

St Philip's Anglican Church O'Connor

# Parish Profile

March 2024



**At St Philip's we glorify God and make disciples by  
creating a community where we live the love of Christ.**

**'Come and see' said Jesus' friend Philip when Nathaniel asked him about Jesus.  
We invite people to 'come and see' what the good news of Jesus Christ is all about.**



Anglican Diocese of  
Canberra & Goulburn



**St Philip's**  
*Come & See*

# The new Rector

## **Our collective hopes and plans are that we will:**

- remain an authentic community that:
  - testifies to and worships the Lord;
  - provides a home for seekers and those in need of love, healing and growth;
  - grounds our worship firmly in the Anglican Prayer Book and sacraments within the broad catholic tradition.
- find renewal and new directions, including growing the parish, that are consistent with remaining authentic.
- remain a welcoming and affirming place that values openness, diversity and social and environmental justice.
- establish appropriate and sustainable ways of engaging with our wider community.

## **We are seeking a Rector who:**

- has a deep personal spiritual life firmly rooted in prayer;
- is well grounded in traditional Anglican liturgy, adopts a sacramental approach and approaches ministry with an orthodox theology that also leans into the challenges facing Australia and the world;
- brings presence and attentiveness when engaging with people, inviting them into conversation;
- is practical, yet kind, supportive and flexible in dealing with people in all situations, valuing inclusivity and diversity, and having fun in celebrating our community;
- brings leadership, vision, energy and commitment to growing our strong community, including:
  - establishing and supporting a ministry structure of shared pastoral care,
  - renewing lay ministry and enabling parishioners to exercise their individual gifts and talents, particularly in the areas of music, youth ministry, outreach, community formation and education,
  - helping to unlock our potential and working with us to achieve our hopes and plans.

To this end the Parish is open to flexibility and discussion of options for how this might be achieved.

# A brief history

The Parish of St Philip's O'Connor was created in response to new suburbs emerging in Canberra's inner north during the 1950s. Since then, the parish has grown and changed in character as both the Anglican Church and parish population have changed. Once a community of young families, the suburbs neighbouring St Philip's have evolved into a diverse mix of residents of all ages and ethnicities, close to the city centre and a large university.

The early years of St Philip's tell of post war urban expansion, building development and outreach. O'Connor was still being built when our church site was obtained in 1951. Soon after, in 1953, the Canberra North Parish was formed consisting of three suburbs: O'Connor, Ainslie and Turner. Later, the independent 'parochial district' of St Philip's Turner, O'Connor and Lyneham was launched in 1960. The emphasis was on door-to-door visiting to create a new church community and ministry to families new to Canberra.



Building began in 1957 when Bishop Burgmann laid the foundation stone of the church hall, the first building on the site. In 1958, the Governor General declared the hall open for business and laid the foundation stone for the church. Building commenced in 1960 and by the end of 1961 Bishop Clements had dedicated the completed church and declared St



Philip's to be a parish. However, it was not until twenty years later, after much hard fund raising, that the debt was cleared and the church consecrated.

Once St Philip's was established, a range of national reforms, liturgical and social, helped shape its identity. A congregation that included academics and public servants made this easier. In the 1960s and 70s the Anglican Church of Australia was much engaged with liturgical reform. By the late 1960s, St Philip's was one of just a few churches across Australia that had introduced new ways of celebrating holy communion that embodied the ideals of the liturgical movement.

Another 'first' occurred in 1989; St Philip's welcomed Canon Ruth Jefferson to preach and celebrate Holy Communion. It was the first occasion in the Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn that a clergywoman had, with official sanction, celebrated the eucharist.

Ministries of practical care and community service have featured throughout St Philip's history. Every Monday for more than 22 years from 1996, the Northbourne Community Centre provided a good meal, together with physical and emotional support. Pandora's pre-loved clothing shop continues to flourish, selling good quality used clothing and shoes, for women, men and children at affordable prices. A special part of our community was the South Sudanese Dinka Congregation that was resident in St Philip's parish from 2011 to 2015. St Philip's also had a special relationship with CAMRA — The Canberra Academy of Music and Related Arts, active in the parish for 17 years until 2014. For some decades, the parish hall has been leased to the SPK Early Learning Centre. More recently, the parish completed building the Lamerton Centre. It provides a meeting room with a kitchenette and retail accommodation for Pandora's.



