

**Helping people to meet Jesus -
Worship, Prayer and Discipleship in life**

***The Strategic Vision for
The Anglican Parish of Orange ('Holy Trinity')
2021 - 2025***

CIRCULATION DRAFT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Brief Overview

In 2018, facing the potential prospect of financial insolvency, The Anglican Parish of Orange (“Holy Trinity Parish”) developed a proposal to strengthen bonds with Anglicare in Orange to provide a unified ministry into Orange, which would also give the Parish a degree of financial support.

This work included:

1. Refurbishment of the Memorial Hall, to accommodate the Parish Office and other Parish activities.
2. Engagement in a partnership with Anglicare Orange as a paying tenant in the Parish Centre building and Rectory.
3. Support for the Rector and his family to move to off-site accommodation.

The implementation of this proposal provided a foundation for Holy Trinity to build upon. The Parish Council’s deliberations around a longer-term vision for the Parish were diverted in 2019 by increasing evidence of structural deterioration in the church roof. The rectification of this, coupled with the challenges of changes to ministry in response to COVID, became the major undertaking for the Parish Council in 2019 – 2020.

In November 2020, the Parish Council and Lay Ministry engaged in a day of contemplative prayer and reflection led by Rev Dunnett. In December 2020, the Parish Council hosted the parishioners in the “planning AGM” for the Parish, at which parishioners were invited to engage with the process of prayerfully and consciously seeking to understand the direction God has for our Parish. Individual parishioners have provided further comment and input since that meeting, as they contemplate the mission of our Parish and our ministry within Orange.

This document sets out the vision of the Parish for the next five years.

Our vision can be summarised as “Helping people to meet Jesus – worship, prayer and discipleship in life”.

Contact details

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1. BACKGROUND

The contemporary Australian Church operates nationally in an environment of significant societal and generational change, creating challenges and opportunities for growth. The Anglican Parish of Orange (*'Holy Trinity'*) has been actively considering and attempting to engage effectively with these changes over the last few years.

1990 - 2015

Parishioners in the early 1990s worked to develop a stable financial base for the Parish to extend worship and mission in Orange; but a number of events in the period of 2000 – 2015 resulted in a significant shift for both the Diocese and the Parish. The combined effects of the settlement with the Commonwealth Bank and the revelations of the Royal Commission into Child Abuse resulted in the loss of assets that had been used to support parish ministry and compelled the Parish to reduce stipended clergy and administrative (office) support.

The Parish Council have carefully considered the results of the National Church Life Survey as these have become available which flag several crucial points in relation to developing a sustained model of successful ministry:

1. A central focus on the teaching of Jesus
2. Investment in worship services as a core aspect of mission
3. Welcoming newcomers, and supporting relationship within existing parishioners
4. Commitment to prayer
5. Supporting church groups, and church involvement in community
6. Development of 'lay' ministry
7. Growth in stipendiary clergy

Data from the *National Church Life Survey* suggests that the absence of full-time stipendiary ministry is a 'tipping point' at which parishes and churches spiral into a cycle of diminishing ministry and stagnation. Parishes which can maintain stipendiary ministry above one full time minister are much more likely to experience ongoing growth and community witness. Of concern to the Parish Council – in the wake of the Commonwealth Bank matter, Holy Trinity reduced the stipendiary ministry in Orange back to a single full-time minister. This resulted in the loss of the dedicated (part-time) youth ministry worker and loss of a number of the gains which had been supported through that position in youth and young families ministry.

2016 – 2020

During the period 2016 to 2020, Holy Trinity completed the work to stabilise future ministry and growth in the Parish.

The negotiation of a lease with the Orange branch of Anglicare to co-locate on the Holy Trinity site created significant opportunities to reach into a section of the community not usually engaged in the parish life of Holy Trinity. It has enabled Holy Trinity to develop a shared-profile with Anglicare in compassionate work within the community of Orange, which has raised the profile of the Parish generally. The first triennium of the lease agreement (to conclude this year) provided foundational financial support for the day-to-day upkeep and expenses of the Parish.

The agreement also allowed the Parish to reclaim access to the Memorial Hall, and to provide sufficient refurbishment of that space to allow for ongoing worship meetings during the COVID lockdowns of 2020.

