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# Annual Report

A report on all the ways  
God has been at work  
in our church in 2017.

VINE CHURCH

## OUR VISION

We dream of seeing thousands of Christians gathering in the inner city that are passionately devoted to sharing their faith, serving others with joy, and growing in the knowledge and love of Jesus.

## OUR PURPOSES

**Magnification:** we exist to live in awe, dependence, and holiness as we magnify the greatness of Jesus Christ.

**Maturity:** we exist to grow to become fully mature disciples of Jesus by bringing every part of our life under His word.

**Ministry:** we exist to serve others with a glad and joyful heart because our God gladly served us.

**Mission:** we exist to do something about the millions of people in our city who don't know Jesus by urgently speaking the gospel to our friends and family.

**Membership:** we exist to join God's family, gather with His people and care deeply for each other.

## OUR MISSION

Our mission is to connect 1,000 people to the life, love and freedom Jesus offers.

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# Letter from the Lead Pastor

Dear friends,

I'm thrilled to report on the ways we've seen God at work among us over the past year. It really is a privilege leading a community so passionate about connecting people to the life, love and freedom Jesus offers. It's a thrilling time to be alive and this is a great family to be a part of. I've seen people love one another deeply and grow so much. I've seen a real hunger to know God better and bear up under difficulty. I've seen people take risks and start new ministries. And I've seen people be very generous with their time and money. I give thanks for you all!

When Vine Church and St Michael's merged in 2015, Vine Church was like a family of fast growing teenage kids. We were passionate, flexible, agile, open, and we loved to party. St Michael's, on the other hand, was like a newly retired couple: not sure what the future holds, but open to what God has in store. Over the past three years we have successfully integrated these churches. This was a massive enterprise and not without it's challenges, but we ought to thank God for what he has done.

## Where are we now?

Well, the "adolescent" Vine Church has grown up and is now a married home-owner and needs to juggle the responsibilities of adulthood. The "newly retired" St Michael's has had kids move back home and has had to cope with all the change and noise this brings. (I hope you're following my metaphor.)

In many ways, 2017 was a year of growing up and checking our foundations, both spiritually and operationally. We saw a shift in the pendulum slightly away from outreach and more toward growing our members. We also sought to build a stronger, more efficient and organised operational team (with parish council, wardens and administration).

One of the advantages of maturing is that you are wiser, stronger, more responsible, and resilient in the face of trial. We've seen that happen at church this year in a number of ways.

But one of the dangers of maturing is that you can become entrenched, tired, and inflexible. You start doing things the way you've always done them, and lose the inspiration and creativity of youth. In some ways we also saw this happen in 2017. We've felt the evangelistic temperature cool and there have been pockets of apathy toward our vision to connect people to Jesus.

Here is the challenge: how do we mature as a church without losing our youthful passion?

## What are our priorities in 2018?

As the leadership team have thought through this challenge, three priorities have emerged for 2018:

### **1. Prepare for developing our church buildings**

Generations ago, Christians built churches in every suburb of Australia to provide places for people to gather to hear the Bible taught and build Christian community. For almost 100 years no significant work has been done on our buildings, and it's time we did something about that. In 2018 our priority is to submit a design for the development of our site. We want to create an inviting and flexible place where people can connect with Jesus and each other. We will be asking you to give us your ideas for what our church should be and to invest financially in the project. We're no longer teenagers living at home. We're a family that needs to create more space as we grow. You can read more about this on page 36.

## 2. Everyone serving joyfully in a team

As we grow up, we want everyone serving in a ministry team that is fun to be part of. This could be in welcoming, foodies, Bread of Life, Vine Kids, administration, music, design, events or something else. As we grow, we need to share the responsibility for the ministry of our church. That's what it is to grow up: it means taking responsibility for your life and for those in your sphere of care. We have a great desire that every one of us would be part of a ministry team this year. We don't want to simply fill rosters, where you get a reminder which says you have a duty to show up and do your task. We want you part of a team that has purpose and a vision, where the people involved have fun serving together.

## 3. Lift the evangelistic temperature of our church

When Vine Church started, the temperature was high. We were determined to do anything it took to reach our friends, family and neighbours with the love of Jesus. Recently our temperature has cooled, as you can see by the statistics of those going through Christianity Explored (see page 17). In 2018, we're planning a number of opportunities for you to engage in reaching out to our city.

- We're starting the year with a teaching series called **Introducing Jesus** – a great way to equip you to know the gospel and to invite your friends to hear the gospel.
- We are running the **Mardi Gras outreach**, not to protest or promote the event but to proclaim Jesus as the only lasting source of life, love and freedom.
- After Mardi Gras we're launching the **My Problem with Christianity** sermon series and **Wimblepong** event which is designed to build connections between our church and our community.
- Finally, we're planning a large **Open Forum** in a local theatre with a gifted guest speaker which will also be accessible to invite friends to.

But its not just the programs we run that will raise the temperature. We're hoping you pick up a 311 prayer card from the bookstall and pray for three friends once a week for one year, and that you love them and lead them in a personal way to Jesus. To help you do this, we're running evangelism training at our Summer Sessions in January, and we've got guest speaker Richard Borgonan in February speaking on how to read the Bible one to one with a friend.

## What did we learn from the Bible in 2017?

We **began the year** — as we always do — by looking at the life and teaching of Jesus. This year, we studied Jesus' last night with his disciples in **John 13-17** where he prepares them (and us) for the work of building the church.

In **term 2** we looked at the **slogans of the protestant reformation** which get us to the heart of Christianity. We were reminded to be thankful that our salvation comes by grace alone through the work of Christ alone, which we get, not by being good or religious, but by faith alone (simple trust in Jesus).

As **winter** set in, things heated up for our series on the erotic love poetry of the **Song of Songs**. Many of us were surprised at how relevant, practical and hopeful God's word is as it addresses our ache for intimacy. We had fun hearing how this song is alike (and not so alike) the love songs of Beyonce, Marvin Gaye, John Mayer, Bruno Mars, Etta James, Ed Sheeran, Johnny Cash, Taylor Swift, Mumford and Sons, John Denver and more.

In **term 3**, we spent time in another Old Testament book, Judges. We called this series **God's Cowboys** because it reads like a spaghetti western: there's no sheriff in town and the townsfolk have elected a villain. But as the tumbleweeds roll on down the street, God's cowboys stroll in for a showdown and ransom His people held captive. We laughed at how stupid we are when we wander away from God and were reminded how much we need godly leaders.

In **term 4**, we launched our vision series called **Worship in Every Direction**. We saw how worship is about ascribing worth to God which we do by looking up (Magnification), digging deep (Maturity), reaching out (Mission), giving back (Ministry), and drawing together (Membership).

Finally, in the lead up to **Christmas**, we finished the year looking at the kitschy Christmas words which actually have a deep relevance: **Peace, joy and all that stuff**.

What a year we've had as our preachers and community group leaders have brought God's word to bear on our lives! I pray you've been challenged and encouraged, strengthened and trained up to build your life and our church on the foundation of Christ. I am so thankful that you come to church so hungry to listen to the word, ready to test and approve all that's good in it. Don't forget you can listen to any of our sermon on our website.

## What are we learning from the Bible in 2018?

We are starting 2018 with a series called **Introducing Jesus** looking at his character, claims, verdict, death, resurrection and what it means to witness to him. Then in conjunction with the Mardi Gras outreach, we're doing a series called **My Problem with Christianity**, in which we are addressing the top 4 problems people have with Christianity (from a survey we did in December and January).

