



ST KEVIN'S TEMPLESTOWE

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Parish Council meeting – 6 March 2025.

Present: Fr Charles, John Costa, Tiziana D'Costa, Adrian Teo, David Hii, Carmel Shiel, Eva Tomazos (representing Gabee Leone), Ana Saro, Pauline Erickson, Margaret Turner, Peter Sheehan, Claudia Raiola & Michelle Verna.

Apologies: Gabee Leone

Meeting began with opening reflection led by **Margaret Turner**

Discussion arising from previous minutes. – **Nil**

Questions arising from Reports

- a. Fr Charles – As the student enrollment at St. Charles Borromeo fell below 20 at the beginning of 2025, MACS made the difficult decision to close the school. This decline is part of a broader trend of decreasing student numbers in Catholic schools in the area, driven in part by demographic changes, among other factors.
 - b. St Charles Borromeo – The closure came as a surprise, and Michelle, the acting principal of St. Charles Borromeo, is currently offering comprehensive support to the affected students, families, and staff during this challenging time.
 - c. LEL - The council expressed its heartfelt gratitude to Tiziana for her invaluable contributions to both the parish and the schools throughout her time here. In turn, Tiziana shared her sincere appreciation for the unwavering support she received from Father Charles, the staff, all the Parish Council members, and the parishioners. Once the responsibilities for the Lay Ecclesial Leader role have been clearly defined and finalised, the parish will begin the process of finding a suitable replacement for Tiziana.
 - d. Business Manager – No question arising from the report of Business Manager.
 - e. St Kevin's Principal – All students who have transferred from St. Charles Borromeo are adjusting smoothly and settling in well at St. Kevin's Primary School.
 - f. Social Justice Action –
 - (i) A date has not yet been set for Josh Laurenz's presentation on Catholic Social Services.
 - (ii) Similarly, no date has been scheduled for the presentation on Refugees/Asylum Seekers by a "youngish" speaker, which will be held via Zoom.
 - g. Pastoral Worker – No question arising from the report of Pastoral Worker.
2. **Appointment of new Chairperson – David Hii** is appointed as Acting Chairperson
 3. **Proposal – Blessing for the sick** – The Council fully supports **Margaret Turner's** proposal. However, careful planning is needed to organise the Blessing of the Sick appropriately.
 4. **SJA proposal: an initiative to promote all parish ministries** - The Council expresses its sincere appreciation to **John Costa** for his proposal to promote Social Justice Action and all related ministries to the parishioners. Further discussion will take place during the next Council meeting.

For more information, see the parish website.

Next meeting: Thursday, 3rd April, 2025 – 2.30 pm.



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Parish Council agenda – 6 March 2025.

1. Opening Prayer
2. Apologies
3. Matters arising from last meeting's minutes – 6 February 2025
4. Parish updates – Questions on circulated reports
 - a. Fr Charles
 - b. Lay Ecclesial Leader: Tiziana D'Costa
 - c. Schools Principals' update
 - d. Pastoral Worker: Ana Saro.
 - e. PPC Acting chair.
 - f. SJA – John Costa
7. Appointment of new Chairperson: Fr Charles.
8. Proposal: Blessing for the Sick – Margaret.
9. SJA proposal: an initiative to promote all parish ministries.
10. Proposal: Columbaria – David - update
11. Proposal: Modifications to the altar: Fr Charles and David - update
12. Evangelisation: Bringing Community Together. For discussion: "Would merging the two Sunday morning Masses foster a stronger sense of community?" - Fr Charles
13. Next meeting – Thursday – 3 April 2025, 2.30 pm.

Good evening, here are some thoughts from my work over the past month since we last met:

