



Risen Christ Parish

Pastoral Plan 2025-2030



Introduction

Risen Christ is a welcoming Catholic parish, a living community inspired by the Gospels, enriched by the vision of Vatican II, formed by vibrant liturgy and sacraments, and respectful of the different histories and identities of our two faith communities.

Risen Christ Parish Vision Statement

Welcome to the 2025-2030 Risen Christ Parish Pastoral Plan. This plan has been developed by the current Parish Pastoral Leadership Team (PLT) who were guided by the work of the Transitional Leadership Team. It has been drawn from the Risen Christ Parish Mission Statement and the 2024 Parish Survey Report. These key documents reflect the many voices of our parish and the strong identity and values held by the faith communities of Our Lady Help of Christians and St Francis Xavier.

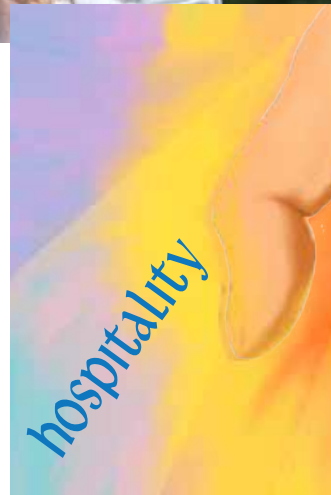
This Parish Pastoral Plan serves as a guide and framework for the pastoral life of our parish. It is a living document, which will grow and be shaped by the two faith communities as we work together to develop a life-giving and vibrant parish.

In the words of Pope Francis, the church, as the people of God, is a ‘humble and synodal church.’¹ This means that it is a learning church and an inclusive church—a church for everybody—marked by consultation, discernment, formation and participation. A synodal church is a church where synodality (‘walking together’) is practiced.² The Parish Mission Statement and the 2024 Parish Survey reflect the strong connection of Risen Christ Parish with the synodal way, and this sentiment continues throughout the Parish Pastoral Plan.

The future of Risen Christ Parish relies on the faith, engagement and passion of its parishioners. This Pastoral Plan seeks to provide a foundation for the development of a vibrant, collaborative, lay-led parish. In the 2024 Parish Survey, the PLT identified five areas of parish life that members of the Risen Christ Parish value most highly. These themes form the five focus areas the heart of the Pastoral Plan: **Hospitality**, **Prayer and Worship**, **Family**, **Social Justice**, and **Safeguarding**.

Together, these key focus areas are symbolised as the five fingers of a hand reaching out in support and connection. The five fingers are linked through the palm, and the nerves that run through them provide the life-blood that sustains action. The five focus areas of our Pastoral Plan are not independent; there are many areas of overlap, and what connects them most strongly is a deeply Christian, gospel-centred spirituality—a spirituality that recognises the movement of the Holy Spirit through the church and the world. Through these five focus areas, we seek to build a vibrant parish that is safe, welcoming, inclusive, prayerful, communal, outgoing, service and action-oriented, and future focused.

¹ XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Bishops Synod, Synthesis Report, October 28, 2023.
² For more information on synodality and what it means for the life of the Church, see <https://www.synod.va/en/the-synod-on-synodality/what-is-the-synod-about.html> and <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/vatican-city/news/2024-10/synodality-a-conversion-aimed-at-becoming-more-missionary.html>



1: Hospitality

I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me... Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me. (Matthew 25:35-40)³

Jesus' way of being with people reflected an open hospitality. He dined with people who were outcast and excluded, he sat with those who were grieving or suffering, he touched the 'untouchable', he taught in ways that challenged and engaged, and he welcomed the stranger. Jesus' way of being with people presents a model and blueprint for how we think about what it means to be a vibrant Catholic parish today. We are a parish that invites, includes, reaches out and welcomes.

Hospitality can be reflected in many ways: a simple welcome before Mass, a shared meal, a visit to those who are feeling lonely or isolated. In the gathering space at OLHC, Eltham, just the smell of coffee can evoke warmth and comfort and make a guest feel cared for. But of course, hospitality is so much more than this. Hospitality stretches past those we know and out to those across our schools and local communities who are yet to be welcomed. As we begin to live out our Pastoral Plan, we have the opportunity to build on what already exists, to find new ways to bring our faith communities together, and to find new ways to welcome people from across the parish communities.

We invite you to reflect on this description and consider if you feel a calling towards hospitality at Risen Christ Parish.

³ All scripture references in this document use the translation from the New Revised Standard Version Anglicised Catholic Edition.



