocabulary extension, grammar and written English. Each term topics for conversation centred around a theme such as "Newspapers", or "Disasters", with preparatory topic and questions being sent to the class. For two terms we read and discussed the Gospel of Mark in the Bible Spots but have now returned to Bible passages pertinent to the topic of the day. We are delighted that one of the students has been attending Bible study with Nigel.

Each term we replace the formal class with one or two social outings, usually around morning tea or a meal. The Christmas party was a joyful lunch with the other classes and friends and an opportunity for two students to share how each of them came to Christ in both English and Mandarin.



Intermediate Class is aimed at students with some basic English language abilities and teaches grammar, sentence construction, vocabulary, listening and speaking skills. There is also an emphasis on learning about Australian culture and our way of life with recent subjects covered varying from travelling around Sydney and Australia to the recent referendum. Every week we have a Bible Spot where students read the passage out loud and answer some questions to reinforce their understanding and increase their English vocabulary. The Intermediate class is taught by Richard Hobson assisted by Richard Oh.

Beginners' Class caters for students with little or no English language skills. Classes are divided into Lower Beginners and Upper Beginners. The Lower students require a hands-on teaching style with translators close by to explain the English lesson in Mandarin.

The Upper Beginners class had a busy year in which the students have bonded together as a group and have gained in confidence in their use of English in class. Topics have included Easter, Christmas, Mother's and Father's Day, Holidays and Travel, Currency, Moving house, King Charles Coronation, Understanding Directions and Shopping. We have had two excursions – one to Chinatown and one



to Wahroonga Park. We have encouraged the students to speak in sentences, or to use phrases when answering questions, and have developed vocabulary which is useful for them when mixing with the community. Each week we have had a Bible Spot where we read a short passage from the Bible and we encourage the student's understanding of the passage by discussing

the main points of the reading using simple English. We prepared for the end of year Christmas lunch by teaching the students to sing a simple carol which they performed at the lunch with great enthusiasm. One of the greatest joys has been seeing the growth of care which the students show for each other—they have developed strong friendships within the group and share social occasions outside of the weekly class meetings.



We enjoy introducing them to Biblical truths and participating with them as they develop their knowledge and use of English. Some students have formed a social group outside of Everyday English and a growing group of students attend the 10.30am service every Sunday and the Mandarin Bible.

My thanks to Beginners teachers Sharna Philips, Louise Small, Linda Gray and Ann Marie Leung Morrow and helpers Dorothy Davis and Sophie Kasker. We have a wonderful group of Mandarin translators who work closely with the students – ***and we would welcome more!***

Anglicare is always behind us to provide support, teacher training and resources. We acknowledge the dedication and enthusiasm of all the teachers and helpers who have contributed to the success of Everyday English through the last year and Annette Cousens and her team of ladies who make and serve morning tea every week.



Please pray for:

- the students to hear and respond to God's love
- more volunteers to come forward as teachers, helpers and translators
- more ESL students to join our classes

Then Jesus came to them and said, *“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”*
(Matthew 28: 19-20a)

Richard Hobson
Coordinator



Intermediate students with their certificates at the Christmas party

Mandarin Ministry

We have had an up and down year in the Mandarin ministry. During 2023, we said goodbye to a number of dear sisters from our Mandarin group as they returned to their homes in China or have moved away from the Pymble neighbourhood.

In November, we had a Christmas celebration to share the good news of Jesus and about 60 people joined us from the English conversation class and Mandarin bible study. It was a great time for all with Stuart, Andy and teachers from the English conversation class joining us, singing well known hymns, eating delicious food and listening to the story of birth of Jesus.



As the year came to an end in 2023, we had to temporarily stop the Mandarin translation ministry at the 10:30am service due to a lack of Mandarin speaking friends attending the service. This is likely to be due to the rapid turnover of Chinese residents travelling to and back from China. We believe that we should now concentrate on growing the Mandarin bible study and we are currently studying the John gospel. We will organise an Easter celebration to look at the Passover and Easter story. Please pray for us that we can continue to proclaim the good news of Jesus to our Mandarin speaking friends.



Betty Huen
Coordinator

Prayer Ministry

“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near, do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God which transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4: 4-7

Thank you

I would like to acknowledge the dedicated contribution which Ann Powell has brought to the Prayer Ministry over many years at St Swithun's and for her forethought in succession planning. Ann led many Prayer Vigils at St Swithun's and has been and continues to be a blessing to many church members. Thank you Ann.

Answered Prayer

It is good this AGM to give thanks for a year in which we have seen many answers to prayer, both individually and corporately. If you are interested in taking part in any of the prayer ministries listed below, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Online—9:00am Zoom Weekly Prayer Meeting

This takes place each Tuesday in term time at 9:00am. There is a core group of about five to six people, as we have welcomed new people during 2023. We pray for people in need of prayer, families, our church, the wider community and for world peace. You are invited to join in at 9:00am each Tuesday during term time. For any more information please contact, Nigel Gray.

