

St Carthage's 2025 AGM – St Carthage's Church, Parkville

Sunday 23 March 11.15am-12.15pm

Refreshments from **11.00am** with a special morning tea & coffee inside church
Agenda Items:

1. Welcome & Agenda for the meeting
2. Acceptance of the 2024 AGM minutes
3. Finance Council Report (Michael Pirotta, Chair of Finance Council)
4. Pastoral Council Report (Constant Mews, Chair of Pastoral Council)
5. Sacristans (Maree Rabach)
6. SVP Parkville Conference (Maree Rabach)
7. Representative of Future Directions Working Group to speak
8. Administrator's Report (Fr Tony Kerin)
9. Questions and discussion
10. AOB; close of meeting

Minutes of St Carthage's AGM 11.15am 24 March 2024

23 parishioners attended the St Carthage's AGM, chaired by Constant Mews, and including from the Pastoral Council Claire Renkin, Penny McCann, Sean McManus, Rosemary Sheehan and Michael Pirotta (chair of the Finance Council).

1. Report from the Chair of the Pastoral Council (CM).

After acknowledgement of country, CM presented a report of parish activities over the last year, noting in particular the transition from offering three to two masses on the weekend (Sat at 6pm and Sunday at 10am, no longer holding a service on Sundays at 5pm), and the development of a parish plan. He thanked a wide range of individuals who have made key contributions to the Parish. He also explained the purpose of developing a St Carthage's bookmark, as directed particularly to visitors and newcomers to the parish. The report covered outlined key developments since the 2023 AGM relating to the three of the four portfolios into which parish activities can be grouped and Michael Pirotta, reporting on developments relating to building and refurbishment. These included involvement in the Voice campaign and planning for the Synod on Synodality in Rome.

(1) **social and pastoral outreach:** CM summarised the importance of two key activities. One is support given to the St Vincent de Paul Conference, both financially and in voluntary support, serving the needs of people in distress in the Parkville and inner-city area. The other is the importance of the hospitality group in providing refreshments, and in the importance of welcoming newcomers and visitors to the parish.

(2) **sacramental and liturgical activity:** CM explained the new arrangements with two music groups sharing support for the 10am mass: Roger and Anne Rassool, and friends at the first and last Sundays of the month, with Morag Fraser, Rick Norwood & Juliette Hughes on the other Sundays of the

month. CM thanked various people involved in preparing the church for services, readings and post-communion reflections at particular periods (Advent, Lent and Mothers/Fathers Day).

(3) **educational and spiritual development.** CM referred to the range of activities outlined in the Parish strategic plan, supporting a range of activities by individuals within the parish (a meditation group, feminist theology group, women's reading group, zoom discussion of Sunday readings) as well as the need to find some replacement for the Spirituality in the Pub, organized by the late Dennis Green with Richard Olive.

2. Report from Finance Council Chair

MP reported the positive response to calling for support to both the Maintenance Sinking and Church Development funds (the latter to consider improving audio-visual facilities), as outlined in his accompanying report. The development of paying by card rather than cash has been positive for the parish. As older parishioners pass on, involvement in planned giving is down, even though overall attendance is steady, with some people joining or coming back to the parish. The parish needs to further reach out to new parishioners to support St Carthage's.

3. Report from the parish priest

Joe Caddy thanked various people for their support of various activities going on in the parish, especially mentioning the transition from three to two masses each weekend. He spoke about the continuing number of baptisms, often from people connected to the parish in the past, and a more limited number of weddings. He commended the parish for involvement in various activities, including preparation of responses to the synodal process, and involvement in a discussion of various parishes in the Western Region, to which the Parkville Parish is officially assigned.

4. Discussion of Reports and Presentation of Draft Strategic Plan (CM).

It was asked why Parkville Parish was attached to the Western Region. JC responded that there was not reason it should be assigned more naturally to the Northern Region.

On the issue of welcoming visitors and newcomers, it was suggested that parishioners be encouraged to greet each other immediately before mass, and possibly (if they wish) introduce themselves to the wider community.

John Drennan responded to a question to explain a proposal that the parish acknowledge the importance of animals as sentient beings within creation (perhaps something to be incorporated into collective prayers of the faithful).

There was discussion of the Maundy Thursday practice of rearranging the seating to emphasize the setting of a meal, as also about the possibility of rearranging seating on other occasions. The altar still needed to have a central place, but perhaps one could experiment with arranging seats in a semi-circle.

The idea of a suggestion box at the back of the church was mooted .

The idea of developing a screen for liturgy/memorial images at funerals was supported, while maintaining respect for church as a building.

CM explained that his three-year term on the Council was expiring on 30 June, but he was willing to stand for another three years. There were two other Pastoral Council members (Ro Sheehan and Jack Rendle) whose terms were expiring then, so expressions of interest were open to individuals willing to stand for the Council from 1 July 2024. The meeting closed at 12.10pm.