In **term 2**, we're doing a five-week series on **prayer**. It's an area we believe we can grow in — that God wants us to express our dependence on him as we live our lives and reach our city. Also in term 2, we're doing a five-week series in **Romans 5-8**. Here we will learn about how to face temptation, what to do when struggling with sin, and where to find power to live a holy life.

In **term 3**, we're going back into the Old Testament to look at the rise of King David in **1 Samuel**. It's an amazing story which speaks to many of the challenges we face in our world today.

Finally, in **term 4**, we will be looking at another perspective on the **vision** of our church.

It's going to be a fantastic year hearing God speak and having him challenge and invite us to get on board with the vision to connect people to Jesus and see them grow to become more like him.

## Stories of God at work

Throughout the year we saw a large number of people explore the life, love and freedom Jesus offers at Christianity Explored and through our Sunday gatherings. We've also seen significant steps of growth in the lives of many people. Almost every week I hear a story of how God has been at work. For some this involves great joy and answer to prayers. For others it involves comfort and assurance in the midst of great pain and sorrow.

This is what this report is about. It's an account of all the ways God has been at work in the life of his church and his people in 2017. Enjoy it! Give thanks for his work. And pray urgently that God might do more in us, among us and through us.

I'd love to leave you with this encouragement from Bec Giam, the first visitor who walked in to Vine Church when it started back in 2011. Bec has been fighting cancer for the last 7 years and in 2017 she wrote to me saying:

[Jesus] has an incredible plan for my life... But this plan may not be one where there's success and prosperity and happiness. It might instead be filled with grief and struggle and pain. I might beat the odds... Or, my health might rapidly go south and I might die soon. And yet, both plans are God's plan and both are incredible if they lead to us loving and putting our faith in Jesus resulting in our salvation. Miracles can happen. God could heal me. However, whether God heals me or not, the miracle has already happened. The miracle is that I have a relationship with God and get to enjoy that relationship in heaven forever. That's the really miraculous thing. And so yes, it would be amazing if God healed me but an amazing thing has already happened when God saved me.

I think Bec shows a remarkable combination of both passion for God and deep maturity. I think that shows us what we're praying for in 2018. Let's reclaim the passion of our earlier days and keep growing deeper in wisdom as we mature as a church. Let's spend 2018 trusting God with our future, and giving thanks for the amazing things he has done and is doing in our city by saving people.

For Jesus' fame,

Toby Neal

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Toby Neal". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of "Toby" and "Neal" being capitalized and prominent.

# Leadership Team

*Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you. (Hebrews 13:17)*

We are thankful for a gifted and dedicated staff team in 2017.

## 2017 Staff Team



**Toby Neal**  
*Lead Pastor*



**Andrew Bryan**  
*Maturity Pastor*



**Nate Singh**  
*Director of Gatherings*



**Esther Neate**  
*Female City Pastor*



**Meg Chatterton**  
*Church Administrator*



**Becky Cox**  
*Ministry Intern (MTS)*



**Seb Lane**  
*Student Minister*



**Brian Leung**  
*Student Minister*



**Steph Leung**  
*Student Minister*



**Simeon Cumberland**  
*Student Minister*

## Parish Council



**Justin Yoon**



**Tom Schell**



**Pei Li Guan**



**Mario Chan**  
*Treasurer*

## Wardens



**Alexis Linton**



**Pauline Oh**



**Noel Nallaiah**

# Maturity

“We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God” (Colossians 1:9-10 )

## What are we praying for?

A dynamic community of mature disciples who want to grow in Jesus by bringing every part of their life under his word.

## What did we do in 2017?

2017 was a year of change. Esther Neate worked diligently in the first half of the year to encourage and strengthen the women at church as well as our network of Community Group leaders. She finished halfway through the year to have a baby (Walton). Andy continued to work in developing our Community Group leaders, our leadership pipeline, and our series material. In the last year, the maturity team have started and developed:

- **Leadership Pipeline** – a proactive and systematic approach to the identification, development, deployment and ongoing training of leaders at church.
- **Regular Community Group Leaders’ Huddles** – termly meetings where the Community Group leaders meet for training and encouragement with input from experts or trained professionals in important areas related to leading groups (e.g. group dynamics training).
- **Integrated Vision Series** – a devotional guide combining Bible readings and helpful questions to prompt deep engagement with each of our purpose areas and to aid each of us in taking the next step following Jesus.
- **Vine Bible Reading Plan** – printed booklets of daily Bible readings giving our members an opportunity to dig into the Bible at home in a regular and disciplined manner.
- **Leader’s Launch** – A half day training day at the beginning of the year to help our leaders to get their groups up and running and excited to grow.

**Community Groups** remain the fundamental element in growing mature disciples of Christ. Last year we trained seven leaders through **Leaders in Training** course and eight through our **Foundations** course.

**Sunday preaching** is where we all sit under God’s word to hear it proclaimed and to respond in worship. Last year we heard God speak in the Old Testament, New Testament, and in a few topical series. This worked well to help each of us engage with the whole story of the Bible and God’s plan in salvation and church history.

- **Term 1** we continued to work through the Gospel of John. We listened in as Jesus prepared his disciples to grow the church after his death, resurrection and ascension. John 13-17 challenged us to be faithful in a hostile world and be united to Christ by the power of his Spirit.
- **Term 2** we dived into two challenging series. Our first was a look at the historical doctrines that came out of the Reformation 500 years ago. The doctrines set our gaze on the essentials of our faith. Following that we dug into the Song of Songs to see what God has to say about sex, dating and relationships.
- **Term 3** saw us work through the gruesome book of Judges to see that God saves his people. Following that we examined Titus to see what makes and keeps us as a healthy church.



37

Women at  
Girls' Getaway

Girls' Getaway

- **Term 4** we looked at who we are as the Church of Christ through our vision series. We were challenged to make our lives an act of worship by worshipping God in every direction.
- Finally, in December, we cut through the kitsch of **Christmas** to see the serious and amazing truth of Christ's coming into the world and how that has brought real peace and joy.

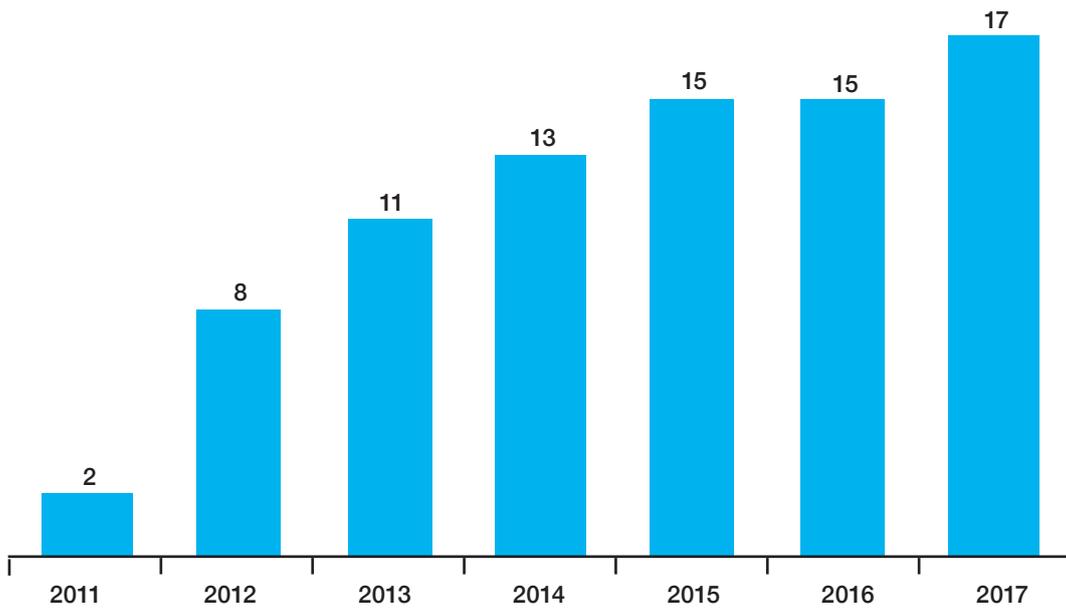
### Where are we going in 2018 and beyond?