Questions for reflection:

- How can a conversation inspire or uplift someone?
- How does loneliness affect those in our community?
- In what practical ways can we as a parish, and I, personally, encourage and facilitate more meaningful connections among community members, particularly with those of diverse backgrounds or life situations?
- How can I engage better with the wider community?

Examples to inspire:

- Contribute to our post-Mass gatherings at Eltham.
- Welcome people into Mass.
- Coordinate and extend visits to the elderly in our parish.
- Reinvigorate some past examples of hospitality, including parish meals and BBQs.
- Help organise regular and annual events that bring diverse members of the parish together.
- Welcome and engage Prep parents who are new to our three schools; consider restarting the joint schools Prep commissioning Mass, the Prep parent welcome evening or developing a new format to bring parents and other parishioners together at the commencement of schooling.
- Consider ways to support hospitality at Montmorency, recognising the limitations of the physical space.
- Organise a structured listening activity to find out from marginalised, disengaged or wounded members of the community how they might be supported and welcomed into the pastoral life of the parish.



2: Prayer and Worship

*For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.
(Matthew 18:20)*

Prayer and worship builds relationships with ourselves, with our community and with God. It is in coming together that we can find strength as the people of God, where personal connections are formed and deepened, and where our faith is strengthened.

Liturgical celebrations provide the opportunity for us to come together in celebration, and the document on the sacred liturgy from the Second Vatican Council invites Christians to ‘full, conscious and active participation in the liturgy.’⁴ For many people who regularly attend the weekend Mass, this is often where they feel strongest in their faith. There is good reason for this, because the Eucharist is considered to be the ‘source and summit’ of Christian life.⁵ It provides the spiritual and communal nourishment and guidance for Christians to live their faith in the realities of their everyday lives and to continue to be the face of Christ in the world.

At Risen Christ Parish, prayer and worship extends beyond the celebration of the Eucharist and the formal sacramental life of the church: it can be found in any gathering place—the church, the home, or out in the community. It can be found in a communal praying of the rosary, in prayer groups, scripture reading and study groups, youth and other community groups, in group music or dance, in memorial services, in extending hospitality to new members of the community, in celebrating with Confirmation candidates, in the rites of Reconciliation, in coming together in prayer before engaging in active service in the community, and of course in the celebration of the Mass on weekdays and weekends.

Participation in the prayer and sacramental life of the parish does not mean that you have to be front and centre (leading music ministry or proclaiming the readings), it can simply mean that you are present with the community and open to the Holy Spirit’s movement in prayer. Being present with the community in this way is an equally valuable and valued part of the prayer life of Risen Christ parish.

We invite you to reflect on this description and consider if you feel a calling towards prayer and worship in the life of Risen Christ Parish.

⁴ Vatican II Council. *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Sacrosanctum Concilium* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1963), 14.

⁵ *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 10, 14.

Questions for reflection:

- As a vibrant parish community, how might we invite, welcome and encourage those who come along to participate and contribute to the celebration of Mass and other opportunities for prayer and worship?
- What might lay-led liturgy at Risen Christ Parish look like?
- What can we do to make our prayer and worship opportunities more inclusive, to support the homebound, families, children, and people of all ages? Do we offer a fully accessible parish to all ages (for example, with access to a hearing loop or aids for those who are visually impaired)?
- What skills and interests do I have that I might use to support the liturgical life of the parish?

Examples to inspire:

- Help organise or be involved in different experiences for community members to share their faith, learn about faith, ask questions, and develop a deeper understanding.
- Help organise a yearly pilgrimage to unite the two communities of the parish.
- Bring your own gifts and talents to Mass: how might you participate more fully?
- Consider how we might add some variety to Mass, with liturgy led by different groups (eg youth/children).
- Help to organise, lead or participate in scripture study groups or community prayer, such as a reading and prayer evening during Lent, a memorial service on All Souls Day, the Rosary, the Children’s Liturgy of the Word.
- Contribute to the celebration of cultural richness in our community by offering Prayers of the Faithful in your own language.
- Help to organise and participate in Healing Masses.

Prayer and Worship



3: Family

Standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, ‘Woman, here is your son.’ Then he said to the disciple, ‘Here is your mother.’ And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home. (John 19:25-27)

The community that we see today has been enriched by many families who have been connected with the parish across generations. Many of the children in the parish have been welcomed through Baptism, have attended one of the three schools connected to the parish, and made their sacraments of Reconciliation, First Eucharist and Confirmation in our churches. Several have even returned to be married! All of these families reflect the diversity of our Australian community—diverse in their make-up, expressions of faith and cultural roots.