Praying at all of our Services

We are grateful for the many members who lead our congregations in prayer at various services. Your prayers are appreciated and help us all to intercede on behalf of other people and for the world.

Prayer Notes for Core Matters

We give thanks for those people who regularly contribute to writing the prayers each month in Core Matters. Your prayers are appreciated.

Prayer Chain

Members respond in prayer for any request that Stuart sends to them about an urgent prayer need. This is a very valuable part of the prayer ministry as we respond by bring those in need to God in prayer.

PRAYER EVENTS OF 2023

Refresh – Prayer for the Thirsty Soul- Saturday 10 June

This was a very encouraging time of prayer. 22 members of the church met together for this time of refreshment in the PACE Centre. Stuart led four sessions based on some of the Psalms.

The times of quiet prayer and meditation were very helpful and there was real sense of communion with our Heavenly Father, afterwards there was a real sense of being refreshed. Many shared how they had found the time of prayer very beneficial. Some had never been to a prayer event where individual prayer and meditation were the main aims and they found it to be of great benefit to them. In turn this has benefited the wider church.

Zoom Parish Prayer Meeting—Wednesday 9 August

This was held online via Zoom to enable more people to attend. Members from all congregations prepared prayers beforehand for our Church, our community and the wider world. We were blessed by this online Prayer Meeting.

Prayer Retreat Saturday 21 October Covenant Christian School, Belrose

This was the last Prayer Retreat led by Peter and Judy Taylor with participants from St Swithun's and various churches. Peter and Judy received cards and presents from various people. Just before Christmas, I gave them a gift on behalf of the members of St Swithun's who had regularly attended their prayer retreats.

It is hoped that this Prayer Retreat will continue in 2024.

“Nor prayer is made on earth alone
The Holy Spirit pleads
And Jesus at the Father's throne
For sinners intercedes.

O thou by whom we come to God,
The Life, the Truth, the Way
The path of prayer thyself has trod
Lord, teach us how to pray.”

Sally DeFord from the hymn with the first line - “Prayer is the soul's sincere desire.”

Lastly, it is good to reflect that the Holy Spirit helps us to pray and that Jesus Christ, our Lord, intercedes for us at the right hand of the Father in heaven.

Margaret Knuckey
Lay Prayer Coordinator



Prayer retreat participants at Covenant Christian School

Missions Beyond the Parish

St Swithun's supports ten Mission Partners and in addition has links with other people and organisations.

Our Mission Partners in 2023 were:

- Elizabeth (identity protected), Middle East (CMS)
- Chris Hingley, Zimbabwe (via Anglican Aid)
- Evangeline Sita – St Andrew's School – Hyderabad (via Anglican Aid)
- David (deceased) and Robyn Claydon working with refugee families in Australia. David went to be with our Lord on 28 July 2022 and is greatly missed. Robyn was farewelled in November and we gave thanks for her and David's many, many years of missionary service.
- Ku-Ring-Gai Christian Education Association (KCEA) – Stephen Gorringer resigned in the first half of the year.
- Ku-Ring-Gai Christian Education Association (KCEA) – Andy Tuskan
- Turramurra Christian Education Association (TCEA) - Fiona Newcombe and Heather-Rose Newcombe
- Cameron Jones - Irish Church Missions (via Anglican Aid) - in Silicone Docks, Dublin
- James Thomas – Global Recordings Network (GRN)
- GWC and bursary student—Tashil Singh (via Anglican Aid) .
- Simon & Alison Roberts – BCA in Exmouth, WA

We support our Mission Partners financially, and most are linked with Home Groups or individuals for prayer support and encouragement.

The Parish Council budgeted for \$30,000 to Missions in 2023. We guarantee all ten missionaries a minimum amount of \$5,000 per annum.

In addition, we support:

- Berkeley Life Centre - a Parish to Parish Partnership with Rev Wayne Pickford

Our Mini Mission Markets raised \$21,541. Thank you to all who support our monthly Mission Market either through baking or purchasing.

The Missions Annual Dinner and Silent Auction was again held in October. This year it was in support of Evangeline Sita at St Andrew's Hyderabad and we raised \$13,198. Thank you to the generous support of donors through donations for the silent auction, cash donations and successful bidders.

We also had visits during the year from Chris Hingley from Zimbabwe, James Thomas (GRN), Andy Tuskan, Fiona Newcombe and Robyn Claydon. Our overseas missionaries contacted us via video link on the Sunday dedicated to their missionary work.