Escalation in the rate of decay of the roof of the main church building caused some distraction through 2019 – 2020 as work was undertaken to restore the roof, with subsequent water damage caused during the repair work. The support of the Diocese has been crucial in negotiating the challenges in the project. Holy Trinity expects this work to be complete in the first half of 2021.

2. Current Priorities

2021 – 2025

The priorities for the next five years can be outlined using the following schema. The Parish Council, and Parishioners generally have identified that the main concern is to ensure growth in the fundamental work of Christian growth – inviting existing parishioners to grow in their relationship with Jesus, and enabling people from outside the parish with the opportunity to meet Jesus. All other parish initiatives and activity must fold into this primary purpose of growing Christian ministry in all sections of the community of Orange and our local district. Fundamental to this understanding is the personal acceptance that “no-one in the church is a spectator”, and that every individual member of the church body has a role and a calling to ministry in some form or another. The role of the church broadly is to bring these individual ministries together into a coherent whole through which the broader community are called into a personal relationship with Jesus.

This broad goal will be achieved through the following ways:

Continued support of different styles of Anglican worship in Holy Trinity

- Traditional service
- Family / contemporary service
- Reflective / meditative service

The Parish Council at Holy Trinity realise that growth in the parish is dependent upon attracting and retaining faithful Christian worshippers to the church from across the full spectrum of the community. Although God is unchanging, the diversity of human expression and the variety of lived experience requires us to be able to open opportunities for worship and discipleship which are not just authentic to God, but also speak authentically into the lives of people in our community, regardless of their background. The Anglican model of worship provides a broad scaffold to support and nurture a wide variety of relationships with God. For this reason, the parish must see the value in different forms of worship (the traditional, the contemporary and the contemplative) where the focus remains on the development of a deepening relationship with Jesus; understanding him as friend and saviour, and working to the fulfillment of his kingdom.

Rather than expecting all Christians to “mature” toward a ‘traditional’ 2nd order communion’ model of worship; the parish understand the need to be thoughtfully contemporary in our approach to worship – retaining Christ at the centre and welcoming all who seek a personal relationship with Jesus within the Anglican framework polity.

The parish also realise that there are social and ethnic groups within Orange for whom the current worship services would be unfamiliar, and possibly threatening. The Parish recognises that over the next five years, we may also need to look at developing additional worship opportunities for people unfamiliar with any of the existing models of worship.

Continuation of existing Ministry and Mission activities

Whilst we have examined the information provided from NCLS we are also aware that what we have been doing over the last 20 years hasn't been in vain and is still important and seen as vital as part of a church's growth into the future.

The Solomons Mission

The Solomons mission has seen considerable investment, growth, connection into the Orange schools community, and ministry extension as it continues to grow in our Parish. We are committed to getting resources such as library, medical, technology, and Ministry opportunities in worship, prayer and discipleship occurring between the Diocese of Ysabel, the Parish of Buala and the Parish of Holy Trinity.

Not only do we have a strong core group working very hard to connect Australian Rotary RAWCS programs to our partners in Ysabel to build sanitary blocks for high schools in Ysabel, but we have seen wonderful connections with Orange High School, Orange Anglican Grammar School, and other independent schools support the program with thousands of dollars of resources.

We have seen the ability to share and cultural Ilse discipleship programs across the partnership, have connected with other Anglican parishes in The Bathurst Diocese such as Dubbo with team members and resources (medical, educational and other).

We have connected to sporting teams in Orange with resources going to schools in Ysabel, students coming with us on mission and the hope to increase this over the next few years.

The Parish Council and the Bishop of Ysabel, B+ Ellison Quity, who many of us met when he came to Orange several years ago, are looking to try and bring a team over to share cultural dance, singing and other opportunities with Rotary in our community and Diocese.

The Orange Rotary Clubs have also provided support and partnership for this ministry, through joint activities for fund-raising. These have provided opportunity for Holy Trinity to speak at Rotary events, and to extend invitations into these service clubs for individuals to re-engage in a relationship with Jesus.

Pastoral Team visiting

Our Pastoral team goes into all of the nursing homes in Orange at some point over the month, and in many several times over the month. We have a vibrant team but are always looking for more people to be involved. It is not onerous but vital for the ministry of the Parish.