Strategic Plan for St Carthage's Parish, Parkville (as at 12/03/2025)

. Goals of this Strategic Plan

- to establish priorities that can help guide developments within the Parish
- to identify specific proposals that the Parish can adopt both in the short and mid/long term
- to identify ways of increasing participation within the Parish, not just financially, but in terms of involvement of different aspects of the Parish
- to provide opportunities for younger people (including students and young families) to connect with each other, and integrate them more into the Parish
- to inspire both regular and occasional visitors to the Parish in their understanding of the Gospel and living out a Christian life.

Brief introduction to the Parish

St Carthage's, 123 Royal Parade, Parkville, was originally built in 1934 as a Chapel of Ease within the Parish of West Melbourne, becoming a distinct Parish in its own right on 1 November 1956. It embraces Parkville and the southern part of Carlton, but attracts parishioners from a wide range of postcodes. Its proximity to both the University of Melbourne and the Royal Melbourne Hospital has been important in shaping its identity, and commitment to education, health, and social welfare in this part of the inner city.

Core values

The parish is committed to providing:

- a welcoming and caring community
- an inclusive and inspiring liturgy
- social justice and Gospel values.

Governance structure

In conformity with the canon law of the wider Church and the principles laid out in the Constitution of St Carthage's, the Parish is governed by both a Pastoral Council and a Finance Council, working in collaboration with the incumbent pastor, Fr Tony Kerin, who took the position of Administrator 1 July 2024, after departure of Fr Joe Caddy. The Pastoral Council is made up of six individuals elected for a 3-year term, renewable for a further 3-year term. The chairs of both Pastoral and Finance Councils attend ex officio meetings of the other Council. The Pastoral Council meets normally on a two-monthly basis, but more frequently when needed.

The Pastoral Council is charged with formulating policies relevant to the Parish, in conjunction with the Parish Priest, that are driven by its core values, and raising issues of concern to the wider parish community. The Finance Council is charged with ensuring that the Parish is able to meet its financial responsibilities, to maintain its physical upkeep, and to ensure smooth running of its activities. There is a Parish Office, run by the Parish Secretary, who is responsible for producing a weekly newsletter and co-ordinating parish activities.

Networks and activities within the Parish

A number of activities take place involving members of the Parish, each animated by various networks, some formal, others informal. These activities taking place within the Parish or

supported by parishioners can be grouped into four broad areas or portfolios, all under the aegis of the Pastoral Council.

The Parish is enormously grateful to those involved in promoting these various activities, some organized through the Parish, others simply supported by parishioners. All parishioners, including newcomers and occasional visitors, are urged to become involved, even in just a modest way, with one or other of these networks or activities, or to think about developing activities not currently identified here. These activities include:

Pastoral outreach and community

- Support for St Vincent de Paul and social outreach in the inner-city region; contact Maree Rabach <maree.rabach@bigpond.com>
- Hospitality (concerned with offering refreshment after 10am mass, also with welcoming newcomers and visitors to the Parish); co-ordinator John Drennan <johndrennan1934@yahoo.com>

Music and liturgy

- St Carthage's Singing Group at 10am mass (2nd and 3rd/4th Sundays of month); convenor Morag Fraser <morag.fraser@bigpond.com>
- St Carthage's Music Group at 10am mass (first and last Sunday of month); convenor Anne Rassool <anne@rassool.com.au>
- Readers and setting up for services: coordinator Maree Rabach

Building and refurbishment

- Finance Council and associated advisors: chair Michael Pirotta (concerned with maintenance, planned giving and development), contact Parkville@cam.org.au

Education and spiritual formation

- Sacramental instruction; contact the Parish Secretary <parkville@cam.org.au>
- Zoom meditation group (Wednesdays weekly, 5.00-5.30pm); contact: Liz Dohrmann <lizdohrmann@gmail.com>
- Feminist theology Zoom group (4th Monday of month 7.30pm); contact Mary Roberts <mjrob2@hotmail.com>
- Tuesday morning Women's Reading Group (third Tuesday of month 10am-11.15am in Parish House); contact Mary Roberts.
- Zoom group relating Sunday Gospel to personal experience (Sundays 5pm-6pm. fortnightly); contact: <anniecantwellbartl@gmail.com>

Possible further developments

- public talks and discussion, ecumenical/interreligious activity, animal rights, ecological issues, refugee support groups

If individuals are interested in publicizing current activities, connecting with any existing networks, or developing further other areas of activity within the framework of the Parish, they are urged to contact the Parish secretary <parkville@cam.org.au> or the Pastoral Council, through its chair <Constant.Mews@monash.edu>.