1. Lay Ecclesial Leader: Tiziana has submitted her resignation, effective from ca. 16th April but with impact immediately. The scope of the role changed significantly over the past three years so a revised position description will be needed before beginning a recruitment process.
2. Alpha: Tiziana will report in detail – but wow! Well done.
 1. As we complete this round of Alpha, and we have the next one well in hand (start August) we will be thinking about the longer term and how to have leaders into the longer term,
 2. We need to be thinking about how to support people as they come through Alpha and want to both maintain the fellowship of Alpha and go further in faith.
3. Fr Anton arrived: taking over alternate weekends and Aged Care. Other duties to be determined.
 1. The supply priests we have been using (Fr Gerry and Fr Isaac) have been advised of the change. They will now only be present for the occasional weekend when one of I or Anton are not available.
4. Holidays: I will be away on holidays 5-30 May, overseas. Visiting England and Spain.
5. St Charles Borromeo School: is in the process of closing. There are three children left and alternate arrangements are being made for them but there are complications. The expectation is that they will all leave before the end of term one. There have been no discussion I am aware of about what might come next. The RULBA agreement has about 40 years to run and the conditions of the Building Education Revolution (that built the hall) talk in similar time frames. It will only be if MACS says there is no school use that the use of the site would revert to the Roman Catholic Trusts Corporation and St Kevin's.
6. Lent and Easter preparations are underway.

That's all for the moment.

God bless,

Charles



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Lay Ecclesial Leader Report – March 2025.

Alpha

What is Alpha? Alpha is an opportunity for people to share a meal, ask questions about important matters of life, faith and meaning and, in the search for the answer, come to know Jesus and grow closer to God.

We began the February-April Alpha program on February 19. We are already in week 3. We have had a very enthusiastic response from our participants – friendships are already forming and there's a heartwarming atmosphere of goodwill. I am especially grateful and impressed by our Alpha Team of volunteers, their dedication and enthusiasm. The intention is for Alpha to grow from strength to strength and to remain a vibrant ministry in our parish as one of the ways in which we invite people into our community of faith: either to renew their faith or to encounter Jesus for the first time.

Lent

On 6 Thursday, our Lenten program begins right after Thursday morning mass (9.45 am) and runs for about 40 minutes. We are ably supported by the excellent Lenten materials designed by Fr Chris Monaghan. Everyone is welcome. You can join the program any time. I encourage the Parish Council members to attend and to bring a friend!

Liturgy Survey

The document attached to this report outlines the qualitative feedback from the liturgy survey. A survey we ran last year to investigate what improvements can be made to the liturgical experience at our parish. Overall, the comments are positive with some room for improvement in the following areas: hospitality, music, homilies, community, ministry groups, invitational church and 'overall'. Going forward, I suggest that the Parish Council analyse the feedback of each of these areas in turn and considers any strategies for improvement.

Resignation

As advised by Fr Charles, I have resigned as Lay Ecclesial Leader to pursue a full-time academic career. It has been a privilege to support Fr Charles in the leadership of the parish and to serve the parish. I am heartened to see the fruits of my labour in bringing the parish out of the pandemic times to renewal and vibrancy.

In a parish, no one works alone. I am grateful for the trust placed in me by Fr Charles, and for the support of the hardworking, caring and talented parish staff (Nadia, Ana, Frances and David), and the dedicated and enthusiastic groups of volunteers.

It is not possible to list everything I have achieved since January 2022. I have led, supported and facilitated a range of initiatives. My role has been varied: to assist, to problem-solve and to be the

conduit between different parts of the parish and to support and manage the office staff. My role is practical dealing with day-to-day management and pragmatic issues, pastoral (leading and coordinating certain ministries and liturgies) and strategic: looking ahead at parish renewal through ministries, providing leadership and ensuring financial sustainability. In my role, I have been acting Chair of the Parish Council, member of the finance committee, member of the liturgy committee, and member of Fr Charles' support group.

Since January 2022, these are some of the highlights of my role.

- Improved office procedures, communication, secured talented new staff. Implemented improved website design. Implemented more accessible methods of collection at Mass using Eftpos machines.
- Contributed to strengthening our relationship with the school families. I persuaded the school boards to endorse a parish contribution from the school, and I implemented the program. There was a lot at stake to ensure this was a successful attempt to reach out to the school communities. The parish had attempted this about a decade earlier and it had failed. It resulted in a breakdown of communication between the parish and the school communities.
- Enhanced communication with parishioners and school communities about the role of the parish in our faith community, what it does (ministries) and how it operates (self-supporting) (This was done at Sacramental Masses, School prep information sessions and at Mass through Power Point presentations).
- Planned and initiated a new men's group ministry. Planned and ran successful Advent and Lenten programs. Facilitated revival of youth group and social justice ministries.
- Coordinated and led the Alpha program for the St Kevins and St Gregory parishes. Effectively represented the parishes in an interview at a conference sponsored by the archdiocese on 'Take the way of the Gospel'.
- I have led (Good Friday services) and coordinated Christmas Eve Masses. Last year, we had a large turnout (over 300 people) at the 6 pm mass on Christmas Eve and we received fantastic feedback about the Mass.
- I facilitated a review of the role of the Parish Council by drafting the Parish Charter.
- We have strengthened our relationship with St Gregory parish. I facilitated the parish forums at St Kevin's to outline a proposal to renew our parish and to enhance collaboration with St Gregory parish.

