

Fulfilling the Great Commission

By discipling & resourcing followers of Jesus
to love and serve wherever He calls

2023 UPDATE



St Clements
Anglican



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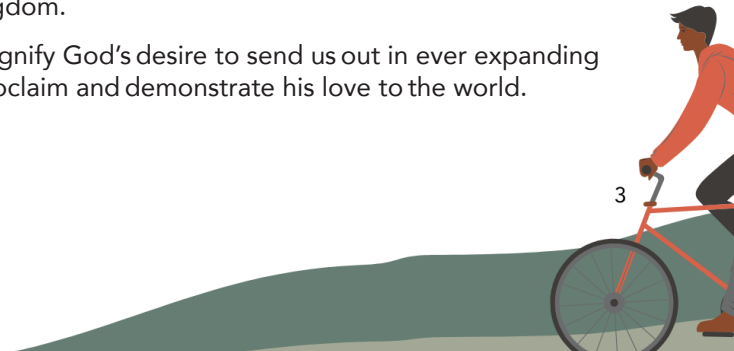


GOD'S THUMBPRINT:

*Jesus said: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbour as yourself."
(Matthew 22:37-39)*

*Jesus said: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising 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. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."
(Matthew 28:18-20)*

-  The thumbprint speaks of our uniqueness and special place in God's plan of salvation.
-  The colour green depicts the growth and expansion of God's kingdom.
-  The ridges signify God's desire to send us out in ever expanding circles, to proclaim and demonstrate his love to the world.



KINGDOM GROWTH: ST CLEMENTS 2027

Imagine five years from now, a reporter from the Mercury spends some time at St Clements, observing every aspect of our church life and then writes a series of articles, describing what she experiences. What sorts of headlines might we hope to see?

IT'S A MIRACLE!

STRANGE COINCIDENCES

OR

ANSWERED PRAYERS?



*"Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."
(1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)*

Church leaders report that they have witnessed a strong correlation between constant prayer and strange coincidences. "When we cry out to God, amazing things happen!" said one of the 5am prayer group regulars. "Prayer makes me so happy" said one of the participants of the group.

RADICALLY TRANSFORMED LIVES: HUGE LIFE SHIFTS

Interviews with church leaders reveal that former alcoholics are now serving communion, former tax evaders are now counting the church offertory, notorious ex-criminals are now part of the food distribution ministry and people set to retire have been given new work to do...

*"They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven."
(1 Thessalonians 1:9b-10a)*

CHURCH LEADERS CALL FOR GENEROSITY: BUT FOR THE POOR NOT THEIR OWN POCKETS

A leaked annual financial report reveals an exorbitant percentage of all giving is going towards reaching the poor, uneducated and needy people around the world including Northern India.

"You know we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed – God is our witness." (1 Thessalonians 2:5)



HUMBLE HARD WORKERS:

WHAT LOCAL EMPLOYERS ARE LOOKING FOR

A Kingborough business has recently explained his hiring strategy: "I need workers who are willing to get their hands dirty and who are not afraid of hard work. I need people I can trust with my good name and I've found that the people whose resume includes mention of their church involvement make a huge difference..."

"You should mind your own business and work with your hands, just as we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody." (1 Thessalonians 4:11b-12)

CONTAGIOUS CHRISTIANITY: THE STORIES KEEP GETTING TOLD

Interviews with Kingborough residents reveal that stories of spiritual transformation keep emerging from friends and neighbours attached to the church. Whether these stories are true, no-one can say for certain, but as one resident aptly expressed: 'something is happening there for sure!'

"The Lord's message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia - your faith in God has become known everywhere. Therefore we don't need to say anything about it." (1 Thessalonians 1:8)

BIBLE BELIEVERS: CHURCH PROMOTES ARCHAIC WRITINGS



A visitor to a St Clements Sunday service reports that church attenders actually believe the ancient writings contained in the Bible are still relevant for life today. In fact, one church leader explained that all activities are governed and shaped by the Bible and that daily Bible reading was a normal part of church life for most church members...

"And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is indeed at work in you who believe." (1 Thessalonians 2:13)

Last week a team of 12 more people were sent on a short term trip to India – and that’s the fifth team that has been sent out this year to various places from Moonah to Mumbai. One church leader said, ‘we believe in sending: Jesus did and so do we. Something very special happens when we make the effort to go and bless and serve and partner with others where they are.