- Training and developing more Community Group leaders to plant more groups in our city.
- Providing multiple opportunities for our members to develop theologically through short courses and hot topics nights.
- Building a culture of personal Bible reading as well as meeting 121 to read and pray.
- Developing a strong culture of personal spiritual growth through the reading of excellent (and readily available) Christian resources.
- Mobilising our groups to be places where we equip and develop the next generation of leaders to point people to Jesus.

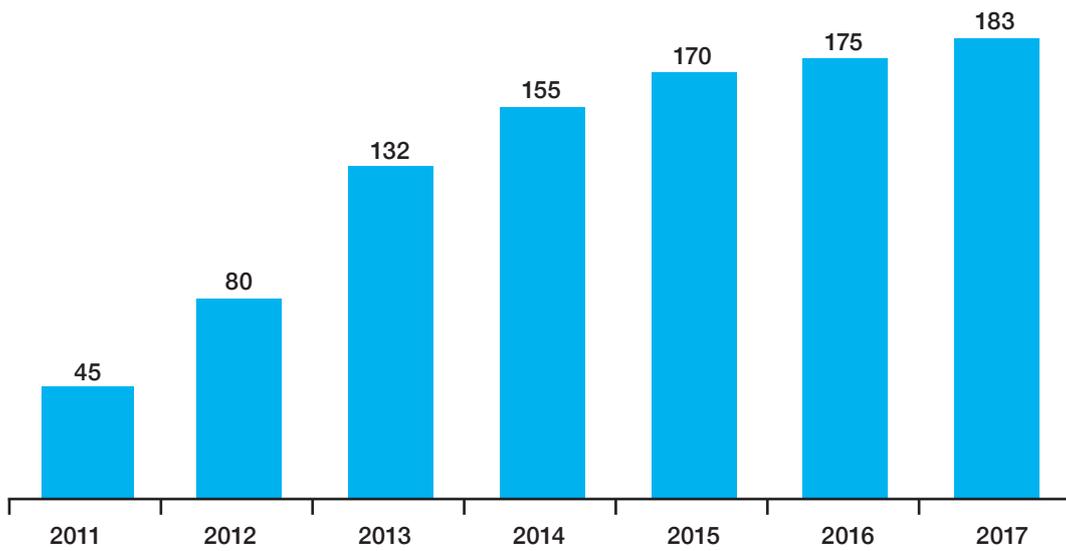
## Community Group Locations



## Community Groups



## People in Community Groups



## Community Group Leaders



# Mission

*All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.* (Matthew 28:18–20)

## What are we praying for?

- An army of Christians urgently sharing the good news of Jesus in our world.
- A flood of people going from death to life as they become disciples of Jesus.

## What did we do in 2017?

In many ways 2017 was a period of transition as we saw the departure of our full-time Mission (and Membership) Pastor Joel Hollier, with Student Minister Simeon Cumberland taking over the Mission area in a training capacity.

Despite the transitional nature of our mission strategy, we were able to establish some great community connections and witness God at work as a number of people became Christians.

- At the **Mardi Gras outreach** we saw around 2,000 people enter our property and hundreds of gospel conversations were started over a free BBQ, pancakes and chai.
- **Made With Love** continued to build connections with women (and men) in our community who society has often overlooked.
- **Bread of Life** continued the great work of offering hospitality, friendship and God's word to those on the fringes of society.
- On top of this, hundreds of gospel opportunities took place every day as we took Jesus into our workplaces, families and social circles.

In 2017 we saw 36 people gather over two nights in local pubs for our Open Forums in which we discussed a range of topics, including:

- How can a loving God allow suffering?
- Does God even exist?

In 2017 we saw another 12 people explore who Jesus is and what it means to follow him at **Christianity Explored**.

**Life Explored** was run twice and aimed at helping people after Christianity Explored understand what it means to follow Jesus.

Over the year we ran a three-week **Upskilled** training course designed to equip people for how to share their faith.

# 2,184

Cupcakes baked for  
women in local brothels

# 60

Kids taught the Bible  
each week through  
Scripture in Schools

Look!  
A  
BBQ

Our **Global Missions Team** ran our first ever Mission Month encouraging us all to partner with those taking the gospel to the world. We raised the following amounts for our partners:

<b>Emily</b> Centre for girls leaving the sex industry in Africa	\$8,456
<b>Josh &amp; Susannah Apieczonek</b> University ministry in France	\$5,554
<b>Geneva Push</b> Church planting around Australia	\$295
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$14,305</b>

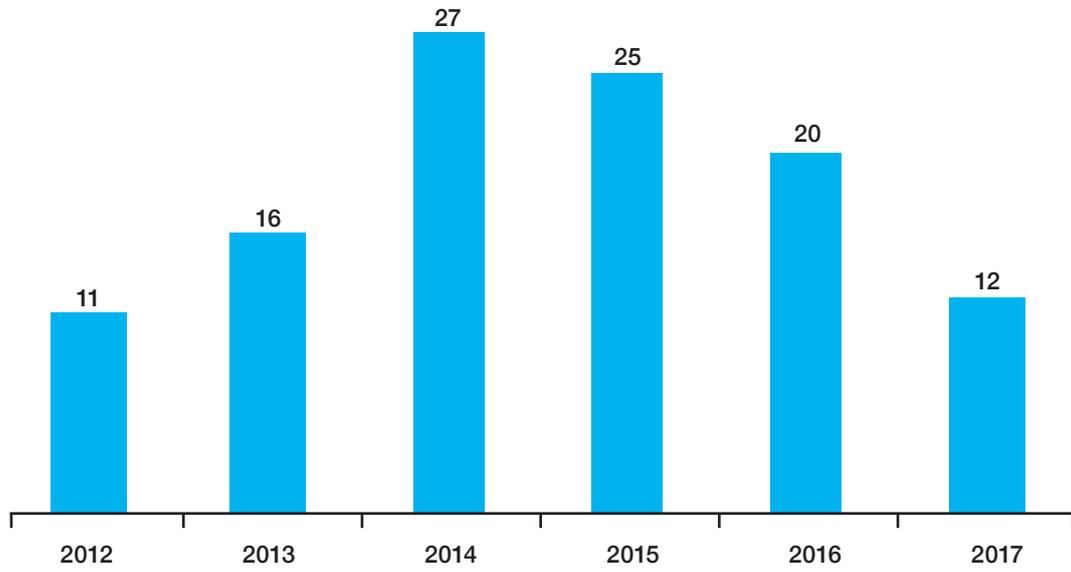
**Where are we going in 2018 and beyond?**

- We want to see our church enthused and engaged in mission on three fronts: Personal, Corporate and Global.
- We want to build a more integrated yearly strategy for evangelistic sermon series and events.
- We want to encourage each member to use a 311 card to pray for three friends once a week for one year that God might open their eyes to see who Jesus is.