Pastoral visiting has also been an important part of our reconnection with our 'shout-in' parishioners. Several of our team will go to anywhere up to 10 people a week to visit and care for those who need a visit or communion.

Pastoral Palliative care is an essential and important part of our consistent ministry. The opportunity to share someone's journey in death is very powerful and we have seen many people come to meet Jesus in this ministry.

The pastoral team has many opportunities to not only refer people to our rector for initial crises counselling but to also connect people with other groups for their benefit to help. This creates the beginning of a journey between the church and people in need which has often born fruit.

Prayer ministry

The prayer-life of the Parish has been a focus for Holy Trinity over the last four years, and this has opened opportunity to strengthen fellowship and engagement in mission among the members of the Parish. General Meetings with the parishioners have demonstrated the value of this ministry. There is strong support for increasing this element of worship over the coming years, as outlined below; both within with existing parish activity, and in conjunction with Christians of other denominations.

Challenge ministry

The Challenge ministry was devised in 2016 by members of the parish and brought up to Parish Council for support. The aim of the Challenge Program is to provide activities which extend Holy Trinity into the community for specific events, which can be used for mission and which can also support self-funding ministry within the parish.

Previous events include commemoration of Anzac Day, family BBQs and picnic events, garage boot sales, concerts, art shows and poetry recitals, and support events for those suffering grief or bereavement. The parish also conducted a successful “movie club” in which parishioners and invited friends had the opportunity to share a lunchtime meal together, and enjoy a ‘classic’ black and white feature film as a means of reconnecting older people with the church.

Many of these ministries were necessarily curtailed in 2020 due to COVID restrictions, but the re-establishment of this wide-ranging ministry activity is planned for 2021. Areas of ministry to be explored further include hosting events / information sessions with expert talks about ‘general life skills’ topics (with a spiritual focus) that will bring people into contact with the church and our central mission. Possible subjects topics include stress management, parenting, mental health, and career development.

Parish Council portfolio ministries

Commencing in 2021, individual parish council members will be charged with specific portfolio ministries (such as those listed above) to develop and support. This will more formally and clearly support the work of expanding ministry within the Parish and create a model of discipleship and leadership in ministry which will encourage the broader parish into specific ministry activity.

Increased visibility of worship and discipleship

- Outdoor worship on the ‘Church Green’
- Electronic church noticeboard
- Facebook streaming of services
- Zoom meetings to facilitate bible studies
- Zoom and Facebook to open access to evening prayer and prayer days

The parish council as shown in current research of church growth, understand that, for some in the Orange community, the main church building and worship styles can be seen as excessively formal, is a formal, imposing and intimidating structure. There is significant community interest in the church building, given its prominent place on the crest of the hill on Anson Street; but paradoxically, the building itself can do as much to conceal the activities of worship as to reveal them more broadly.

The installation of the final bell into the church tower, the ‘worship on the Green’ services, outreach services (in Mortimers Vineyard); and the continued engagement with the Orange Peelers (bell ringers), has helped to raise the profile of the church building as a meeting place which is ‘alive’ with church congregations; but the conduct

of services entirely within the main church building can still obscure the ministry and mission of the church into the Orange community.

At various times in previous years, the church has experimented with ways to make the worship within the church building more visible, including Palm Sunday parades around the church grounds, and Christmas and Easter services conducted with elements outside the church building itself. These have been sporadic and of modest success.

In 2021 – 2025, the parish aim to increase the use of the church grounds for worship (weather permitting), with the aim of conducting regular (quarterly) worship services on the church Green. This will provide an immediate, visible presence of the church meeting together actively within the centre of Orange. This will be facilitated by the plans to redevelop the church Green (see below); including the installation of an electronic noticeboard at the corner of the church property looking into the Anson Street roundabout. The noticeboard will allow for a live visual projection (no sound) of regular worship services as they are conducted within the church building – also raising the profile of worship that occurs within the building.

The Parish are planning to expand the frequency of ‘outreach’ worship services, including Easter services (Good Friday) at the summit of Mount Canobolas, and an increase in the number of services held at Mortimers Vineyard.

