

A few years ago the parish was in a financially difficult position and there was a possibility that we might have to amalgamate with another parish. So the bishop put in Gillian first and then I came in to help her — and then I took over.

Now, all of us working in the parish at the moment are volunteers, including me. We are reimbursed for our travel expenses and other expenses, but we're not paid.

What we are doing at the moment is raising up lay people to take on ministries in the parish, things that maybe traditionally people have thought the Rector did. For example, we have a lay person doing funerals and follow-up and I've got two, what we call, chaplains. They look after pastoral care and the hospital and ministry. I help them all when necessary, but they can carry on without me and do.

We've got a very enthusiastic group that look after activities and fundraising. We don't do as much fundraising as we used to. We do a little in order to pay the bills, and we have a future ministry fund to pay, hopefully, for someone in the future to take over the parish — maybe for two or three days a week with all the lay people still carrying on.

Financially, the parish is in a really good position at the moment and it's growing.

We're doing a lot more outreach into the community. We have a stall at the markets every month doing different things, sometimes selling coffee, sometimes selling cakes, but it's an opportunity for us to talk to people and let them know what we're doing and make that contact, which is very helpful.

We have our book fairs of course, which are now famous all over the district. It's a great wonder where all the books come from, but they do, every time we have it. They just appear from nowhere, thousands of books.

That's also been a really good ministry to the community, as well as the fund raising. It's a very good outreach to the community. We have people helping with the book fair who don't come to us to go to church.

Our house behind the church has become a ministry centre. We have offices here for myself and other



Des of the Diocese

Des McGuire speaks not from the pulpit, but off the cuff, about his life, Braidwood and St Andrews

people who are doing parish work. We have two rooms if my wife and I need to stay overnight. But we've also used those for emergency accommodation.

We have representatives on the board of the Life Centre, so we work very closely with the Centre. We have an

outreach fund, which was started by the dinner we ran last year on depression in the rural communities with Allan Hannaford. We don't give the money to individuals, but we fund projects in the community, mostly through the Life Centre. Where they

identify a need, we can help them with the funds and that's a really good partnership, because the Life Centre was started by the three churches in the first place.

Quite a number of the ladies are involved in their activities week-by-week — Helen Goddard, whose vision it was, is one of our parishioners.

We're setting up a management board for the Anglican hall on Wilson Street because we found that our congregation got so small that we didn't need it. We can do most of what we want to do. Rather than sell it we decided to offer it to the wider community as a resource, because we know that a lot of people like to use the hall for middle-size functions.

At the moment, the diocese is setting up a board of management, which will run the hall with community help. It's been neglected for many years. Hopefully that will be off the ground within the next couple of months, and we'll be doing it up and offering it to the wider community for functions, as well as having the odd function there ourselves.

A lot of clergy are now working part-time for the Church and part-time for something else. But we still have full-time people going in to full-time clergy — it's the country parishes that are finding it difficult to pay for a full-time person.

We're still ordaining people. Every year we ordain dozens of people, but a lot of them work part-time. Some work full-time. Smaller parishes like this one just simply can't afford it. It's over \$100,000 a year by the time you provide everything that is required for a full-time person. We can't do that.

BWD: What can be done to address this drift away from religion?

You've first of all got to show people that God exists and that God isn't responsible for the troubles in the world, as a lot of people think He is; and that God is important to them. When you get them to see that, they can begin to see that the Church has a place in their lives.

It's those steps you've got to take so people can see that God is relevant to them.

The Church has also got to change — and it is. Our Sunday worship is changing, too. For example, we have 'Church around a dinner' here, which

is very informal. We're finding that those kinds of congregations, in this area particularly, are the congregations that are growing.

We're not abandoning the morning service for those who like it, but doing something for those who don't find that relevant. We've got two generations, really, of people who've had no church experience.

BWD: How did you come to be in the ministry?

I've been involved with the church since age eight. When I was eleven, I decided God wanted me in the ministry, but it took me a lot longer than that to do something about it. I was a teacher first, in the public school system, and then at Cranbrook in the private school system.

I have a library degree and I started off in the primary school. I finished up running the school libraries and teaching in the high school.

It was there that the headmaster encouraged me to contemplate going into the ministry full time. He could see that that's what I wanted to do.

Then I went to Saint Marks in Canberra and studied theology. I was accepted by the Diocese for ordination. I served my first curacy in Cooma. I then was responsible for the parish in Chapman, helped to build

the church there, and then I went to Young as archdeacon and rector. I retired from there because I have severe rheumatoid arthritis and it got to the stage where I couldn't work.

I live at Barnard Estate on the Goulburn Road, so I live in the parish.

BWD: What are you offering in terms of services at the moment to people?

We have Holy Communion on Sunday. This service does vary from Sunday to Sunday because there are different ways we can do Communion. One of them is fairly informal, one is sung all the way through like it used to be in the old days — it's varied. There is also one every Wednesday at the church using the old prayer book.

On the second Friday of each month starting at 5pm we have a worship time, a prayer time. We have dinner and discussion. It's the night people come and go — whatever bit they want.

We have another group, a ladies' group that meets every Thursday, and that has a lot of ladies who come to church, and a lot who don't. They all mix together and chat, and people get to realise that we don't all have 'two heads'. It's a good forum and I'm trying to get something started for men in the same way. ■

