

## Rector's Report to Parish Council September 2021

I thank my God every time I remember you, <sup>4</sup> constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, <sup>5</sup> because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. <sup>6</sup> I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. <sup>7</sup> It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart, for all of you share in God's grace with me. Philippians 1-7

I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart;

I will tell of all your wonderful deeds.

<sup>2</sup> I will be glad and exult in you;

I will sing praise to your name, O Most High. Psalm 9.1-2

Well, we knew this day was coming didn't we, but it doesn't make it any easier to say farewells, so instead I'll say thank you!

You have been brothers and sisters in Christ to me and I give thanks for your faithfulness and your commitment to the work of the Gospel, for your service on Parish Council, for the building up of the Body of Christ here on the Sapphire Coast. I give thanks for the way that God in his grace has moved through our work together and for all that we've achieved.

It's a risky business to list all those that I'd like to give thanks to and for, so, in case there are any accidental omissions, please know that your work mattered even if your name is not on the list of people and ministries. Here goes:

- past and present clergy that I've had the privilege of working with: Reverend Stephen Rigby, Reverend David Luck, Deacons Lisa and Andrew, Reverend David Ruthven, Reverend Helen Cowgill, Reverend Fay Fraser, Reverend Anthony Frost, Reverend Rod and Reverend Michael. You have been colleagues, co-workers and an inspiration to me.
- Jenny, our Stipendiary Lay Minister and Office Manager; Peter Charlton and Hazel Targett our previous managers, you have all coped with endless requests from me and the Diocese
- Ray Flint our Disaster Recovery Chaplain for his compassion and willingness to go the extra mile
- Ken, our Parish Chairman who has analysed and reported in the greatest detail and with such thoroughness, been a strong support and would have given me the shirt off his back if I'd ever needed it
- Gavin, our Treasurer who has kept us on track and with such good humour
- Janet, our Secretary, and previous Secretaries, for their faithful recording of meetings and gathering us together with reminders and agendas
- our Financial Advisory team who have kept a keen eye on budgets, accounts and financial outlooks
- Raymond, my Parish Rector's Warden whose sound advice has been so valuable

- each of the centre wardens who have guided and led their congregations: Ken, Vickie, Malcolm, Raymond, Max, it has been an honour to work with you
- those of you who have held portfolios on Parish Council: Uschi for Aged Care, Flo for Anglicare, Cathie for Pastoral Care, Jenny for Communications, Peter for Buildings and Maintenance, Carol for Mission. Thank you for your dedication to your role, for honouring your calling, for the gifts you bring to it
- for each of the congregations and churches, I give thanks for such different characters to them all and yet all united as one family and for your varied ministries around the parish.
- St Clements Merimbula: for the church refresh and installation of the stained glass; the work with the Social Justice Advocates for the construction of St James House and the running of the crisis accommodation; for your creativity in worship with Prayer for Healing and the Blessing of Animals
- Pambula's tradition of beautiful worship, music and Christian meditation
- St John's development plan and all age worship together, Café church, outdoor services, meals together
- the creative ministry at St Lukes Wolumla and St Peters Candelo using the arts; the special services including the Blessing of Animals and Fire Trucks, the gatherings on ANZAC eve, the Knit and Natter group and some spectacular afternoon teas and a lot of laughter
- the ecumenical worship at Holy Trinity Wyndham that has been such an insight into how different denominations can worship together and the partnership with Wyndham Progress Association
- the relationship with the people of Towamba and their partnership to care for St Pauls
- the community attachment, love and care for Holy Trinity Kameruka, its vibrant history, community events to mark special anniversaries and the annual thanksgiving service
- the sacrifice of the people of St Johns Tantawanglo
- the Missions team who have worked with Carol and kept us linked with Klaus and Judy and the boys in Germany, Jude and Andy Benton from Croajingalong Parish and Naomi, Alex and Eliana in Japan and have undertaken some great initiatives and projects
- The Mission to Seafarers Eden team and their generous hospitality and welcome and care for seafarers
- The wide-ranging partnership Anglicare has with the parish, Flo and all the volunteers at Sapphire Surprises Op Shop and those who provide welfare; Michael Palmer's Rural Chaplaincy, the projects he has led and encouraged, and the work of the Disaster Recovery team at the evacuation centres during the Black Summer bushfires
- the Bible study and home groups, their members, leaders and hosts, for their faithfulness in studying God's word

- the SRE teachers who visit, teach and encourage at Towamba, Eden and Pambula Public Schools
- the work of the pastoral care team and phone care team that has kept us connected during lockdowns and as they've remembered the Parish family in the difficult times and celebrated with us in the joyful moments
- Diane's steadfast work on the pew sheet to keep us informed and entertained and Andrew's patient maintenance and updating of the parish website
- the members of the prayer chain who have faithfully prayed for those in need
- the lay assistants who have loved residents and helped provide visits and church services at RSL Lifecare centres
- the buildings and maintenance team who've kept a close eye on the repairs that needed to be done on our buildings and kept them in good condition
- the quiet workers in the background who welcome regulars and visitors, our Sacristans, those who clean and arrange flowers, organise rosters, check-ins and QR codes, provide morning tea and then wash up too
- the lay assistants, preachers and teachers, musicians and singers, readers, intercessors and liturgical assistants who have made our liturgies reverent, joyful and full of praise.

For all of you, I give thanks to God for you and also say thank you for your friendship as well as the work that you've done while I've been leading in this Parish.

Finally, I give thanks to my Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, for calling me to this beautiful parish, for giving me the example of servant leadership, for teaching me to smile in the difficult times and for the privilege of asking me to lead.

You know that I'm not leaving the area and although I'm retiring as Rector, Bishop Mark has graciously indicated that he is willing to licence me for a new creative role at St Lukes Wolumla. This will naturally be part of the discussion with the new Rector about future directions for the Parish and these discussions will shape both how the project unfolds and the timing of its commencement; I will be sure to let you know how it progresses. In the meantime, I've attempted to put in writing some of the knowledge that I've picked up, thinking that it might be useful during the time of transition that lies ahead for the Parish with an incoming locum and the changes to permanent staffing. The first draft of a Parish Handbook is attached. There are bound to be gaps, please forgive any error, over-simplifications or omissions, this is a work in progress. And I know that you will continue the work, so, may God continue to bless you richly in all you do.

Keeping safe, staying calm, trusting God.

*Lou Oakes* **Rector, Sapphire Coast Anglican Parish**

**20 September 2021**

*Privileged to have been leading since 2013*