

# Annual General Meeting

**Blackwood Uniting Church**  
**Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> November 2013**



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

**Congregational Meeting Agenda**  
**Sunday November 17<sup>th</sup> 2013**  
**Blackwood Uniting Church**

1.	Apologies and Attendance sheet		
2.	Minutes of Congregational meeting Sunday November 18 <sup>th</sup> 2012		3
3.	Matters Arising		
4.	Spoken Reports		
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	<i>including Guidelines on General Appeals for Money</i>		
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6.	Tabled Reports		
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	Playgroup	Marnie Agnew	18
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	Story Sundays	Marnie Agnew	19
	Messy Church	<i>see Rev Coral's report</i>	
	Community Program	Riki Owens-Bennett	20
6.3	Website	Karen Collins	22
6.4	Mission and Justice	Anne Magarey	23
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6.8	Library	Joy Belling	27
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7.	Reflection on Tabled reports		
8.	Next Meeting		
9.	Benediction: Ministers		

## **2. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting**

### **Blackwood Uniting Church Sunday 18 November 2012**

- Wendy Norris (chair of congregation) welcomed 83 people to the meeting and opened with an excerpt from a thoughtful article by Andrew Dutney entitled “Who is the Head of the Church?”
- The minutes of the 2011 AGM were accepted –consensus
- Ray Bown presented the first spoken report about the Mission plan for the next 2 years based on our vision statement:
  1. Justice
  2. Learning – celebrating
  3. Learning – community
  4. Service
  5. Care
- This mission plan was endorsed by the meeting-consensus.
- Phil Megaw presented treasurer’s report which included the projected budget for 2013 and a review of the 2012 budge. An offering increase is needed. Report received by consensus.
- Ray Bown reported on conversations with the Church of Christ in Blackwood. He presented 2 proposals for the meeting’s consideration
  1. Church of Christ will be responsible for worship in the National park on January 6 and Belair congregation will be represented as in previous years.
  2. Conversations with the church of Christ will continue next year. Both proposals were endorsed by the meeting with consensus.
- Nominations for positions as Elders, on Council and for Congregation Secretary were received and the meeting voted for all to be elected:

Angela Smith and Liz Collins as Elders

Alan Nannes, Bec English, Adrian Brown and Chris Bray for council

Dave Smith as Secretary of the congregation

Lynona Hawkins as Congregation Rep to Community Group
- They were warmly congratulated.
- Announcements about the Craft Fair on 23 and 24 November were made.
- Rev. Dean Eland presented his report regarding the core pastoral ministries plan and invited everyone to ask the question: where is your passion, so that the work load can be shared between the 5 areas outlined in the Mission statement. The meeting endorsed the report by consensus.

- Rev. Coral (Cogs) Smith presented the Outreach Report and outlined the plan for family and children's ministries for next year, which is available in a brochure. The report was endorsed by the meeting-consensus. The people involved in these areas were thanked for their work.
- Ray Bown presented the Church Council report and highlighted the busy year including the departure of Rev. Leanne Jenski, the visit of Carolyn Kitto and the work of Rev. Dean Eland as supply minister. Ian penny proposed a vote of thanks to Ray for his work on council over the years and as Chair of Council from which he is resigning this year. The meeting supported this and endorsed the report by consensus.
- Tabled reports were opened for questions. Regarding Friday night Meals Jan Furness told the meeting of Brian Langsford's part in providing bread for meals and this was noted and thanks given to him. The Christmas meal is on December 21.
- Wendy Norris reported that Urban Mission Network will meet at Blackwood Uniting on May 19 2013 and help will be needed to host that meeting.
- Rev. Cogs closed the meeting in prayer at 11.55am.

## **4.1 Minister's Report to the Congregational Meeting**

### **Minister of the Word's Report**

It is now 141 days since I commenced as Blackwood's 'other' minister. That is really a short space of time. That's little more than half of one football season! I have tried to spend it listening to hear the heart-throb of this community.

