

St. Augustine's Anglican Church

Biblical Stewardship 365

Bulletin April 2022

See!
I am making
all things
new.

Rev. 21:5

Let the children
come to me.

Matt. 19:14



Stewardship is about how we use the gifts God has given us to work with God to make the world a better place, to help build the Kingdom of God on Earth.

Some preliminary musings and reminders.

First a Reminder - What is Biblical Stewardship?

Stewardship is about how we care for and use the gifts God has entrusted to us, gifts given to us as a parish, gifts given to us as families, and gifts given to us as individuals.

Biblical Stewardship is about how we use scripture as our guide.

Stewardship is collaborating with God in building the 'Kingdom of God' on earth.

This takes many forms and could well be described as 'living a Christian life.' One form this collaboration is taking at the moment, is to imagine, design, and implement, a meaningful, engaging, age-appropriate in-person, Christian Education Programme for our children.

An imagined comment from Jesus.

"You've been waiting for God to do it for you (i.e., Provide a meaningful, engaging, programme for our children,) and God has been waiting for you to collaborate."

An imagined reply.

"Where's that in the tradition? We hope for it. We pray for it. Who said we had to do anything?"

God is ready, are we?

➡ **'Doing Something' is Stewardship!**

And - Surprise! God gives us the gifts we need to do this, including the will, the vision, and the resources we need.

(To start with, a reminder for the people who have worshipped at St. A's for a long time.)

Some of you will remember the 4 years before the pandemic. The only children in our community were Megan and Jonathan's children, and the occasional visits by

grandchildren, and occasionally, babies brought to our church for baptism. **Perhaps you also remember that we didn't like it, we really missed having children around, and we constantly prayed that God would guide new families to our community?**

Have you noticed? God's promise has been kept! We now have beautiful children in our parish family, we love them, and enjoy watching them grow, and we don't care how much noise they make because that is the sound of new life in our midst. **"Behold! I AM making all things new."**

We as a parish, have committed our support to each person, child, or adult, who has come to our community for Baptism, using the words, **'We will'**, to the following question? **'Will you who witness these vows do all in your power to support this person in her or his life in Christ?'**

God is now calling us to fulfil that vow.

Again, we turn to scripture.

Throughout 2021/22 the stewardship theme has been **'Behold I AM making all things new!'** (Rev. 21:5)

Have you noticed the newness around the parish? The garden? The plans for the annex and land? The enthusiasm? New ideas? Worship that is now accessible to people who can't be with us in person? The



Meditation Group? Zoomed discussion groups? The possibility of finding a new venue for our Parish Retreat? And many other things - including Children in our building and on-line!

Just in case you have missed these signs of newness, or didn't connect them with our prayers, there was a reminder on the Fourth Sunday of Lent, when we read the words of St. Paul which were from the earliest Christian writings, the closest in time to the actual words of Jesus, during his earthly ministry.

"If anyone in Christ there is a new creation, see: everything has become new!" (2 Cor. 17)

**Sometimes,
God's
'coincidences'
are far from
subtle!!**

God is ready, are we?

The planning to provide for our children, is also urged by the words of Jesus penned by St. Matthew, **'Let the children come to me for it is to such as these that the Kingdom of Heaven belongs.'** (Matthew 19:14)

*I like to think that Jesus was reminding us, **our children are our future.***

So, St A's, are we ready to provide meaningful, in-person, Christian Education for our children?

(As I write this, I realise that I consider this planning for our children, to be God's will, the time is right, and I doubt I am exaggerating or being over imaginative.)

I would like to add something about which I feel very strongly. Although I am sure parents would want to be involved, **I believe the responsibility for helping 'the children come to me' is the responsibility of the whole parish, and it is urgent!**

Now that Covid seems to be retreating, (fingers crossed) it will be safer for children to come to church and, as well as the indoor facilities, there is lots of lovely outdoor space to explore as the children learn how to discover God through nature.

We need to get going!

What does all this mean?

Much has already been happening during Covid time. Several children have been in church regularly, and on occasion they and others have helped with reading and assisting our priest during Communion. There has also been regular on-line programming, as well as on-line camps during the summers.

If we want to establish an in-person Children's programme on Sundays, we need to know what it is that we want the children to learn. I imagine that helping the children to enjoy a warm relationship with God as known in Jesus Christ, is important to all of us. Knowing where to find God and to recognise God, and God's activity, in their own lives, is important, as is recognising God in other people including friends and family. As they come know Jesus, they will learn that no matter what they do, think, or say, God will always love them and will never punish them, and will always help them to be the best they can be.

None of this will happen without all of us being enthusiastic about it and being willing to help in whatever way is necessary and appropriate.

At some point some funds will certainly be needed to buy resources and maybe to hire someone skilled in this area to deliver parts of the program. There will likely be children in church for appropriate parts of every Sunday's worship, and maybe there will be occasional Family Services where children will read scripture and

prayers, and maybe do other things. I hope that as a planning group gets together, they will **create a vision** of what they would like this programming for children to look like, and what they will need to get it started. The **'getting it started' is our mission.** Please pray about this and let us be willing to fulfil our vows to provide for our children. If you have ideas, please be willing to share them and please volunteer to help.

Watch/Listen for more information! Val McCormack Easter 2022