All our teams are different – but all of them have the same purpose: encourage, strengthen and serve.’

“We sent Timothy, who is our brother and co-worker in God’s service in spreading the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you in your faith.”

(1 Thessalonians 3:2)

SENT TO HELP

FIRM UNDER PRESSURE



After the latest defeat for the church in the High Court this week, the people at St Clements seemed quite unperturbed. One woman said, ‘this ruling makes us even more determined to care for the vulnerable and to reach out to them with the love of Jesus.’ One man said, ‘We can’t let this ruling discourage us – Jesus is real and we will follow him as best we can no matter what.’

“Therefore, brothers and sisters, in all our distress and persecution we were encouraged about you because of your faith. For now we really live, since you are standing firm in the Lord.”

(1 Thessalonians 3:7-8)

SPONTANEOUS ACTS OF LOVE: WITH STRANGE REGULARITY

If the stories are correct, then spontaneous acts of generosity and hospitality have been occurring with surprising regularity at St Clements. It is reported that meals suddenly appear on the doorsteps of families at the end of their tether, visitors appear in hospitals and nursing homes to hold the hand and pray for the sick and the lonely and encouragement cards keep turning up in the mail. And it all happens quite indiscriminately...



“Now about your love for one another we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other.” (1 Thessalonians 4:9)

KINGDOM GROWTH: NEW CHALLENGES



Our current experience of God's hand of blessing and growth leads us to both praise God and also to ask "what next?" One answer is to simply do what we have always sought to do: continue to seek to please God.

"As for other matters, brothers and sisters, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more." (1 Thessalonians 4:1)

However we then need to ask the question: "How do we please God?"

Having prayerfully considered the key challenges that we are facing at present as a church, we have settled on ten guiding questions for our vision that we believe will help us to please God. None of the questions focus on particular ministry areas such as music ministry or children's ministry as we want to remain flexible and able to move as God wills in each ministry area. The questions that we want to consider undergird our church culture as a whole and all our activities.

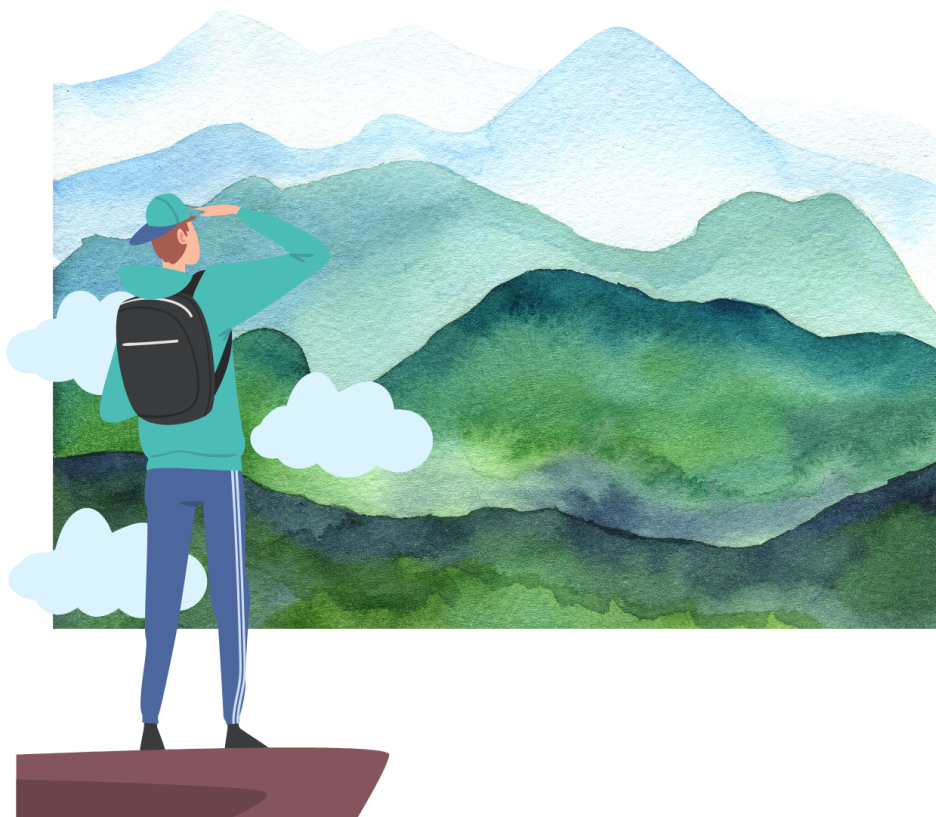
1. "How can we keep discipleship central in our church community?"
2. "How do we help new people to belong in a large and growing congregation?"
3. "How do we help every believer grow to maturity in Christ?"
4. "How can we enable ministry groups to develop in flexible and dynamic ways?"
5. "How can we train and support future leaders in ministry?"
6. "How can we improve our systems of communication?"
7. "How do we best use our buildings and land for God's kingdom?"
8. "How do we best serve God's kingdom in our own backyard?"
9. "How do we equip God's people to live in a post-Christian world?"
10. "How do we partner with other churches in Tasmania in making disciples?"