I was attracted to join in leadership by your embracing theology, epitomised in "*A Place to Consider the Possibility of God*". That's a good understanding of a faith community's identity and role!

Early areas of focus for me have been

- Reviewing how Blackwood's structures serve the function of ministry in this place
  - And how this enables or fosters 'spiritual oversight', strategic planning and pastoral care [which you'll hear more about at the Annual General Meeting of the Community on November 17<sup>th</sup>]
- Giving myself keenly to the task of preaching (and enjoying the discoveries of grace therein)
- Getting to know and working with worship leaders
- 'Looking Ahead' in sermon planning [the title of advance postings on the web page]
- Becoming familiar with and involved in Family Ministries
- Staff familiarisation, relationship-building and review
- Sharing in significant community moments including the "Service of Lament for Asylum Seekers" on August 25<sup>th</sup> and the "Taste of the Middle East Night" on September 14 (both highlights of the first 141daysfor me)
- Attending the various committees and councils of Blackwood Uniting (Finance, Property, Mitcham Hills Inter-Church Council, Co-operation with Blackwood Churches of Christ (where I preached on September 15th), "Circle of Friends")
- Being kept grounded by my weekly session with my "Kid's Hope" little Year 4 mate
- Thinking about 'future church'.

I perceive many strengths at Blackwood; the level of volunteer commitment, the spirit of giving and service, the well-established links with the community and a heart for justice as expression of our hope for the world.

At the Urban Mission Conference that we attended in September, Cogs and I heard from Dr Chris Baker of the William Temple Foundation in the UK about the church's provision of 'social capital'; in what ways does our church add to community assets and life? Blackwood has heaps of social capital.

Clearly the community programs are key in the overall life of the community. I witnessed a 'new (and different) community' at the Craft Fair over the penultimate weekend of October. But I find intentionality not always apparent; in what way are we offering any consideration of the 'possibility of God'? How we remain true to the God in our midst is a continuing point for reflection.

However, there is also a palpable grief here over what has been; youth and families have long since left (left the morning worship at least). Sometimes I wonder if our sense of loss in the church can blind us to the riches we still have.

I sit hammering the keypads to compose this report late at night (and after the deadline) after a long day at Synod/Presbytery. In the discussions of the sessions have been consideration of the "Changing Landscapes Working Group Report" to consider the ever-changing social and cultural context of the church. That report states, "*The Changing Landscapes Working Group*" has formed a view that the institutional systems and cultural patterns that have served us well in the past require urgent review and reform. Given the environment in which we now find ourselves, 'business as usual' will not suffice.

That Report usefully encourages us to think of the Church as both a movement of the Spirit of God into which we have all been drawn by the grace of God and an institution where we constantly shape structure and organisation to serve that movement. Clearly institutional belonging is not a feature of modern society, yet it is what we have rested upon.

The Report notes, among other things:

- The resourcing of ministry priorities that are currently unfunded,
- The challenges of pioneering ministry,
- The increasing number of part-time placements and the increasing need for ministers to follow bi-vocations in order to support ministry,
- The increasing dependence of congregations on income from property,
- The dilemma of the inequalities evidence by the divide between mission rich, resource poor congregations and mission poor, resource rich congregations.

That Group is proposing a 'Charter for a Pilgrim People", which calls the church to "*pledge ourselves to putting our hopes for the future of our church ahead of our comforts in the present and pledge ourselves to being brave, bold and creative in all our decision-making*". I would add, 'trusting in a faithful God'.

The Uniting Church is a community on a journey. The future cannot be avoided. Much of what we have known will no longer be. We must find ways of embracing our 'wider' communities and serving them in considering faith.

Sunday's (17<sup>th</sup> November) AGM will consider a 'strategic plan' for Blackwood for 2014, with emphasis upon 'building the future church' whilst maintaining our current activities of worship and care.

I look forward to exciting times of exploration and discovery as we seek to build future church together.

