

Our vision and mission



In 2017, as a parish we shared in a process to develop a new vision, mission and strategic plan for the parish. The process was based on the findings of the National Church Life Survey, in which all parishioners were given the opportunity to participate. Parish Council then led the parish through a further six month consultation process, in which all parishioners were again given the opportunity to provide further feedback. The result of this process was the approval by Parish Council of a new 5 year vision, mission and strategic plan for the Parish, which was then launched at the 2017 Annual General Meeting. The five year vision, mission and strategic plan to 30 September 2022 will be reviewed in 2022,

in light of the findings of the 2021 National Church Life Survey, to be held in November.

The Anglican Church in Melbourne is made up of clergy and lay people who are united in their commitment to building up the Church, under the leadership of the Archbishop, in service of the vision, 'To make the Word of God fully known'. The Word of God is Jesus Christ. In fellowship with him, who is personally present, in the bread and in the wine, we have fellowship with God himself.

Fellowship with God, is fellowship with God, in the future of his kingdom. The kingdom of God is pure future. It is nowhere available in the world in the present time. It is available now, in the worldwide Christian Church. It is Present now, in Jesus Christ, who is truly present in Christian worship, under the sign of bread and wine. And with him, the future redemption of the world. As this has now come into the world, in the once for all Passion of Christ, for the reconciliation of the world to God. And on the basis of this reconciliation to God, reconciliation to one another, in the fellowship of the Christian Church.

In the Gospel of John chapter 21, verses 1-19, after a long night, that is a symbol for the long night of the history of this world, Jesus appears to the first disciples, on the shore. The shore that was a symbol of the Kingdom of God, the homeland, the distant shore, the better country, 'a heavenly one', beyond this world, in the book of Hebrews 11:3-16. As Jesus appears to his disciples at daybreak. The daybreak that was a symbol of the

inbreaking, the dawning, of the new day, the future kingdom of God, in the resurrection of Jesus.

Disheartened, disillusioned, and defeated, by the stark reality of the death of Christ, the disciples had given up. They had given up on hope. They had given up on following Jesus. They had gone back to their old way of life. They had given up on the way of Jesus. They had turned back to an old world. Where they had caught nothing. Turning their backs on following Jesus, they had turned back, to this world. They had turned their back, on hope.

Jesus appearance to his disciples in resurrection life, on the shore that morning, after the long night, at the breaking of day, was the appearance, in this old world, the revealing, to this old world, that there is a distant shore, a homeland, a better country, 'a heavenly one', that awaits us all, beyond the horizon. Behind the clouds. The resurrection of Jesus, was the once for all revelation, by God himself, of Hope. The dawn of Hope. In a world that is passing away. For a world that will one day pass away.

The resurrection of Jesus was no return to the life Jesus had before. To the same world Jesus had known before. To this earthly life, this world, that you and I know. The resurrection of Jesus was the beginning of a new life. The beginning of a new world. The appearance, the in breaking, the dawning, of a new world. A new life. A new hope. The dawning, of a new

heaven, and a new earth. The dawning of the kingdom of God himself. The appearance, of a world without end.

The resurrection of Jesus is a reality. A fact. An historical fact. And, because it has as its content, the reality of God himself, it is a reality, a fact, a history, that transcends our human attempts to understand it. It is not something that we control.

The disciples of Jesus, who for years had shared table fellowship with Jesus, eating and drinking with him, were the first witnesses, the eye witnesses, to Jesus, in his new, eternal, glorious, exalted, resurrected life. Even they, did not recognize him. Did not understand. Had to blink, at the light, of the glory, of the new day.

Jesus is here now, but in a new way. A new life. A new body. A new form of life never before seen in the history of the world. A new life never since seen. A new life, in a new body, that even his closest friends no longer recognize. Even after he reveals himself to them, as himself, and breaks bread with them, as he did before, throughout his earthly life, they still want to ask him, 'Who are you?' Even though they know that it is the Lord.

