

S.^TJAMES'

Bicentenary 2019-2024

The Reverend Andrew Sempell
Rector

5 January 2022

Dear Parishioners and Friends,

Welcome to the New Year

God's blessing upon you as we enter 2022 and celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany. It reminds us that acknowledgement of Jesus as God's anointed one extends to the entire world, represented by the wise men from the East who came to worship him. It is God's world, and many people are called into his service including those of us who worship at St James' Church.

In our Strategic Plan, we describe ourselves as a 'Classically Anglican' church that is committed to bringing God's presence to the people of Sydney and beyond. To do this we seek to transform people's lives through proclamation of the Gospel, teaching the faith, worshipping through word and sacrament, serving those in need, and creating a fellowship of love. May we keep on seeking the guidance, strength, and encouragement of the Holy Spirit for all we do.

COVID-19 Regulations

COVID-19 continues to be a challenge for our community and its capacity to operate effectively. The Omicron variant is spreading rapidly, yet the more severe Delta variant also remains present in the community. Moreover, of late it has become especially difficult for people to access testing for infection. All of this has created a degree of community apprehension regarding current public engagements and of uncertainty about what will happen in the future.

It is understandable, therefore, that people will be worried about going out. Yet, having been through this experience several times over the past two years, we know that it will change at some stage and that we will return to more predictable times.

We will therefore continue to operate by the current restrictions, recommending that those attending worship or other church activities should:

- Be fully vaccinated;
- Stay at home if feeling unwell;
- Use either the QR code or registration log upon entering the building;
- Wear masks while in the church building and not remove them to sing;
- Keep appropriate physical distancing where possible under the 2 sqm rule (i.e. sit at the green dots—4 people per pew or closer if from the same household); and,
- Use hand-sanitiser regularly.

Pastoral Visiting

Because of the infectiousness of the Omicron COVID variant and the ongoing presence of Delta, general Pastoral Visiting will be restricted over the next month until an improvement to the situation becomes apparent. Visits will occur on request, but masks will need to be worn and physical distancing kept. Telephone, Zoom and email contact will continue to be the main ways of keeping contact. Please contact Fr John Stewart if you have a pastoral need.

Postponement of Special Services: Choral Mattins and Orchestral Masses

As you have already been advised, the Bicentennial Choral Mattins that was scheduled for tomorrow (Feast of the Epiphany) has been postponed.

We have now also decided to postpone the two Orchestral Masses that were scheduled for later this month. While the normal Sunday Eucharists will be celebrated, it is thought that the larger Orchestral Masses are of a higher risk both to those who attend as well as the musicians who perform. We will look at other dates in the year when these services can be conducted.

National Church Life Survey (NCLS)

This month, St James' is scheduled to participate in the National Church Life Survey. The NCLS is conducted every five years to help better understand churches and their engagement with the wider community. It looks at areas of demographics, participation, wellbeing, spirituality, and church health. Millions of people participate in the Survey across the mainline denominations including Anglicans, Catholics, Protestants and Pentecostals.

The Survey can be conducted in a 'hard copy' paper format or online. Forms will be available at church on Sundays or from the Parish Office. We will also post out forms to selected households over the course of the month. Online returns can be completed by going to: attendersurvey.ncls.org.au and entering the code: ANS00301

Please note that this is a voluntary, anonymous, and confidential survey; that most people complete it within 15 to 20 minutes; and that not all response forms are the same.

*Keep us, good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy in this time of uncertainty and distress.
Sustain and support the anxious and fearful, and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may rejoice in your comfort knowing that nothing can separate us
from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.*

Every blessing,



The Reverend Andrew Sempell
Rector of St James'