Increased focus on prayer

- Monthly prayer day (first Wednesday 17-hour prayer day)
- Tuesday and Thursday evening prayer
- Opening the church building for personal prayer at lunchtime
- Expanding access through social media
- Considering a program of consistent prayer and gathering with other denominations for ecclesial prayer.

Through the next year, the parish will focus on the expansion of prayer services and the ‘prayerful lifestyle’ as a central component of parish ministry and life. A disciplined prayer-life is central to ensuring connection between the individual members of the church, and the church mission.

Increased bible-study activity and worship activities throughout the week

- Lenten studies
- Regular bible studies run both by clergy and LLM’s
- We have access to 50 different studies from world class academics and church leaders to engage, enlighten and encourage us in our Faith walk.
- Prayer and fellowship groups

To create opportunities to strengthen relationship with Jesus, or to come into relationship with Jesus; the parish will increase the variety of regular worship and fellowship groups operating within the parish. These will include the regular Lenten study groups.

Conduct of additional ‘introductory’ courses / studies

- Alpha courses
- Alpha Journey’s course
- Alpha parenting program
- Alpha youth program
- Alpha marriage program
- Baptism group

(experiential Christianity explained – similar to the Case for Christ model from Lee Strobel)

Increased use of social media to extend reach

- Streaming services via facebook page
- Zoom meetings
- Use of social media to reach isolated parishioners (nursing home residents)
- Zoom bible studies and prayer meetings

The difficulties with COVID experienced in 2020 allowed for the rapid expansion and acceleration of parish plans around the use of videoconferencing and social media to expand the message of the church more broadly in the community.

Already through 2020, the use of social media / Zoom meetings has allowed for an increased church presence in the residential aged care facilities in Orange, and provided opportunity for engagement in bible studies and Alpha courses with people who would not otherwise have been connected with the parish (including people living in Bathurst, Sydney and Newcastle). The Holy Trinity facebook page continues to have regular 'hits', and now has 3200 people who have 'liked' the church *Facebook* site and are linked as subscribed followers. This means that all of these individuals will receive invitations through their *Facebook* newsfeed every time the parish update a *Facebook* post. The commencement of live-streaming services via Facebook creates an opportunity for all these followers to watch the church services from a mobile device and flags automatic reminders when the services are being streamed.

The parish has invested in iPad units, to allow parishioners who do not have access to online devices to engage in streaming services and services / bible studies and other meetings broadcast via Zoom.

Through 2021 – 2025 the parish council expect to continue to build the online presence of the parish as a core component of parish ministry.

Increased engagement with the community

- Expansion of the partnership with Anglicare
 - o Clothing / Op Shop management/emergency Relief
 - o Distribution of food aid
- Partnership with Orange Council to increase utility of the Green Space
- Partnerships to attract people into the church grounds
 - o at lunchtime / informally (mobile catering)
 - o conservatorium concerts

October 2021 will mark the end of the first triennium of the Anglicare lease arrangement with Holy Trinity. Under the terms of the lease agreement, Anglicare and Holy Trinity will extend the current lease over a further two 3-year lease periods, running from 2021 – 2024 and from 2024 – 2027. The initial 3-year lease included a modest base-rate, further discounted by amortisation of some of the refurbishment costs paid by Anglicare as deductions on the monthly lease-fee, for the duration of the first triennium.

The initial lease negotiations included an in-principle agreement to increase the base-rate of the lease in the second triennium toward a standard commercial market rate for the floorspace. The parish understands that there may be a need to negotiate further amortisation of refurbishment costs into the second triennial lease; but the negotiation

of the new lease should provide increased financial security for the parish moving forward.

The parish council have been in discussions with Anglicare about an extension of the current cooperative arrangements. Opportunities exist to become further involved in compassionate programs; both in distribution of local food-aid packages, and in the distribution of clothing to the financially disadvantaged as well as other Emergency Relief programs that when we have the people available to run we will be reaching out to the community into different areas of focus. Both these projects would open the church grounds further to a different demographic within the Orange community and create opportunity to help people develop a personal relationship with Jesus. This would also engage the parish directly in the commission from Jesus (Matthew 25: 31-40) to feed the hungry and clothe the poor.