The Jesus with whom they had shared table fellowship before in this earthly, mortal, perishable life, was back, to share table fellowship with them again, after his death. This was in fulfilment of his promise to them,

which he made at the Last Supper. But he is with them now, in an altogether new manner of life. In an entirely new form of life. A life otherwise unknown, in the history of the world. A life otherwise unseen, in all creation. A life after death. A life beyond death. A life where there are no more tears, or suffering, or pain, or death. A life transfigured by God's Spirit. Eternal life. Life without end.

In the resurrection of Jesus, the Jewish hope, in the resurrection of the dead, is fulfilled. The Jewish hope, for the future world change, for the kingdom of God himself, is now. The hope that has come, not only to the Jewish people, but to the Gentiles, too. The hope that has come, to the world. The hope for which all people, both Jew and Gentile, now wait. Has now come, has now drawn near to the world. In Jesus. The Messiah of God. The Christ.

'If for this life only we have hoped in Christ,' said the Apostle, 'we are of all people most to be pitied. But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died...But each in its own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming, those who belong to Christ.'

The surprising thing about the kingdom of God, when it came, was the unique way in which it came. Not all at once, as the Jews had expected. But each in its own order: Christ first, and then, afterwards, at his return, us all. All who are in Christ.

But we must not think of this event as different events, separate from each another. We must think of this event as a single event. With two parts. The first part is the resurrection of Jesus. The second part is our resurrection, the resurrection of all who are in Christ, at the future general resurrection of the dead. Both are one event. The one event of the coming of the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God has now come in Jesus Christ. It has dawned. It is not yet the day. The church waits. The world must wait. It is not yet the day. Salvation is not yet.

In a world of sin that is passing away, the Christian understanding of salvation is that it is a future event. The kingdom of God is pure future. And the only sign that there is for this future, is the resurrection of Jesus. All that is known of this future, we know from the resurrection of Jesus. The resurrection of Jesus, is the once for all revelation of God to the world. The once for all revelation of what God has in store for his world. The once for all revelation of the future destiny of the world. The future destiny of the world in the kingdom of God. The future destiny of the world of eternal, resurrected life. The future destiny of the world that will come, not from any human hand, not from this whole world of human being. But from God alone. That will come, not according to any human timeframe. That will come at an hour that nobody knows, not even Jesus. At an hour that God only knows. And God alone.

Of the distinction between this life, and life in the kingdom of God, the Apostle Paul says:

‘There is a heavenly body and an earthly body, but the glory of the heavenly body is one thing, and that of the earthly is another...So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is a spiritual body. But it is not the spiritual that is first, but the physical, then the spiritual. The first man was from the earth, a man of dust, the second man is from heaven. As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we will also bear the image of the man of heaven.’

The past resurrection of Jesus, and our own future resurrection, is ‘one event’. The ‘one event’ of the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God that dawned in Jesus, is a future reality for everyone else. Is a future reality for you and me. A future destiny, for you and me, for everyone, beyond anything we could ever ask or imagine. In the words of the Apostle,

‘Listen, I will tell you a mystery! We .. will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For this perishable body must put on imperishability, and this mortal body must put on immortality. When this perishable body puts on imperishability, and this mortal body puts on immortality, then the saying will be fulfilled:

‘Death has been swallowed up in victory.’ Where O death is your victory?
Where, O death, is your sting?’

The resurrection of Jesus, is the hope of the world. The basis of our proclamation of the good news of the future kingdom of God. The basis of our faith as Christians. The sure ground, of the Christian Apostolic faith. In the words of the Apostle:

‘Now I would remind you, brothers and sisters, of the good news that I proclaimed to you, which you in turn received, in which you also stand, through which you are being saved, if you hold firmly to the message that I proclaimed to you – unless you have come to believe in vain. For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sin in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared to me.’

In the resurrection of Jesus, the future, is now. In Jesus, the future of the world, is come. In Jesus, God’s vision for his world, has dawned. In Jesus, God’s future kingdom, is here. It is the Kingdom of God Himself.

The Kingdom of God calls us to put behind us, our former life in this world. To leave behind everything else in this world, for the sake of the Kingdom of God. To put the concern for the Kingdom of God above every other concern in this world. That is the way of Jesus.

The way of Jesus, the way that leads to eternal life, is the way that leads us beyond this world, with its many false hopes, to the Christian hope, for the kingdom of God. Not from within this world, but from beyond this world. From the Kingdom of God alone, from the other side of the world change, we put our trust. In God alone. In the future of his Kingdom.