The total giving to Missions in 2023, according to receipts via the Church office, was \$75,246 including donations from Men's Breakfast and Women's Friday Bible Study. In addition, much is given by private donation.

Our Missions Committee members were Rev Stuart Holman, Bruce Kinghorn (Chair), Susan Smart, Fred Morris, Léonie Anderson, Paul Sampson, Sue & David Barling, Sharna Phillips (Berkeley Life Centre representative) and George Huen as Treasurer.

We were pleased to welcome two new members in 2023 – Ross Millar and Sarah Hunziker. During the year Jane Pape resigned and we thank her for her service and commitment to Missions.

Special thanks to David Milling for his dedication and expertise looking after the Missions finances and to Sue Barling as Secretary.

The Missions Committee is no longer responsible for Toys 'n Tucker – it is now looked after by Cate Holman.

The Missions Committee is keen to encourage those Home Groups who have not adopted a Mission Partner, to do so, and to support them with regular contact.

Our thanks go to all the St Swithun's community for their very generous support to Missions.

Bruce Kinghorn
Chair | Missions Committee



Mini Mission Market tables with an array of goodies to purchase in support of our mission partners

Mission Partners

Chris Hingley in Zimbabwe

Chris Hingley has been our Mission Partner in Zimbabwe for many years, formerly as the Rector of the Petra Schools and founding pastor of Whitestone Chapel. He is currently as the Chaplain at Whitestone School in Bulawayo and leader of the annual Aslan Camp in August. Chris has a significant ministry with children and young people in that country where there is much hardship. His role in organising the camp and pastoring provides an opportunity for children and young people to enjoy some time in a safe environment where they can be carefree. Chris also runs afternoon or evening groups for high school students and a Friday night youth gathering for 50 teenagers, called “Fridays with Aslan”.



David (deceased) & Robyn Claydon



David & Robyn Claydon have been associated with St Swithun's as Mission Partners for many years. They inspired us with their tireless commitment to preaching, teaching, writing, nurturing and advocating for others. David sadly went to be with our Lord on 28 July 2022 and is greatly missed. He was an expert on Islam and was in constant demand as a speaker and adviser. He edited a book called

Islam: Human Rights and Public Policy which he gave to every member of Federal Parliament and some State MPs. He worked closely with Immigration officials in order to support applications by Christians from North Africa and the Middle East to come to Australia. Previously David had served as the International Director of the Lausanne Movement, the Federal Secretary of CMS and the NSW Director of Scripture Union. Robyn has also served as the International Women's Director for the Lausanne Movement. She conducts a Women's Bible Study group at St Andrew's Cathedral which draws woman from all over Sydney and from different denominations. Robyn is a bible teacher and preacher and a mentor to young leaders. She has written a number of books to encourage people in their Christian journey.

Evangeline Sita at St Andrew's School in Hyderabad, India

In 1993 a young student and teacher, Miss Evangeline Sita, together with her cousin, Sanjay, gathered a group of under-privileged children from one of the poorest areas in Hyderabad and began an open-air school beneath a tree.

Since then, St Andrew's High School has graduated many students each year and are achieving remarkable academic results at the highest level. The school ranges from pre-primary to Year 10. Covid was very tough for them, but they have managed to continue paying their teachers due to our support. Many other schools have no teachers. They have a library, science lab with equipment, hall with audio visual classes, various sport activities and they participate in inter-school activities. They also hold a national festival where they invite important dignitaries. A Christmas programme is held where they learn the story of Jesus.



Evangeline and Sanjay are very grateful for the ongoing support from St Swithun's which enables them to continue with this wonderful work.

James Thomas with Global Recordings Network (GRN)

The 7bn or so mobile handsets being used all around the world today present enormous opportunities for sharing the good news about Jesus. The GRN works to deliver gospel audio content via mobile devices to the people of the world who are least reached by the gospel. James is GRN's Mobile Technologist. He leads the implementation of GRN's strategy to deliver free gospel content via mobile devices.



GRN distributes Bible stories recorded in 6,000 language dialects to mobile phone users in 170 countries. James works in Sydney, leading a team of software developers and testers. GRN's outreach website (5fish.mobi) and 5fish mobile app (5fish) provide easy access to

free content online for listening to and sharing person to person using SD cards, Bluetooth, or portable media players.

They have been focusing on making the 5fish app accessible in more languages and have introduced nine new interface languages (used for the button labels, titles, help text etc.) They are continuing to add gospel content in more languages and are working on including LUMO Gospel Films.

Tashil Singh at George Whitefield College (GWC), Cape Town, South Africa



GWC is an important contributor to theological education in Africa, preparing students for ministries of the Word of God in South Africa, greater Africa and beyond. The College's mission is "to shape minds via a classical theological education, create hearts devoted to Christian service, and train voices to effectively communicate the Word of Christ".

