



To the People of St Augustine's Hamilton

Thursday 7th April 2022

Following up on the conversations that we've been having since the Annual Meeting at the beginning of March, I write with an update regarding the times of our Sunday services.

Thank you to all who have so helpfully spoken with me or written to me over the last few weeks. It has been clear that there are some aspects of the current setup which are hugely valued by the community - not least that by worshipping at one service at 8.30am each Sunday there is a real sense of celebration when we worship together with a 'critical mass' of people, and that we've all been appreciative of the chance to get to know each other as one congregation, rather than split into two groups.

On the flip-side, there have been observations that the earlier service time has prevented some from joining us at all, and has made it harder for some of those corralling children. One parent made the observation "we spend all week chivvying our children to get out the house on time, it's a shame to have to do it on a Sunday as well!" The additional observation has been that while the 8.30am service has made for a comfortable return to something approaching normality after the lockdowns - having two services gives us more room to experiment and grow.

With conversations at Parish Council, as well as with the wardens, and with much prayer and deliberation, we have come to the decision to implement the following:

From Sunday 24th April, we will be moving to two services on a Sunday morning.

- At 7.30am each Sunday there will be a simple Communion Service with three hymns. The hymns, readings and sermon will be the same as at 9.30am. There will be one person rostered on each week, who will act as the welcomer and the reader. There will be a coffee roster for after the service.
- At 9.30am each Sunday there will be a Sung Communion Service, with a Sunday School each Sunday during school term time. The children will come into church to receive communion (or a blessing). The Third Sunday of the Month, when we have baptisms in the 9.30am, will remain as our "All Together" service - where children will be invited to take part in the service, and the Sunday School volunteers will have a break!
- Each year after Christmas and for the whole of January, there will be one Sunday morning service, at 8.30am, as the choir have their break and while many people are away.

Parish Office: 56 Racecourse Road, Hamilton QLD 4007
p: (07) 3268 3935 e: hamilton@anglicanchurchsq.org.au www.staugustineshamilton.org.au



- Throughout the year there will be various Sundays when we have one Sunday morning service at 8.30am, and these will be in a set and regular pattern to minimise confusion! They are:
 - Easter Sunday
 - The last Sunday in May, for our St Augustine's Day celebration.
 - The first Sunday in October, for our St Francis Day celebration.
 - Christmas Morning will remain one service at 8.30am

My hope is that this transition is as smooth and as life-giving as possible. It is aimed at enhancing our shared life together - and not segregating it. Please continue to see our church community as 'one', and attend 7.30am or 9.30am as suits you and your schedule.

Galatians 3.28 reminds us "there is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; (there is no longer 7.30am person or 9.30am person), for all of you are one in Christ Jesus."

There is a deliberate aim to continue this sense of 'togetherness', and that will be pursued by encouraging you all to come to either service, by having 8.30am services regularly throughout the year, by encouraging attendance on Feast Days and Festivals, and by enhancing our social calendar so that we continue to get to know each other.

There is also a concerted aim to continue the sense of joy and the 'buzz' around our Sunday worship by seeking to grow our congregations. We will be inviting baptism, wedding and funeral families to join us throughout the year, and continuing to reach out to the wider community.

As St Paul states in 1 Corinthians 9.22, "I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some." It is our calling as a Christian community to offer up worship to God that is broad and varied and to encourage attendance from across the wider community so that even 'some' may come to a deeper understanding of God's love for them.

This is very much not a return to the 'old ways' but rather an exploration of something new. It may feel different, or alien at least to begin with, but together we shall settle into new and enriching routines as we seek to develop our faith, to walk with Jesus, and to worship God who daily calls us into newness of life.