*Rev Phil Hoffmann*

## **Outreach Minister's Report**

After very satisfying although rather busy weekend, it is delightful to sit and have time to think! As I write this we had the **Roundabout Craft Fair** last weekend (I am sure Riki will say more about this in her report) and the **First Annual Family Ministry Team Lunch**, both are a big part of my ministry here at Blackwood.

Of course, **Friday Meals** is still running and it was delightful that through the *Blackwood Times* newspaper article we were able to get enough volunteers to keep the program running weekly, over 100 volunteers are involved, many from beyond the congregation! The people who come are starting to look forward to the Friday Night Christmas Meal, which is the high point of the year for them. The **Young Adult Group - YAG** -still gets together most Friday fortnights in term time. And we are still dialoguing and planning events with the **Blackwood Church of Christ**, the next will be a Blue Christmas service.

These are all good things, yet what I thought I would share with you as a way of reporting is the "think tank" session that we had at the Family Ministry Lunch, because in some ways most of these ideas span across a lot of what we do here at BUC. And the ones that don't maybe we can think about those and ask why not?

### **So what do we have to celebrate in Family Ministry?**

- Being together, connections and friendships!
- Food, lots of good food.
- Wonderful families.
- Growth and diversity
- Atmosphere
- Concepts working
- Being a part of a "new approach" & being open to it as a church
- Common faith is our bedrock.
- "More than a Sunday Church"
- Playgroup started in 2010, this is its 4<sup>th</sup> year.
- Some links developing with Community Program and Friday Meals.
- We are blessed by the good things that happen.

### **So what might we do differently or what's next?**

- How do we move on and continue to make connections with these families? Both current and past? Can we develop a more personal approach and develop ways of listening and contacting them?
- How can we encourage them to have ownership and partnership within the programs?
- How can we encourage the "home dads" who seem isolated?
- Perhaps, next year, a playgroup reunion/ teddy bears picnic or something to celebrate the 5<sup>th</sup> birthday?
- Family programs in school holidays? And who would be available?

We conclude with the thought that these BUC folks views of these programs are probably quite different to those folk who come! As we would have a different sense of belonging. **And that at the end of the day we hope they know that we are here for them should they need it!**

All these groups build what is called “social capital” they help strengthen the society around us by encouraging the good things of society. To do this we, as a church are using both our “religious capital” – the strength we have as a religious institution, and our “spiritual capital” - those beliefs in something beyond us that we simply call God and attitudes that invite us to consider reaching out to neighbour is an important thing to do.

Or to put it another way we care because God cares for us and we are sharing that caring where we can. Which is not a bad thing, in fact, it is a lovely thing to be able to do! Many blessings are the gift that is given and many blessings are received by us, too.

*Rev Coral Cogs Smith*

## **4.2 Church Council**

I have pleasure in presenting the Annual Report on behalf of your Church Council for 2012/2013.

### **Ministerial support**

At the time of the last Annual Council Report in November 2012 we had yet to finalise a ministerial appointment and were not expecting to do so for some time given the stage of the year and the number of ministers who were available to call at that time. Much to our joy a few months later in early 2013 we discovered that The Rev Phil Hoffmann was available to be considered. After an interview he was called by this congregation which he accepted, taking up his appointment with us mid-year 2013. From that point of time much has been done to consolidate Phil's ministry with us and to further the work and organisation of this church.

Prior to Phil's appointment we had interim ministerial support from The Rev Dr Dean Eland and the Rev Dr Adrian Brown both of whom played a significant role in leading, preaching, managing and assisting us to plan for the immediate future. Their role with us was appreciated and valued at our time of need. The Rev Robyn Caldicott assisted us by replacing The Rev Coral Smith during her long service leave earlier in the year and we benefitted from her support as well. We note and congratulate Robyn on her appointment to the Ascot Park Congregation as Minister of the Word.