Throughout its life, the St Philip's community has sought to engage with Godly and Christ-led innovations while holding to the best of Anglican tradition and practice.





# About O'Connor



St Philip's is in the inner north suburb of O'Connor, an older suburb with established trees. Many residents value nature, gardens, wildlife and birds. Yet O'Connor is also within walking distance of the nightlife area of Braddon, the Canberra CBD, Canberra's 'Chinatown' in Dickson and the Australian National University. This cosmopolitan diversity creates a special combination of a

relaxed lifestyle with some inner-city energy. The suburb has a diversity of people, most of whom appreciate the inner north's lifestyle opportunities.

Just 250m from the church and rectory is O'Connor shops, a vibrant local centre with a popular family-friendly pub, one of the best fish and chips takeaways in Canberra, suburban restaurants, a grocery store, an after-hours pharmacy, various medical practices and a post office. Past rectors have made a point of being on good terms with local businesses and the church is a recognised part of the community.

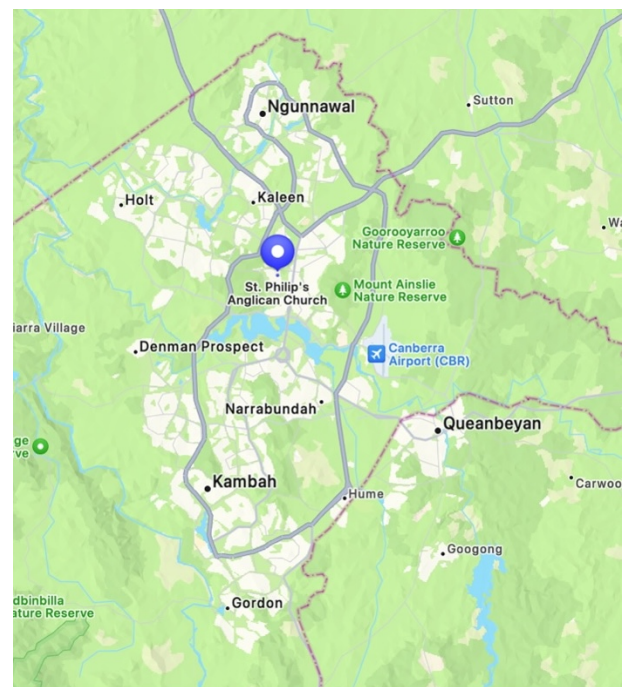
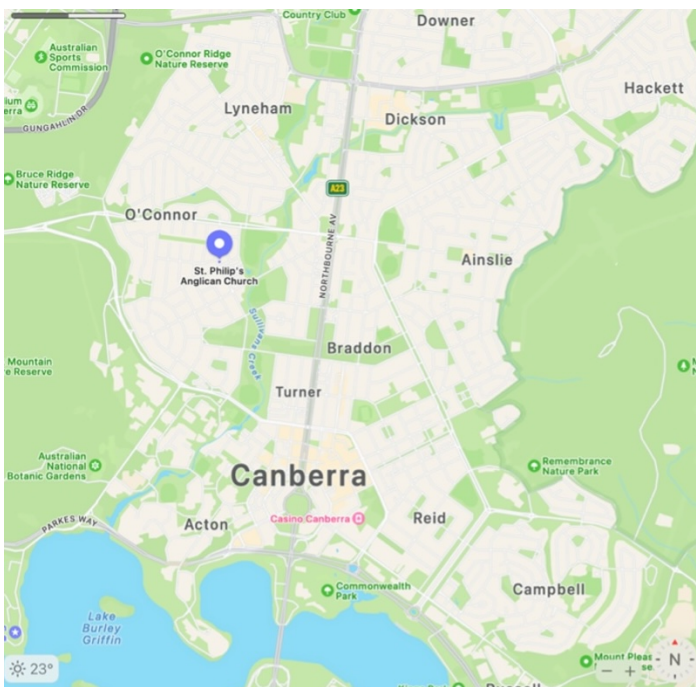
O'Connor sports many community facilities including playing fields, parks, a dedicated dog park, tennis courts and several wetlands. Bordering O'Connor is the Bruce/O'Connor Ridge nature park, a strip of land popular with bushwalkers and mountain bike riders because of its extensive network of trails. For a little more challenge, the popular Black Mountain trails are at your doorstep.

