

St. Michael and All Angels

Anglican Church

The Diocese of Saldanha Bay



Our Mission

To honour God by proclaiming His Word in a spirit filled church, nurturing leadership, holistic growth, missions and care groups in a Discipling Environment

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TO THE PARISH FAMILY OF ST MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS, EDGEMOED **JUNE 2018**

Dear Friends,

Following the festival of Pentecost, the longest season of the church calendar begins, during which we reflect on the teachings of Jesus and many of the events which took place in His life. This is a wonderful time and opportunity to strengthen our faith and look ahead to preparing for the beginning of the church calendar on Advent Sunday, leading us into the joy of Christmastide.

A Reflection on Icons

You will recall that I have often quoted from Fr Richard Rohr, Franciscan monk and founder of the *Centre for Action and Contemplation* (<https://cac.org/>). In his most recent weekly meditation he quotes from the writings of Ken Gire who, seeing God as an artist, says:

“God stretched out the heavens, stippling the night with impressionistic stars. [God] set the sun to the rhythm of the day, the moon to the rhythm of the month. . . . [God] formed a likeness of [God’s own self] from a lump of clay and into it breathed life. [God] crafted a counterpart to complete the likeness, joining the two halves and placing them centre stage in [God’s] creation where there was a temptation and a fall, a great loss and a great hiding. God searched for the hiding couple, reaching to pick them up, dust them off, draw them near. . . .

In doing all this, God gave us art, music, sculpture, drama, and literature . . . as footpaths to lead us out of our hiding places and as signposts to lead us along in our search for what was lost. . . .

We must learn to look with more than just our eyes and listen with more than just our ears. . . . We must be aware, at all times and in all places, because windows are everywhere, and at any time we may find one. . . .

What do we see in those windows? What do we see of who we are, or once were, or one day might become? What do we see of our neighbor living down the street or our neighbor living on the street? What do we see about God?”

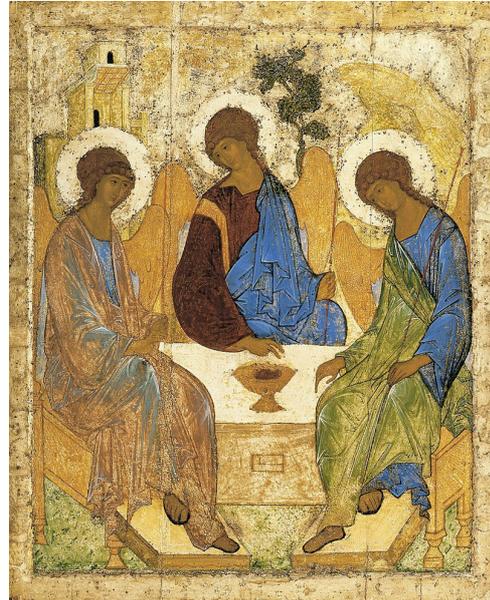
*(Ken Gire, **Windows of the Soul: Experiencing God in New Ways**: Zondervan: 1996).*

We are invited in this passage to see ourselves, our neighbour and God in altogether new ways – to do this we need to practise more of ‘being’ than simply ‘doing’. Fr Richard uses this as a preface to writing about icons and how these are, “windows for the soul”.

The name ‘Icon’ referring to these beautiful images, particular to the Eastern and Russian Orthodox traditions, comes from the Greek word meaning, ‘image’ or ‘picture’.



A modern Western Icon of Archangel Michael



An Icon by Andrei Rublev depicting the 3 the angels who visited Abraham in the desert – the detail of the icon however suggests this to be a representation of the Holy Trinity

(Source: Wikipedia Icons and Trinity: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Icons>
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trinity_\(Andrei_Rublev\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trinity_(Andrei_Rublev)))

Next time you see an Icon take a close look at it and treat it as a ‘camera lens’ through which you can be drawn deeper, not the mystery of who God is and who the saints are.

Communication Matters

In this respect I want to use the word, ‘matters’ both as noun and adjective.

Communication matters - particularly in today’s world of the internet and social media, instant communication is as simple as pushing a button on a keyboard, or tapping an icon on a Tablet or Cell phone screen. I am sure that, like us, you too are delighted when images and video clips of our children and grandchildren that reach us instantly through Whatsapp. Facetime and Skype video calls also make keeping contact with family and friends in far-off places so much easier.

In the church too this matters a lot and especially where we need to know about one another in the family of St Michael’s. I am deeply grateful to Gwen Burns, for managing the **Parish Prayer Chain**, while Fr Allan and Avril are away on extended leave. This serves as an ‘icon’ (borrowing from the section above) to keep us in touch with those for whom our prayers of support, love and care, are needed.