Tashil is our new student that we are supporting at GWC. He comes from Durban, South Africa and is single. Tashil became a Christian in 2019 when he was convicted of his sin and knew that Jesus Christ wanted him to repent and believe in him. When he qualifies, he would like to return to his home church and serve there for several years.

He preaches at Christ Church, Newlands in Cape Town on two or more Sundays a month, at Teen Ministry every other Sunday. He leads the service, and helps with admin work, property maintenance, the projection team and is a music team assistant.

His notable skills are critical thinking, working under pressure, time management and multi-tasking.

Elizabeth with CMS in the Middle East

After studying at Moore College and training at St Andrew's Hall, Elizabeth went to Dubai at the beginning of 2020 to work with Warwick & Caroline De Jersey in their rapidly growing ministry at a large expats church. Elizabeth is now serving in a church called The Fellowship of the Emirates – "a church for people who think they don't like church". The church's vision is to help people come to know God, equip them and then send them back to their home countries to share the good news. More than 4,000 people attend the five services and there are many different ministries.



Cameron & Alex Jones with Irish Church Missions, Dublin

Cameron and Alex Jones are from Sydney and attended Christ Church St Ives. Cameron is an ordained minister in the Church of Ireland (Anglican) and has served in All Saints Church Belfast. Ireland is the least evangelised country in the English-speaking world. The Society for the Irish Church Mission was founded in 1849 and is committed to seeing gospel-believing gospel-sharing churches established and strengthened.



In Dublin, with its population of 1.2 million, there are only about 10 churches that are theologically evangelical, two of which are ICM churches. The gospel need is immense.

Cameron is a pioneer Evangelist for Church Planting and is responsible for the Dublin Bible Talks (Silicon Docks Project). This work is building trusted relationships with existing believers, so that they are encouraged to consider the Dublin Bible Talks as a good use of one lunchtime a week. Its primary focus is to help believers grow and share their beliefs with colleagues and invite them to the talks to learn about Jesus.

Cameron preaches every month for a rural group of parishes in Co. Cavan. He also assists with preaching at ICM's Immanuel Church and often travels to encourage and support other churches both mid-week and on Sundays.

Simon & Alison Roberts in Exmouth, WA with Bush Church Aid

Simon & Alison Roberts took up a ministry position in Exmouth, WA in 2021. Exmouth is a town on the tip of the North West Cape in WA, around 1250 kilometres north of Perth in the Diocese of North West Australia. It is predominantly a tourism town, famous for the Ningaloo Reef and Cape Range National Park, meaning thousands of tourists bolster the town's population of 2200 throughout the year. Locals



are involved in industries like tourism, fishing and maintenance of the nearby Naval base. Simon, who was the senior minister at St Mark's Malabar in Sydney, is committed to making disciples who make disciples.

Ku-ring-gai Christian Education Association (KCEA)

In 2022 Andy was appointed as the SRE teacher at Ku-ring-gai High School. Andy writes: "I'm married to Jade and we live in Carlingford.

I have a real passion for ministry to teenagers having been in youth ministry for most of my adult life. I teach on Mondays and Wednesdays at KHS and have two classes from each grade, year 7-10. With year 7 and 8, we're currently working through an introduction to the bible unit and with years 9 and 10 we're tackling a unit about Jesus offering us life, here and now.

As I continue to teach, get to know the staff and student body, could you pray for these things I've outlined here and pray most importantly, that I would be humbly emulating Jesus each day at Ku-Ring-Gai High School."



Turramurra Christian Education Association (TCEA)

St Swithun's and other local Protestant churches formed Turramurra Christian Education Association to fund the best possible Christian Special Education programme at Turramurra High School (THS).



In 2020 Fiona Newcombe and Heather-Rose Thompson were appointed to share the teaching position at THS. Having the teachers on site for four days a week leads to stronger relationships with staff and students.

Fiona supports students and staff and reaches out with the good news of the gospel. She has worked as an SRE teach in high schools for the last three years.

Heather-Rose previously worked for Crusaders and studied secondary education full time. She married during 2023 and has resigned from TCEA to take on a full-time role at Tara Anglican School.



Fiona Newcombe



Heather-Rose Thompson

Bruce Kinghorn
Chair | Missions Committee

It has been an encouraging year in the development of our relationship with Berkeley Life Centre. We have strengthened the processes by which we provide items and groceries to the Second Chance Op Shop through discussions between Stuart and Wayne Pickering. The outcome of these discussions has clarified and developed our understanding of their needs and how best we can contribute to these needs and further enhance our partnership with them.

