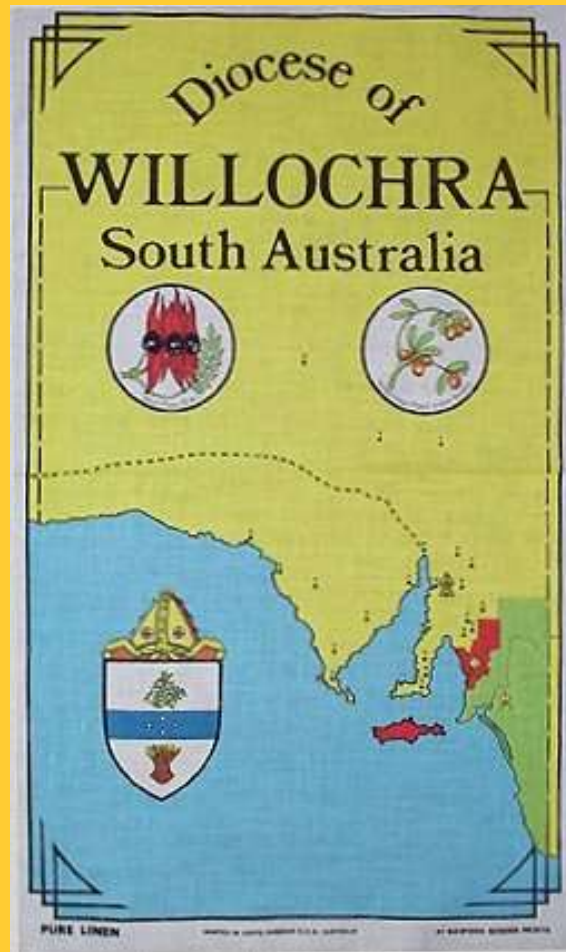


Ministering Communities in the Diocese of Willochra



The Diocese of Willochra



Our Vision

- We seek to be communities where the Word is preached and the Sacraments are celebrated, where people are nurtured in faith, give and receive pastoral care and participate in God's mission to the world so that everyone may be drawn into the fullness of life that is God's intention for us.

Where are we now?

- In this Diocese an enormous amount of time and energy has gone into Ministering Communities in Mission. And so in our Ministry Districts and in those parishes which have been influenced by this way of thinking, there is a new understanding of what it is to participate in the life of Christ in the Church.



Ministry Districts

We have four Ministry Districts

- **Southern Flinders** (10 congregations)
- **Wakefield** (15 congregations)
- **Eyre Peninsula** (7 congregations)

which began in 1997 because of inability to maintain the existing parish structures.

- **Lower York Peninsula** (8 congregations) began in 2005 at the request of the two former parishes one of which was viable.

The need



David McCall became Bishop in 1987. He realised that existing parochial structures could not be sustained because

- Rural population was in decline
- There was a „rural crisis“ and insufficient money to provide for stipendiary clergy
- The dependence on stipended clergy for the life and worship of the congregation was counter-productive to the mission of the Church

What happened

- 1994 Bp McCall signalled that existing structures were unsustainable
- 1996 He attended a rural ministry conference in Perth where Bp. Stewart Zabriskie (Nevada) was guest speaker and he heard about ministering communities and local priests
- 1996 He attended a Readers Weekend in his own diocese on the nature of the Church in a changing society and realised that change was necessary
- He preached and taught about the responsibility of the local congregation for its life and mission

What happened next

- 1997 8 parishes were dissolved and 3 Ministry Districts created
- 4 Ministry District Priests were commissioned
- New regulations were passed at Synod
- Garry Weatherill was appointed MDO with NHMF funding
- Training and support of Lay Ministry teams began
- The MDO and a District Priest attended an international conference on mutual ministry

How Ministering Communities work

Each congregation is responsible for its own life: ministry and mission, property, and finances

There is a Ministry District Council for the management of shared responsibility, mainly connected with stipend, rectory, Synod representation, assessment.

There is a Ministry District Priest, sometimes 2 in each Ministry District

The Bishop (+Garry since 2001)

- The Bishop is the chief “bearer of the vision”. He breathes it over everyone all the time.
- He takes a strong nurturing role with clergy and laity
- He is persistently hopeful, encouraging and forgiving.
- At the commissioning of a District Priest he commissions the people too



The District Priest



- An “Equipping pastor” who is a team-worker
- Mentoring
- Teaching
- Encouraging
- Presiding at the eucharist at each centre at least once a month
- Resourcing
- Learning

Local clergy



- Local priests and deacons have a personal sense of call, are discerned by their local congregation, and have the call validated by the Bishop and the Provincial Ministry Advisory Conference

Local clergy

- Are non-stipendiary
- Are licensed for ministry in their own congregation
- Are required to be involved in a two-year Post Ordination Program (10 days p.a. and reading) and continuing education. They are encouraged to do Trinity Certificate or tertiary study by distance ed.