O'Connor has, and is situated close to, excellent primary and secondary schools (public, private, catering to students with a disability, Anglican and Catholic). Also within easy cycling distance are the Australian National University, Canberra University, a campus of the Australian Catholic University and St Mark's National Theological Centre (part of Charles Sturt University). The Alliance Française is just down the road.



About 3km from O'Connor is beautiful Lake Burley Griffin, set against the magnificent backdrop of the Brindabella Range. It is the perfect place for a brisk walk, a cycle, a paddle or even a swim. Many of the nation's finest cultural institutions are situated close to the lake including the National Botanic Gardens, the National Gallery of Australia, the National Portrait Gallery, National Library, the National Museum of Australia, the War Memorial, Government House and Jerrabomberra Wetlands.

In 2021, the estimated population of O'Connor, Turner and Lyneham was 16,000, of which about 950 identified as Anglicans.



# Parish strengths

## **A clear St Philip's 'style'**

Worship and liturgy are central to who we are and all we do. We value well-structured liturgical worship with a strong focus on the sacraments. Our 'middle church' style is somewhat understated but encourages people to 'come and see'. We meet them where they are in their faith journey and allow them to grow in their own time.

We value beauty; music has been an important part of our tradition. We are also comfortable with contemplative, prayerful silence.

## **A united, open and tolerant community**

Our style draws people from across Canberra to worship with us and we have no noticeable factions. In our understated way we foster an environment in which diversity, inclusivity, collaboration and openness are valued and celebrated. We also like to have fun and enjoy fellowship opportunities throughout the year.

## **Financially sound**

While not a wealthy parish we have no debt and several assets. The original parish hall is rented to a private kindergarten. The newer Lamerton Centre provides space for small group activities and, on Saturday mornings, is transformed into Pandora's, one of Canberra's best pre-loved clothing shops. Pandora's is an important community and outreach focus for the parish. A Tongan congregation rents the church for regular worship.

## **Inner-city parish with a history of social justice**

St Philip's has attracted a community of people with theological and other wide-ranging interests. Many have roles within the wider church and involvements in organisations tackling social and environmental issues.

Within the parish, study groups form during Lent and Advent, or for a special purpose to engage with indigenous, social and environmental justice issues.

The Parish Council allocates an annual commitment of funds on behalf of the parish to support mission activities at local, national and international levels, often through the Anglican Board of Mission.

## **A caring and supportive community**

St Philip's fosters a culture of informal pastoral care of each other by members of the parish. It also provides formal pastoral care to two local residential aged care facilities.

# Parish opportunities

## **Community size and composition**

As an inner-city church in a suburb with a relatively transient population, attendance has fluctuated across the years. Post-COVID, attendances are at historical lows. Our parish is also passing through a cycle of relative aging as children from active families have grown. We are fortunate to have several recent university graduates and learned retired clergy within our Sunday congregations. The reduced size and gradual aging of the parish community has seen a gradual decline in the practical ability of the parish to do things we wish to do or have previously been able to do. The parish may have become a bit conservative in committing to new projects, apprehensive about overcommitting. This trend runs the risk of self-limiting what our parish has to offer if encouraged, empowered and supported.

However, these demographic trends present opportunities. There is a desire within the Parish to increase numbers by re-engaging with families and young adults who have connections to St Philip's and to fostering links with the nearby ANU community. Previously, the Rector has been involved with ANU chaplaincy.

## **Infrastructure and administrative support**

The church infrastructure is reasonably sound but some buildings are over 60 years old. This brings the usual maintenance issues that come with property ownership. In this regard, Parish Council is progressing a capital works program to address these issues and better position the infrastructure's functionality for the long term. The original church hall is rented on a long-term lease to the kindergarten. While this limits the types and scheduling of outreach activities, it provides a steady revenue stream. St Philip's has no paid parish administrator and relies on volunteers to undertake most administrative and operational tasks.