We are aware of the challenges facing Catholic parishes: the reduced credibility of Church authority, declining numbers of priests and parishioners, and the changed cultural and religious context, are just a few of the challenges facing Catholic parishes today. For many parents and children, the only experience and exposure to the Church that they might have is through our Catholic schools. It is in this spirit and with these challenges in mind that we need to think about ways to be creative in our approach to parish life.

Many families can also sometimes feel disconnected from the wider parish life, and for many reasons are unable to join regularly in the weekend Mass. It is important to note that Mass attendance is not the only way to be part of a vibrant parish community. It is important that all members of the Catholic communities in Eltham and Montmorency know that they are a welcome and valued part of Risen Christ Parish.

In order to be a parish of the future, we need to work together to ensure that families see the parish as a safe and welcoming place, and that they feel they are valued and part of the community.

We invite you to reflect on this description and consider if you feel a calling towards supporting families at Risen Christ Parish.



Questions for reflection:

- How can we as a parish better support families through different stages of their lives?
- How can we engage better with school families who are involved in the sacramental programs and make them feel welcome?
- How might parents be better supported in their roles as the first educators of their children?
- How might our faith community listen to the voices of young people and provide meaningful ways for them to contribute to the liturgical and pastoral life of the parish?
- What skills and interests do I have that I might use to support and engage families in the pastoral life of the parish?

Examples to inspire:

- Organise opportunities for young people or family groups to participate in social walks or visits to local sites of significance.
- Welcome families to the parish prior to the sacrament of Baptism.
- Consider what support might be needed for parents to have their children participate in Children’s Liturgy of the Word or community groups.
- Help to support young people of the parish to attend youth events, such as the Australian Catholic Youth Festival or World Youth Day, and follow up with them for formation and mentorship.
- Develop ministry opportunities for young people, including social justice initiatives, liturgy, and music groups.



4: Social Justice

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour. (Luke 4: 18-19)

Christian faith is lived most authentically in active service to others. This is because love of God goes hand in hand with love of neighbour (Mt 22: 37-39). This premise sits at the heart of Catholic Social Teaching, which is centred on the recognition of the inherent dignity of the human person and the call to strive for the common good. According to Catholic Social Teaching, human societies and communities cannot flourish unless the needs of all—and especially the most vulnerable—are met. As a parish, we have a duty and responsibility to contribute to this work.

Both the Eltham and Montmorency communities have a strong charism and heart for social justice and outreach. With long-standing relationships with a number of organisations, social justice plays a pivotal role in the fabric of the parish. Community awareness and service connects us as human beings, not only with other church groups but also with the wider community and the world. It is this sustained passion for helping others that has remained through the history of both communities, and this theme was consistently rated in the 2024 Parish Survey as highly important for members of the parish.

We invite you to reflect on this description and consider if you feel a calling towards social justice at Risen Christ Parish.



Questions for reflection:

- How can we identify the invisible needs in our local community? How might we respond to the realities and needs of those around us?
- How might parish outreach extend both to Christian communities and to communities of other faith traditions?
- How might Risen Christ Parish think about the priorities for social justice and outreach—locally, in the wider community, and globally?
- How might we engage further with our schools and young people to support social justice and outreach initiatives?
- How might we create opportunities for members of the parish to reflect on the role of faith in action and how faith is lived through action?
- What skills and interests do I have that I might use to support and engage in social justice and outreach as part of Risen Christ parish?

Examples to inspire:

- Help to create a coordinated approach, perhaps with a yearly theme with an inspiring guest speaker and follow up actions for the parish and wider community.
- Support and participate in local Vinnies Conferences.
- Help to strengthen ties with our sister schools in the Philippines by becoming involved in related programs.
- Help to develop a more coordinated approach around refugee engagement.
- Work with others to list and share the stories of our relationships with local organisations, such as Project Kenya, Kadasig, SVdP. Make these stories available to the rest of the community, perhaps in the gathering spaces, or through regular reflections in the parish newsletter.
- Organise a structured listening activity as a way of engaging with the marginalised, disengaged or wounded members of the community.

Social justice



5: Safeguarding

God has so arranged the body [... that] if one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together with it. (1Cor 12:24-26)

Risen Christ Parish has a strong commitment to safeguarding children, young people and the vulnerable. This commitment is informed by the 2013 Report of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. Sadly, the community of Our Lady Help of Christians has had a particularly challenging history in this regard, so we must acknowledge the past and create opportunities to remember, grieve, and heal. The safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults must be considered in every aspect of the life of Risen Christ Parish and across all five of the key focus areas in this Pastoral Plan.

We invite you to reflect on this description and consider if you feel a calling towards supporting safeguarding practices at Risen Christ Parish.



