

**2026-2030**  
**St John's**  
**West Brunswick**



# About

## Living the hope Jesus brings

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### The point of us

We exist to build up local people in the hope of Jesus Christ. We pray and work to see people mature in their trust in Jesus, and to experience his hope, help, and joy.

### Our priorities

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To worship and honour with our lives the one God who is Father, Son, and Spirit

To share the hope of Jesus, the Son, with those who are distant from hope

To build a healthy, safe, and welcoming community hub for Brunswick West

To care for, equip, and send out mature disciples of Jesus

### What we value

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**A Bible-formed and cross-shaped ministry.** With God's help, we pray and work to be a church grounded in learning from God's word, the Bible. We aim to point with humility to the reality of God in Jesus Christ, not only with our words but also by the changes he makes to our lives through his Spirit. The cross of Jesus undergirds the message we speak and the life of discipleship we ask God to help us live. We ask God to help us serve in the power of the Holy Spirit, using our weaknesses and vulnerabilities to help us grow up in Christ. This is for our own sake, and for the sake of those we are responsible to love and serve.

**Using the gifts we have in the places God has placed us.** The major work of our church is done by our members living out their lives where God has placed them. The point of us gathering, teaching, and pastoring as Christians is to encourage, equip, and strengthen the daily-life ministry of our members. When we meet, we also share the gifts that God has given us to build up the

church. We can only do what God gives us the gifts to do. When we work together as a church or in the places God has set each of us, we pray for willing spirits to see and take up the opportunities God puts before us. We enjoy small ministries because we know that often small acts of kindness are significant. So, we plant and water in the places God gives us, knowing it is only God who gives growth. Life is his gift, not ours.

**Beauty in brokenness.** Our area has many who have deep experiences of brokenness. Though it is costly and risky to do, we embrace this brokenness, believing, as the apostle Paul was shown, that God's grace is enough for us because his power is made perfect in our weakness. This means we expect to be patient with each other, often have to go slow, but we also have hope. We expect to see spiritual growth, increasing health, and purpose for all who seek Christ's help as his disciples.

**To build up and to send out.** Our local area is a transient area and becoming more so as apartment complexes replace the factories, houses, and flats of earlier generations. We aim to reach out to many, and to build up those who respond to Christ, knowing many will move on to the next stage of their life and serve Jesus elsewhere. Some, we pray, will move into mission or church work in other places having discovered or grown their skills with us. All of which is why we accept the work of regular welcoming and the grief of regular farewells. We realise our part in people's journey with Christ is only for a time.

# Journey

Many churches have *strategic* or *mission action plans* or *road maps* laying out the things they hope to achieve. We have a *bike path*. We've chosen the bike path metaphor partly to avoid the overconfidence of corporate planning, partly because Brunswick has more bike paths than any other part of Australia, but mainly because bike paths bring us to one thing at a time, normally without multiple routes, and at a speed that matches our abilities. For a smaller church like ours, we think this is a necessary approach to forming plans. We also know that over several years, we will be surprised by how far God will help us to travel along the path he has for us.

## Destinations along the bike path

Below, under *topic* headings and then as a *bike path* timeline, are the projects we are asking God's help to take on from 2026 to 2030.

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### Prayer (because Jesus is building his church)

As a first priority, we aim to soak everything we do in prayer by:

- Building a prayer chain of people who pray for others.
- Working out how to make prayer part of *every* activity.
- Holding a monthly online prayer meeting (1 hour).
- Holding a prayer event twice a year (3 hours).
- Our leadership to encourage, develop resources, and grow themselves and our members in lives of prayer.
- Our leadership to identify, train, and encourage those with a gift for prayer.
- Encouraging more open times of prayer in our worship times.
- Encouraging prayer stations to be used regularly during our times of worship.
- Encouraging stories about answered prayer in our worship times.
- Building on our website a resource of written prayers, poems, and songs.
- Growing our music ministry as a form of prayer ministry.
- Writing a prayer for St. John's ministry.

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## Building mission into what we already do (start where we are).