I am keen to do anything I can to help during this transition. As well as wrapping up my responsibilities and supporting staff with handover in the short term, I will support the Lenten program and continue to coordinate the current Alpha program, until its completion on Wednesday 16 April.

It is not an easy decision to resign from this role. The experience has been transformative. I thank sincerely the Parish Council members for their support and belief in me in these last 3 years.

Tiziana D'Costa

Parish Survey Comments – St Gregory's

Hospitality
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcomers at Mass are a start. In an ideal world we would have a welcome pack and parishioners who visit people new to the parish.• I feel that we do welcome new people, and we want to welcome new people, but it doesn't go beyond the welcoming person in the narthex handing out the bulletin.• In response to "c", unless a person is physically disadvantaged eg in a wheelchair or on a walker, how do we know if they are disadvantaged financially, mentally, ect?• When attending the 9 am mass I feel the welcoming presence• Most parishioners are happy when they are welcomed with a smile
Music
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Difficult to answer this section as the hymns and singing vary considerably across the Masses. However, better music and choral resources would definitely contribute to a richer liturgical experience for all.• The music selection (both recorded music and live) is good but repetitive. If possible, it would be nice to have live music more than once per month.• It would be wonderful to have good live music at more Masses, but difficult to achieve probably; sometimes hymn/music choices do not seem appropriate or encouraging of communal singing.• Weren't sure what was meant by "contemporary music". Should be well-known hymns if words not available, and only one new hymn at a time.• The 9 am mass only has recorded music which is not as good as a live choir. Also I prefer the traditional hymns that have good tunes compared with some of the newer ones that don't seem to have/rarely have good tunes. Contemporary music to me sounds like it is the modern music• the 10.30am Mass has an excellent array of hymns that are uplifting.
Homilies
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cannot please everyone every time. I participate more fully when a one or two idea are taken from the readings, developed in the biblical context and then brought into relevance for today's living. When this latter step is challenging, then I am more likely to carry the thought home with me.• Bishop Les' sermons can be tedious and test your attention span although, if effort is made, the content is usually good.• the message from the homily should be simple and not complicated.
Community
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We tend to fall into friendship groups and whilst these are rewarding for members, they can be unwittingly exclusive of others. I note many people do not seem to want interaction but don't know whether that is by preference or for fear of experiencing social ill-ease or rejection.• The parish already offers many activities for people to participate in and extends the invitation many times eg Lenten/Advent preparation group, multicultural day, Christmas party so in this regard, I'm not sure how much more inviting/welcoming the parish can do. On the other hand, these gatherings might not be the right setting for new parishioners to get to know someone on a 1 to 1 basis. But I think that having even just 1 person that knows them more deeply than on a surface level is a nicer experience than going to mass, not know or speak to anyone else, then go home afterwards week after week. Maybe we can think of how to reach out to new people and get to know them more, even if they don't attend the small/big group gatherings.• More opportunities for spiritual formation would be good; social events are plentiful and welcoming. Perhaps more formal channels for recognition of new parishioners would be good- a sign in book at Narthex may be helpful to contact and identify and welcome newcomers• Our Parish is one of the most welcoming, making new comers feel a sense of belonging
Ministry Groups