KINGDOM GROWTH: KEY STRATEGIES

We now pause to consider our 10 guiding vision questions, and give what we believe to be God's guidance on the "next steps" in each area.

The strategies are not exhaustive by any means – much more could be said about each of them. All we aim to do for each area is to give our prayerfully considered "next step." More will be added in months and years to come.



JESUS IS OUR EVERYTHING:

1. "How do we keep discipleship central in our church community?"

Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." (John 8:31-32)

Being disciples of Jesus means following Jesus' teaching. Discipleship involves embracing Jesus' vision for our lives, and as we take hold of Jesus' words and follow him more closely, we will experience a renewed joy, purpose and freedom. God's goal is to make us more and more like Jesus, so we reflect his life and character in the world.

Discipleship is a journey we cannot walk alone. In order to grow as disciples we need to be involved in one another's lives. Jesus called his disciples together to form a community that worked together to teach, strengthen, grow, love and encourage one another.

In addition to the encouragement, edification and fellowship of our regular Sunday gatherings, we have a plan to keep discipleship central across the life of our church and ensure our various ministries exist to make and grow disciples. We are in the process of implementing a Leadership Pipeline to better equip our existing ministry leaders as disciple-makers, and to raise up new disciple-making leaders. (See question 3 for more detail)

We also have a Discipleship Pathways framework which maps the ministry activities of the whole church to ensure we have clear 'next steps' for people at every stage of their spiritual journey, from not-yet Christian through to spiritual maturity. Some of our ministries have particular strengths in reaching new people, helping them connect and sharing the good news of Jesus. Others have strengths in helping believers grow deeper in character, service and leadership. (See question 4 for more detail)



LOVE IS OUR LANGUAGE:

2. "How do we help everyone feel like they belong in a large and growing church?"

"And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching." (Hebrews 10:24-25)

Meeting together for teaching and encouragement has always been a key priority of the church. We need to fellowship together for mutual encouragement and help each other to live as disciples of Jesus. We currently run three worship services each Sunday at 8am, 9.30am and 4:30pm, each with a different style and emphasis.

In order to strengthen the community life, love and vision for each of our congregations, we have three dedicated leadership teams who oversee the ministry, mission, social life and day-to-day practical issues. Each team facilitates activities and social events focussed on welcoming new people and helping everyone to connect within the life of that congregation.

Although we exist as three distinct congregations, we see ourselves as one church. We have one staff ministry team, one Parish Council, one location and ministries that span the entire church. We all benefit from sharing our God-given resources as we seek to fulfil the Great Commission together. We are exploring the idea of running a special event (or special events) to encourage all who worship at the three services at St Clements to come together as one. Our aim is to foster a deeper sense of love and unity in establishing a worship home where all feel a true sense of family and belonging as members of one church.



GROWTH IS OUR GOAL:

3. "How do we help every believer grow to maturity in Christ?"

"We proclaim Christ, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ." (Colossians 1:28)

The Apostle Paul was passionate about helping all believers to reach maturity in Christ. He was zealous for converts - yes. But more than that, he wanted fully committed and mature disciples who are becoming more like Christ and in turn making disciples of others. While it is every individual's responsibility to pursue personal spiritual growth, the church community plays a vital role too.

