



Blackwood Uniting Church

the church on the roundabout

Blackwood Uniting Church is called by God to be an inclusive Christian community committed to justice, learning, service and care.

15 June 2009

Dear Members of Our Congregation

As you may recall following the Annual General Meeting of our Congregation in November last year, Council has been working on preparing a draft budget for 2010, in consultation with members of the Congregation. This has involved two planning sessions lead by Rev Rob Stoner and discussions at the May Congregational meeting, focussing on the questions “What is God calling us to be and to become in our time and place?” and “What is God calling us to do?” In this we have been looking at a vision for our ministry and mission for the next few years as a necessary basis on which to develop our budget.

In response to the question “What is God calling us to do? Table Group discussions at the May meeting identified 18 potential initiatives across six areas of mission.

Council has considered these initiatives which fall into two groups. Group A consists of ideas that fit within our ongoing mission and would require little additional resources to implement. Group B contains new ideas which are more innovative but which may require more effort or cost.

As it would not be possible to implement all of these great new ideas initially, we need to place some priority on those which we feel most called by God to undertake, engender excitement and for which we have collective energy. So Council is seeking the engagement of the whole Congregation to confirm and guide us as we continue with this process of discernment.

We are asking you to consider the ideas summarised in the Attachment to this letter and provide your feedback by Monday 29 June to me or to the Church Office. From this Council can work on developing the missional priorities which we believe God is calling us to at this time, which will reflect where we feel led to put our collective energy and resources over the coming years. This will assist Council in bringing a budgeting proposal to the Special Meeting of the Congregation set for Sunday 26 July.

Council looks forward to your participation in this crucial process and asks for your ongoing prayers as we seek to discern God’s call to Blackwood Uniting in the coming years.

Yours in fellowship

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Chairperson of Council

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Mission Initiatives – developed by the Congregation 17 May 2009

Each Table Group considered new initiatives in one of the following areas identified at the March Planning Day:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Inspiring Worship | 4. Discipleship |
| 2. Welcoming | 5. Open church |
| 3. Raising our profile | 6. Community Needs |

GROUP A (Initiatives which fit with ongoing programs)

2a. Follow-up baptisms (weddings and funerals): suggestion that participating Elder follow up

- Elders Ministry to action

2c. Regularly review systemic greeter arrangements to get the best result

- Elders Ministry to action

3a. What are we trying to do? Some work is needed in articulating our vision & what we are promoting to others.

- Council's Steering Group along with the new Communications Group (Comms Group)

3b. Supporting work of Comms Group

- key resource people plus everyone

3c. (i) Improve our public profile as BUC. Us to witness as Christians. Focus on activities that meet the needs of community. Finding the vision that invites commonality of purpose. Why do we want to raise our profile? What message do we want to give? Promote property as community facility.

- Comms Group, Life & Faith, Website

4a. To intentionally deepen our relationship with God and each other. Continue with Faith Sharing, Studies and Spiritual Practices.

- current programs, Elders (include mentoring)

4b. Bible/book studies. Short-term focus for a large number of people re discipleship

- Ministers and Elders

5d. Open up the Friday Friendship group to general public

- this is already happening (Mary Thomas and friends)

6a. Youth community study to ascertain youth community needs and fulfil them

- study already planned , Ian Penny & Elders
- implementing a program would belong to Group B

6b. Responding to the economic downturn, budgeting workshops, budget cooking

- Community Program, Life and Faith etc : extend to cover basic needs

GROUP B (New ideas/programs) [Arranged in Council's priority order]

5a. Community Program continues but expand to include Child & Youth Health Services (2 hrs Thurs pm 2 groups) – which will be ongoing with new groups of mothers

- Government looking for new premises; volunteers already investigating

5b. Second group of mothers & babies without facilities(?) for those continuing after 6 weeks. Offer this to families with baptisms. Ongoing Playgroup with Christian focus

- follows on from 5a. ; volunteers investigating

2b. Nurture a culture of welcoming. Make it a theme in worship & preaching e.g. passing the peace. Make us a welcoming community, don't just rely on rostered greeters

- at the very heart of being an inclusive community, and may require a deliberate process

5c. Building relationships with our local community through free meal gatherings

- both linking and meeting needs, volunteers already investigating

3c. (ii) Provide improved signage to publicise our programs
- some previous work; volunteers prepared to investigate

1a. Set up a system of feedback about inspiration in worship / add to website
- e.g. after service discussion groups

1b. Provide some sort of take home resource and/or on website as a reminder of lessons learnt from service (prayers)

1c. Conduct an alternative service for those who can't come on Sundays
- alternate time with attendees to determine style/form of worship, volunteers to research

6c. Community gardens. Create a community garden to foster home grown products – improve environment
- research required; volunteers interested; longer term

Prioritising

In considering these ideas Council affirmed the Group A ideas as building on our existing life & work and attempted to discern its own priorities and passion for Group B, as shown by the order above.

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Your Feedback (please tear off and return to Church Office by Tuesday 30 June) [add extra sheet if required]

Name (optional)

Group A

Do you affirm these initiatives which build on existing programs?

Are there any you would like to support (time, fund-raising etc)?

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Are there any you feel we should not take up?

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Group B

Please indicate which of these initiatives you believe God is calling us to take up and put them in priority order.

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Please indicate which initiatives you would like to support (time, ideas, fund-raising, energy etc)

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