The Parish are also in negotiations with Orange City Council in relation to further development of the Church Green space, with the aim of creating an inviting environment for people to spend time in quiet thought or prayer. The redevelopment (outlined broadly below) would create facility for lunchtime concerts and develop a place of sanctuary and reflection close to the centre of Orange. The Orange Conservatorium is keen to support informal concerts, through their music program using students of the Conservatorium, and they have expressed interest in coordinating specific musical events for worship with holy trinity (either outdoors in the church grounds, or within the main church building itself).

In February 2021, the parish entered a 3-month trial arrangement with a mobile catering van to provide lunch two days each week on the church grounds. The purpose is to encourage the community of Orange to engage more closely with the church grounds, providing opportunity for an invitation to meet Jesus through engagement in the church; and to provide some increased financial stability for the parish through a lease arrangement at the conclusion of the trial period (still under discussion).

Expansion of lay ministry team

Ten (10) people trained to lead Prayer services

Ten (10) people trained to support worship services

Ten (10) people trained to assist with preaching

Ten (10) people trained to run Discipleship programs

(alpha, Journeys', alpha marriage and alpha youth, alpha parenting and bible studies).

An early step in the vision over the next five years will be the expansion of active 'lay ministry'. Every member of the church has a role in helping the people around them come to know Jesus – there are no 'bystanders' in the Christian journey.

The goal that has been set for the development of lay ministry is to have ten people trained up, supported and working actively across each of four central ministry activities within the parish. This will build capacity for growth within the parish; and create an opportunity for a wide variety of authentic stories about the impact of relationship with Jesus to become a natural part of the 'public face' of the parish.

Currently the parish is on track to reach these goals by December 2021.

Increased 'formal' (stipendiary) ministry

The *National Church Life Survey* indicates that the presence of full-time stipendiary ministry can be considered a 'tipping point' for the development of mission in the

church. The Parish Council therefore see the development of both laity stipendiary clergy as vital to the growth and expansion of the Parish into the future. Holy Trinity has, for some years, worked toward the appointment of a part-time minister focussed specifically on youth and young-family ministry. The original intention of the development of the Holy Trinity Retirement Village was (in part) to create a stable financial platform to support youth ministry within the parish. Several long term parishioners (J McDonald, E Shave, G West, R Westcott) have expressed their dismay and disappointment that appointment to this ministry has only been intermittently successful in the past 25 years. The last appointment of a part-time youth ministry leader concluded in 2013 (after R Budden resigned from the role for personal reasons). The present Parish Council members are keen to pursue the appointment of a part-time youth minister to focus on the development of youth and young-family ministry.

Currently, the parish has an active ‘baptisms team’, who provide strong support and nurture for baptismal candidates and their families. The work of this team has been instrumental in bringing several new families within the parish into a new or renewed personal relationship with Jesus; and the enhancement of this ministry with a part-time stipendiary position would further develop this important area.

Development of the Church Green

The Parish Council have considered a number of different proposals for the development of the church Green.

Initial proposals were developed in the period 2007 – 2009, which included levelling of parts of the Green, the installation of a paved central space and walkways and feature plantings to attempt to replicate a flowing ‘church building floor plan’ in the space. At this time the proposal reached the point of commissioning concept plans through a local landscaping / architectural firm. The plans were of concern to some parishioners at the time, and full specifications for the work were never commissioned. More recently, members of the Parish Council have considered these plans again, and used the concepts within them to look at a less complex redevelopment.

Several proposals have been brought through Parish Council over 2019 – 2020, including options for street-lighting and floodlighting, several options for the delivery of power to the site (trenching in from existing power sources), and options for security cameras, motion sensing cameras, and various forms of security fencing. The Parish Council have considered the installation of bollards and other traffic-flow mediation devices. At the end of 2020, the Parish Council made the decision to alter the traffic flow within the site, with the aim of reducing congestion and confusion in the traffic circle; and improving access for hearses and funeral vehicles.

Currently, the Parish Council are working with Council to develop up a proposal which would see power brought to the Green underneath the driveway from an existing light-pole (a distance of approximately 15 metres). Over time, the development would include the construction of a rotunda which could be used to conduct worship services (with the church building as a backdrop), or for lunchtime concerts or similar events.

