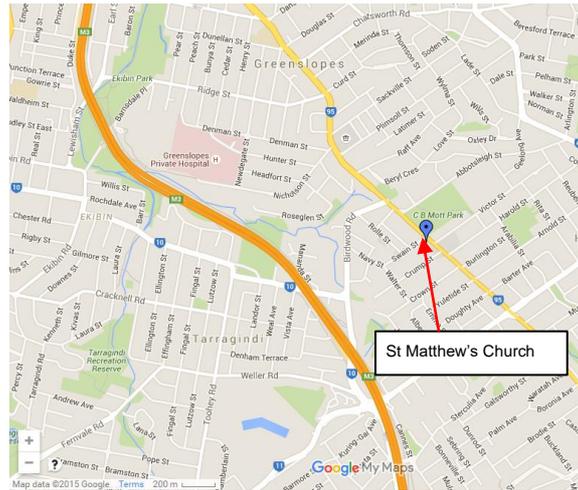


**Saint Matthews, Holland Park Parish Profile 2020**



**Background**

**Holland Park** is an inner suburb of Brisbane located approximately 6 kilometres south east of the CBD and borders the suburbs of Greenslopes, Coorparoo, Mount Gravatt East and Holland Park West. The suburb is mostly residential, with some commercial ribbon development along Logan Road. Saint Mathews Church is located at 889 Logan Road (Corner of Swain and Agnes Streets), Holland Park West see, map below.



Holland Park is an older suburb made of largely post- World War II wooden homes with Logan Road bisecting the suburb. Holland Park has the advantage of being centrally located between the major shopping centres of Westfield Carindale and Garden City, Mount Gravatt, being only 10- 15 minutes travel distance by car to either. Major hospitals such as Mater Private/Public, Queensland Children's, Greenslopes Private and Princess Alexandra are all within 10 minutes travel distance. M1 Freeway access north to the Brisbane CBD or south is no more than 5 minutes from the Church site.

The three current major demographic profiles of the Holland Park area are: established couples and families, followed by the fast-growing maturing couples and younger families demographic, due to the rejuvenation and re-gentrification of Holland Park and the surrounding suburbs of Greenslopes and Mount Gravatt East.

The site consists of the Church with a maximum capacity of 200 (pre - COVID), 60 (post-COVID) the adjacent hall has a capacity for slightly less, both with disabled access, memorial garden at rear of church, parish office, amenities block and a small car park. A portion of the upper level of the hall is used for a Thrift Shop with the remainder being used by local community and parish social group mornings.



A new rectory was built and completed in November 2020 and is located on the residential street next to the church hall.

## **Church History**

Although initially established as a mission church to service the expanding south eastern suburbs of Brisbane in the early 1930's, the parish reached its maturity after World War II which culminated with the building of the existing Memorial Church in 1957 and the establishment of the parish hall complex adjacent. Subsequently, church facilities have been maintained over the intervening 60 years to meet the evolving needs of the parish congregation. In more recent times the parish hall has been made available for community use, eg martial arts and aerobic / yoga classes and Anglicare, with the resultant rental being applied to parish income.

A major fund-raising campaign between 2009 and 2012 led to the installation of modern toilet facilities and the refurbishment of the hall kitchen facilities. Over \$100,000 was raised solely by the congregation for these works.

In 2014 after the retirement of long-standing rector Father Peter Uther, the parish was adjudged to not be financially capable of retaining its benefice status. Due to the support of the then Southern Regional Bishop (Bishop Alison Taylor), a series of "intentional part time ministries" and locums were appointed with a mandate to stabilise the parish and again prepare the parish for growth and to provide a platform for the appointment of a full time priest going forward. A focussed stewardship campaign was launched with a view to raise regular pledge income such that the total income of the parish was approx. \$140,000-150,000

Happily, this target was achieved, and the parish was blessed with the appointment of Fr Allan Paulsen as full time Priest in Charge from 2017 until his retirement post-surgery (taking effect in February 2021).

The Parish is now seeking a suitable full-time priest to continue this form of intentional "growth orientated ministry".

### **Where are we now?**

During 2017 to 2019, the Parish undertook a series of Parish and Church Growth programs and ministry outreach initiatives including the Leading Your Church Into Growth (LYCIG) program, Anglicare morning teas, retreats, public interest lectures, Labyrinth events, and general social events (like our 60th anniversary) to which the community was invited.

By the grace of God and the enactment of the Parish Ministry Action Plan, the parish experienced an increase in average regular Sunday communicants from the high 20s in 2014 to the high 30s in 2019.