Parish Survey Comments – St Gregory's

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Caring for another spiritually is a difficult proposition. I think we try but generally don't feel empowered to do so, not because of "Father knows best" but because we don't know each other well enough to be open and trustful.• For me, joining a parish ministry is normal because I witnessed this from my parents. However, this might not come as easily or be obvious for people who don't have a role model in this area.• we are the Church
Experience of the Holy Spirit
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I think we "understand" (head) the Spirit but generally do not "experience" (heart) the Holy Spirit acting in our lives.
Invitational Church
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I am not good at this.
Taking Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A social justice awareness has never been a solid part of the parish DNA in the nearly 40 years I have been at St Greg's. We have generally responded to appeals (e.g. Vinnies, Caritas, Catholic Care) and some episodic events (e.g. refugees from Syria). This would be a fertile (but not easy) area for the PPC to develop.• The parishioners are very generous when invited to contribute to the needs of the poor.
OVERALL
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I encounter many parishioners who see their parish participation essentially as Sunday Mass and who are not that interested in participating more generally in parish life. While this has to be respected, it behoves us generally to challenge that perception and encourage greater participation. I like that the PPC is trying to do just that and hope this survey proves a rich source of insights.• Our parish is very important to my Faith journey• Just an idea, it might be good to use of the time after mass to reach out to new comers, rather than welcoming them only before mass, as people don't usually stay and chat before mass.• Thank you for the opportunity to comment. As we reflect on our responses we hope we haven' been overly positive ie should we have been more critical?• Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Some questions are too broad to be able to answer with adequate knowledge of the parishioners as a whole.• Some of the questions were outside our knowledge of our parish.• "we need to realize that parishioners are continually changing but at saint gregory especially at the 10.30am mass the children liturgy is very well attended and they are the future for our church and parish we need to nurture and encourage not just the children but their parents."• As a regular participant of our parish, i have found the questions easy to answer



Welcome BBQ	Looking forward to Welcome BBQ Thursday afternoon.
Kinder visits	I am continuing the Kinder visits and connecting with Managers and Kinder teachers.
Student Captains and FIRE Carriers	This year all the Year 6 students hold Leadership positions and the FIRE Carriers will be commissioned at the Ash Wednesday Mass this week.
Senior Manager at MACS	<p>John Corkill has been a dedicated supporter of schools and principals in the Eastern region for over 20 years. I sincerely thank John for his invaluable support over the past four years. His commitment has been evident through his twice-termly visits to our school and his ongoing engagement with our leadership team, helping us grow in all areas of learning.</p> <p>John, we deeply appreciate your unwavering support for our students and families, always offering guidance when needed and stepping in promptly whenever assistance was required. Your dedication often extended beyond the usual time commitments, demonstrating your genuine care for our community.</p> <p>At this stage, I am unsure who my senior manager will be, but I will inform the community as soon as I receive confirmation.</p>

Unexpected visitor



We had a massive kangaroo hop across the oval on Monday morning. The students were very entertained and mesmerized by the graceful animal. We all had something to chat about on Monday!

Inform and Empower

Inform and Empower

Being cybersafe is an essential part of everyday life. It's important to stay alert, be aware of what's circulating online, and carefully consider what we share. **Inform and Empower** consists of two presenters, Marty an educator and Carley a psychologist. Two years ago they worked with our students, staff and parents. The feedback about the sessions was extremely positive. On Tuesday afternoon staff are having their session with Marty and Carley. The students have already had one session and will continue to work with the team this term. Parents and Carers session is on the 27th of March called 'Raising Kids in a Technology'. This will take place in the school library at 7pm.

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL MEETING
LEAD PRINCIPAL REPORT
Thursday 6th of March 2025
2.30pm.



St Charles Borromeo
CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Since the school closure news by MACS on Thursday the 13th of February 2025, all members of our school community have been impacted significantly. Amongst the sadness and grief, staff and students are starting to begin a new chapter.

Fortunately, remaining staff will soon commence new school positions. We currently have three students left, whose family are finalising their new schools. Most of the students who returned to St Charles at the beginning of the year have been placed, mostly at St Kevin's PS in Lower Templestowe.

I would like to thank Fr Charles and Marwin Austerberry (General Manager-East), for their ongoing support.

I would like to thank and acknowledge, the outstanding leadership by Michelle Cameron, who has supported me and the staff and school families during this challenging time.

Michelle and I have been working closely with MACS staff, to ensure that the school closure follows all MACS protocols.

The staff and I have valued as much 'normality' in the life of the school as possible. Visits to see the children and staff by Fr Charles, celebrating Mass, is greatly appreciated.

