



St Francis of Assisi

Anglican Church, Alberton

ANNUAL CHURCH WARDEN REPORT TO VESTRY

INTRODUCTION:

As we take this opportunity to reflect on 2020, as a new Council, we were warmly welcomed onto the Parish Council; for that we are thankful. The year 2020 was marked by both serious challenges and opportunities. As your Council, we embraced these challenges as opportunities to keep the church doors open amidst the Corona virus pandemic and to build our church to be a welcoming and inspiring parish.

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT:

The year under review was characterized by challenges and awkward inhibitions of the New Normal. Eclipsing these were the COVID 19 lockdown restrictive protocols which forced not only churches but businesses as well to close their doors. St Francis of Assisi was no exception and had to oblige. The passing away of the Rector Father Motsamai Sebowane exacerbated the situation as the church was left without a priest. The Parish Council under the guidance of Church Wardens pulled all stops via constant virtual meetings to streamline operations and ensured the smooth running of the church. Though the year had its ups and downs, we thank the Parish for supporting us and thank Our Lord for guiding us as we tried our utmost best under the restrictive Lockdown protocols.

This report seeks to help portray the activities of the church which because of COVID 19, the church's life was disrupted, and all activities came to a standstill. It was uplifting to once again see the youth represented on council. This last happened in 2011 when Thato Mokoena represented the youth. It also seeks to highlight the endeavors undertaken by the Church Council amidst the prevailing situation to keep the fires burning. It also seeks to reflect on our achievements as a church during this difficult period; to give credit to those who played a part in volunteering their services to ensure that not only St. Francis of Assisi parishioners but the public at large access church

service every Sunday via You Tube as well as those who volunteered to serve as COVID 19 Team to ensure compliance with the COVID 19 protocols. This enabled the congregants to attend church services under relaxed conditions. The report also seeks to observe the passing of congregants during 2020 as well as the births.

FINANCES

2020 was a rollercoaster ride from a financial perspective. Due to COVID 19 pandemic, 2020 has been an extremely difficult year financially with some congregants being re-trenched, others suffering from financial constraints. The closing of church doors because of this pandemic added strain to the church's financial standing and resulted in the Dedicated giving and offerings being below budget. However, with some very prudent control over this year's expenditure, St Francis Church has managed to honour its payments to the Diocese as well as to its creditors and contribute to the needy to a certain extent. We thank all those parishioners who have faithfully followed through with their dedicated giving throughout 2020 amidst these trying times and appeal to those who have not yet committed to Dedicated Giving, to pray about this. The audited statements reflect the income and the movement of the parish finances and the continued stability of the parish.

Portfolios

The allocation of Portfolios was a challenging task due to few people save Church Wardens who served on the Council. Church Wardens had to fill some of the Portfolios to ensure smooth operation. Like the previous year, the Council again had a situation this year where the Pastoral Care portfolio did not have a leader and a Church Warden took that responsibility. Our thanks go to all council members who under these difficult situations offered their services to the church this year and for their endless enthusiasm and efforts in making our church functional and effective in all manner of ways.

The individual portfolio reports for the year have been placed in the entrance hall for your perusal. We are hoping that people who have not previously been on the Council will respond to a calling from God and step up to the plate. St Francis Church cannot run on its own. Your church needs you. God wants you to serve Him.

Achievements –

Although the portfolio reports are up on the board, we wish to highlight a few of the achievements attained during the past year.

COVID 19.

In line with the Covid 19 Protocols, the Covid 19 team comprising Council members and a health professional was established. The council approved the engagement of a company to sanitize all the church buildings every 4 weeks.

a) Parish Roll

During the period under review, the Communication Portfolio leader continued updating the parish roll as per the Council's resolution in preparation for getting all names and addresses onto the "My Anglican Website" which is used to communicate some announcements and church activities to the parishioners.

This has been a colossal task which has been slowed down by outdated details from some parishioners.

b) AV and Sound System.

New sound system was purchased thanks to the St Francis men's group for going out and getting three quotes from various suppliers. The council bought a camera for the Live streaming of church services weekly on social media platforms. The Men's fellowship has donated a second camera for live streaming purposes. Thanks to Siphwe Madonsela, Thembi Tondi and Andy Tondi. This has helped parishioners to view and participate in church services during the lockdown period.

c) Solar System

The solar system communication cable has been installed and fully commissioned. Thanks to Ossie for his input.

d) Garden/ Garden of Worship

The irrigation system has been serviced and repaired where needed.

f) Generosity

During the period under review, the church donated food parcels donated by parishioner to St. Matthew and St. Luke church in Eden Park and St James in Katilehong. Money was also donated to Johan and Jenny Prinsloo for the

outreach program that they were running in Alberton. St Francis continued to assist **Ekuphileni Respite Care and Support Centre** under the leadership of Mother Lulama amidst all the challenges it faced. We had an anonymous benefactor who helped us by paying the staff salaries for two months. This person donated R 41,177 which covered the staff salaries for two months. The benefactor was willing to donate for a third month if we needed it. We thank this benefactor for their generosity. The church received R 499,307 from the Estate of Ron Duhig.

g) **Hosts**

This year St Francis hosted three Diocesan Council meetings

Tithing & Offerings

Due to the Covid 19 Protocols, many parishioners could not fulfil their obligations thus Tithing could not meet the expected targets. Offering was far below budget due to the Covid 19 protocols.

Challenges

St Francis of Assisi Church is faced with the following challenges:

- Poor attendance of Sunday Services even though the Covid 19 restrictions have been relaxed.
- Lack of commitment and participation to church duties.
- The implementation of a diversified Praise and Worship and Free choruses as per the survey to reflect the complexion of the parish and to make St. Francis of Assisi a Relevant, Vibrant Christian Community.
- Support and attendance of Junior Worship
- Choir- more members to grow the choir.
- Audio Visual operators – more members especially the Youth required.
- Altar Servers- more youth-especially those confirmed to participate.

Opportunities.

Besides all challenges presented by the Covid 19, the Lockdown presented us with new opportunities such as the use of WhatsApp to communicate with all parishioners and the ability to distribute Pew Slips. The Live streaming of church services on social media platform was the pinnacle of our success in broadening our reach to the outside world. Thanks to Andy Tondi and his team for leading this initiative.

The Future

God willing, it is the wish of this council to meet all the challenges mentioned above and growing the church through:

- Greater and active participation of parishioners in church activities.
- Parishioners availing themselves for nomination as Church Wardens and Councilors.

Thank You's and Farewells

As the curtain falls, we thank the Parish for supporting us and thank Our Lord for guiding us as we tried our best to keep the fires burning amidst the Lockdown Laws. We thank all those people behind the scenes who continue to make St Francis run and fulfill its mandate. A special vote of appreciation to Bishop Charles May who was always willing to assist and give direction, the Archdeacon Father Justice Mhlungu who we consulted as and when necessary and all priests who stood in and rendered service to the parish during trying times of COVID 19 and the absence of a Rector. A special vote of thanks also goes to all who volunteered to participate in the Parish Covid Team to ensure compliance with the Protocols and keep the church doors open.

Thank you all. It has been a privilege serving you this year. This concludes the Church wardens report to Vestry.