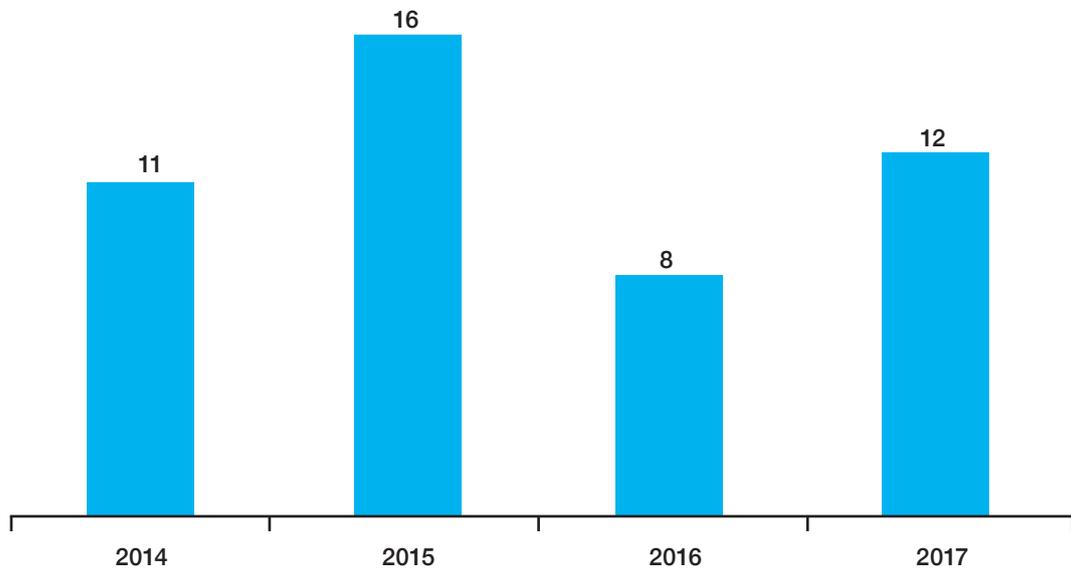


Mardi Gras outreach

## Christianity Explored



## Life Explored



# Magnification

## What are we praying for?

A passionate community of disciples who magnify the greatness of God in awe, dependence and holiness in every aspect of their lives.

## What did we do in 2017?

In 2017, we brought on **Nate Singh** as our Director of Sunday Gatherings. Nate successfully mobilized the music and production teams which have enhanced the quality of music and singing in our gatherings. Nate's role encompasses more than just music. He takes a holistic approach to thinking about how we can create more engaging, joyful and welcoming Sunday gatherings. The Sunday upfront teams have grown into more purpose-driven teams rather than task-focused rosters, resulting in joyful service week in and week out.

Over the year, we saw 25 new members join the **Magnification team** including new musicians, production volunteers, Bible readers and meeting leaders.

Over the year, we gathered for four Prayer & Praise nights. We saw many people attend these nights even as we experimented by changing the day of the week and the venue. Additionally, the prayer team gathered each week on Sundays to bring our church to God in prayer, and provided a safe space for people to pray after the 5pm service.

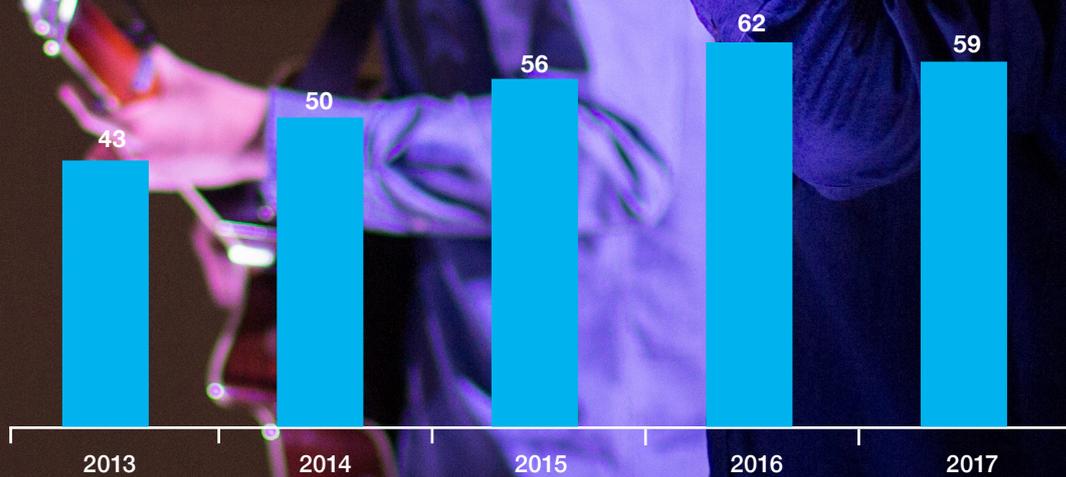
The real fruit of Magnification happens on Monday mornings when people go to work and live a life that shows the world that God is more important than their careers, relationships, health and finances. We've seen people worship God by being generous, avoiding ungodly relationships, speaking the truth in love, persevering in trial, praying, recognizing God's gifts in small things, and listening to his word expectantly, and much, much more.

## Where are we going in 2018 and beyond?

- In 2018, we will continue to improve the quality of our Sunday services to create a more consistent joyful feel as people gather for church. We will intentionally gather our Sunday teams quarterly to refresh and excite team members. This will result in a greater sense of energy and ownership of the purpose of why we are serving.
- We are continuing to build a stronger culture of prayer at church. We are launching the prayer team in our morning service in February. We are also working on ways to get resources to help you in your individual prayer life (e.g. prayer calendar, vision booklets with prayer points, sermon series on prayer this year).

*Praise the LORD.  
Praise God in his sanctuary;  
praise him in his mighty heavens.  
Praise him for his acts of power;  
praise him for his surpassing greatness.  
Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet,  
praise him with the harp and lyre,  
praise him with timbrel and dancing,  
praise him with the strings and pipe,  
praise him with the clash of cymbals,  
praise him with resounding cymbals.  
Let everything that has breath praise the LORD.  
Praise the LORD  
(Psalm 150)*

## Prayer & Praise Night Average Attendance



# Ministry

*And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. (Colossians 3:17)*

## What are we praying for?

A community of disciples who joyfully serve God and others by giving their time, talents and treasures.

## What did we do in 2017?

In 2017 we created a **Ministry Team** to improve our process of stepping people into ministry. Through the use of surveys and conversations, the Ministry Team seek to place people in teams where they can use their gifts and abilities to reach our city.

In 2017 we trained and inspired our leaders in a variety of ways, with highlights being the **Leaders Launch** (January) and the **Leaders Rally** (July).

The Ministry Fair ran in its second year, raising the profile of the number of opportunities for people to serve at church. We saw 75 people show interest in joining a team on the day. Overall, in 2017 we saw 39 people start serving who had never served before.

We continue to train the next generation of leaders.

- **Becky Cox** came on as a ministry intern (MTS) under Andy Bryan. During this time she has lead the Vine Kids team, she has led the Ministry Team (with Toby Neal), and organised the Girls' Getaway team. She has encouraged a couple of women throughout the year by committing to regular one on ones. She has also done part time study through the Timothy Partnership.
- We also trained four passionate **Student Ministers** (Seb Lane, Brian Leung, Steph Leung and Simeon Cumberland) who combined their training at Bible college with practical ministry experience at our church.

