



Newsletter #3

Discern who you are trying to reach.

Welcome to the third Hope25 monthly newsletter. We thank the parish clergy who have contributed to this article on discerning who we might try to reach. We pray that it is helpful and energises creative ideas in our local working groups and parish councils.

As our parish begins the early stages of thinking about reaching out to our community during Hope25 one of the questions we've begun to ask is, "Who are we going to reach?" Wouldn't it be a shame to put in a whole lot of effort only to have nobody turn up to any of the events we run. It won't be enough to simply run some events and hope for the best, we need to spend some time thinking about who we're trying to reach and tailoring what we do during Hope25 accordingly.

So, "Who are we going to reach?" For us some of the answers have come from our pre-existing efforts and our place as a church within our community. As it happens, our church will be celebrating 100 years since its foundation stone was laid during the Hope25 period. So that has led us to start thinking about how we can reach out to those in our community with a historical connection to the church but who don't realise that they could be part of the regular worshipping life of the parish. We will likely reach out to our local historical society, past families who've been baptised or married in our church as well as the broader local community and invite them to celebrate the church and hear not just about the building but about who the true foundation stone of our church is. You might not be celebrating a 100 years, but perhaps those with past connections are a group of people you could reach during Hope25?

Another thought we've had has been around our church's well-established ministry of a Playgroup for young families. We've begun to think about what we can do to take a more deliberate step with some of these families in helping them hear the gospel during Hope25. We've had some success with an Alpha course this year, so perhaps we will run another one again, or even a different shorter course just during Hope25. We're also trying to think about how we can connect with some of the families whose kids have grown out of Playgroup and how we can connect with them during Hope25. Maybe you have pre-existing ministries that you could focus more keenly on evangelism during Hope25?

We've also realised that every single member of our church has a friend, family member, work colleague or neighbour who is not part of the church. We're trying to think about how we can run 'outsider' friendly church services during the Hope25 campaign so that every member of our church will have confidence to invite a friend to church during Hope25.

Before Hope25 we will need to do some training with our church about how to start 'God conversations' and how to invite people to church as this can be a very daunting thing to do in 21 st century secular Australia. Maybe there is some way you could unlock the networks of your current parishioners during Hope25 and share the gospel with them?

In fact as we've begun to think about who we might try and reach during Hope25 it's become obvious that there are so many who need reaching with the gospel! Our challenge now is to start praying and thinking strategically about how our small church can reach out most effectively to our community during Hope25 so that we focus our effort, energy and prayers.

Who are you going to reach during Hope25?

Hope25 Contact Details:

Website: <https://www.hope25.com.au/>

Email: info@hope25.com.au

Hope25 Parish Working Group Meeting Notes:

What is challenging or encouraging in this article?

Who do we have existing or potential connections with from the wider community?

Who in our wider community might God be leading us to share the hope of Jesus with?