

PRAYER FOCUS GROUP

Members: Peter Bengé (Convenor), Helen Bengé, Liz Friend, Dulce Johnston, Ann Quartley, John Warren.

Since 24 September the Prayer Group has been meeting every Saturday at 8.30am for an hour. We agreed that the specific contents of our prayers and who prayed them would be confidential, so that people could pray freely. Our hope and desire has been that our prayers would be more and more directed by the Holy Spirit as time goes on.

For several weeks we used the outline for prayer of adoration, confession, thanksgiving and supplication (ACTS). We have been aware of how easy it is for people to push for what they want, when important issues are up for decision. An aspect of the confession section of our meetings has been to confess our own tendency to want what we want and to contend for it. We have asked for openness to what God wants instead.

We have been praying with a lot of hope for the process we are in. We are confident that God is faithful and that God can bring good to our faith community and the wider community through this process.

We have a strong sense that the main issue in changing to a new service is not finding the perfect new service, because perfection is not a realistic goal. We believe that the most important aspect of the change is that it frees us up to try new things and to focus much more on our collective journey as a family in discipleship and mission. It is a symbol of the newness and change that we are being called to in this stage of our parish's life. We are already sensing that many people have energy for this new stage of the journey together, which has added excitement and expectation to our prayers.

In the initial meetings our prayers of supplication (intercession) were particularly for those who are leading this change, the members of the focus groups and those who are finding the prospect of change difficult. More recently we have also been praying for new people to come into the parish through the new service, that they would be truly included in the parish and they would be enabled to enter into roles of Christian service and leadership both in the parish and in the wider community.