We now have a Discipleship Pathways framework in place to ensure we have intentional and clear 'next steps' for people to grow in their own faith and assist others in theirs. When someone believes in Jesus as Lord and Saviour, and commits to following him, we have a range of ministry activities to help them grow. These include Children and Youth ministries, Connect Groups and Men's and Women's ministries.

Earlier this year we launched some new Connect Groups, enabling new people to better connect and begin sharing life and walking with others at a deeper level as disciples of Jesus. Connect Groups continue to play a vital role in our Discipleship Pathways for closer fellowship and care, studying and applying the Scriptures, and praying for one another. The Leadership Pipeline will enable us to raise up new leaders and start more groups in an ongoing way. (See Point 4)

A new focus in 2023 is to run some short courses (approx. 4-6 weeks) which are an opportunity for people to receive a 'boost' in their growth in particular areas of life. We have run a Digital Parenting course to help parents disciple their children well in the context of digital technology. We are planning to run courses which help people discover how God has wired them and gifted them for service, managing money wisely, faith and work, mental health, and personal evangelism.



GROWTH IS OUR GOAL:

4. "How do we enable ministry groups to develop in flexible and dynamic ways?"

*"And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others."
2 Timothy 2:2)*

To keep our ministries focussed on making and growing disciples, it is essential that our ministry leaders and teams are intentionally equipped to lead in increasingly complex and challenging times. The mission to which God has called us never changes, but the methods of achieving that mission do. What worked in the past doesn't necessarily work in the present, and almost certainly won't work in the future. As we stay focussed on the Great Commission, our ministries need to be adaptable and flexible, contextualising the gospel for our time.

St Clements has grown in size significantly over the past decade, both in terms of our congregations and also the size of the staff team. In light of this growth, recently the staff team have reviewed our 'organisational structure' to ensure we have clarity of responsibility and accountability across all ministry areas with the aim of greater efficiency and effectiveness.

In the second half of 2023, we will be trialling our Leadership Pipeline in four existing ministries. The Pipeline clarifies the roles and responsibilities of different layers of leadership, such as ministry leaders, team leaders and team members. At each layer, leaders are encouraged and supported to grow and develop in "Head" (what knowledge is needed?), "Heart" (what character is needed?) and "Hands" (what skills are needed?). The Pipeline will also provide a clear pathway for raising up and training new potential leaders.

The Discipleship Pastor will continue to coach and support ministry leaders in their roles, and oversee the implementation of the Leadership Pipeline.



GROWTH IS OUR GOAL:

5. “How do we train and support young people to become future Christian leaders?”

“Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.” (John 13:14-15)

Leadership is a serious responsibility before God and others. A Christian leader is called to serve those they lead, following the example of Jesus.

Whilst we want to help every believer to be on a pathway towards Christian maturity, God will raise up some to be leaders in the church and in the world. As a church, we are committed to provide specialised support and training for young people who are keen to grow in their leadership talents beyond the requirements of their current ministry roles.

We are conscious that a one-size-fits-all approach to leadership development is not always helpful, and so we plan to offer a range of different opportunities for young leaders to be trained in the leadership areas for which they are especially passionate. Some of these areas include vocational ministry, leadership in the workplace, sharing the gospel, personal spiritual formation and godly decision making.

Over the next four years, we will create leadership training opportunities for thirty young Christian leaders.



GROWTH IS OUR GOAL:

6. "How can we improve our communication?"

"Again, if the trumpet does not sound a clear call, who will get ready for battle?" (1 Corinthians 14:8)



Effective communication is essential for any community or mission group to ensure that people will not miss out on opportunities to serve, be blessed and invite others. We are aiming to communicate effectively to everyone through multiple channels and to this end have developed a communications strategy to cater for differing needs.

We recognise the need for continued improvement in this area. However, in recent times we have made significant progress. Our website now acts as a communications hub and the weekly newsletter contains the latest information about the events in the life of our church. We have also been encouraged by the excellent response to our new digital rostering system on the Services App.

We are currently working on our social media strategy and implementation.

We are also building a team who, through story-telling, will reflect the heart and values of our church into the Kingborough community and beyond.

