



7 August 2020

Dear Fellow Parishioners

I am writing to outline extended voting arrangements for the forthcoming elections of new office bearers and representatives of the Parish.

As you are aware, an Electoral Meeting is usually held in conjunction with our Annual General Meeting. At that meeting wardens and parish councillors are elected; on this occasion we also have to elect parish members of the Clergy Appointments Board and our Synod representatives for the next three years.

Unless the COVID-19 situation worsens the most we can have in the hall for the AGM is 62, which may not be enough for all those who wish to attend. Also, I have been told that many of you still feel concerned about attending large gatherings and are unlikely to attend the AGM, even though you are vitally interested in the election process.

As a result, Parish Council has decided to separate the election from the AGM in order to provide the best opportunity for all parishioners to vote. This will involve a combination of voting in person and postal voting.

If you wish to exercise a postal vote you will need to register with the parish office by phone (6248 8399 if unattended leave a voicemail message) or email (admin@stjohnscanberra.org) so your name can be recorded against the parish roll, and ballot papers can be sent to you by post. If you wish to vote in person you will have that opportunity directly after the AGM and after the Church services on 23 and 26 August.

As part of the process we are asking all candidates to complete a simple questionnaire about themselves, which will be available to all who wish to vote and will be included with the postal ballot papers.



We are going to operate to the following schedule:

10-17 August	Register with the office for a postal vote, either by phone or email
14 August COB	Nominations close for all positions
19 August	Postal vote ballot papers sent out from the office to those who registered; you may return your completed ballot paper at any time, provided it is received by 4 September (see below); please allow adequate time for postal delivery
22 August	AGM and opportunity to vote in person
23 August	9:30am service followed by the opportunity to vote in person 6:00pm service followed by the opportunity to vote in person
26 August	10:00am service followed by the opportunity to vote in person
4 September	Postal votes must be received by 5:00pm by mail at the Parish post office box, details of which will be given with the ballot papers
5 September	Votes counted
6 September	Results announced on the Parish website and at Church services

The returning officer for the elections will be Canon Margaret Emil, who will be present at each in-person voting time, and who will supervise the overall process. She will be assisted in the counting process by two tellers appointed from the lay people of the Parish.

I know this is a significant departure from our normal process but, of course, these are strange and difficult times. Parish Council feels that the process I have just outlined, while more complicated than unusual, will hopefully ensure no one is disenfranchised because of the pandemic.

If you are planning to attend the AGM in person you will need to let us know, so that we do not have more than 62 (either by phone or email) in the hall. Please register your wish to attend with Kimberley in the parish office.

Yours in Christ's service

John Richards
Presiding member, Parish Council