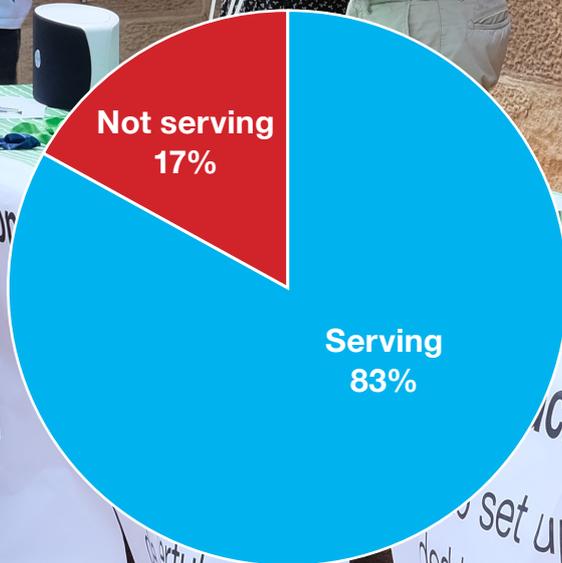
## Where are we going in 2018 and beyond?

- As we grow, we are still working to build a more organized system of finding and placing volunteers in ministries they can excel in. We think this will help people serve with joyful hearts as they build Jesus' kingdom.
- We're committed to raising up more and more leaders so that church is not run by the staff but by the entire body. This will require greater training and clear lines of delegation.
- We're committed to running teams not rosters; where people serve alongside others in fun teams not simply out of obligation to fill a roster. This year our goal is that everyone serving would be part of a team that has fun making an impact on our world for Jesus.

# 152

People serving  
at church

Proportion of members  
serving at church



# Membership

*In Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. . . [Therefore] love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. (Romans 12:5, 9-13)*

## What are we praying for?

A united and growing community who are functioning as members of one body and warmly connecting and caring for each other as family.

## What did we do in 2017?

In 2017, we saw our Membership (and Mission) Pastor, Joel Hollier, move on from his position at church. Over the time Joel was with us, he ably connected and cared for many people. In his absence, we have sought to encourage the entire church to be more deliberate and intentional in building a community which is not so dependent on the pastors.

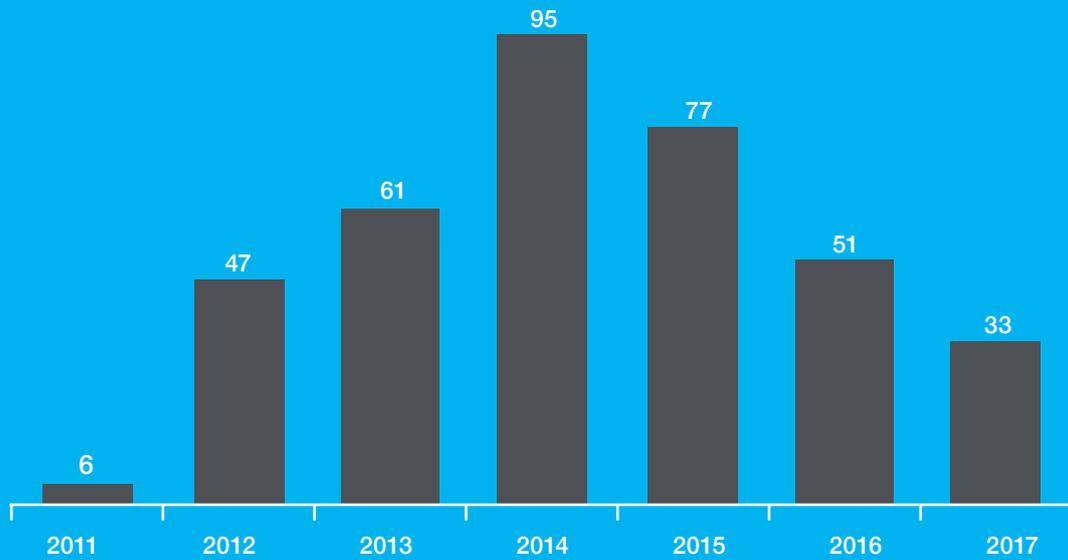
We sought to build community among our members throughout the year at the **Weekend Away**, **Man Camp**, and **Girls' Getaway**. Jarad Grice took on **Newish dinners** which are for people who are newish at church looking to connect with others. **Guess Who's Coming to Dinner** ran in its second year and was a great success in creating a culture of people opening their homes for ministry. We also activated more of the **church site** for welcoming and hospitality, with the back-yard full during morning tea (after the morning service) and the front-yard full and highly visible to the community for afternoon tea (before the evening service). We've become a permanent fixture at the Carrington Hotel on Sunday nights after church for fellowship and a meal. There has been an exciting growth of **diversity**, with people from many walks of life beginning to call Vine Church home.

Over 2017, we sought to **care** for people who are doing it tough through phone calls, prepared dinners, pastoral counselling, practical support and prayer. Many of us were supported through relationship difficulties, job frustrations and job losses, mental health concerns, marriage breakdowns, a variety of temptations, death of loved ones, difficulties in having babies, navigation of diverse sexualities and gender concerns, loneliness and severe health trials. Hundreds of gospel conversations have been had as members of our church have cared for each other and called us to rely on Christ.

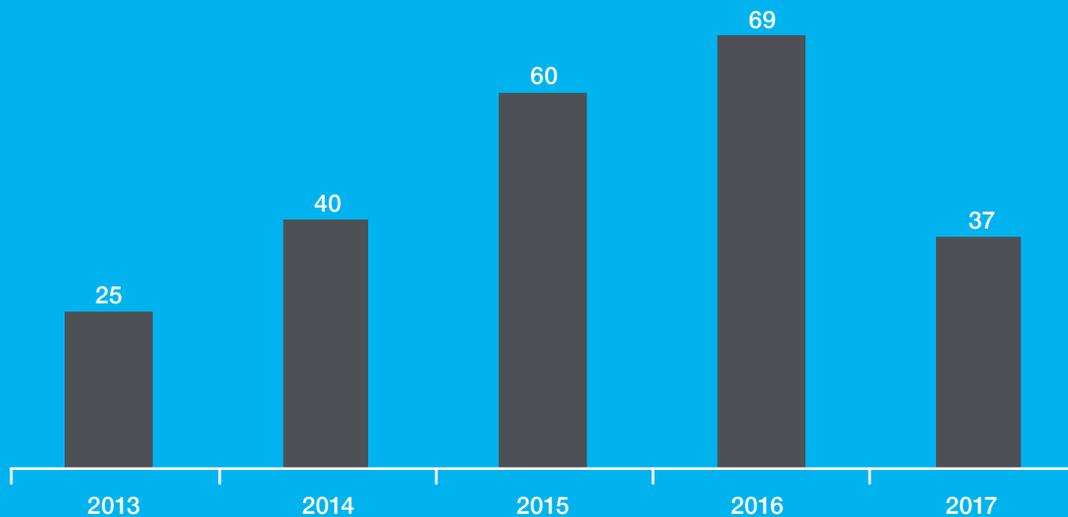
## Where are we going in 2018 and beyond?