We use the word mission to describe our hope of sharing the news about what God has done for us in Jesus Christ using words but also in our life as a church and as individuals. Here are some missional ideas we want to learn from:

- Turn our church calendar into a mission calendar to help keep us accountable to continue the mission of Jesus in all our activities. We will catalogue events on the calendar as: *Presence events* – like a board games afternoon, where we just hang out with others as local Christians. *Proclaim events* – like a carols service, where the good news about Jesus is explained. *Persuade events* – like an Alpha course, where people are invited to respond to Jesus.
- The vicar's report at our monthly parish council meetings will include a review of our bike path progress for our leadership team.
- Plan an annual outreach course, like Alpha.
- Plan an annual baptism and confirmation service.
- Plan an annual meal where we celebrate the gifts and work of the groups that hire our facilities at St. John's.
- Plan an annual service and luncheon to thank our Op Shop volunteers and customers.
- Aim to attend the big events our hirers organise (e.g., end-of-year concerts).
- Be involved in events run by others in our community.
- Identify the gifts God has given us to better train and use them in our ministry.
- Establish new events with the gifts and interests we have. For example: board games events, men's breakfasts, grandparents and grandchildren outings, a casual Op Shop Cafe Lite, an art show.

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## Partners in mission (because we are not only about ourselves).

### **Local mission.**

During this *bike path*, we may consider partnerships with other small local Anglican churches. The aim of any partnership is to revitalise each church's life in Christ while respecting each other's independence as a separate Anglican church. One recent example of this has been our involvement in the Inner North Youth Group, but in the future, we may be able to help each other by sharing staff costs, administrative resources, missional experience, building or equipment resources, or by making use of each other's events (e.g. a shared Alpha course) and praying for each other.

## **Wider mission.**

As a parish of the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne, we are already part of the wider church. Several of our members are already involved in supporting the mission of the wider church in Melbourne, Australia, and overseas, but more than that, all of us are called to mission where we live, work, study, and play (see point two under *What we value*, above). Here are some ways we can support the wider mission of the universal church.

- At the start of this *bike path*, we are supporting through prayer, friendship, and giving mission work in the Northern Territory and Southeast Asia. Over this journey, we hope to add one other mission partnership to our support.
- Aim to host at least one student minister per year who is considering training for paid ministry work.
- Learn how we as a church can honour and pray for the wider church ministry our members are already involved in. As we start this journey, this includes mentoring ministers, teaching and training ministers in Australia and overseas, peace-wise processes for churches, hospital chaplaincy, archdeacon responsibilities, and parish support teamwork.
- Develop our digital church ministry, which is already part of our contribution to the wider church (see below).
- As part of identifying the gifts God gives us, we will be praying that we would be able to identify those amongst us who we believe God is calling into full-time ministry work. There are many fields this could involve, from youth or children's ministry to overseas mission, to chaplaincy or ordained ministry. A significant part of their calling will be the encouragement, testing, and prayers of our church.
- Encouraging and celebrating each other as we take ministry initiatives in the places we live and work in. This may be starting a prayer group or Bible study at work. Learning to pray for our clients. Joining a Christian group at uni or school. Praying with others while carpooling or praying for those around us on public transport as we commute. We may even start, in small ways, to pray with others in our homes and to share encouragements from the Bible with them.

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## Life groups (a key strategy)

Life groups can be called small, home, or cell groups. We call them life groups because they help us to do life together. They give us a more personal opportunity to share our gifts, care for, and encourage each other than our public worship times can. In short, they help us to grow in knowing God, who is the giver of all life.

Brunswick is a diverse part of Melbourne, and it contains many different communities. Our aim is to establish life groups, rather than congregations or outreach projects, that are designed around these different groups. They may be:

- Groups for young adults and young workers
- Language-learning groups for people who are developing their skills with English
- Groups for older single people
- An online group for those comfortable in that medium
- A group that prays specifically for healing requests
- A prayer meeting group
- A gamers' group
- Evangelistic courses like Alpha or Christianity Explored based in life groups
- Daytime groups and other diverse groups that meet to share friendship, study the Bible and pray

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## Building a safe community hub (serving the neighbourhood)

**Op Shop** Our Op Shop, like our church buildings during the week, is already a community hub for many. Here is how we want to develop these connections:

- A simple monthly lunch for those who use our site during the day
- A mid-week worship service accessible to people who use our site during the day
- Establishing sheltered outdoor seating and improving the gardens near the Op Shop
- An external mural on the bare walls of the Op Shop
- Running an occasional donation-only café around the Op Shop

**Garden upgrade.** Our local community already uses the church grounds which we spend resources maintaining. Therefore, it is wise for us to plan how to develop this opportunity. On this *bike path* we hope to develop a site-wide landscaping plan, we can build over time, which includes:

- Openness (for welcome) and security working together well (no hidden spaces)
- A better playground idea
- A covered outdoor meeting area near the Op Shop (see community hub)
- A budget line for keeping the grounds in good order

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## Children and young people (to such belongs the kingdom)

At the beginning of this journey, we have a small number of children and youth attending church. The question for us is, where to go from here? Here is what we will do:

- Pray for families with children to stay and help revitalise this ministry at St. John's
- Move the pre-school activity area into the main body of the church with new resources
- Set up a volume controller on the speaker in the church foyer (Narthex) so parents and teachers can control the volume independently of the sound desk operator
- Continue to invite, welcome, and train children and young people, via their parents, to serve on our church rosters.
- Start using children's songs in our family worship service.
- Develop kits for children's teachers (all who have been cleared by our Diocesan professional standards body) for use with little notice when children do arrive at church.
- Strengthen our relationships with the families who already use St. John's as a community resource and invite them to appropriate events like Carols.
- Design our events with the expectation that children will be present.
- Run a messy church for parents, grandparents, and children on Mothers' and Fathers' Day each year.
- As we grow, develop a Mainly Music outreach program (pre-schoolers).
- Keep exploring the parent-child, Mother Goose program (infants).
- As we grow in this area of work, work towards employing a part-time children and families minister towards the end of this *bike path*.

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## Staffing and budgets (planning to grow)

At the start of this journey, we are paying for a part-time vicar. By the end of this journey, we hope to be able to afford a full-time vicar, a part-time communications and administration person, and a part-time children and families worker as well as provision for student ministers each year. This bike path asks our parish council to produce a draft budget up until 2030 that contains estimates of income and expenditure over the coming years that assume we take on all the ideas on this *bike path*.

Our commitment is not to go too fast or too far beyond our abilities. While sometimes we should take risks, we will not do things we cannot reasonably afford to do or sustain.

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## Worship together (our life and our future)

Worship is our life (e.g. Philippians 1:21) and our future (e.g. Revelation 22:1-5), which is why we want to meet together for worship. Here are some things we hope to do.

- Continue developing our Sunday morning worship time as an informal, family-friendly service.
- Commence a mid-week daytime service.
- Commence a Sunday evening service.
- Have part of our church building open for prayer during daylight hours.
- Consider partnerships with other local Anglican churches in sharing resources that enable worship elsewhere (see partners in mission).
- Develop a digital church ministry (see below).

**Digital church.** We already have this ministry, so this part of our *bike path* is about developing something we already do. In the 12 months before writing this *bike path*, our website had just shy of 9,000 views from around 3,600 separate users. Most of these people were in Australia with significant numbers also coming from North America, then Asia, then Europe. Most visitors downloaded Bible studies and audio recordings of our teaching. At the time of writing, our other online platform is Facebook where our page has 153 regular followers and has been viewed around 24,000 times in the last 12 months.

Our existing digital church is already supporting our own ministry and contributing to the wider church so it is reasonable for us to consider how we can develop this. Here are our ideas.

- As our existing audio-visual equipment reaches the end of its useful life, replace it with equipment to facilitate this ministry.
- Develop electronic aids for vision, hearing, and neuro-diversity.
- Develop online access to worship for those who cannot physically attend worship and for those times when it is not possible for our community to meet together physically. This covers a broad category of people that includes those in aged or homecare, others with mental health conditions, some with cultural restrictions, and those times when physical access to churches is restricted.
- Develop diverse ways of accessing the content we produce – for example, podcast and video channels.

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## Love justice and do kindness (love your neighbour).

As we weave prayer and mission into all we do, we will find ourselves learning to imitate God in our care for our brothers and sisters in Christ and our neighbours as ourselves. This is part of what it means to be with Jesus in his mission to the world, and a way God uses to bring people to trust in him and to keep going during hard times. The needs in our area continue to be high, and there are regular calls for local churches to take up social causes. Here are ways we hope to respond.

### **Love justice**

- We welcome our members' involvement in social causes, political parties, community, and charity work. The Lord wants good and just things for all societies, and we are part of that work (for example, Romans 13, Micah 6:8, 1 Timothy 2:1-6).
- We welcome people of different political persuasions because our political ideas are not what makes us Christians. What unifies us is our love for Christ, who calls us to work out how to love our neighbours in many ways.
- From time to time, we will consider balanced discussion and formal debates about social causes that our members are involved in. We can also see these events as part of our mission to our area.

### **Do kindness**

- Our focus, as a church together, is on the care of the individuals, families, and groups God sets before us. The neighbours we encounter (Luke 10:25-37).
- We hope to grow a pastoral care team and system for volunteers and staff.
- We will continue to visit those who cannot be at church or a life group. We will bring church to them.
- We will aim to grow our ability to help individuals with practical financial and other assistance (Bruce's Helping Hand).
- We will work out how to measure whether we are caring well.

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## And walk humbly with your God (stay godly and sane).