We have transported many car loads of goods to Berkeley throughout the year and many thanks goes to those who have willingly driven to Berkeley on a needs basis. Several times we had urgent calls from the Manager of the Op Shop for groceries and warm clothing and bedding, especially during the winter months. The rising cost of living over the past year has hit the Berkeley Community very hard and often the need for groceries (in particular) outstripped what they had on their shelves. As well as bringing bags of groceries to the church for Berkeley money for gift vouchers was donated by members of St Swithun's which was used to purchase grocery gift vouchers and these were then given to Wayne to distribute to those most in need. A couple of groups from St Swithun's collected donations from their members and did online grocery shopping from the local grocery store—this facilitated a quick way of getting the needed goods to the Op Shop.

At the end of 2023 women from the Friday Women's Bible Study made up 20 grocery bags which included special Christmas items, especially for the ladies of Berkeley. They also made up some smaller bags for people who had dogs and who fed their dogs before themselves. These bags all had a short Christmas message in them which said God loved the recipient and wishing them a Happy Christmas--these were all received with great delight.

This is a very practical ministry which delivers directly to people's needs and we at St Swithun's are privileged to be able to share our gifts with those less fortunate than ourselves.

Sharna Phillips
St Swithun's/Berkeley Coordinator



Cottage Counselling

The Cottage has had a steady, solid year. Client numbers have stayed consistent, with new clients approaching us for help every week. With the downturn in the financial economy over the last year, many are experiencing financial difficulty, and we have been blessed to help each of those clients access our service, many of whom needed to use our subsidy system to enable them to get the counselling help they needed. We have been able to settle in further to our newer locations (Dural and Parramatta), and as word spreads to those communities, referrals are increasing. We continue to grow and develop such lovely relationships with our partner churches, and we are so grateful for all your support.



It was with sadness that we farewelled Vanessa Ong and Joanne (Jo) Martens at the end of last year. Vanessa was with us for three years, and brought a wonderful sense of expertise to her work. Jo was with us for a decade, and has been an amazing gentle wise presence on the team for all of those years. We are also about to say goodbye to Anne Hong, who has also been with us for many years, doing a lovely job at Lindfield, and then at Parramatta. These three women will all be really missed by the team, and by their clients who they have done fabulous work with. For all three of them, life brought changes across their paths which meant rearranging work roles was necessary. We wish them all the very best in their new seasons!

We had a lovely year with our 2023 intern Larissa Allen, and wish her all the very best with her next season - we are looking forward to hearing what she decides to do next.

And we welcome Jenny Fung, our intern for 2024. She is very capable, and has a lovely gentle way with clients. Jenny will be based in Dee Why, Ryde and Pymble - she will be working very hard across three different locations so if you see her around, make her feel welcome!

We have made a decision, after many years without adjustment or review, to increase our fees, this is long overdue, and is needed in order to retain our excellent counsellors, and to attract new ones of quality. Rest assured, the subsidy system will still be there for any of our clients who struggle to meet the session fee! The Cottage Board and Team are comfortable that this is a wise and necessary decision for the running of the service. What it does mean, though, is that there will be greater demands on our finances this year. Please keep us covered in prayer for this,

and if you feel to, consider whether adding us to your list of charities you support might be possible. You may also know of individuals or businesses who might be interested in supporting us through sponsorship or donation. Let us know if you have any contacts who might like a coffee and a chat about what we do!

Our EAP (Employee Assistance Programme) has rolled into it's second year, and is proceeding nicely. We had around 25 staff members of Covenant Christian School contact us last year to make use of their three counselling sessions (an EAP means the school pays for up to 3 sessions for each of it's staff, at no cost to the staff member), which is a great take-up rate. We have enjoyed building this new relationship with the School, and it has been a positive adjunct to what we offer.

As a team, we feel so blessed to be a part of The Cottage, and so very blessed to be supported by your Church. Without you, we wouldn't be able to do what we do. Thank you so very much!

Looking forward to seeing what 2024 will bring,
Keren Calvert and John Parmentier
Co-Directors for The Cottage.

Safe Ministry Parish Report

Summary of Safe Ministry Training Records for the year of this report:

Working with Children Checks (WWCC)

Total number of verifications: 16

Safe Ministry Training (SMT) – numbers of people trained during the year:

Essentials: 8

Refresher: 7

Junior Leaders: 1

Safe Ministry Checks (SMC)

Total number conducted in the year: 16

Safe Ministry Compliant (as per Safe Ministry to Children Ordinance 2020)

Number of people in roles requiring WWCC/SMT/SMC at time of report: 48

During the year, the following incidents and health & safety concerns were identified:

The church gate to Merrivale Road are often propped and left open – this is a safety hazard to our young children as the church is on the corner of a busy road. We have had young children run out from the premises and run onto the road. We ask all members to be mindful and ensure the gates are kept closed. Whilst it might be inconvenient to the elderly for the gate to be closed, the loss of a child is more distressing.