- We need to emphasize growing smaller and bigger at the same time. As church grows, the importance of people being well connected in a Community Groups amplifies. We are challenging everyone to be in a group and to have a regular commitment to it and to church so that there are strong mini-communities in our church.
- We're seeking a venue for morning church people to go out afterwards for lunch and to build community.
- We are working to build better systems of welcoming and hospitality via the hosting and foodies teams at church, so that the experience of visitors is consistently warm, friendly and fun week to week.
- We are seeking to recruit lay leaders and pastoral staff to give greater shape and energy to this area of church life.

## Newcomers Dinner



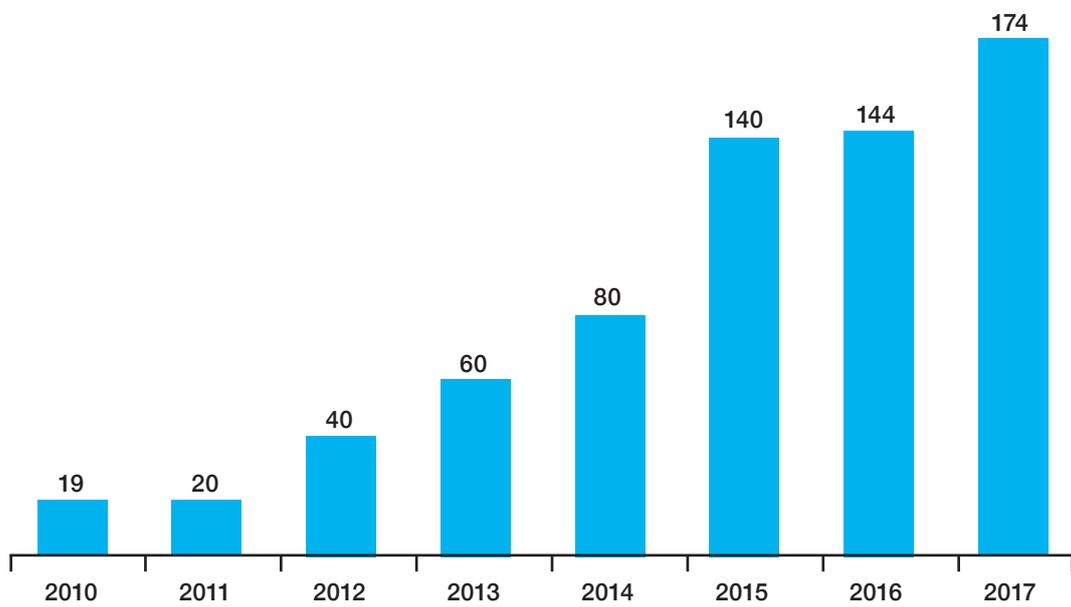
## New People joined Community Groups



## Community Group Attendance Rate



## People at Weekend Away





Christmas Party

# Vine Kids

*Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these. (Matthew 19:14)*

## What are we praying for?

Hundreds of kids to join a Christ-centred program where they have a stack-load of fun getting to know the God who made them and saved them.

## What did we do in 2017?

In 2017 we saw Vine Kids swell to **37 regular kids** on Sunday mornings. To cope with this growth we needed to divide the school kids into infants section (k-2) and primary section (3-6). This enabled us to tailor our lessons more effectively to the age group.

We utilised more **spaces** on site for kids ministry. The pre-schoolers moved to the upstairs hall and crèche reached capacity in its current room. We look forward to the property development so that we have more spaces which are better suited to these ministries.

Over the year we saw **3 new leaders** join our wonderful team of 18 leaders. This team was ably lead by Becky Cox and Brian Leung.

**Playtime** grew larger in 2017 under the leadership of Liz Neal and Esther Neate. It sees a number of non-church families come along every Tuesday for a time where kids play and their carers enjoy conversation together.

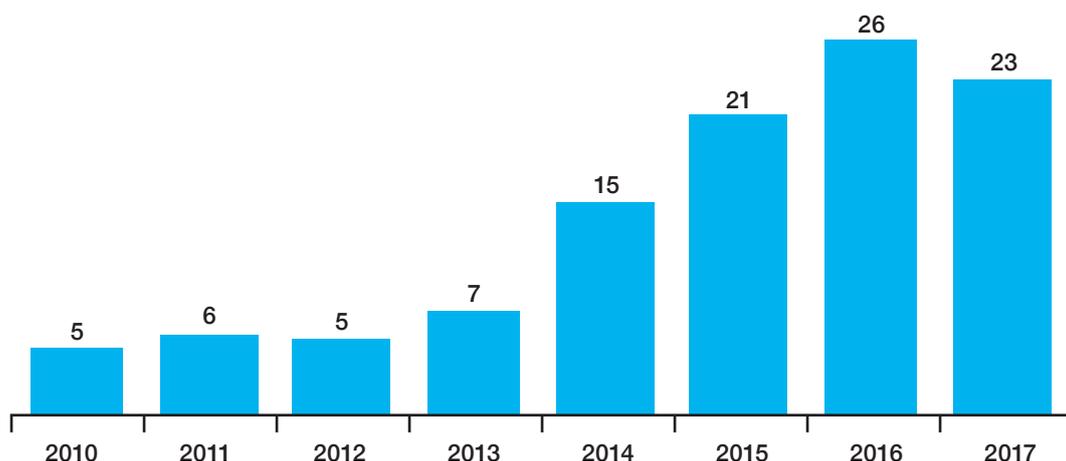
We taught **Special Religious Education** at two primary schools, and ran Easter and Christmas assemblies for more than 200 students.

## Where are we going in 2018 and beyond?

We are seeking to expand the number of kids and families in our church by:

- Recruiting a full-time families pastor.
- Starting a midweek youth group.
- Starting an annual camp for primary school kids.
- Starting regular kids spots in church on Sunday mornings.

## Average Weekly Attendance





# Sunday Gatherings

*Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.* (Hebrews 10:24–25)

Over 2017, a bunch of different people came together each week for two different gatherings at Vine Church.

## 10am

The 10am gathering built amazing momentum over the year and grew significantly for the second year in a row. Some of this growth was from people transitioning from our 5pm gathering, but we also saw many others join us for the first time. We continue to see this gathering broaden in its demographic with people from every generation represented. Not just families but also singles. Not just 20s and 30s but also 50s and 60s

## 5pm

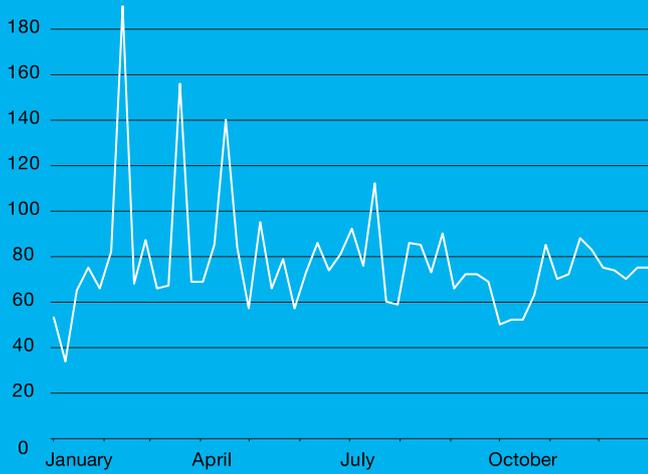
The 5pm gathering spent its first year in the church building after moving out of its home for many years at Crown Street Public School. We continue to see many young people come in and find genuine community here. The music is louder, the jeans skinnier, and each week we go down to the pub for a meal and drink with each other.