Matters for communication are also important – please make use of all the options available to you, for communicating information to our parish. This can be done through the Facebook

page, via email, Whatsapp and SMS. We have set up a bulk SMS facility which, through our parish office, will be used to gently remind folk of forthcoming meetings and other events which are on our parish calendar.

That said though, may I ask please that, if there are needs, such as sudden illness, injury or admission to hospital, or the celebration of a new child in the family, academic achievements etc. that you advise our office, or preferably me directly, so that we can reach out in both celebrating with you as also showing our care and prayer for those in need.

Please remember that ***no need is too small or unimportant*** - we strive to be a loving community and family of Christ, and need to know so that we can offer the love of our Lord to you, both in times of challenge as also times of celebration and joy.

Please let us know what you feel about the plans and events of our parish, both those you enjoy and those which you find challenging – it is always good to know what our folk are feeling, as ***the opinions and convictions of all truly matter***.

I check my phone regularly for messages, through Whatsapp, SMS, as well as email and try to respond as quickly as possible to any communications sent.

The Current Financial Position at St Michael's

It is incumbent on your leadership at St Michael's to keep you, as our parish family, abreast of how we are managing in these very tough economic times.

Last month our Finance Warden, David Baird, gave a presentation to the congregation at the end of one of our 09h00 Sunday services. In this presentation (which you will find forms part of the email to which this Pastoral Letter is attached) you will see ***comparisons made between year-to-date 2017 and 2018 Budget and Actual Figures***.

Regrettably the financial position of our parish has this year changed quite significantly for the worse – in 2017 we ended most months with a reasonable profit of Actual Income over Actual Expenditure. However year-to-date this year we are barely breaking even, despite stringently controlled expenditure.

The Executive and Parish Council of St Michael's have been monitoring this situation closely and ***I need to now bring this matter to the attention of every member of this parish***. In so doing, I recognise fully that each family and individual is struggling to make ends meet – among others the petrol price has gone up significantly, food prices are out of all proportion and so it goes on.

My plea is to all those who are currently ***not on the planned giving scheme in supporting our parish financially***, to please enrol in this scheme, so that, through the pledges of all our members (which is our predictable monthly income stream) we can turn the corner.

June Lane is our Planned Giving Secretary and she will gladly provide you with a ***Pledge Number*** – our request is that you please set up a monthly ***EFT Stop Order***, so that we can budget on the basis of a predictable income stream.

Our Budget, as was explained at the February 2018 Parish Vestry meeting, is a ***Faith and Ministry Budget***, by which is meant that we recognise that financial support for the ministry of our parish comes through our trust and faith in Almighty God. It is against this background that ***we tithe as a non-negotiable budget expenditure line item*** - through this St Michael's

supports a number of deserving beneficiaries, in acknowledging our trust in and dependence upon Almighty God and our faithfulness to the Scriptures in respect of giving.

We also seek through this Budget to provide for ministries in our parish, such as the following: Grace Ministries and the Barnabas Basket, Youth and Sunday school ministry and the ministry of Praise and Worship.

If you need any specific information about this please speak to David Baird, our Finance Warden, or to me personally.

Worshipping together at St Michael's

In the letter to the Hebrews, the writer comments, “ *And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as it is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*” (Hebrews 10: 24-25 NRSV).

This challenges us to several important truths, viz.

- *Provoking, that is to say, stretching one another to love and good deeds;*
- *Not neglecting to meet together as some are;*
- *Encouraging one another.*

At times people have said to me, “Why do we need to attend church services? Surely God is everywhere?” My reply has been invariably along these lines, “Yes, indeed God is everywhere, but your brothers and sisters in Christ are not always with you where you are.... We don't come to the church to, ‘find God there’ but far more to find one another there and, in worship, prayer and fellowship grow together in faith and our love for one another.”

Thus, referring back to the text above, meeting together for worship and fellowship enables us to fulfil what is being asked of us – provoking one another to love and good deeds; meeting together and encouraging one another.

To those who, for whatever reason have not been joining us at our services of worship (I know this winter is cold!!!) I want to say that we miss you and look forward to seeing you with us at our church soon.

As mentioned in the earlier section on communication, if there is a specific reason why you are not able or willing to join us at our services please be in touch with me – we would love to help.

In closing, I wish you and yours every blessing in our Lord, who is forever our Resurrection and Life.

God bless,
Fr David

To be a Multi-Generational Church creating a culture of discipleship where all people can Believe, Belong and Become

◆ Relevant ◆ Effective ◆ Dynamic

Followers of Jesus Christ.