



CANBERRA CENTRAL PARISH

Planning Day Report 2008

27 people gathered on the morning of Saturday 26th October 2008, for the annual Parish Planning Morning. The day was led by Gregor Henderson. We began with devotions based on 1 Corinthians 3:10-17. Working in table groups and plenary sessions we discussed the highlights and concerns of the last year, and looked ahead to priorities for the year to come.

1. WHAT'S GONE WELL OVER THE LAST YEAR

The new Youth Group commenced this month, our worship and preaching, the Thursday 7.30am intercessory service, the Autumn Fair, the pot luck lunches, the seniors events, the music in the 9.00am Wesley service and the involvement of youth in the 9.00am service, the bush dance, our links with the Baptist Church, the Young'n'Restless group, the music at Wesley, the development of personal relationships, our support for the Nou Hach Fund and for other wider church appeals, property maintenance at Wesley including the provision of speakers in the Vercoe Room, the Children's Time on Sundays and the presence of children on Sundays at Wesley, the ongoing provision for a Children's Ministry Worker, the great welcoming space of the Wesley foyer, the toys and instruments for children, the children's courtyard, the tennis courts, our pastoral care (notably Elizabeth Richardson's pastoral work and her ministry co-ordination of recent months), the Lenten studies at St Aidan's, the care for each other at St Aidan's, the Wesley 10.30am crêche, the Wednesday lunchtime music concerts, U3A, the awareness of the wider life of the church especially through Gregor's input, Whippersnappers, the Micah Challenge Weekend, the pay parking at Wesley, and the fact the building loan at Wesley is almost paid off.

2. WHAT'S NOT GONE SO WELL - OUR CONCERNS

We need more home fellowship groups. The cessation of the Membership Development mission team. Our welcoming/greeting process at Wesley functions quite well, but is dependent on too few and needs some renewal. Our ageing membership is still a concern, with only a few new younger members each year. Numbers have been down at the Thursday Friendship Group. We have lacked continuity this past year in the co-ordination and leadership of our children's ministry. We've not conducted as many faith forum series this year as in the past. We feel the loss of some key leaders, including from one or two who shifted overseas a few years ago. Our activities in local community service and in social justice are relatively weak. The looming loss of Peter Walker's leadership, and our need for a new minister. Do our Elders need more support and equipping? Are the

mission teams functioning as well as envisaged? St Aidan's property maintenance. Are the average numbers at the 10.30 service declining? We do not involve our youth enough in our worship leadership.

3. IDEAS FOR THE COMING YEAR

Gregor gave a brief introduction to the plans for provision of ministry next year, noting that up to July 2009 we would be in a state of flux. After mid-July we should have two fulltime ministers plus a part-time Children's Ministry Worker. It was noted that we have three initiatives already planned for next year: the new Youth Group led by Tim Rees, Irene's Place led by the Baptists, and a national music seminar in October 2009.

Suggestions raised and discussed in table groups included: Saturday evening worship, a suggestion box, more special events (mainly social), a men's shed, a family concert, parish picnic, church camp, more interaction with Mirinjani, a regular youth service, more ecumenical and inter-faith activities, developing relationships with Indigenous people, further overseas connections, a mid-week service aimed at local office workers, having a combined service in 9.00am style, more Sunday afternoon forums, regular youth involvement in worship, mentoring for elders, a car-pooling service on Sundays, reworking of the elders' allocated lists, an adoption scheme for grandparents/children, students, 9.00 and 10.30 pairings, and St Aidan's people.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE CHURCH COUNCIL AND THE ELDERS

After table group and plenary discussion, nine recommendations were agreed:

- focus on maintaining well what we're already doing well, until new members of our ministry team comes into place;
- celebrate the UCA 32nd anniversary, with a focus on international mission;
- create a fresh emphasis on Bible study, through home fellowship groups, Sunday afternoon short courses, Lenten studies;
- set up a group to research why people come to Wesley, why they choose to belong here, and what the barriers are to the participation of others;
- establish a "fellowship linking" scheme between 9.00 and 10.30, grandparents and younger families, 9.00am Wesley and St Aidan's;
- invite the Elders to follow up the outcomes of this Planning Morning, including review of Elders' responsibilities;
- establish new links with Mirinjani, in terms of voluntary assistance from the parish and potential financial contributions;
- invite the Rugby Choir to participate at one or two Wesley events, in collaboration with singers from Wesley;
- seek to reinvigorate our mission teams, and perhaps review the composition of the Joint Church Council.

COMMENTS AND QUERIES ARE INVITED ON THIS REPORT, PLEASE SEND THEM TO THE PARISH OFFICE.