General Comments:

A closer working relationship between the ministry team and myself will allow us to plan for who is safe ministry trained, and future requirements for training to run ministries and events at church.

Hannah Killen implemented safe ministry Sundays in 2023 where lunch was provided and people would work together to start their essentials or refresher courses. They would then complete the course and webinar at home. Face to face training is still preferred by some (less tech savvy) and we can let people know when these are available.

Sarah Hunziker

Safe Ministry Representative



Synod Report

St Swithun's was again represented at Synod by our Senior Minister along with elected lay representatives, David Barker and Pamela Summers.

This year there was only one session of the 53rd Synod which was in September 2023. After an opening service at St Andrew's Cathedral, Stuart, David and Pamela joined 815 other Sydney Diocese attendees at meetings in the Wesley Centre spread over five days between 11 and 19 September.



A report back from Synod was published in the November 2023 edition of Core Matters including a link to the Sydney Anglicans' "Synod Summary" of key outcomes on the sds.asn.au website. Amongst the 65 resolutions, 8 ordinances and 1 policy that were decided upon, there was discussion of many significant issues such as voluntary assisted dying and the referendum which was about to take place on the indigenous Voice to Parliament proposal. Stuart addressed Synod on a matter relating to Anglican schools and David asked a question on notice in relation to the appointment of auditors.

In Core Matters, Stuart characterised Synod in 2023 as a "mixed bag" and Pamela similarly described it as "exhausting and frustrating, but also uplifting, intriguing, inspiring and thought-provoking". This year, Synod is expected to take place between 14 and 24 September 2024 and we will again be in attendance as your representatives.

Pamela Summers
Synod Representative

Library Report

The Library, situated in the Chilton Gallery in the PACE Centre, is available for use by parishioners. Unfortunately, even though many people walk through the Library to Morning Tea each Sunday, only a handful are making use of its resources – all those enticing founts of knowledge standing tall with bright colours are not going on exciting borrowing journeys! It is anticipated that there will soon be a video presentation demonstrating the best use of the books particularly as the classification scheme is probably unknown to most. There are however two indices on the Library table to aid the enquirer – a black book listing subjects by shelf order to aid browsing, and; a blue book which is a Subject Authority File that will direct you to the shelf number of your subject. In addition, the Librarian is available to contact by phone or email for assistance and is very willing to come down and explain the best use of the facilities to individuals or groups.

Although each work has been entered on computer the borrowing system is yet to be set up so borrowing involves physically entering your personal details and the details of the item being borrowed in the Loan Book – also on the Library table.



Even though the collection has grown over the last 12 months, borrowers still need to be considerate by not borrowing a number of books on the same subject as this prevents other borrowers from having access to similar material. If there are few books on your desired subject please return them within a reasonable time.

The Librarian is continually attempting to enlarge the section on Bible commentaries to keep abreast with sermons and Home Groups. There are still areas here where there is a dearth of information – commentaries on the book of Daniel, for example, are desperately needed. Perhaps the various editions of translations of the Bible could be used to obtain a helpful meaning of a difficult chapter or verse. Take for example the verse in Judges 19:30 which follows the horrific narrative of the unnamed woman who was so badly ravaged and mutilated! This verse is a message of response for the reader:

“We must do something! So speak up.” NIV

“Consider it, take counsel, and speak out.” NRSV

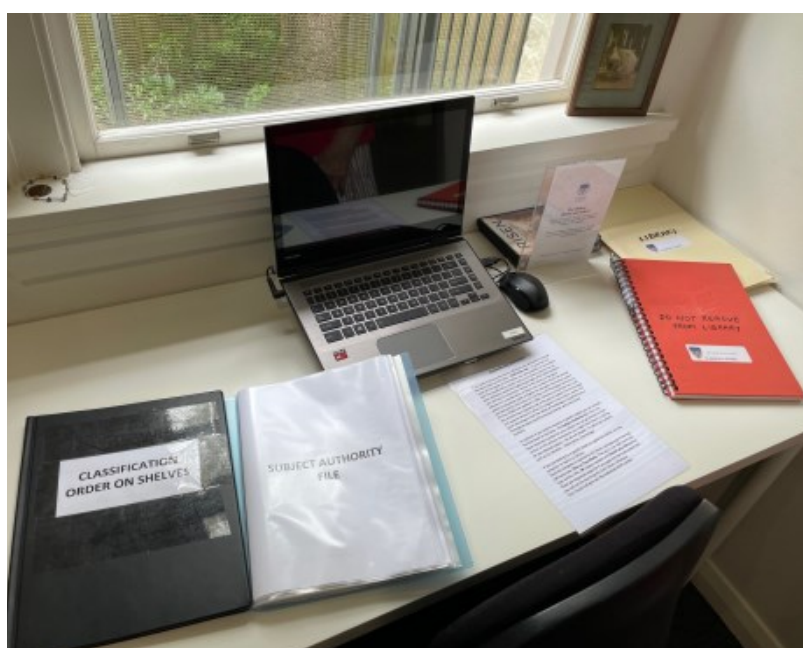
“Put your mind to this!” Jerusalem Bible

“Direct your heart to her.” A commentator’s translation from the Hebrew

By using this method with a whole chapter we can challenge a commentator?! Or at least be able to use our resultant thoughts for discussion in a study group. Hopefully it will not be too long before our collection of commentaries has grown and developed.