In summary, the parish was slowly and incrementally growing, despite the inevitable loss of many of our faithful older members, with a net decrease in average age of parishioners, an increase of parishioners assuming extra responsibilities and “getting involved”. This was supplemented by an increase in parish spiritual growth opportunities a regular bible studies and retreats (some focused upon those just coming to faith as well as those wishing to go deeper) , a weekly meditation group and mid-week services morning and evening, monthly labyrinth walks and regular men’s and women’s group gatherings).

We also attach a summary of our 2019 NCLS results by way of background.

The COVID pandemic caused most of these events to be curtailed and only now are they being restarted in a “COVID friendly” format.

Following Fr Allan’s final service in October 2020, Fr Lindsay Howie has been appointed as part-time locum.

The parish is currently conducting one Sunday service at 9 am (which is live-streamed on the parish Facebook site) and is planning to shortly restart a mid-week service.

The average number of regular worshippers during September 2020 was 25 with a weekly average of an additional 22.75 watching services on Facebook.

The parish's financial position has been adversely impacted by COVID restrictions both in limiting worship numbers and the cessation of fund-raising events and hall rental (the latter previously accounting for over 45% of the parish income).

This being said, the regular pledges are holding up and the parish's financial position should strengthen during the interregnum with a significant surplus (over \$200,000) resulting from the sale of the old rectory and development of the new, and an improving top line as restrictions ease and parish activity increases.

In summary, pre-COVID the parish was humming, and slowly and methodically growing both in numbers and faith. During COVID the parish pulled together and carried on with phone trees, live-streamed services, and irregular smaller face-to-face and virtual catchups. We were determined to uphold, support, and encourage each other.

The parish is now emerging from "COVID hibernation" and evaluating its next steps in the interregnum with a fresh, new rectory and its activities gradually reopening in a "new normal" bimodal phase of twinned in-person and virtual events and ministries.

With God's grace, the parish is looking forward with confidence and is seeking a priest who will embrace with us the challenge of reshaping our church in this place and time.

## **Liturgical Expression**

### **Parish Vision Statement**

The liturgical expression is “middle of the road” Anglican: vestments and candles, regular readers and intercessions and sung responses at 9.00am Eucharist on Sunday.

There is extensive use of data projection for the 9.00 am Eucharist and the services have been live-streamed and recorded since November 2019 (so we were well-positioned to transition to this aspect of COVID restrictions)

Sunday Eucharist is sung with music provided by organ and piano. St Matthews is blessed to have 4 very competent organists for the 9.00 am Eucharist.



In order to increase the flexibility in liturgical expression and use of the church building, the parish arranged for the sale of most of the solid wood pews and their replacement with modern comfortable interlockable chairs. This has opened-up the back half of the church for use for community morning teas, studies, retreats and labyrinth events.

Pre-COVID, a pew bulletin was produced weekly, providing readings, devotional prayer points and general notices. During COVID, Fr Allan emailed daily readings, prayers and general updates. Weekly pew notices are being sent to parishioners.



We have a choir of 10 choristers.

Pre-COVID the parish priest had been undertaking visits to 2 local aged care facilities, but these are currently on hold.

## ST MATTHEW'S PROFILE

Less than 10 weddings and baptisms have been held at St Mathews in last 24 months. The register indicates that these weddings and baptisms were mostly requested by families living outside the parish. There have been 5 funerals during this period with approximately an equal number of those being parishioners and non-parishioners. 5 confirmations of parishioners (or their wider families) have also occurred during this period.

## **Organisational Structure**

### **Parish Administration**

The parish is administered by a parish council, consisting of 2 church wardens, and 7 parishioners. One of the wardens is assisting Fr Lindsay with the administrative aspects of the parish.

Parish Council meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of every month. Proposed agenda items are discussed by the priest with wardens the Tuesday evening prior to the Parish Council. Minutes are kept of each meeting and are conferred to be true and correct at each subsequent Parish Council Meeting.

St Matthews has a website at <http://stmatthewshollandpark.com> and Facebook page at <https://facebook.com/groups/292308270851142>.

The following are separate groups in our congregation:

- Ladies Fellowship and Bible study group meets weekly at a parishioner's home. Currently a group of 8-10 ladies attend.
- Men's (Breakfast) Fellowship met Pre-COVID on the first Tuesday of each month with between 6-10 attendees. The men's group seeks to provide a place for men to share matters of faith and relevance to them in an informal environment. This group is currently holding irregular Coffee and Cake evening sessions in the parish hall and is aiming to recommence on a regular basis in February 2021.

## ***Outreach and Community Engagement***



The church thrift shop has re-opened on Thursday from 9.00am -12.00pm. The thrift shop, including the annual garage sale, historically accounted for approx \$5000 per annum of income. The prices of clothing and goods are kept low for those in need. In cases of real need items are provided free of charge.

A dedicated parishioner sells her jams, pickles and chutneys at church events. The takings from the stall are contributed to church revenue.

