



Planning for 2025

December 2024

By God's grace, St Michael's vision is to see more disciples of Jesus shining as lights in our city. In prayer, and with God's Word the Bible as our ultimate authority and guide, we seek to:

- **Engage** our community with sacrificial love
- **Evangelise** the lost with the gospel of Jesus
- **Establish** disciples in Christ and his church
- **Equip** generations of believers for ministry

As we seek to meet this vision, our parish council and pastoral staff identified 5 major focus areas that have been shaping effort, attention and resourcing (not in any priority order):

1. **Internal Pastoral Care:** To be a community where every member cares for the practical and spiritual welfare of others – and know who cares for theirs.
2. **Reaching the marginalised:** To reach the marginalised in our community for Christ. To reflect Jesus' concern for those in the margins of society, through caring for whole persons (physically, spiritually, etc.).
3. **Training and sending disciples to serve elsewhere:** To see all departing members equipped to explain the gospel and serve their new church, and send X people into paid gospel ministry.
4. **Congregational growth and church plants:** To see St Michael's a church of 800 members within 5 years.
5. **Overall Property strategy:** To have a clear and achievable major property site-plan that serves current and future ministries.

As we look the changes of 2025, our vision, strategy and focus impact our decision-making. The video spoke to some of it. There's always more to say. The questions and answers below add extra depth...

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What gospel priorities shape our budget and ministry decisions?

Our vision is to see more disciples of Jesus shining as lights in our city. It flows from Christ's call in His good news (eg: Matt 28:16-20). Our financial priorities lean heavily to staff over property:

- ensuring the gospel is taught and members disciplined (congregational pastors)
- that the next generation is reached (children's and youth minister)
- that we are good stewards (administrative staff)
- and we seek the lost (the appointment of a community chaplain in Bellambi with Anglicare, and the re-appointment of a community pastor for our whole parish).

These decisions are made along with our responsibilities to manage what's been entrusted to us, controlled by the generous offertory of members. Assuming the same giving as 2024 and rising costs, our budget will not stretch as far in 2025.

Q. What is an Anglicare Community Chaplain?

Anglicare explains a Community Chaplain as '*Someone set aside for generous kindness and Gospel friendship with the marginalised to point them to Jesus and into church community.*' They are firmly connected to our church as a staff member. But their focus is on those not yet part of church, in a marginalised community. This

model is more than simply 1-2-1 Bible reading or running evangelistic courses, like a University ministry worker. It's also more than simply parachuting in a 'church plant' of people who aren't part of the community. It's a more flexible ministry that serves the community in the name of Jesus, that starts with being a proactive presence.

The community chaplain could partner with things our church already does (eg: Community Pantry, SRE), engage in community initiatives (eg: Neighbourhood centre's breakfast programme). Whatever opportunities are taken, it's to address the gospel need of marginalised people in Bellambi by developing relationships and connecting people with both Anglicare and our church.

Q. Why Bellambi?

We want to see disciples from every background. It's recognised that Anglican churches as a whole haven't reached those in marginalised communities well. The Bishop drew together key people from different organisations with the possibility of addressing that in our parish, with Bellambi. Bellambi has around 620 public housing dwellings in Bellambi, with an estimated 1,200-1,500 people living in these dwellings. There are community consultations currently that might see the number grow. At the same time, our Parish Council and Pastoral Staff identified a focus area of reaching the marginalised.

We already run the Community Pantry ministry with Anglicare at Corrimal. It's run by committed church members who love to build relationships with shoppers and invite them to get involved in church. We recognise that there are still cultural, geographic and relational boundaries, that make it harder for those from marginalised communities to join church. This is a rare opportunity the Lord has currently opened up to reach Bellambi alongside Anglicare.

Q. What are the lay overseer's roles?

Over the past year, we've been developing clearer structures of teams to organise serving across our ministries. Serving ministries have layers: Team Members, Team Leaders, Area Leaders, and Ministry Leaders. There's different goals and responsibilities for each. In brief: Team Members show up and serve. Team Leaders organise and communicate with their team. Area Leaders resource the various teams and communicate with the team leaders. Ministry Leaders determine the direction and goals for the ministry.

Some of these layers are yet to be filled. Some ministries don't need every layer. Many of the 'Ministry Leader' responsibilities fall to pastoral staff. As we build new ministries and are also in a time of change, there are some significant roles being filled by key lay people. Liam has responsibility for how we build rich relationships within church-life. Under him, Michelle Read is giving a day a week to help direct and develop this. Under Mitch, Joe Radkovic has taken responsibility for all Engage ministries – as we seek to prayerfully appoint another Community Pastor.

Q. How does pastoral care work (especially for women)?

Pastoral Care is helping others grow spiritually by caring for them as a whole person in all circumstances. It's more than simply responding to crisis. It's care in 'the good times' too – a concern for others 'body, mind and soul'. The key place for pastoral care in our church is Growth Groups. Leaders meet regularly with other leaders and congregational pastors for encouragement and prayer. Leaders take pastoral responsibility for members; but not alone. Every member is concerned for every other member – to see us all grow to be more like Jesus.

