



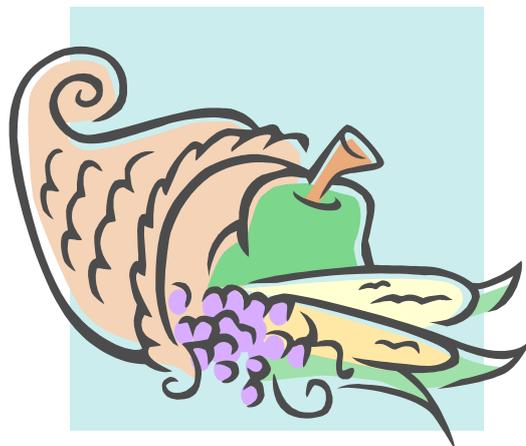
THE GENEROUS CHURCH

St Clair & Erskine Park

Anglican Church

Sustainability Initiative

Proposal



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The Generous Church: The St Clair Anglican Church Sustainability Initiative

Introduction

The term Sustainable living may be defined as “a lifestyle that attempts to reduce an individual's or society's use of the Earth's natural resources and personal resources” and aspects of sustainable living have become main stream. The motivation to live a more sustainable lifestyle may be so we can reduce our impact on the environment, reduce global warming, reduce reliance on fossil fuels, save money or just generally move towards less consumption and more meaning.

It also may be said that the responsible and effective stewardship of the church property is modelling aspects of a godly life and as a church we need to model the ideals we espouse. The Generous Church initiative is designed to show the need for and help our members to live a more sustainable lifestyle in terms of the food they consume.

Scope

The desire to live a more sustainable lifestyle requires that a number of aspects of life be addressed and modified where required. Such aspects include water, energy, food, transport, waste, consumption patterns in general and community. The “The Generous Church” initiative in the most part deals with food: its sourcing, cooking, consumption, donation and what we do with the stuff left over. You have to start somewhere, and everyone has to eat!

Aims and objectives

The **aim** of this process is to assist the people attending our church to live a more sustainable life by modelling and supporting their food-based actions and choices required to achieve it, and have fun doing it.

To achieve our aim we will need to complete the following **objectives** -

1. Consult widely and deeply with our people about sustainable food issues (Talking Well)
2. Choose healthy and sustainable food for religious events (Eating Well)
3. Educate our people about healthy sustainable food (Teaching Well)
4. Use the physical property of the church and its members to promote sustainable food related activities (Acting Well)
5. Show our people how the food we give to others can be healthy and sustainable (Giving Well)

Talking Well

For people to contribute to the solution of a problem they need to know what the problem is, why it affects (or will affect) them and their family and what they need to do to be part of the solution. Only when these three conditions are met will people “buy in” to the process. To facilitate this there should be a five minute “this is what we are going to be doing and why” talk during morning and night church preferably delivered by Scott or James.

At a later time but within a few weeks there should be a more in-depth discussion (30 minute to 1 hr) on the challenges that we will face ie peak oil, climate change and economic issues delivered at a time to be decided and by a different facilitator.

After the more in-depth session has been conducted, appropriate personnel should be identified by Scott and others as required and invited to join the team. As part of talking well there should be regular updates on how things were progressing, possibly a section on the website and even an article submitted to "Southern Cross" detailing the process and any "wins". This document should also be circulated widely.

The team members would also be involved in keeping the congregation up to speed on how the process is progressing.

Forming the Team

Once the personnel have been invited to join the team, these should be reviewed by the Parish Council, for the size of the congregation perhaps 5 or 6 would be a reasonable number. The team would be made up of a "driver" (Scott) a sustainability "advisor" (Nevin) and a representative or two each from day and night church.

Once the team has been established there should be an initial meeting to go through this document in detail and work out the "who, does what, when" then set out a proposed time line of how things will work.

To identify the strengths and weaknesses of the current sustainability policies and practices the TGC team will conduct an assessment using the Good food Toolkit, based around the four objectives, Eating Well; Acting Well; Teaching Well and Donating well.