2019 social and community outreach activities include our 60th Anniversary and St Matthews Day celebrations, Bishop John's visit, the St John's Annual Church Service and our Friends of Nungalinya College Dinner and First Nations celebration.

Our anniversary celebration attracted approximately 120 attendees and the next day's service and morning tea was attended by 50-60 people. The Nungalinya Friends dinner attracted 70 attendees including Uncle Des and Auntie Deborah Sandy and their families as elders and representatives of the local Jagera and Turrbal tribes.



We also held 2 well-supported Anglicare morning teas providing information on accessing in-home help and moving into higher care. These were well-advertised and resulted in over 60-70 community members in attendance.

As noted above, the parish is focused upon both numerical and spiritual growth. Accordingly, pre-COVID it offered regular "seeker-friendly" events including presentations upon matters of topical interest, regular bible studies and retreats focused



upon those interested or just coming to faith, weekly meditation group and mid-week services morning and evening, labyrinth walks and events and regular social gatherings. These events are structured so as to be welcoming, friendly, informal, interesting and informative and have no "strings or expectations attached".

We simply wish to make space for people to be receptive to the Divine and we seek to support and companion them as they go forward with whatever of the Divine they have received and experienced.

**Property**

**Church, adjacent rectory**

We have just built a new rectory next to the church. It has four bedrooms, and two bathrooms, with the ground-floor bathroom being accessibility compliant. There is a kitchen on the ground floor and a sink and bar area on the second floor. Bedrooms are air-conditioned with a split-system air-conditioner each, and the living areas are also air-conditioned.

The surplus resulting from the sale of the old rectory, subject to Diocesan approval, will be used to fund some upgrades to the church. The balance will be held on deposit and the interest used for outreach and related ministry purposes.

Other property includes computer, photocopier in Parish office, laptop, projector and screen in church; TV, CD/DVD player in hall and parish car (Toyota Camry Sedan 2011;134,000 kms).

We have a property and working bee group that maintains our property, including the rectory and surrounds with a major clean-up occurring every 4-6 months. A team of between 4-6 parishioners is the core of the working bees together with the wardens. We also contract businesses for the maintenance of lawns at the Church, electrical, plumbing and building and engineering work. We maintain a Workplace Hazards Register and follow Diocesan WHS guidelines.

### **Strategic Vision**

As a result of the parish Mission Action Plan and recent parish council deliberations the outcomes as a parish we have agreed to focus on include:

- Distilling and reviewing the lessons and learnings of our parish and parishioners' COVID experiences and reshaping our parish offerings and ministries in light of these (eg continuing with Bi-Modal virtual and face to face services, studies and activities);
- Continually review services so that they have contemporary relevance and spiritual significance to worshippers without abandoning the rich liturgical traditions of St Matthews;
- Continuing our outreach program to bring us into contact with more of our neighbours and community to give us an opportunity to understand better their spiritual needs and devise ways that St Matthews can meet them;
- Reinvigorate parish visitation and pastoral care;
- Continue offering study courses and activities such that there are numerous easy-to-take paths for new unchurched folks to come to know us and better understand and embrace our faith;
- Training of younger congregational members as lay staff and bringing on new leaders and volunteers; and Encourage and teach the whole congregation how to be introducers and 'welcomers' to those they know in their families, friends and community and those who attend any of our events and services



### **What is St Matthew's looking for?**

Spiritual guidance and compassion is a real need in this parish for all age groups and all areas of the parish.

We particularly seek a priest with a heart for encouraging younger members of congregational families, and the wider community more generally, to be engaged with faith that is presented in a contemporary manner that is relevant across all demographics.

As soon as COVID-safe, we wish the church building re-opened during business hours for private prayer and reflection and a priest who has a heart to be known thorough the community as leading a parish that is authentically open for business and active in building the Kingdom at Holland Park.

Preferred characteristics of a priest:

- can lead a Ministry team of lay people in a shared ministry model;
- committed to growth and outreach and ideally has a track record of parish growth;
- is keen to develop and lead our growth in faith and spirituality and has an openness to contemporary expressions of ministry such as informal, contemporary intergenerational services and labyrinth ministry;
- has a sympathetic and inclusive approach while being passionate and committed in their beliefs, is accepting of a range of theological backgrounds and spiritualities;
- is comfortable with our current style of worship services but is willing to also adopt more creative liturgies to support outreach and spiritual growth initiatives;
- wishes to live on-site and thus with suitable CCTV and other security arrangements keep the church doors open during the working week for private prayer and group meetings; and
- embraces social media as integral to evangelism, communication and interpersonal relationships

The Parish is blessed with parishioners who share their gifts in both the worship and running of the Church. The new priest can be assured of a warm welcome with continued and faithful support of all Parishioners who, with the assurance of God's Grace, look forward with confidence to the future.

