

MEREWETHER PARISH PROFILE

2026

OUR HISTORY

St. Augustine's was established in 1889 by the local Merewether family to minister to the large community working in the underground mines which ran throughout the Merewether and the inner Newcastle City area. Several years ago, the church building was refurbished to open-up an area previously housing a pipe organ which was donated to the Newcastle Regional Museum and replaced with a digital organ and a grand-piano. More recently, a modern AV system was installed so that services could be displayed digitally.

WHO WE ARE

A PARISH OF NEWCASTLE ANGLICAN,
FORMALLY THE ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF NEWCASTLE

We emphasise an Anglicanism in which:

- The Holy Scripture contains all things necessary for salvation.
- The theological and liturgical tradition of our Anglican heritage provide the basis of our theology and practice.
- We hold to the importance of the sacraments, (baptism and Holy Communion), not as mere signs, but living expressions of God's grace to us in Jesus Christ.
- We value our liturgical heritage.
- We remain faithful to our Anglican heritage in our worship but recognise the importance of expressing this in ways that resonate with contemporary culture.

WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO US

I. OUR "CALLING"

AN "OUTPOST OF THE FUTURE"

We believe the life of the Age-to-Come has broken-in through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and that the church is called to live this out by

"[making] every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

Ephesians 4:3

As such we are called to be

A COMMUNITY OF LOVE

..walk in love, as Christ also loved us...

Ephesians 5:2

since only a "community of love" can truly demonstrate this "unity of the Spirit."

A COMMUNITY OF TRUTH

...put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbour

Ephesians 4:25

Truth is the environment in which love flourishes and so we seek to *uphold* the truth God has revealed in scripture and *practice* truthfulness in our relationships with one another.

A COMMUNITY OF RESISTANCE

So, I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do....
Ephesians 4:17

We recognise the need to resist cultural pressures and instead pursue Kingdom values and practices in every area of life.

A COMMUNITY OF HOPE

Forgiving each other as in Christ God forgave you.
Ephesians 5:1

By forgiving one another we seek to be a community where those without hope find refuge and restoration.

II. OUR PURPOSE

to make followers of Jesus Christ.

This expresses our purpose, and it determines everything we do.

This means we want people to

- Know Christ
- Live for Christ
- Love Christ

We aim to do this by:

1. Reaching out

Building relationships with our community and making Jesus Christ known.

2. Welcoming in

Promoting a church culture that is welcoming to people and encourages them to join us as we follow Christ.

3. Growing up

Helping one another to grow in knowledge and love.

4. Living out

Walking with one another through all the experiences and stages of life so that, together, we continue with Christ.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

OPPORTUNITIES

- Merewether is a thriving suburb in Newcastle with lots of young families.
- St. Augustine's is located in the heart of the suburb and has established a good reputation in the community over many years.
- Over the last 25 years St. Augustine's has run a successful and well-regarded Mother and Toddler group and there is flourishing ministry to older people in a local residential aged care facility
- St. Augustine's is the only Anglican church in the Merewether area. There is a small Baptist and a Roman Catholic church nearby.
- Over the last 5 years, the church has a handful of new people joining us, including a small number of young families.

- The outgoing Rector built-up a valued preaching ministry which the church is keen to continue.
- Given the nature of the area, there are great opportunities to develop a multi-generational church which we are keen to pursue.

CHALLENGES

- We are a small church with a largely ageing congregation.
- The faith journey “maturity” varies significantly within the congregation. In this regard for some members of the congregation with a more developed understanding of the Scripture and liturgy, tradition and ceremony are important. However, for some other and newer members of the congregation whose faith journey is still or in earlier stages of development and maturity, considerations such as increasing their understanding and knowledge of the Scripture from the quality of the Sermon and other initiatives such as bible study groups led by the Rector are of vital importance.
- There is a demographic “mismatch” between the community and the congregation which makes it difficult to build effective relationships
- Although we have attracted some new people, the over-all trend remains downwards.
- Attracting and keeping families with children is difficult and at the end of 2025 we lost most of our families. While we have retained a Children’s focus in our morning services, we are no longer able to run a Sunday morning children’s programme.
- Balancing the need to care for existing members with the need to be evangelistically focused can be challenging.
- An increasingly small number of people available to fill ministries leads to people being overstretched.
- There are financial challenges. Whilst St. Augustine’s has sufficient assets to sustain the church for the next 7-10 years, current expenditure exceeds income.