Further steps in development will include the installation of:

- an electronic signboard facing into the Anson Street roundabout, to allow advertising of church services and other information relating to study groups, Alpha courses, baptism groups, and other ministry activities.
- Linkages between the memorial hall and church building using a local wifi network, to enable improved connectivity for security cameras, and to facilitate

the expansion of worship services into social media through invited (zoom) meetings, or via the Holy Trinity Facebook page.

- A formal hedge grown to a height of around 0.6 to 1 metre around the central green area in order to provide a semi-secure play area for small children under parental supervision and to help prevent accidental incursions onto the driveway from activities on the church Green.
- flood-lighting and security cameras on existing building structures, to ensure adequate safety of the precinct after-hours. Put this at the end of the dot points.

The Parish Council are mindful of the need to stage the development, in order to be able to responsibly manage the financial implications of the upgrades. As noted, engagement in partnerships with the Orange City Council and other organisations will allow for some enhancement funding, but the Parish will still need to be able to meet some financial impost in the course of development.

The Parish Council are currently in the early stages of negotiation with the Orange City Council around the development and enhancement of the church grounds with the aim of securing funding from the *Future Cities* grant program to enhance the church grounds and improve access into the church grounds. Through these initiatives, the Parish Council hope to encourage the broader community into a closer relationship with the church and with members of the parish to further the mission of the church.

Parish Council are developing an information brief to present to Council formally to develop a partnership for the development of the church precinct. Early meetings with members of the Orange City Council have been positive and encouraging.

During meetings in the last half of 2020, the Parish Council agreed upon the following priority list of developments:

UPGRADE (in order of priority)	Funding Source
1. Change direction of traffic flow, to return traffic-flow to the original arrangements for the church driveway and circle.	Parish (work complete in January 2021)
2. Electrical connection to location of Rotunda from Council Light (10 – 15 metres trenching under driveway)	Orange Future Grant (Council)
3. security cameras placed around outside of Church and 'the Green'.	Parish
4. Electronic notice board at front of Church building, corner of Byng and Anson Streets, to advertise / broadcast Church events	Orange Future Grant (Council)
5. Lighting into the Green and onto the Church building exterior.	Parish
6. Rotunda/shelter/stage	Orange Future Grant (Council)
7. Establishment of a formal hedge (0.6 – 1.0 m) around the Green to provide secure area for free-play for young children	Parish
8. Access to Church building for activity consistent with the mission of the Diocese of Bathurst	Parish

Restoration of Holy Trinity church building

The global restoration of the Holy Trinity main church building coordinated and managed through the Holy Trinity Foundation is nearing completion. Final works on the restoration of the roof commenced in 2019 have been held up by the need to restore the inside of the church building after water damage. Whilst this has been a difficult and trying time for the parishioners of the church, it has allowed for the church itself to re-imagine and consider ways in which the layout of the church building could be used to enhance worship, and to enable a greater breadth of worship style within the Anglican tradition.

The Parish Council have been aware of a steady decline in the use of the church building for 'traditional' wedding and funeral services over the last eight to ten years. This is consistent with the experience of the broader church within Australia around these sacraments and acts of worship.

Another major challenge for the parish has been the gradual deterioration (through age) of the church organ. Even prior to the recent problems with water ingress and dust accumulation as a consequence of the roof restoration, the organ has required increasingly-frequent maintenance and the advice from the company servicing the organ is that the organ will soon require a major overhaul (at an expense of at least \$40,000, and possibly as high as \$80,000). The parish council have reluctantly accepted that we do not presently have the funds to be able to invest in organ maintenance to this degree.

Church Pews / accessibility

Alternatives for the provision of worship through music, include the use of the sound system to access organ music and other traditional forms of church music to enhance the traditional service. The Parish Council have also looked at the creation of space at the front of the church which could be used for contemporary music, or for traditional music provided through a keyboard broadcast through the PA system.

The creation of this space will require the relocation of three pews from the front of the church (directly in front of the pulpit) to create an open space. This will also provide an 'all-access' area within the church building which will allow parishioners who use mobility aids (wheelchairs, 4-wheel walkers, or walking sticks) easy entry to the church and rapid egress in the event of emergency.

The parishioners will continue to discuss ways in which the use of space within the main church building can open up this area for broader worship activity; and provide a space of sanctuary and quietness open to the whole Orange community for private prayer, reflection and worship.