## Planting new gatherings

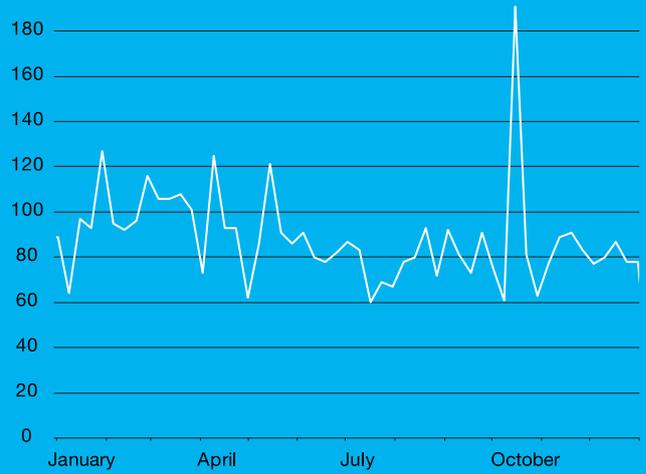
In 2017 we were not able to achieve our desire to plant a third gathering. In 2018 we are considering when and how we might start a new service to reach a different tribe and demographic than which our 10am and 5pm gatherings do.

# Weekly Attendance

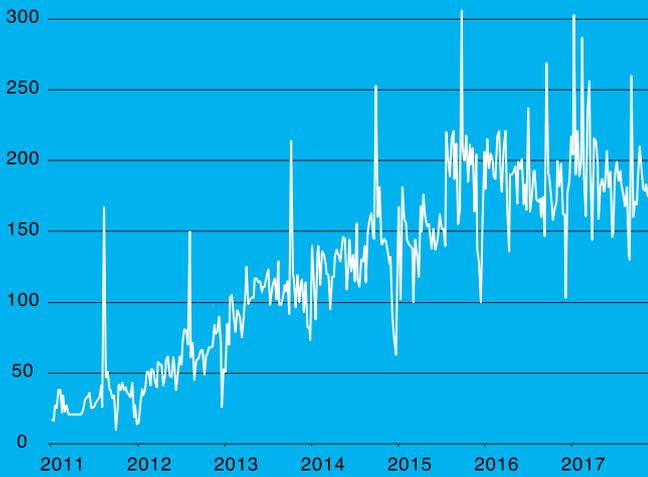
### 10am



### 4.30pm



### Historic Gathering Statistics



### Kids



# Property Development

Our church buildings are an incredible gift from a former generation. In them, people have been hearing the life-changing message of Jesus for over 160 years. However, as you probably notice, they are old. And while their age makes it obvious to our neighbours that we have a history, their condition does not demonstrate that we also have a future.

One of the things we have identified as a strategic priority is the need to develop and enhance our property to both preserve its past as well as make room for our future. We need facilities that are inviting and comfortable for those in our community to come and connect with Jesus and one another.

Over the course of 2017 the Parish Council and Wardens have laid the foundation for what is to be a very active and exciting few years ahead.

Details regarding the specific enhancements that we plan to make will come later this year, but below are our three core objectives:

- To provide some type of connection across all three buildings that makes the entrance to our church more approachable and fosters community gatherings before and after services and throughout the week.
- To make the church more flexible and functional for a variety of uses as we grow.
- To enhance the hall to make it a multi-purpose venue for large and small gatherings and of course, more bathrooms.

These buildings have an important legacy which is also recognised by both the Anglican Diocese and the City of Sydney. It's for this reason that there is a complex process which we must follow as we undertake this project.

In 2017 we retained a project management firm and various other consultants to advise us as we navigate the process of adhering to the many building codes and heritage constraints.

Also in 2017, we commissioned a heritage architect to produce a Conservation Management Plan, which is expected to be submitted for approval by the City of Sydney Heritage Council in early 2018.

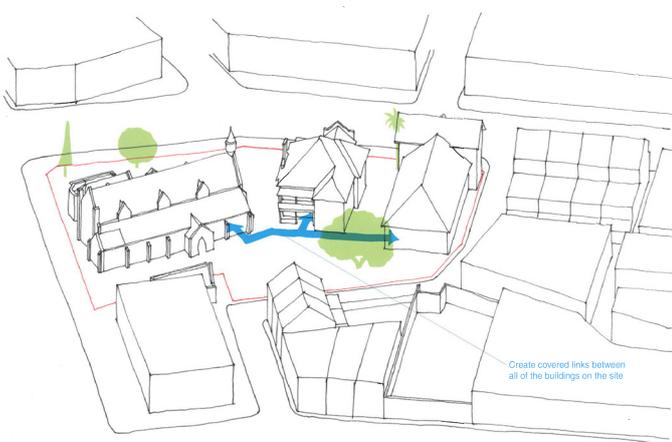
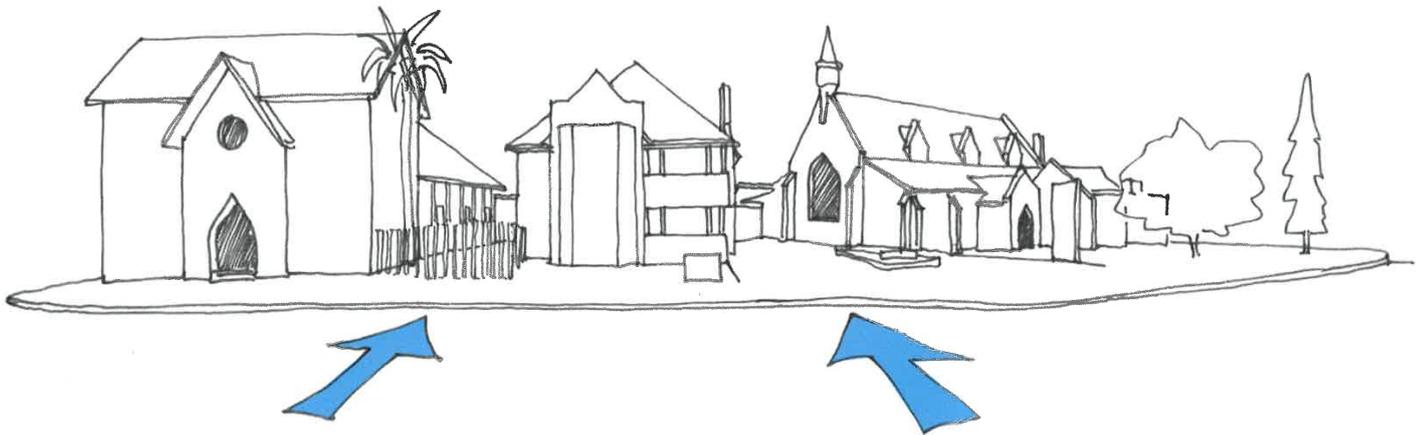
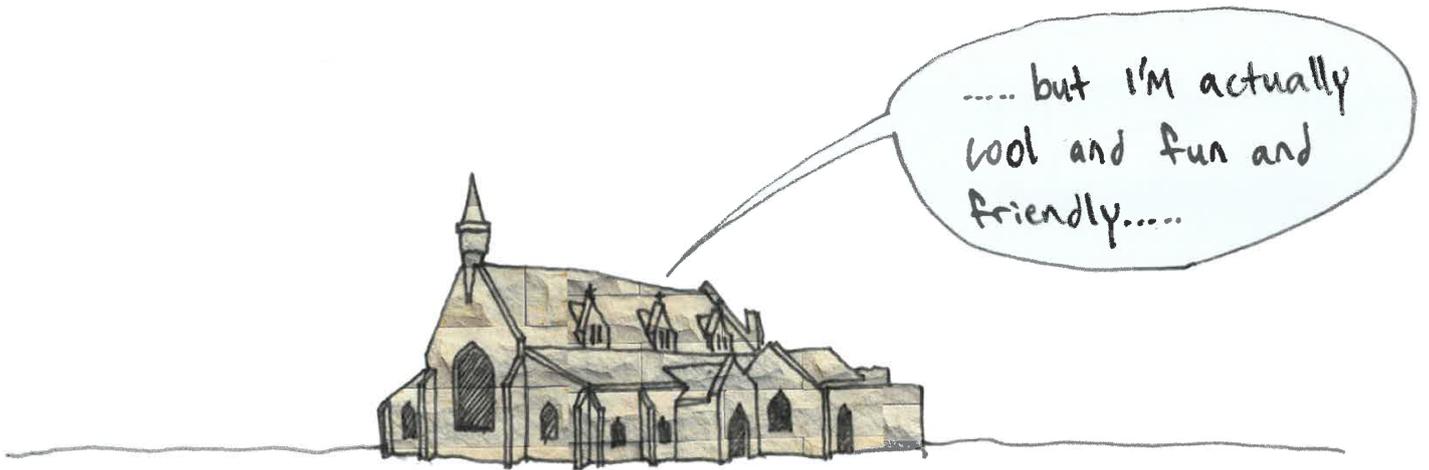
As we begin 2018 the Parish Council and Wardens are in the process of selecting an Architecture firm to partner with us on this journey. After a formal tender process with eight firms and multiple in-person meetings, we have narrowed the list to just three. The leadership team expect to secure an architect in early 2018.