Post Ordination Group of Local Clergy and seminary-trained clergy, 2005

Pastoral Assistants



- Team work is encouraged

- Licences are issued for various liturgical ministries, preaching, pastoral care, youth ministry, outreach, education and formation
- They are encouraged to attend Ministry Weekends, study Trinity Certificate in Theology and Ministry, submit sermons for appraisal

The congregation

- There may be a Church Council but many congregations make decisions as a congregation or vestry.
- There are few regulations
- The congregation is free to order its affairs as it sees best. It is responsible for its worship, christian formation, pastoral care, outreach – its total life
- The District Priest offers counsel and advice, education and training, sacramental ministry

A case study

- Gladstone in the Mid North (popn 680) has stopped its decline and is very gradually attracting retirees without much money. Many young people move to the city.
- It has 2 primary schools, and a high school which serve the wider district. No teachers live in town. Health services but no hospital. Strong footie club, bowls, swimming pool of sorts. Mobile library
- There s a PO, Bank, supermarket, 2 pubs, a stock firm, 3 service stations, a tourist organisation, an op-shop , a caravan park and little else apart from Church Office!



- Gladstone congregation has a regular congregation of 7 people. There is one Home Communion member.
- The Uniting Church has 11 members, the Catholic Church is stronger but declining. Lutherans go elsewhere,



St Alban s, Gladstone

- The whole congregation is involved in decision-making, ministry and mission
- **Trevor** (the Diocesan Registrar) is the local priest (2004). He celebrates and preaches once a month.
- **Pat** and **Maurie** assist with the eucharist, and lead worship once a month
- **Bev** operates the CD music
- All members read in church
- **Anne** and **Bev** are a catering group
- **Bob** does most of the ,jobs
- **Nell** loves the fellowship

continued

- **Everyone** helps in the annual fundraiser of making >2000 pasties
- **Everyone** helps with their annual Mission Dinner fundraiser for ABM
- The District Priest celebrates once a month
- Worship shared with the UCA once a month. They also share study, outreach events and special occasions
- Gladstone MU involves women from nearby towns
- Much ministry is in the community, Tourist Assoc., Meals on Wheels, Health centre support, ambulance
- The townspeople look to St Alban s in times of need and support their activities

Issues for St Alban s

- Inability to attract newcomers from townsfolk and new residents
- Inability to work with young people
- Ageing: Ages range from 61-94. What happens if someone moves?

Ministry Development Officer

- There have been three MDOs: Garry Weatherill 1997-2001, David Amery 2001-2003, Dorothy Thorpe 2003-present.
- They have continued sustained work in fostering the vision, providing training, and encouraging congregations and individuals.



Nurture and Formation

- 2 Clergy Conferences and a retreat
- Continuing education reading and reflection program
- Post-Ordination program
- 4 District Priests Gatherings
- 3 Local Priests Gatherings
- 2 Lay Ministry Weekends
- Advice and consultation

The Willochran

*Father:
we see in Jesus Christ
your love and compassion
for the whole world.
By your Will, Grant
renew and empower us
in witness to the world,
that all may know your
love and the life which
abounds.*

The Willochran

FOLLOWING Jesus... PROCLAIMING his gospel... CONNECTING with his world... and ENJOYING our common life.

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ORDINATION - A HAPPY FAMILY OCCASION



On Saturday 11 December 2004, Bishop Garry Weatherill ordained Gerald Moore to be local deacon at Auburn and David McDougall to be non-stipendiary deacon in the Ministry District of Wakefield.



Left - Dave and Gerald cut the ordination cake made by Gerald's daughter.



Andrea with Abbie and Dave McDougall, Bishop Garry, Vicki and Gerald Moore.

A NEW OUTREACH

'Spare Moments' is the name of the new Christian Bookshop which opened in Crystal Brook in December. St Skis was offered a shop in the main street, rent free and the Guild decided to take the opportunity to put it to good use and open a Christian Bookshop, something they felt was needed and would be a good outreach to the community. The opening on 3 December was very successful, with members from all churches calling in to have a look and we also had visitors from Port Broughton. Comments such as - 'This is really good' and 'We needed this' have encouraged the Guild and they will endeavour to keep the stock up-to-date and supply books that have been requested. Craft items are also on sale, as well as good second-hand novels. Tea, coffee and biscuits are served for a donation and we can see this as a useful tool for outreach. The first month of trading has been good and we look forward to serving the community. We are open on Wednesdays and Fridays from 10.00am to 2.00pm, so if you happen to be in Crystal Brook, please call in and say hello. We are in the main street next to IGA Supermarket. Photographed on opening day are Guild President, Joan Sawyer and the Rev'd Simon Waters. Judy Bell



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- The bi-monthly diocesan magazine is carefully edited to promote the vision, give ideas, report ministry and mission

Issues

Constant reinforcement of a clear vision

Trust and fear

Managing the process of change

Resistant gatekeepers

Demarcation issues, clarity of roles

Aged congregations and perceptions of abilities

Dependency issues

Authority issues with ecumenical partners

Wider effects

I have been surprised and delighted at the ways in which this new expression of being Anglican has taken off in Ministry Districts and has influenced the whole Diocese. From the perspective of the nine years I have been in the Diocese now, I can see some very significant growth, both in ministry and in mission.

Bishop Garry Weatherill