If the borrower is still at a loss for specific information please do not hesitate to contact the Librarian who may be able to provide suitable material from other sources.

Catherine Halsall
macleodhalsall@gmail.com
0401 091717



The indices & loan book on the library table

Ku-Ring-Gai Inter-Church Committee

The Ku-ring-gai Inter- Church committee has met 10 times in the past year.

There are two representatives from each of the member Churches:

Corpus Christie Catholic Church, St Ives
St Ives Uniting Church
Gordon/Pymble Uniting Church
St Swithun's Anglican Church, Pymble
Pymble Catholic Parish
St Ives Baptist church
St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, St Ives/Pymble



Madeline Forbes retired from the chair in March after many years of dedicated service. She will remain on the Committee. Cheryl Doyle and Charles Parbury were elected as joint Chairpersons and Annette Burne continues as secretary.

The wording of the agreement between the member churches, last signed in 2016, has dominated the discussion throughout the year. It is hoped that a consensus will be agreed at the March meeting. The Signing of the Agreement is planned to take place during a Service for Christian Unity which is scheduled for Tuesday 11th May at 11:00am at St Swithun's, followed by a Bring and Share lunch. Each church must be represented by a clergy and a lay person. The theme chosen for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is Luke 10::27:

“Love the lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and love your neighbour as yourself.”

Rev Stuart Holman will plan and preach at the service.

During this year we have welcomed Pastor Benedikt Exner to St Ives Baptist church; The Reverend Karen Mitchell-Lambert to Gordon/Pymble Uniting Church; and Rev Samuel Choi to St Andrew's Presbyterian Church. Ann Powell and Catherine Halsall joined other members of the Inter-Church Group at the latter two events.

St Ives Uniting Church celebrated 60 years of worship in their Church building on the corner of Douglas Street. This was a joyous event attended by a large number of people including former ministers and local dignitaries. Members of the KICC were also present.

Ann Powell and Catherine Halsall
St Swithun's Representatives KICC

Treasurer's Report 2023

Overview

An increase in the number of parishioners and a shared commitment to growing the church as outlined in the Ministry Plan (2023-2027) underpinned an improvement in the church's budgetary situation in 2023.

The generosity of parishioners, as well as the receipt of several government grants were the main factors behind the better-than-expected financial outcome. At the same time, expenditures remained relatively contained, being only slightly above budget. Overall, the church reported a deficit of \$46,000 in 2023, well below the budgeted deficit of \$110,000 and the 2022 actual deficit of \$81,000.

This report should be read in conjunction with the table accompanying this report and the 2023 audited financial accounts.

Income

Offeratories are vital to the funding of the church's many programs and the regular admin costs involved in running a church, accounting for just over 80 per cent of operating income. At the same time, offeratories can be volatile, particularly in the face of heightened uncertainties as we saw during the latter stages of the COVID pandemic and before the appointment of our Senior Minister. We are therefore grateful for the sustained increase in giving from parishioners throughout 2023. Offeratories increased by 28 per cent in the year, to \$730,000, twice the increase factored into the budget and more than offsetting the decline in offeratories over the previous two years.

The other major – and unbudgeted – source of income in 2023 was the receipt of grants from the Australian and New South Wales governments, as well as Ku-ring-gai Council. The grants, totalling over \$30,000, funded the installation of solar panels on the PACE Centre (the NSW Government), as well as the upgrading of the gymnasium at the PACE Centre (Ku-ring-gai Council) and the creche (the Australian Government). We are grateful to our representatives at all levels of government for their support.

Reimbursements for cultural and music activities undertaken by the church from the Swiz Cultural Foundation were down from 2022, reflecting less spending eligible for reimbursement. Rental of the church premises to various organisations remained a stable, albeit small source of income.

Expenses

Total operating expenses were largely in line with budgeted expenditure; a positive outcome given the increases in inflation and wages over recent years. Most

categories of expenditure, particularly ministry staffing costs, parish administration and parish cost recoveries – which in aggregate accounted for just over 80 per cent of expenditure – were also broadly consistent with budgeted expenditure.