OUR NEW RECTOR

WE ARE LOOKING FOR SOMEONE WHO HAS

1. experience of church leadership
2. a demonstrated capacity for effective biblical teaching

WE ARE LOOKING FOR SOMEONE WHO IS

1. Committed to the major emphases of St. Augustine’s
2. Committed to personal growth and development in Godliness and who will provide a healthy example.
3. Able to teach and apply scripture in an engaging and thoughtful way and committed to their own biblical and theological development.

4. A leader with the gifts to seize opportunities, and bring about change, while at the same time maintaining the unity of the congregation. Self-motivated, able to persevere through difficult times, self-disciplined and able to manage their time well.

5. Committed to Evangelism, discipling, encouraging and equipping the congregation to use their gifts for the building-up of the church.

6. A prayerful pastor who cares for the well-being of the congregation.

MINISTRIES AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

SUNDAYS

8.30am	Holy Communion	First & third Sunday
	Morning prayer	Second Sunday
	Prayer Praise & Proclamation	Fourth & Fifth Sunday each month

MIDWEEK

10.am	Holy Communion at a local Aged-care facility
11.30.am	Holy Communion (held in the church)

OTHER SERVICES

There is a memorial garden on the church premises for the internment of ashes

Over the years other services have at various times included:

Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Easter Saturday, All Saints and All Souls Day and the use of Celtic Spirituality

OTHER ACTIVITIES

HOME GROUPS

There currently 2 bible study groups

PRAYER MEETING

Held once a month under the outgoing rector.

MOTHERS' UNION

There is an active Mothers' Union group consisting of around 20 members which conducts a number of outreach programs.

MISSION SUPPORT

The Parish has always supported missions both in Australia and the world with generous donations towards the Diocesan Mission program. Our annual Mission target is 10% of our annual free-will offertory giving. We currently support the Mission to Seafarers, the Bible Society, Bush Church Aid Society (through BCA Boxes), and support for James and Brittany Daymond (missionaries in Cobar NSW) and Jill and Jeremy Horrocks (missionaries in Phnom Penh Cambodia) who are with the CMS.

In addition, the church supports *Jenny's Place* which provides housing for women and children who suffer from domestic violence

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

A Play Group was started many years ago which continued to grow through word of mouth and became a thriving and well-respected group. This is now in recess due to lack of leaders.

Carols on the Grass has become an annual event bringing together the church congregation, Playgroup families, and community members with the music provided by a very talented group coordinated by the Parish's Music Director.

Family Fun Day brings the congregation together, who bake and prepare some exceptional items of food, produce, and craft. It is an event which is well-attended by a wide cross-section of members from the surrounding community.

MU Outreach Programmes include Coffee & Care at the Childrens' Courthouse, Maternity Hospital Visitation, Parish Baptisms, provision of items for Baby Bundles, including hand-made baby blankets distributed to John Hunter Hospital, the Awabakal Centre, and Maitland Hospital, and the annual fund raising Northern Outreach Lunch.

STAFF

- Rector, full-time (vacant)
- Director of Music (Paid, part-time) as well as an Assistant Organist (unpaid)
- Office Administrator (3 mornings during the week)

The parish office is open 9am-12noon Monday and Friday, and 8am – 1pm Tuesday to Thursday. A group of volunteers assist with this.

VOLUNTEERS

- Visitors to Scenic Lodge (Aged-Care) facility
This is run by team of volunteers, along with the rector.
- Communion Assistants
- Licensed Lay Assistants
Able to take home communions
- Service leaders
- Pastoral Care Team

Members of the congregation are involved in a variety of organisations, both inside and outside the church, including Cursillo and practical support for local hospitals,

BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES

St Augustines has several associated buildings and facilities. These include a Parish Hall with a working kitchen. The hall is airconditioned with a stage and can be partitioned off into two sections. The hall has seated up to approximately 100 people for various functions.

There is a carpark adjacent to the Church and Parish Hall.

There is a Parish Office which is open 9am – 12noon Monday and Friday, and 8am – 1pm Tuesday to Thursday.

There is also a play area adjacent to the Parish Hall and Office.

THE RECTORY

There is a three-bedroom plus office Rectory directly adjacent to the church. The Rectory has a private yard with a single garage and off-street parking for another vehicle.