One key area in our communications that we wish to further develop is in the digital sphere. We have made important gains in this area such as starting a daily bible reading podcast, a weekly livestream and regular social media posts. In addition, we intend to develop and include a range of teaching and worship resources in our aim to reach a wider online group/audience.



GROWTH IS OUR GOAL:

7. "How do we best use our buildings and land for God's kingdom?"

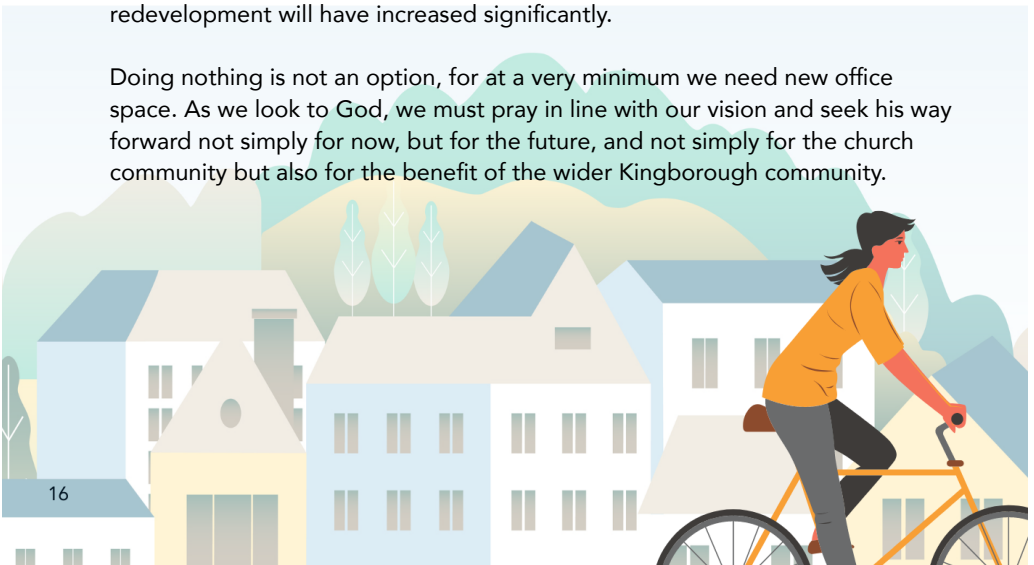
*"The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it"
(Psalm 24:1)*

St Clements has been blessed with a prominent site in the heart of Kingston with a heritage chapel, a large area for corporate worship, a function centre, children's playground and good kitchen facilities. We also have some very limited office space. For some time now, we have sought the Lord about how he would like us to use and develop our land and buildings. We firmly believe that buildings and property are tools that must reflect and support our vision. A building is only as useful as the worship and ministries that take place within it.

To this end, we appointed a team to create a site plan after a process of prayer and consultation. We now have a revised concept plan of a proposed re-development of the site that would provide a new hospitality space, new office space, and new meeting rooms. This concept plan is ready to present to Kingborough Council as a Development Application.

There are a three main hurdles that would need to be crossed in order to proceed with this redevelopment: clearly hearing God's voice, attaining Council approval and successful fundraising. We will move when we have received God's guidance, when our application has been accepted and when we have raised the required funds. We are very mindful that building costs and interest rates have both increased during Covid and therefore the cost of the proposed redevelopment will have increased significantly.

Doing nothing is not an option, for at a very minimum we need new office space. As we look to God, we must pray in line with our vision and seek his way forward not simply for now, but for the future, and not simply for the church community but also for the benefit of the wider Kingborough community.



SERVING IS OUR PRIVILEGE:

8. "How can we best serve God's Kingdom in our own back yard?"

"Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law. Love does no harm to a neighbour. Therefore love is the fulfilment of the law." (Romans 13:8,10)

The Lord calls us to serve and bless our local community. According to the 2021 Census figures, the population of Kingborough was 40,082. Interestingly, 53% of them said they have "no religion" and 13% ticked "Anglican."

As individuals we will serve God's Kingdom best when we are fuelled by a passion for the lost and a deep desire to bless others. We will continue to promote this call to personal outreach through teaching, prayer and telling good news stories of how people are serving in the local community as Christ's ambassadors.