Finally, as I will not be able to attend the next PPC meeting, I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their ongoing support and I only wish everyone impacted, all the very best for the future.

Pastoral Worker PPC Report September 2024.

Sacramental Program.

- First reconciliation approaches on Thursday 20th March. Pia Pagotto booked for Child & Parent workshop on Tuesday 11th March. There are 8 catechist kids and 10 St Kevin's children enrolled.

Safeguarding.

- WWCC and COC continue to be updated on PACEM.
- Safeguarding meetings continue monthly.

Outreach and Nursing Home Visits.

- Continue to visit 3 nursing homes a week. Templestowe Manor has worked with me and we are now doing a monthly morning tea after Thursday mass – the residents are bussed out to us.
- Bookish Morning tea continues and is growing. We now average 6-8 people each time. Lots of fun!!

Youth Group.

- Each meeting remains very energetic. The first meeting had 30 children attend- very noisy but fun!!

Playgroup.

Slow start this year. We currently have 4 families enrolled.

Bereavement Team.

Continues to work well – one volunteer assists with the set up of mass and I do carpark duty!!

St Vincent De Paul

We have a dedicated team of 4 – Nicole, Daniel, Adrian and myself.

Social Committee

I am currently putting together a social committee. We were able to give everyone a Chocolate heart to celebrate St Valentine's day! Next – all things green to celebrate St Patrick's Day on Monday 17th March.

Report to Parish Pastoral Council Meeting St Kevin's Parish Social Justice Action, 6 March 2025

1. Wider and more extensive engagement with/in St Kevin's Parish Ministries, towards the Post-Synod 'New Way of being Church' we continue to pray for at our Masses.

For timing reasons the previous full-agenda PPC meeting wasn't able to consider a Social Justice Action proposal on the above (and some other Agenda items) but deferred it to the 6 March Meeting. The SJA Proposal was previously sent to all PPC members in printed form so it won't be re-sent now. However the objective of this proposal (wider engagement across all of St Kevin's Parish Ministries) remains constant, and its process is summarised through three underlying principles:

1. Intended as a sociable 'All of Parish' wide initiative,
2. Invitations to attract diverse ages, backgrounds and parish participation levels, and
3. This is not simply to promote and perpetuate what Ministries already strictly do and how we do it, but rather seeks to incorporate some new ideas, and engagement, from a more diverse and age range of resources, for what the 2022-2024 'Synod on Synodality' established as a 'new way of being Church'. i.e. More collaboration across the People of God, Less hierarchical, and Faith driven ('Sensus Fidei Fidelium'), for the times in which we live, together.

Since last PPC Meeting the SJA has done further work towards practical means for progressing these principles and proposal if the PPC supports this. Practical measures vary only marginally from what was suggested in the previous PPC Proposal, but allowed for in it. The practical arrangements for proceeding now more fully developed by the SJA group will be elaborated during my (brief) introduction to this Agenda Item.

If the PPC supports this proposal we will then need to determine timing, and to support arrangements.

2. Presentation on Catholic Social Service Vic. by Josh Laurenz (Exec. Director)

Based on discussion at our last 2024 SJA Meeting (20 January 2025) our first joint-Parish presentation for 2025 is presently being progressed. As part of that and in various ways it's intended to informatively increase our (Catholic) Social Justice awareness and understanding.

3. Presentation on Refugee/Asylum Seekers

By a 'youngish' person who was first prompted towards her current legal role related to Refugees and Asylum Seekers by a St Kevin's Parish Social Justice event "Road To Refuge" several years ago (during Fr Gerry's time), for which she also volunteered at the time.

4. New Member of SJA

SJA is pleased to welcome Bernard Butler to our Social Justice Action meeting this afternoon and hope he might then choose to join us.



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BUSINESS MANAGER REPORT – MARCH, 2025

Columbarium (Wall Niche)

I will arrange an appointment with Coordinator Statutory Planning, Daniel Yu, at Manningham Council to discuss the construction of a columbarium at St Kevin's Templestowe. I will inquire whether a planning permit is required and obtain information regarding the associated costs.

Sanctuary Renovation

We will engage Law Architects to advise us on the best course of action for the necessary alterations to the sanctuary. I will schedule an appointment with them at St Kevin's in due course.