We recognise that Growth Groups can't work for all, and that some matters require other conversations and support beyond the Growth Group structure. We're blessed with pastoral staff. Without the whole body of Christ working, caring for every individual as deeply as we'd like, is beyond individual staff. But congregational pastors welcome the opportunity to serve members and the trust you give us. We will miss the pastoral care given by Stacey, even though

she wasn't officially a 'Women's Minister' (more recently she has served as a congregational pastor at 8am, 9:45am and 7pm, as well as overseeing the 'Equip' portfolio). Thankfully we are blessed with many godly women in the life of our church. Should an issue arise that would be best addressed by a woman, congregational pastors can assist in redirecting and creating connections.

Q. What financial factors shaped budget decisions?

The budget is driven by our vision. We want to resource 'more disciples shining as lights in our city'. With that aim, it is constrained by expected offertory and anticipated costs. The pledge exercise leads Parish Council to expect similar giving patterns to 2024. Expecting to fall a couple of percent behind this year's budget, we aren't seeking to increase expenditure. With expected increases in costs (eg: electricity, wage increases, giving to the diocese), maintaining what we currently do in resourcing ministry and caring for property will take up more of the expected offertory.

The budget being prepared for 2025 is not seeking to stretch. But Parish Council is looking to bring possible staffing and property projects for the church's prayerful consideration and support.

Q. How are we planning to 'replace' Stacey and Mitch's roles?

As individuals, neither can be 'replaced'. Both brought particular gifts and passions that can't be replicated. Both worked part-time (officially) but gave so much more to the life of our church. We praise God they will bring those gifts and spirit of service to broader Kingdom work. There is a need to also grieve our loss.

In terms of formal roles, we are looking to fill the outward-facing role that Mitch served in straight away. We will support (1 day of 4) a Community Chaplain in Bellambi in partnership with Anglicare. We are advertising for a godly woman or man with a Christ-like heart to be our new Community Pastor. It's a part-time role, overseeing our Engage and Evangelise ministries, and investing in the local community to bring Christ to the lost.

Before other roles are created, we need to consider our needs and financial capacity. Stacey has not only served pastorally (a blessing to so many), she's overseen serving and training. She's put in good systems – but there is ongoingly a challenge to continue to raise up servants, equip them, resource all our ministries and champion workers being sent into the harvest.

We need to prayerfully consider what the right roles might be and bring it to the Lord.

Q. What changes are happening in administrative staff?

Administrative staff have been stretched for some time. Parish Council approved increased financial support (15 hours weekly) a year ago. It's been largely spent in overtime. Our paid administrative staff serve graciously – ably assisted by some key volunteers who give regular assistance in our office.

To better meet the parish's needs – supporting the ministry of our church – we are restructuring current roles and looking to fill a new role. Going forward:

- Catriona will continue as our Parish Administrator: Overseeing the team and assisting both Rector and Wardens.
- Lauren is our Communications Director (part-time):
- Nicole is moving to a role of Communications Assistant (with some ongoing 'admin' tasks)
- Jodie will continue in areas of Administration and Reception
- Morwenna will return from maternity leave as our Bookkeeper (Kerrie serving in that role currently)
- We will appoint a new Reception position

Part of these changes mean the office will be open with someone serving in Reception Mon-Fri, 9am-12pm. Outside of these hours, please make an appointment directly with the person you need to speak to.

Q. What can I pray?

Prayer is a tremendous privilege. It is powerful to have the one who controls all things, genuinely listen to our requests and as our Heavenly Father, give us what is best.

We must keep thanking God for what He's doing in fulfilling our vision. He is making new disciples. He is making current disciples 'shine' (reflect Jesus more accurately in word and action).

As you thank Him, ask Him to:

- Have mercy on the lost of this area and the world. Keep praying by name for 2 people you want to see come to Christ in the year ahead.
- Keep meeting our needs (spiritually, financially, ministry, property and staffing) that we might glorify Him
- Raise up more workers for the harvest
- Grant wisdom to make good decisions that will advance God's Kingdom and bring Him honour.
- For us to be united in Christ and deal well with change.

Q. What new staff or property projects might be raised in 2025?

Parish Council has been working, and continues to work, on good stewardship of our sites in Wollongong and Corrimal. Part of this is ensuring good 'maintenance' – keeping properties safe, improving them for ministry and paying current staff. Part of this is looking ahead to improvements and changes.

In property terms, careful consideration has been given to what would be good for the Wollongong site. A key part of that is improvements to the 1908 Hall (where the offices currently are). In 2025, we hope to bring a plan of what could be done on the site to see our property better used for ministry now, and for future generations. Any major developments require commitment from our whole parish. We are at an earlier stage in planning further for the Corrimal site and are looking to what wisdom and direction the Diocese's 'Sydney Anglican Property' team can give in this area too.

In staffing terms, we are looking to fill some roles immediately (administratively, and outward-facing Community Chaplain and Community Pastor). Given the increases in staff wages and giving to the diocese, we will bring to the parish any other roles to gauge support before we establish any role. Part of this pause is seeing what gaps, opportunities and needs are revealed in the coming months.

