

# Friends@Leisure



**Everyone matters to God**  
**A Pastoral Care Program**



# Friends@Leisure

## Mission Action Plan 2015

Our Mission Action Plan adopted in June 2015 states under the section of Pastoral Care— How can we care for each other? Pastoral care is all endeavours undertaken by Anglicans that involve the practical gospel command to love. It is about how we care for each other. One of the goals and actions is to explore a mentor / buddy system for all parishioners. We are calling the program friends@leisure

## Background to Friends@Leisure

Among scuba divers and those who swim in the ocean, there is a developed program for safety known as the "buddy system." When a person decides to go scuba diving, the "buddy system" demands that one always has a friend to go with then. This friend knows the equipment, stays close at hand, watches out for danger and is ready in times of trouble to lend a helping hand. In this fashion, a diver is never alone in case help is needed quickly. It is a terrifying thought to be alone in strange waters, threatened, with no one to assist. Both divers are protected by the presence of the other and, born from necessity, the "buddy system" is a good idea.

Occasionally, someone journeys through a difficult situation alone because he or she chooses to do so. However, more often than not, there are those who want support, yet fall through the cracks. No one visits a hospitalized person, or someone in the midst of crisis suffers alone. Damaged trust, hurt feelings, and missed

opportunities are the result. Many times, people thought they told someone they needed help, but the message did not arrive on time or to the right person. This news can be heartbreaking. To help ensure these gaps in pastoral care don't occur, we need to set up a pastoral buddy program.

Friends@Leisure is a planned, effective, flexible way of providing responsive, non-threatening and informal care of each other within the church family. It is like the school buddy system where each family has a pastoral partner who looks out for them. It is kept simple but meaningful. In many cases it will involve little more than a brief acknowledgement before or after worship, or a telephone call weekly to keep in contact. At other times it may require caring and down to earth support in difficult times.

## Biblical background

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 says:

*9 Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work:*

*10 If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up!*

Friendship is clearly more than a social connection. Friends offer each other help, loyalty, protection, support, unselfish love, and moral guidance. Friendship as one of the primary relationships in life, a tie at times exceeding that which bonds blood relatives. When we face a task with someone, we have hope that between the two of us we can do something bigger than



either of us could ever do alone. When we travel with someone, there is a joy and a confidence in the journey that we would never have alone. Life is a journey full of hazards. We are constantly challenged. It is easy to become overwhelmed if we try to face these challenges alone. To be alone is to be vulnerable. God speaks to us through the community, but we still are responsible for listening to his voice. The wise are the poor in spirit who are humble enough to know that they need both God and their neighbours.

We are called to love God and love our neighbours. This program is a way of caring for our neighbours and by doing this we love God.

### **What is Friends@Leisure?**

Friends@Leisure is a procedure in which two people, the friends, operate together as a single unit so that they are able to monitor, care, guide and help each other. The Friend@Leisure is a friend not a babysitter, or a teacher, or a parent. The Friend may be like a brother or sister or best friend but does not act in an authority role. Acceptance and a non judgmental attitude is important along with the need to treat the other person with dignity and respect. Confidentiality in conversations is also essential.

Friends need to see this ministry as a service to Christ and look for opportunities

to meet various physical, social and spiritual needs of the other person. Friends also need to consider themselves on a path to learning and look for things that they can learn from each other.

### **How do we be Friends@Leisure at Christ Church Essendon?**

One person must ask another person to be a Friend who can accept or reject the invitation. Both potential Friends need to agree. People over 18 can only team up with people over 18. A Friend team cannot be related to each other. You can only be a Friend in the program to one person at a time. But we also want you to be friends with everyone else in Church also. A husband and wife can team up with another husband and wife but they need to divide into friends teams.

The Friends@Leisure teams let the Parish Priest know, photos are taken and placed at the back of the Church and the Friends are blessed in Church. A liturgy will be developed to bless buddy teams.

People who have their photos at the back of the Church and part of the Friends@Leisure cannot be asked to be a Friend to someone else.

Friends teams are for 12 months and then the team is dissolved and new Friends

# Friends@Leisure



It is hoped that once or twice a year there might be a special social event for all Friends@Leisure. This will be an opportunity to meet with other Friends

## Benefits of the Program

- Strengthen friendships within our Church
- Improve our Pastoral Care of each other within the Church
- Learn greater respect and acceptance of each other.
- Help new people in the parish connect with others more easily

picked. If both Friends agree there can be an extension for another 12 months only before the team is dissolved and new Friends picked. It can be extended a further year for pastoral reasons only and in consultation with the Parish Priest.

It would be wonderful if everyone in the Parish had a Friend to watch over them and that they were watching over some and caring.

When a Friend@Leisure team is dissolved, this does not mean that you stop caring for your old friend (they will always be special and a good friend hopefully) but is an opportunity to build a new friendship with someone else especially new people who have come into our Church.

## Proposed Timeline

October 2015 Parish Council approval of program

November 2015 Advertise the program with in the Parish & invite people to become Friends

December 2015 & January 2016

Implement the program, photos, blessings

During 2016 Maintain the program

October 2016 Evaluate program

## What is the commitment?

### Minimum Contact

Phone call weekly plus talking to each other at Church

### Other Suggestions

Monthly meal or coffee together  
Encourage each other to meet at Church weekly

Encourage each other in their faith walk  
Follow up and support when one is sick  
Keep an eye on each other, encourage, support where appropriate.

Do something special for their birthdays  
Pray regularly for your Friend and their family

Where appropriate let the Priest know if problems occur such as illness etc

