



ALL SAINTS ANGLICAN CHURCH FOURWAYS GARDENS

Anglican Diocese of Johannesburg. PBO Number: 930018128

REPORT FOR VESTRY: SPIRITUAL FORMATION 2024-2025

1. Introduction

Spiritual formation is one of the pillars of our Diocesan Vision. It concerns the process and practice of developing our inner lives through lifelong learning and mentoring. Spiritual formation is a journey through which we accept the invitation into relationship and a deeper connection with God. It helps us to reclaim our relationship with God as it was meant to be, within the context of community. Therefore, it is important to approach spiritual formation with an intergenerational focus that embeds and acknowledges community and family practices.

2. Spiritual Formation at All Saints

Scriptural foundation is encouraged through regular Bible reading as suggested by the lectionary. This should be complemented with sound teaching because literal and out-of-context interpretations can be misleading. In this regard, small groups meeting together to discuss the Bible is invaluable in the learning process and should be encouraged.

Centering Prayer

Opportunities to pray together through the Tuesday Centering Prayer group are also important in spiritual formation, and we are pleased that this group has continued to meet for silent prayer and meditation. In addition to the time of prayer we often connect about experiences or aspects of our faith and spiritual journey. Our intention is to support the parish of All Saints and any prayer requests we receive. Requests are communicated among us and we pray for people in need of this support. Please join us on Tuesdays at 09h30 or let Lorelle know if you would like further information about the group.

Quiet Mornings

The beautiful grounds at All Saints and the labyrinth provide a special space for reflection and meditation. Three Saturday Quiet Mornings for the Parish provided additional opportunities for people to journey in their faith.

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Teaching Opportunities

Regular teaching opportunities for the congregation are primarily confirmation preparation, baptism preparation, and Lent. The 2024 **Lent course** was held on Wednesday mornings and Saturday afternoons and explored various aspects of the Mystery of God.

Focussed and occasional spiritual formation also takes place through **Baptism Preparation** courses which were run by Jean Pienaar (three baptised in the past year).



We were thrilled to explore our faith alongside the four confirmands who diligently and enthusiastically participated in the **confirmation classes** and camp in 2024, led by Jean Pienaar, and supported by Frank Biesman-Simons and Rev'd Dave Osburn.

Learning together

On the whole, the All Saints community is receptive to intergenerational initiatives for festivals (e.g. Good Friday, Pentecost, Patronal Festival, etc.). It is encouraging that All Saints is a congregation with an openness to explore more participative and reflective worship that extends beyond being a passive recipient of information.

Messy Church provides opportunities for intergenerational ministry to support spiritual formation in families as they navigate life's joys and challenges. We give children and adults a vocabulary to speak together about faith and Scripture through activities, stories and a meal shared together. Families enjoy the relaxed time of learning where they can **belong, believe and become**, creating and sharing together during the monthly Messy Church sessions, which the children from the Mother of Peace orphanage also attend.



Children's Church

The younger members of the Parish appreciate Children's Church during school terms. The growth in numbers (especially of the 8-12 year olds) during 2024 means that two teachers are now needed each Sunday. Please prayerfully consider joining the team that lay these important foundations in our young people.



Children's Church have enjoyed participating in Heritage Day celebrations, liturgical dance, nativity play, Spring Faire and the sale of Egg and Bacon Rolls.

Youth

There has been interest expressed in creating a Youth Group for the high school to young adult cohort, where we can gather regularly (around coffee and cake, or food in some form) to discuss topical issues and create a network of support as we navigate this thing called life as a Christian. If you would like to join this fledgling ministry, please contact the Church office.

Holding the Worship

Parish Ministers receive on-going training through the monthly meetings and the Diocesan training course.

Sacristans provide a crucial background role in preparing the altar for worship. We are hugely grateful to Gaile Taylor and Jane Sibiya for their commitment to prepare trays for Eucharists on Sundays and Wednesdays. Sacristans also meet twice a year to do a more thorough clean up and polish the silverware before Easter and Christmas. Many thanks to Frank Biesman-Simons who lends a hand when he is available and Jessica who helped out over the Christmas period when only one sacristan was available. We would welcome anyone interested in becoming involved with this ministry. Please contact Jane Sibiya or Gaile Taylor if you would like to find out more about being a sacristan or would like be involved

Music is a very important part of worship and is something which adds a unique dimension to worship services. Music has a way of piercing into the deep and non-verbal part of our souls. For this reason, the last few years have been challenging and tough as regards music at All Saints. After having no musicians to lead our singing for several years, we were extremely pleased to secure Clement, to play our clavinova and lead our musical worship once a month in 2024. As of mid-January 2025, we have been delighted to welcome Emmanuel as our full-time musical director. The choir now rehearses weekly and leads the singing in Church every

Sunday. The music at All Saints promises to go from strength to strength under Emmanuel's enthusiastic and caring direction. Please contact the Church office if you would like to be part of the music group.

Spiritual Direction

We are delighted that Carol Blane, a Spiritual Director with The Centre for Contemplative Spirituality, Pretoria, is willing to offer Spiritual Direction to those who desire a deeper walk with God. Spiritual Formation looks for how God is working, calling, prodding, transforming and inviting us to new ways of being with Jesus in the midst of our everyday circumstances. Contact the Church Office if you would like to explore your Christian journey with Carol.

3. The way forward

To further embed and practise spiritual formation, we need to plan for all-ages to worship together on a regular basis, building on the celebrations of feasts and festivals. Inclusion and welcome is not just providing a grape juice option for the eucharist. All-age worship is not about young people performing for an audience. The focus for the Anglican church is the altar, not the stage. Spiritual Formation requires developing relationships within the community, across all members of the community, so that we can model for one another a life of faith and so that people of all ages are nurtured to become nurturers.

There is a small core of parishioners who regularly participate in activities that foster Spiritual Formation. Feedback received affirms the benefit of small group interaction that offers a greater opportunity for participation and in-depth questioning. Learning through quiet days, baptism preparation, confirmation class and Messy Church is often appreciated. We would love to increase involvement. We try to be flexible and offer a variety of options that will provide a number of opportunities for spiritual formation, being cognisant of external demands on time and energy. There is room for everyone!

The tagline "Belong, Believe, Become" is intentional. There is space for everyone to be formed spiritually at All Saints, and you are encouraged to participate in as many opportunities as possible. We encourage all members of the congregation to embrace opportunities for spiritual growth as we *belong* to the community, explore what we *believe* and *become* what God had intended us to be to this broken and wounded world.

Many thanks to all the volunteers who have assisted, walked alongside and facilitated spiritual formation within All Saints, and to the Parish Ministers (Beth Heydenrych, Charles Onukwube, Frank Biesman-Simons, Heather Mutch, Jean

Pienaar, Jeanine Line, Kgotso Meleke, Mawethu Marubelela) for their willingness to serve.

I am grateful to minister in this portfolio because it has afforded me opportunities to grow in my own faith as I journey with God. I have been stimulated and fed through my involvement with Messy Church International, the Intergenerational Conversations in South Africa and abroad, and as an OutoftheBox mentor. These ministries have shaped my involvement at a local level.

Jean Pienaar
(with contributions from Gaile Taylor, Beth Heydenrych and Natasha Bailey)
February 2025

