



# St Matthew's Georgetown

Sunday 2 May 2021

Dear Parishioners,

As you may know, at its January meeting our Parish Council considered the major impact the pandemic had had on our parish finances, and decided to take serious proactive action. Bishop Peter did not agree with the course of action taken, and instead referred the matter of the future of St Matthew's Georgetown to Diocesan Council. He foreshadowed that Diocesan Council was likely to decide to dissolve the Parish of Georgetown. The parish was invited to make submissions, and Parish Council and at least two parishioners took this opportunity.

Diocesan Council considered the future of our parish at its meeting on Thursday evening (29 April). As expected, the decision was made to close the Parish of Georgetown. Diocesan Council gave Bishop Peter discretion about the timing of the closure, but in light of our desire not to "drag out" the process he has written to us with the following proposal:

**"It is my proposal that the church be closed on 29 May 2021 and that the parish be formally dissolved on 30 June 2021.**

**"It would be my intention to come to a service on [Saturday] 29 May to formally close the parish. My encouragement would be that parishioners are able to attend a new parish from the next day."**

Members of Parish Council will meet with the Bishop on Thursday (6 May), and then separately in the evening to prepare for the closure and deconsecration of the church. After the deconsecration on Saturday 29 May, the month of June will be spent tidying up the administrative matters – hall hire arrangements, sorting out archives, transferring financial management and the like.

t. (02) 4968 4632  
e. [office@gchurch.org.au](mailto:office@gchurch.org.au)  
w. [www.gchurch.org.au](http://www.gchurch.org.au)

7 Wentworth Street  
Georgetown NSW 2298

Our final Sunday service at St Matthew's will be on Pentecost Sunday – 23 May. We will be arranging a celebratory lunch after that service. Parish Council will have to sort out details of how we do this in a Covid safe manner, but please invite any friends of the parish to join us for that service and the lunch.

After the deconsecration service on Saturday 29 May, Revd Barbara and I will spend the following Sundays leading groups of parishioners in attending Sunday services at nearby Anglican churches, including St Andrew's Mayfield, and St John the Baptist Lambton. I will be employed in the parish until it is formally dissolved at the end of June, so I will still be available for pastoral care until I go on holiday in mid-June. Bishop Peter has made arrangements for me after 30 June, but I'm not at liberty to disclose these at the moment.

I know that for some of us this letter will come as a relief – the last two months of uncertainty have not been easy. But with this relief will be deep sadness. The church we have faithfully attended over many years is closing. While we – and not the building – are “the church”, it is absolutely true that this building has shaped and nurtured our worship and faith over the years. As well as that, the building itself is tangible evidence of our commitment – we have offered ourselves and our possessions to God, and this building represents our offering.

At this time we should consider St Matthew – the Apostle and Evangelist our church is named after. Matthew was called to abandon a comfortable and lucrative life as a tax collector, and to follow Jesus. We don't know much about Matthew's life after Jesus called him, or how or where he was martyred, but the gospel he wrote has helped millions of people encounter the Jesus who called him.

Matthew's martyrdom was certainly a sad occasion. And as we leave St Matthew's church for the last time later this month, many of us will shed a tear. But let's do our best to follow Matthew's example – let's strive to point others to the Jesus who called each of us.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B Amner', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

The Revd Bryce Amner  
Priest in Charge  
St Matthew's Georgetown