Questions for reflection:

- How might I educate myself about archdiocesan and parish safeguarding requirements?
- How might I support others to educate themselves?
- What further work do we need to put in place to continue the safeguarding journey?
- How might we ensure that the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults is front of mind in parish life and parish activities?
- How might we respect and support safeguarding as a whole parish?
- What skills and interests do I have that I might use to support the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults in the Risen Christ Parish community?

Examples to inspire:

- Familiarise yourself with the Archdiocesan and parish safeguarding policies and the Victorian Safeguarding Standards.
- Help to support others to become familiar with safeguarding requirements in our community.
- Work with the Safeguarding Officer to ensure that the Risen Christ Parish community and its leaders are familiar with Archdiocesan and Parish safeguarding policies and meet mandatory training requirements.
- Ensure best practice safeguarding is included in all ministry formation and training, and all activities conducted at, through, and by Risen Christ Parish.

Safeguarding



An invitation

*Christ has no body but yours, no hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes with which he looks with compassion on this world. Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good. Yours are the hands with which he blesses all the world. Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes, you are his body.*⁶

A successful Pastoral Plan involves the commitment of the entire community. This Pastoral Plan is an invitation to you. How might you commit and contribute to the spiritual, communal and pastoral life of the parish? What gifts might you use to support us to build a sustainable, welcoming and future-oriented parish? At Risen Christ Parish, we recognise that the church—as the people of God—are one Body of Christ, called to make Christ present in ministry, service and community. We invite you to discern and pray, and consider where the Holy Spirit is leading you at this time.

When you are ready, please get in touch with a member of the Pastoral Leadership Team to talk about how you might like to be involved or email your interest to the parish at RisenChrist.Parish@cam.org.au.

⁶ Attributed to Teresa of Avila.

Aspirational ministries

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| After Mass Hospitality (Montmorency) | Faith Development Group |
| Active engagement with parish schools | Bereavement Services |
| Combined Music Ministry/Choir | Funeral Ministry/Hospitality |
| Liturgy Committee | RCIC |
| Sacristan | Social Activities Committee |
| Children’s Liturgy | Baptism Support Group |
| Youth Ministry | Social Justice Committee |

Current ministries (current June 2025)

Pillar	Ministry	Contact
Hospitality	Communion at home	Trish Taylor/Patsy Skipper
	Transport of the elderly/infirm to Mass	Patsy Skipper
	Sunday hospitality (Eltham)	Kathleen Nolan
	Gardening	David Warrillow/ Frank Casonato/ Phil & Kathy Maynes/Vali Hall
	Maintenance	Kevin Hannon/Greg Scully
	Parish library	Trish Taylor
Prayer and Worship	Parish bulletin	Kate Kogler (Parish)
	RCIA	Michael Sierakowski
	Liturgy of the Word with Communion	Trish Taylor/Patsy Skipper
	Music Ministry	Chris Gaffney/Kathleen Nolan/ Patsy Skipper
	PowerPoint preparation for Sunday Mass	Kate Kogler (Parish)
	Sunday Mass Ministries:	Kathleen Nolan
	Welcomers, Commentators, Readers,	Patsy Skipper
	Eucharistic Ministers, Church and Altar	Gerard Wood
	Preparation (pre-Sunday), Sacristan	Parishioners
	Counters	Greg Scully
	Linen/Candles	Judy Liss
	Church cleaning	Geoff & Jan-Marie Haines/Gerard Wood
	Meditation Group	John Ramsdale
	Funerals	Michael Sierakowski
	Small Church Communities	Patsy Skipper
	Children’s Liturgy	Fez Cseh
	Rosary (May & Oct)	Kathleen Nolan/Frida Zerjal
	Piety store	Vincent McHugh/Frida Zerjal
Family	Passionist Family Groups	Francis Sullivan
Social Justice	Refugee assistance	Marlis Dopheide/Miranda Armstrong
	St Vincent de Paul (non parish)	Peter Rigg/John Ramsdale
	Kadasig (non parish)	Glenys Gayfer
	Project Kenya (non parish)	John McKenna
	Parkview (Eltham) Retirement Village	Peter Rigg
	ASRC Food Collection	Rosemary & Darrell Bowyer
	Days for Girls	Judi Gayfer/Neroli Marke-Hutton
	Prayer Shawl Ministry	Elisabeth Edwards
Safe- guarding	Safeguarding – communication, education, compliance, monitoring	Peter Williams
	Finance	Peter Rigg

The Risen Christ Parish acknowledges the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation who are the traditional custodians of the land we gather on and pay our respect to their elders past and present.



This Parish Pastoral Plan was published in 2025.

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Pastoral Plan image by Carina Love. Cover photo by Philip Mallis.
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