On behalf of Council I wish to pay tribute to **The Rev Phil Hoffmann** for the work that he has done since taking up his appointment with us in June. His listening and reviewing of what we have done, and are doing, has been valuable and the Council has found his reflections and perceptions highly useful as we work together towards the future of this church. I believe that he has participated in some way within most groups in this church as he learns about what happens here. His work in progressing the directions for our mission areas for worship and pastoral care has been especially valued and we look forward to even further progress in 2014 as organisational and operational changes are finalised and fully implemented. His attention to highlighting the work of Elders and to rejuvenating their role is welcomed. Of special mention is his leadership in worship as we all look forward each Sunday to his preaching, humour and biblical insights assisted by his knowledge of the Middle East. Thanks Phil with the support of your family we have appreciated your exceptional leadership, care and presence with us.

The **Rev Coral Smith (Cogs)** has given our church considerable support this year working extra time to cover some of the work which could not be covered by our part time replacements. Your support over the last 12 months Cogs has been superb in providing the constant face amongst all the changes. Thank you for the leadership you have provided especially for the Community Program and the Family Ministry, the leadership you have given us for special events and services plus the extra demands that you have picked up because they needed to be done, all on top of personal demands such as a knee operation. I believe that Cogs' work was highlighted in the recent Craft Fair which was highly successful and improved on the previous year's operation. We value your work Cogs and thank you for the range of tasks that you lead and with which you are involved. It is important to note that Cogs works far more time than the 0.5 time for which she is paid and that is of concern to council and a challenge for us all for 2014 if we are to continue the work that she is doing. To continue to expect Cogs to meet the mission objectives and to undertake the wider church involvement expected of her is not something which can be sustained.

I wish to note the work of **Riki Owens-Bennett** our Office and Community Coordinator who hasn't had an easy year with some health and related issues. Thank you Riki for what you have achieved in spite of the difficulties that you have faced. We wish you every best wish for the remainder of

2013 and trust that the support that you have received from our ministerial staff and others has assisted and will further enhance what you do. We were all pleased that Riki had a successful performance review during September which made mention of the improvements that she has made. Congratulations Riki on your major role in the success of the recent Craft Fair.

## **Achievements**

- **Mission Areas and Priorities for 2014** - Much time has been spent by Council in coordinating our Mission Areas and determining directions. This has resulted in significant progress especially in the latter part of the year. Council priorities for 2014 are to continue our focus on Families and Children, the Community Program and to take steps towards building our understanding of what could be a future church. All this in addition to maintaining work in the other mission areas. Of special note there will be an re-emphasis on the role of elders in undertaking pastoral Care in the church.
- **Church Communication** - Several improvements have been made in the way we communicate what we do in the church, this has improved the Newsletter, Notice Boards, and Web Site. We expect further improvements to be made later to visually and practically enhance access to church buildings via the back entrance of the church as this has become more the norm.
- **Flora Mansawan Trust Fund** - Jane Bassham with the support of Alastair Blake and Brian Pickering have established a trust fund to raise money to finance the progressive fitting of prostheses for Flora's leg. A Covenant of Partnership has been agreed to between the Uniting Church Synod of SA, Blackwood U/C Church and the GKI Church in West Papua. The small Flora Mansawan Group lead by Jane will provide the initiative in fund raising for this Trust Fund in the New Year. Congratulations to Jane and her group for what has been achieved thus far.
- **Catastrophic Fire Rating Day Policy and the Church's use as a Bushfire Retreat** -Our policy on activities held in the church on Catastrophic Fire Rating Days has been reviewed and clarified and the CFS approved name to advertise within the community for the use of our church facilities on such days is "Bushfire Retreat". This title will be used on all notices advising the community of the use of our church as a retreat on Catastrophic Fire Rating Days. The web site will be amended to use the correct title.
- **Guidelines on General Appeals for Money and the Disaster Fund** - The Council has agreed on guidelines for general appeals for money which includes the Disaster Fund and these will be put before you for approval today. This has come about as a consequence of a need to better manage the collection of money for causes both inside and outside the church to avoid too many collections or appeals and to spread out requests. The assistance of the Justice Mission group advice on this process continues to be valued.
- **Blackwood Church of Christ and Blackwood Uniting Church Cooperation** - Regular meetings have been held with representatives of both churches which has resulted in a combined Service in the Park in January, a combined service for Palm Sunday, discussions with both our Council and State Members and a combined BBQ lunch in August in the Blackwood Community Hall. It is expected that we will have a combined service to begin Advent to round out the year. Further services are tentatively planned for January and for Easter in 2014. Our co-operation is progressing steadily.
- **Fun and Fundraising** - The Council has approved several Fun and Fund raising events for this year and these have included a Middle East Night in September and Fun night on 23rd