It is this future that has now come in Jesus Christ. It is to this future that we will be returning, on Sunday 7 November, in the celebration of the holy Eucharist. To the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God has a name and a face. Jesus Christ. The resurrected Son of God. The eternal Word of God. In him, the Christian vision, the Kingdom of God, is now. In him, the Kingdom of God is now open to all people. In him, the hope of the world, is here. The hope, and the joy, of Eucharistic celebration. God himself is with us, under the sign of bread and wine.

Going ahead, to meet the risen Christ, on the distant shore, of the future kingdom of God, there is a charcoal fire there, with fish on it, and bread. Saying to them, 'Come and have breakfast' Jesus takes the bread, and gives it to them. The risen Christ is with them now, in the Eucharist, according to his promise, which he made at the Last Supper. But he is with

them now, in a different way, in a new way. He is with them, in the kingdom of God. In God's new heaven and earth. He is with them, in his eternal life. In a world without end.

After breakfast, Jesus says to Simon Peter, 'Simon, do you love me, more than these?'

Peter says to him, 'Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.'

Jesus says to Peter, 'Feed my lambs.'

A second time Jesus says to Simon Peter, 'Do you love me?'

Peter says, 'Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.'

'Tend my sheep.'

Jesus says to Peter a third time, 'Do you love me?'

Peter felt hurt, 'Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.'

Jesus says, 'Feed my sheep.' After this he said to him, 'Follow me.'

Why? What is happening here?

Here Jesus is rehabilitating Peter. There are things that have happened, during the night, for which Peter is in need of rehabilitation. During the night of Christ's Passion, Peter had betrayed Jesus. Denying him, three times. Peter is in need of redemption.

Here the risen Jesus meets Peter in his need. Jesus redeems Peter. Jesus rehabilitates Peter. Jesus recommissions Peter.

Jesus sets Peter free. Gives him a second chance in life. Jesus calls Peter to a new life. To a new world. Jesus sets Peter free, liberates him, from his former attachments to the ways of life, 'the things', of this world. 'These things' had once bound Peter, had led him to follow another god. Jesus sets Peter free, for the worship and service of God alone. Jesus sets Peter free, for a life of righteousness. For a life in the Kingdom of God. In fulfilment of the great and first commandment, 'I am the Lord your God; you shall have no other gods but me.' The righteous will of God, for the human race.

Peter is a new man. Peter has in a new life. In the way of Christ, he lives now in a different world. A new world. In a new heaven and a new earth. That has now come into the world in Jesus Christ. The kingdom of God. World without end.

As Parish Council makes the practical preparations for the reopening of the Parish for public worship on Sunday November 7, you are encouraged to make your own spiritual preparation, to spend time with Jesus, as you prepare to receive him, under sign of bread and wine, in full assurance of that redemption that is freely available in him. You are encouraged, too, to consider whether there may be other people you may be being called to invite to come along with you, into table fellowship with Jesus, in the kingdom of God. In the new heaven and earth. In the world without end. As each of us is called, to take up the cross of our individual vocation, to

proclaim the good news of the Kingdom of God. To take our place in the Great Commission, which Jesus has given to the whole Church.

Jesus does not call us simply to continue to live our old life in the world. Jesus calls us out of the world. Jesus calls us to live in God's new world. To live a new life, in a new world. A new life, and a new world, that has now come, in Jesus Christ. The light of the world, in him, the dawn light of the new day, now shines. The light shines in the darkness. And the darkness has not overcome it.

By our baptism, 'God calls us out of darkness, into his marvelous light'. The marvelous light of the future kingdom of God. God's vision for the world, now dawned in Jesus Christ:

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth;

For the first heaven and the first earth had passed away.

And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem,

come down out of heaven from God,

prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

'See, the home of God is among mortals.

He will dwell with them;

they will be his people,
and God himself will be with them;
he will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

Death will be no more;
mourning and crying and pain will be no more,
for the first world is passing away.'

And the one who was seated on the throne said, 'See, I am making all things new.'

The Lord be with you.

Rev'd Jon Chamberlain
Vicar