Our plans are in God's hands and not ours. That alone should keep us humble, but church plans also often forget that starting a new thing assumes it will continue in subsequent years. That means each new activity will require new energy, gifts, resources to make it start and to keep it happening. These are resources that we do not have at the start of our journey.

**Our *bike path* assumes God will grow St. John's in volunteers and resources that allow us to start and sustain the projects we are planning.**

With this must come a sane and godly courage to review the things we have started: to stop doing them if they are not achieving the goal of building up people in the hope of Jesus Christ, if they are not equipping the members of our church for the ministry that is their lives, or if the gifts we started a project with are no longer available.

Starting new things in small churches is hard, but often stopping them following a short time of success is harder. This *bike path* commits our church and leadership team to regularly review what we do, what we do not do, what we start, and what needs to finish.

2030 is the year we will review, revise, and publish an updated version of this *bike path*. It is likely that some of the ideas here will have just begun to flourish and need to be nurtured for a longer time, some ideas will have stopped, some will need to be stopped, and new opportunities for our mission together will have come out of the efforts this plan represents. All we know is that our faithful God is able to more than we ask or imagine (Ephesians 3:20) as we are faithful to him.

# Bike path

Rework our church calendar and reporting to keep us accountable for doing Jesus' mission



**2026**

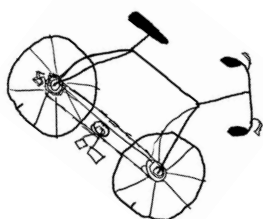
Alpha or Christianity explored/explained available in life groups

Celebration meals - shrove Tuesday, 125th anniversary, thank you meals or hirers.

Start collecting prayers on our website

Foyer of church open to the public for prayer in daylight hours

Re-boot monthly Sunday evening healing and communion service and continue monthly prayer meeting



Get expert advice on digital church project. Explore funding sources for this.

Source prayer training material for life groups

Thank you service for Op Shop and other volunteers



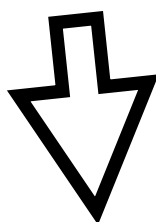
Establish a new contact and outreach event like: gamers night, men's breakfasts

**2027**

Weekly prayer group @ 9:30am Sundays before the 10am worship time

Build up our prayer chain and pastoral care ministries

Start a simple version our digital church project



Attend the big events run by those we have regular contact with

Another life group project - communion for Op Shop & AA (no alcohol!)

Develop our wider church ministry by supporting a student minister and our members' work in the wider church

A possible parish partnership

A paid position to manage communications and administrative work



Seek to make Bruce's helping hand tax-deductible. Update our policies on our care and justice ministry

# 2028

Reboot our Sunday school project  
Employ a part-time children and families worker

Start a regular mid-week worship service.

Update website for accessibility and creativity!

Develop discipleship course material for life groups

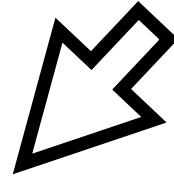
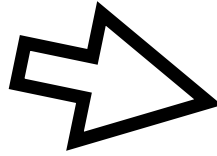
Establish one contact and outreach event like: causal Op Shop Cafe, garden group, a monthly meal for people in need

Add one more mission support project to our budget

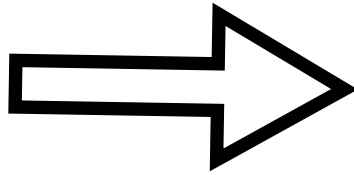
Develop our digital church project for regular broadcasting

Run Messy Church on Mothers's and Fathers' days

Develop a landscaping plan and ideas on how to fund it!



# 2029



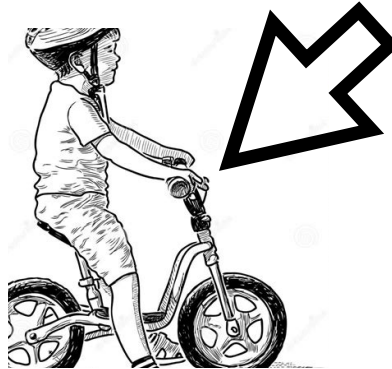
Establish one contact and outreach event like: art shows, walking group



Do the landscaping plan

Develop prayerfulness material for life groups

Establish a new contact and outreach event like: mainly music

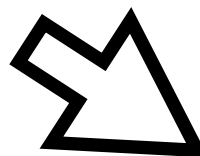


Another life group project

# 2030

Develop creative section of our website for prayers, poems, writing material, visual art and music

Review our digital systems that they are safe and actually helpful to all who use them!



Another life group project

Start a prayer night twice a year