An opportunity exists to consider the role that a paid parish administrator could play in supporting St Philip's mission.

## **Renewal of formal and informal worship opportunities**

Some aspects of traditional St Philip's worship have diminished somewhat in recent years. We want to re-establish and support an active lay ministry team. Music at St Philip's remains a central feature of worship and fellowship. However, it needs renewal following the departure of some key members of the team and an increased burden on the director of music.

There are opportunities to build church community beyond Sunday worship. Until fairly recently, some members of the St Philip's congregation participated in home church ministry groups in addition to regular worship. There is interest in them being renewed.



# Worship Services

## Sunday 8am

A traditional Anglican Holy Communion service with no music followed by a light breakfast of tea/coffee and toast in the Lamerton Centre.

Breakfast has also become an opportunity for parishioners leaving the 8am service and parishioners arriving early for the 10am service to enjoy fellowship.

Recent average attendance: 20

## Sunday 10am

A traditional Anglican Holy Communion service with singing accompanied by the restored 1964 Hill, Norman & Beard 'Continuo' organ. This service is followed by morning tea.

Recent average attendance: 27

## Thursday 10am

A traditional Anglican Holy Communion service, generally a shortened form with one reading, a psalm and gospel except on special feast and saints' days, including a shorter sermon/reflection. This service is followed by morning tea. This service offers a worship opportunity for parishioners unable to attend a Sunday service.

Recent average attendance: 12

## Offsite

St Philip's also provides a regular Holy Communion service and spiritual fellowship for residents of Sir Leslie Morshead Manor/RSL Life Centre and Canberra Aged Care/Kankinya.

Canberra Aged Care: average attendance 8

RSL Life Centre: average attendance 14

## Rites of passage

In 2023, St Philip's carried out three baptisms, one wedding and eight funerals.



# Lay ministry

Lay ministry underpins St Philip's day-to-day ministry operations through to strategic decision making.

The Parish Council provides leadership for the parish by setting, in conjunction with the rector, objectives and strategies for the work of St Philip's and for the efficient and effective management of parish resources.

Parish Council has codified the objectives and strategies for the work of St Philip's in two documents: *St Philip's Frame 2010* and *St Philip's Parish Plan 2023–25*.

- *St Philip's Frame 2010* is an enduring high-level statement of the key elements of strategy which serve to guide the work of the parish and the management of its resources. The frame states St Philip's purpose, vision, mission, values and aims.
- *St Philip's Parish Plan 2023–25* sits within *St Philip's Frame 2010* as a set of 'nudges'. Nudges are particular areas for greater emphasis, focused prayer and collective effort. The nudges aim to better position the parish to realise its purpose in God's world and to complement and support the continuation of other Parish activities, including those relating to inclusion, peace, justice and the environment. The Parish Plan resulted from a parish planning day in 2022 which confirmed that much was well with the parish but identified areas ripe for spiritual growth.

Parish council shares with the rector responsibility for planning, organising and executing the pastoral, educational, evangelistic and missionary work of the parish through various ministry teams, including:

- Liturgy Team
- Pastoral Care Team
- Music Director
- Pandora's Management Committee
- Events & Food @St Philip's Team
- Parish Communications Team



Lay members of the parish take responsibility for aspects of the day-to-day administration and operations of the parish by actively assisting in the following areas:

- banking
- building and grounds maintenance
- lay assistant ministry, reading lessons, leading intercessory prayers, welcoming, preparing breakfasts and morning teas and, in the past, leading prayer services and preaching, providing flowers
- flowers
- linen washing and vessel cleaning
- minute secretary
- mission support coordination (local, national, international organisations)
- organ playing
- Pandora's Pre-loved Fashion op shop
- pastoral care
- pewsheets preparation
- safety, risk and compliance
- social media
- treasurer
- website maintenance





# St Philip's Frame

At St Philip's we glorify God and make disciples by creating a community where we live the love of Christ.