As a church we will serve God's Kingdom best when we: listen to the real challenges and needs of those in our community; provide practical help and support for those encountering hardship such as running a breakfast program for children at a local school; facilitate regular groups that create community; host relevant courses that offer practical life skills; and explore projects that build connection in our local area, such as a community garden.

For a number of years we have been running the Alpha course and it is our intention to also regularly offer a digital parenting course, a marriage course, a financial budgeting course and a mental health course. We also offer a number of different opportunities for connection such as a brunch program (Brunch with Us), mainly music, Friday night youth groups (SAGA and EPIC) and an informal craft group (Cuppa, Craft and Chat). These ministries all need encouragement, better promotion and appropriate resourcing.



SERVING IS OUR PRIVILEGE:

9. "How do we equip God's people to live in a post-Christian world?"

"Though I am free and belong to no one, I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some." (1 Corinthians 9:19-20, 22-23)

Jesus crossed all boundaries in order to proclaim the good news of the Kingdom of God. Likewise the Apostle Paul became "all things to all people" in order to save them. Interacting well in our post-Christian society is not straightforward. It requires careful thought, prayer and preparation to cross cultural divides in order to reach people with the Gospel.

We are passionate about equipping our people to have truly meaningful conversations with those that they meet in every day life. Deep and open discussions relating to current world and ethical issues with family, members, neighbours and work colleagues improve our knowledge and understanding around the ideas and values believed by them to be important. We also need to be ready as a church to pastorally respond in truth and love to people coming through our doors whose beliefs and lifestyles are not in harmony with our own.

We are seeking to equip people in this area regularly through our preaching program, Connect group studies and weekly emails. We also host regular Q & A sessions at our 4:30pm service and share news and insights from our partners in the mission field. In addition, we are running an apologetics group that seeks effective and engaging ways of answering tough questions about our faith.

We aim to offer more resources as an adjunct to our Sunday sermons and Bible study material by way of articles, podcasts and videos that explore how the themes interact with our cultural assumptions and values that point us to Jesus.



SERVING IS OUR PRIVILEGE:

10. "How do we partner with other churches in Tasmania in making disciples?"

"In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now." (Philippians 1:4-5)

The early church, in its various locations around the Mediterranean, was led by local elders and deacons. However, the churches did not work completely independently of each other. Through the Apostles, partnerships were forged between churches so that resources (people, prayer and finances) were shared and difficulties were addressed.

Over the past five years we have supported a number of under-resourced churches in informal ways as needs have arisen. We have partnered with other youth ministries by: inviting youth leaders from other churches to our training nights each term; hosting combined youth events and visiting a range of churches across Tasmania. We have also encouraged and resourced other churches, supported para-church ministries and provided coaching to ministry leaders working in the wider Diocese.

In addition to this, as we look to the future, we are exploring a strategic ministry partnership with the Parishes of Channel-Cygnnet and Huon. Our churches share similar kingdom values and gospel culture and are geographically connected. This partnership may include things like regularly praying for one another, sending teams (e.g. musicians), supporting leaders, running workshops, financing special projects, and much more. There will be various opportunities for members of our church to serve in this ministry partnership. As we join together in obedience to the Holy Spirit, the Kingdom of God advances.

We know that church planting remains a key strategy for making disciples. We have seen first hand how effective and transformative this strategy is in Asia and want to capture these insights as we plant churches here in Tasmania. In 2020 we planted the St Clements 4:30pm congregation. Following conversations with St James, Ranelagh and St Marks, Cygnnet, we are prayerfully considering when and where we might plant next.



THE PATH AHEAD:

Is there anything of which one can say, "Look! This is something new"? It was here already, long ago; it was here before our time." (Ecclesiastes 1:10)

There really is "nothing new under the sun!" There is much in this vision document that contains echoes of the past, models from Scripture and wisdom from other Christian leaders and ministries. And for that, we praise God!

We remain trusting in our Saviour Jesus, and confident in God for all that lies ahead. Our vision document is highly flexible and fluid, yet it contains markers in the ground to facilitate the growth that we desire to see under God.

May the Lord who is able to give us more than we could ask or imagine, be given through this season all the glory "in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen." (Ephesians 3:21)