In 2023, proceeds of the IT Appeal, launched in early 2021, were mainly used for the purchase of a computer for the Children's & Youth Minister. The Wardens subsequently decided to have the unspent funds of \$19,000 raised from the Appeal made available to support youth and children's ministry more broadly.

Expenditure on property exceeded budget expectations, mainly reflecting expenditure on items that were directly funded from government grants, including the solar panels for the PACE Centre and upgrading of the Creche.

The Missions Committee has reported separately on donations to our mission partners. The ex-offertory support to our mission partners of \$30,000 in 2023 was in line with the recommendations of the Missions Committee and approved by the Parish Council.

The Building Sinking Fund

Several important financial initiatives of recent years bore fruit in 2023. A building appeal in 2022 and the decision to transfer a fixed proportion of offertories into a Sinking Fund allowed funds to be made available for major building works. In 2023, a range of substantial projects were funded from the Sinking Fund, including restoration of the church roof and stone work costing \$57,000, as well as the installation of a drop screen for the church. At the end of December 2023, \$120,000 remained available for future building work. More details of building work undertaken are contained in the property report.

The Financial Outlook and the 2024 Budget

Despite the improved financial position in 2023, the church still reported a deficit for the year, albeit lower than budgeted. In order to avoid selling assets and/or borrowing money, the deficit was funded by a rundown in cash reserves. Cash available to meet the day-to-day running costs of the church fell to uncomfortably low levels – equivalent to 75 per cent of average monthly expenditure. In order to preserve the level of uncommitted cash, the Parish Council made the decision in 2023 to terminate any further transfers from offertories to the Sinking Fund until the cash position improves.

The Wardens and Parish Council remain committed to a balanced budget over the medium term, though the need to rebuild cash levels suggests that budgeting for a surplus in 2024 is prudent. The 2024 Budget assumes a surplus of \$24,000 and is based on only a modest increase in offertories.

St Swithun's Anglican Church, Pymble
Financial Accounts Summary (\$'000)

		<u>2022</u> <u>Actual</u>	<u>2023</u> <u>Actual</u>	<u>2023</u> <u>Budget</u>	<u>2024</u> <u>Budget</u>
	Income				
A	Offertories & donations	646	769	710	803
	Grants received	-	33	-	-
	Property income	43	6	6	5
B	Income from trading activities	18	15	14	18
C	Other income	90	67	90	106
	Appeals	133	-	-	-
	Total Income	930	889	820	932
	Expenses				
	Ministry staffing	391	464	467	469
	Parish cost recoveries	89	110	110	106
D	Resources for ministry	35	9	10	9
	Donations	35	30	30	30
E	Parish administration	188	202	192	191
F	IT appeal expenditure	15	2	21	-
G	Property expenses	228	94	76	78
B	Trading activity expenses	29	25	24	26
	Total expenses	1,011	935	930	908
	Operating surplus (Income less expenditure)	(81)	(46)	(110)	24

NOTES

- A Includes supplementary service income
- B Includes counsellor and ministry activities
- C Includes the Swiz Cultural Foundation reimbursements
- D Includes supplementary service expenses
- E Includes admin staff, professional services and office expenses
- F Comprises expenditure from the 2021 IT appeal
- G Includes Provision for building maintenance (2022)

Numbers may not add due to rounding

Swiz Cultural Foundation (SCF)

The SCF is a separate entity to St Swithun's Anglican Church and operates to support music and other cultural activities within the St Swithun's parish. Around \$67,000 was disbursed during the year for such activities.

In February 2023, the Foundation gained registration with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission (ACNC). This was in response to changes in government legislation relating to charities, which meant that non-government deductible gift recipients (DGRs), such as the SCF, were required to be registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) in order to continue claiming tax concessions. Registration also ensures that donations to the Foundation remain tax deductible.

In November 2023, the trustees of the SCF agreed to fund a proportion of the total costs of the Assistant Minister and the Children's and Youth Minister of St Swithun's on an ongoing basis.

A very sincere thank you to those people who have given generously to the Foundation.

Swiz Cultural Foundation (\$)		
	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>
Contributions	137,919	136,067
Disbursements	83,919	66,658
Net movement	54,000	69,409

Special Thanks

I particularly thank David Milling, who brings a high degree of integrity, expertise and skill to managing the financial accounts of the church. David's contribution to the church extends far beyond what is suggested by the title of 'bookkeeper', investing considerable time and thoughtful analysis into managing the many accounting and tax issues that arise on a regular basis. David serves as a wise counsellor and mentor. His substantial contribution to the church is greatly appreciated.

A special thanks is also extended to the team at Swiz's external auditors, Whittle & Associates, for their assistance and support during the year.

Brett Winton
Treasurer

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