Our vision is everyone wants a place where they feel they can belong. We want to be that place.

Our mission is to connect people who are searching into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ and each other.

As we follow Christ we value:

- Inclusion — We respect the individual and embrace and honour diversity.
- Relevance — We promote Christ as central for our community, our world and ourselves.
- Caring — We share Christ's love through welcome, hospitality, service and stewardship.
- Relationships — We build nurturing connections with God, each other and the wider community.
- Worship — We provide a space for people to celebrate and grow in the healing love and grace of Christ.

We strive for ...

- A relationship with the triune God that is personal and daily.
- A relationship with others that is respectful and caring.
- A relationship with the world that engages neighbours and nations.
- A commitment to worship, fellowship, and service.





# Parish groups and activities

St Philip's is an active community participating in outreach, fellowship and other celebrations. The Easter Day breakfast held between services has become an important part of our Easter celebrations. Other opportunities for the parish to celebrate with the community include Pandora's seasonal events, occasional concerts and other events.

- Pandora's @ O'Connor Preloved Fashion is open on Saturday mornings and is staffed by volunteers from the Parish and community. It hosts various fashion events throughout the year; the Autumn/Winter launch, Christmas in July, the Spring Launch and Fashion Parade. Money raised by Pandora's is given to Parish local, national and international missions and especially to local ACT charities.
- The Men's Group meets on Tuesdays in the Lamerton Centre from 10am to 12 noon. It is a time for fellowship, conversation, walks and sharing experiences of life and former occupations. Morning Tea is provided.
- Food@St Philip's
- Food donation support for St John's Care
- Special Advent, Christmas, Easter and Pentecost events
- Occasional Concerts



# Parish statistics

## Income (2023)

Parish		Pandora's	
Total income	\$167 406	Total income	\$26 336
Planned giving	\$94 983	Total giving	\$18 640
Open plate	\$10 076		
Other (fundraising, rents etc)	\$62 347		

## Parish contributions (2023)

To diocese	\$22 296
To missions	\$4 520

## Clergy

- The Rector
- One Honorary Deacon
- One Honorary Associate Priest
- Seven Retired Clergy

## Lay leadership

St Philip's has a Rector's Warden, one People's Warden and six Parish Council members.

# Clergy conditions of service

## Remuneration

Please visit the Diocesan website for the latest full conditions of service. Based on the latest [administrative circular](#):

- Stipend: \$79 528.29
- Superannuation: 15.87% of total cash stipend paid
- Housing: rectory including all utilities and energy costs
- Transport: to be negotiated
- Allowances: to be negotiated

## Supportive care

- Parish Council has traditionally entered into a covenant with the Rector which has been reviewed annually.
- the Rector and their family are embraced as all others in the parish by St Philip's tradition of compassion and pastoral care.
- regular review is made of the condition of the rectory.
- the parish encourages the Rector's active participation in Diocesan Conferences, Retreats and Quiet Days.





# The Rectory

St Philip's maintains a rectory for the Rector and family as part of the package for service. The rectory is located next door to the church grounds providing a convenient but private living arrangement. It has two living areas, a main bedroom with ensuite plus three other bedrooms and a study. It has a single car garage plus an off-street parking space, ample storage and a pet-friendly backyard. The property was renovated in 2016 and is regularly inspected for maintenance.





# Prayer for a new incumbent

(Praying within and from an expectant silence)

Eternal and bountiful God,  
you are ever-present to your people  
through Christ's life among us  
in Word and Sacrament,  
and through the ministries of your people.

Guide us with your Spirit  
as we seek a priest who will lead and minister among us  
in liturgy, prayer, teaching and pastoral care;  
who will attentively and prayerfully celebrate with us,  
drawing us more deeply into your love;  
who will nurture and equip us in our life together,  
in fulfilling the callings of our ministries.

Give wisdom and discernment  
to those who will choose;  
and give us all warm and generous hearts.

We make our prayer through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**  
or Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

*Martin Davies, adapted from A Prayer Book for Australia*

## Resources

[St Philip's O'Connor website](#)

[St Philip's Facebook page](#)

[Anglican Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn](#)

An accessible version of this document is available  
upon request.