Eating Well

The first rung on the sustainability ladder is to ensure that we are modelling the changes we wish to see happening within the church activities themselves and in this case "Eating Well" means "Eating Sustainably". To find out if we are, The Generous Church (TGC) team should conduct a review of the sustainability of the food consumed during activities associated with the church.

The review will be split into a number of areas to be looked at including food consumed during and after worship, meals and special events, beverages and sustainable products. While the first three of these are pretty much self explanatory, the "Sustainable products" section addresses the use of disposable or reusable crockery and cutlery, packaging and cleaning products.

The review will be conducted and using the checklist in the Good Food Toolkit (GFT) and a score arrived at using the process in the kit. This review may be conducted in association with other reviews carried out as part of this process or at a separate time, but in any case the scores will be amalgamated at the end to give an overall score.

Acting well

Within the context of sustainable living about which we are speaking, acting well means using the physical property of the church and its members to promote sustainable food related activities, by

growing healthy organic sustainable food where possible. Where this is not possible we should be acting well to source it from local or organic sources and ideally, both.

A review will be conducted by the TGC team using the GF Toolkit but this will only give some sketchy ideas of what is needed to be done. As part of the review for this process the sustainability advisor (SA) shall conduct a zone and sector analysis for the church property on Coonawarra drive and then use that to develop a Permaculture design for the property. During the process of developing the design, the SA shall consult with the other members of the TGC team and, where appropriate, the greater church congregation.

On nominal completion of the design it shall be presented to the church members at a meeting of all interested parties and at a time approved by Scott. Once the plan has been developed and approved, a working bee will be held to implement the higher priority elements of the plan as considered by the TGC team. Assistance will also be sought from Permaculture Sydney West to provide experienced permaculturists and interested workers to assist in implementation of the plan at a time to be agreed ie a “permablitz” on the church property.

Teaching well

The “teaching well” component is taking advantage of existing church structures to inform the congregation that what they eat matters. They can be given information on how they can make good food choices when they are bombarded by advertising which encourages them to buy and eat food which is neither good for them, nor the planet.

The “teaching” will be the subject of a review by the TGC team also using the tools provided in the GFT. In this case the review will be divided up into three subsections:

- General Communication – This considers how sustainability messages are conveyed within the congregation and/or community.
- Adult Education – examines how we educate adults about the principles of food sustainability and justice, and
- Child/Youth Education – looks at how the children and youth are taught about these issues.

Once the review of teaching has been conducted, the answers will be incorporated into the overall TGC report.

Donating well

As a church we give food to support the less fortunate in our community, we are able to donate through the year but also there is the special time at Christmas when we run the “toys and tucker” program. Do the donors consider the sustainability implications of the food they give? This part of the program uses a part of the GFT to assess how we do in this area.

Review and Action Plan

Each of the sectional assessments may be carried out separately or one after another and would only take an hour or two all told but the zone analysis, sector analysis and Permaculture design will take somewhat longer to complete.

Once all assessments have been completed the TGC team shall meet together to discuss the results and identify what they consider to be the high priority items to be addressed. A plan will be developed to implement the actions required to address the improvements which have been highlighted as part of the assessment process.

The plan shall be broken down into the five “wells” and should contain all actions identified in the assessment but only 3 to 5 priority items should be selected for immediate commencement of implementation.

Presentation

The results of the review and the action plan, highlighting the 3 to 5 priority items, should be delivered to day and night church during a 10 minute spot which should be either during the normal program or at the end of the normal service. It should not coincide with the Sunday when the Lord’s Supper is celebrated.

Regular Review

The TGC team should meet regularly, say once a month, to review the progress of the actions against the plan, identify any roadblocks and work out what is needed to clear them. Once a priority item is completed the team should also identify the next item for commencement and modify the plan to reflect any changes.

Every three months a member of the TGC team (Scott) should present a 5 or 10 minute “where we are up to” address during the normal service. The “News” section can be used to keep the congregation informed of any upcoming events where they may wish to be involved.