Following this we will have three main objectives before the end of 2018:

1. Develop a Master Plan and Final Design Concept
2. Develop a Defined Budget and Funding Plan
3. Submit a Formal Development Application (DA) to the City of Sydney

If we achieve these objectives in 2018, we plan to undertake construction in 2019.

We took big strides in our long-term property planning in 2017 and we look to build on the momentum in 2018 and beyond. Over the course of the year we will continue to update the church on our progress. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions.



# Finances

*On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made . . . Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. (1 Corinthians 16:2; 2 Corinthians 9:7)*

It is an absolute privilege for Christians to be financial partners in the work of promoting the name of Jesus and caring for the poor. In the act of being generous we express our confidence that God has our backs. If we seek first his kingdom, he will take care of our needs.

Learning to become a regular and generous giver is part of learning to follow Jesus. In 1–2 Corinthians, the apostle Paul says our giving should be proportionate, regular, and cheerful.

- Your giving should be **regular**: “On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money.” Studies and common sense reveal that people who plan their giving to church and give it every month end up being far more generous than those who give irregularly or impulsively.
- Your giving should be **proportionate**: Not giving from the leftovers, but “... in keeping with your income.” That means that as God blesses you with more, you become more generous. Studies show that those on the lowest incomes are the most generous givers when their gift is expressed as a proportion of their income. It ought to be the reverse.
- Your giving should be **cheerful**: “... for God loves a cheerful giver.” Understanding the riches we have already received in Christ not only liberates us from excessive worry about wealth, but also motivates us to invest willingly in the eternal kingdom of God.

In 2017, your financial gifts were stewarded by the Parish Council, Wardens and Treasurer (see page 9).

In 2017, we saw you give \$485k towards the running of the church. We also raised \$14,305 for our Global Partners (see page 16) and \$14,000 for our Christmas Offering. We should all give thanks to God for the way he provides for us through such generous members!

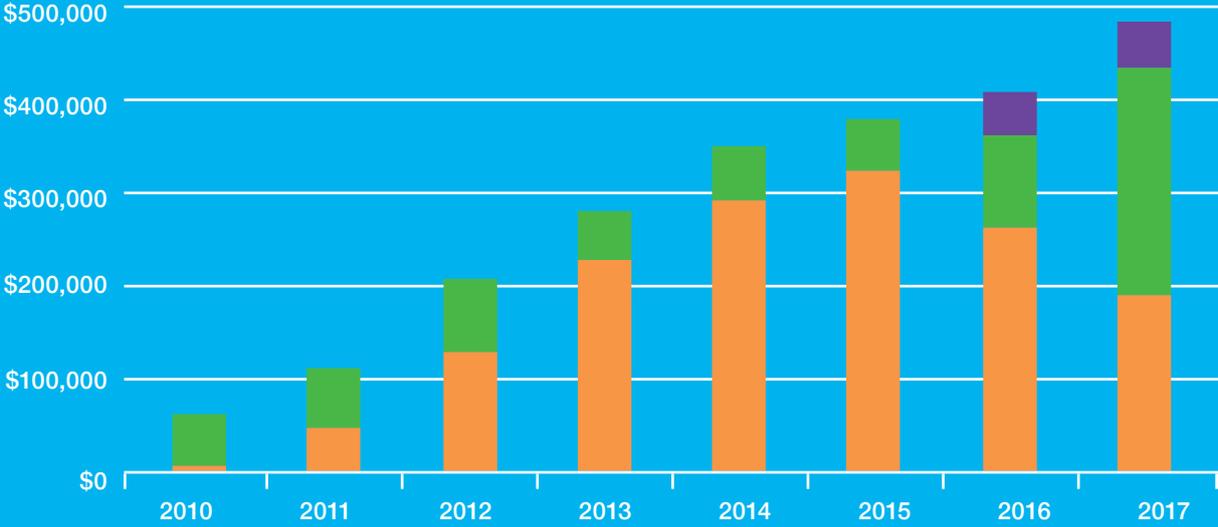
## Christmas Offering

Our Church, Our Future	\$3,447
Refurbish Kids Rooms	\$5,190
Made with Love	\$2,997
New Churches for New Communities	\$1,483
Send a Tanzanian pastor to GAFCON	\$ 1,186
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$14,004</b>

# % of Family Units Giving



# Annual Internal Giving



4.30pm This includes historic Vine Church giving before the merger
 10am This includes historic St Michael's giving before the merger
 Staff This is the 2nd year staff giving has been separated



# How can I be involved in 2018?

Thanks for taking the time to read through this report. I hope you've been moved to prayer and inspired to get on board in 2018. If that's you, we'd love for you to commit to:

- Prioritising a daily time with God in His **word and prayer**;
- Attending a **Sunday gathering** and your **Community Group** weekly;
- Making an effort to **encourage** your brothers and sisters throughout the week;
- Be bold in **sharing your faith** with family, friends and co-workers;
- Coming along to the **Weekend Away** in March ([vinechurch.com.au/weekendaway](http://vinechurch.com.au/weekendaway));
- **Giving sacrificially** ([vinechurch.com.au/give](http://vinechurch.com.au/give)); and
- **Serving with a glad heart** in a variety of practical ways ([vinechurch.com.au/serve](http://vinechurch.com.au/serve)).

If you're not sure where to start, why not make a time to sit down with one of our amazing pastors and ask them to help you begin a life as a fully devoted disciple of Jesus.

# Connecting people to the life, love and freedom Jesus offers

VINE CHURCH

Sundays 10am, 5pm  
200 Albion St, Surry Hills

Photo credits  
Katherine Millard  
Esther Neate  
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