November with "Subtle Bricks". We are indebted to Chris Bray, Bec English and Phil Hoffmann for their leadership in organising these nights. Angela Smith also arranged a garden party to fun and fun raise on the 2nd of November. The September fun and fundraiser was a huge success and it is anticipated, at the time of writing, that the garden party will also be effective in 'fun raising' with some fund raising on the side.

- **Safe Place Signs** - To remind people of our church being a safe place in accordance with Uniting Church policy we have had signs displaying this policy placed in all rooms of the church. A Safe Place statement is to be read at all council and church meetings.
- **Review of the Community Program** - Council has employed The Rev. Dr Dean Eland to undertake a review of the Community Program. This report is expected to be received at the December meeting of Council. We anticipate the report and its recommendations will provide us with a stronger direction for 2014 and beyond.
- **Other issues expected to be addressed in 2014** - the development of policies and practices in relation to Privacy and Occupational Health and Welfare and a review of the membership roll.

Special thanks to all Council members, especially the Executive, for their tireless work and to members of the Finance and Property Committees who do so much to maintain and improve our church.

*Ian Penny  
Chair BUC Council  
Nov 2013*

## Guidelines on General Appeals for Money

### Types of Appeals

#### A. Official Fund Raisers

1. Planned Collections in line with our Blackwood Uniting Church Mission Budget i.e. those planned and advertised in line with our Mission Budget e.g. covering *Justice, Worship, Community Learning, Community Service, and Care*.
2. Official Appeals for Money from the Uniting Church both State and Federal. i.e. the recent national Bushfire Appeal and would include known appeals such as the Uniting Church Lenten Appeal and the National Council of Churches' Christmas Bowl Appeal each Advent.
3. Disaster Appeals i.e. the giving of funds in response to disasters with priority to overseas natural disasters which are not a consequence of war.

#### B Once Off Requests

1. Requests from other churches.
2. Incidental requests from individuals for sponsoring e.g. 40 Hour Famine or to attend conferences.

### Decision Making

#### Group A

Each of the Mission Committees and Council advise the Justice Committee of any planned appeals to be made during the year in February or mid March and a schedule published early April together with a time line to avoid overlap. This would include known appeals from the Uniting Church and the National Council of Churches' Christmas Bowl Appeal in Advent. This schedule should be provided to Council for ratification prior to publication.

**Official Appeals** by the Uniting Church made from time to time should be considered by the Justice Committee and the Council Executive advised as to the direction to be taken.

**Disasters** that crop up from time to time need to be considered quickly by the Justice Committee and a decision made about if and how they should be supported. The Council Executive should then be advised to release funds held in the **Disaster Fund**. An appeal to replenish these funds should be held as soon as possible after funds released.

#### Group B

##### ***Once Off Requests***

1. Requests from other churches and/ or uniting church organizations.eg building appeals should be decided by the full Council with advice from Executive and/or Finance Committee.
2. Requests from individuals:
  - 2.1 ***For sponsorships etc.***

If consistent with an official Uniting Church sponsored or authorized event e.g. 40 Hour Famine it is approved by the ministers and the Chair of BUC Council. (To be done by email)

### ***2.2 To attend a conference***

Provided it is consistent with BUC mission objectives and the **funds are available within the Mission budget** for that particular mission area, approval can be given by the Executive, or if urgent, by the Chair of Council. For example interstate or intrastate conferences for Family ministry such as Godly Play or Kids Hope

**If the funds are not available within a mission area** requests can be made in writing direct to Council or the Council Executive for approval detailing how this activity meets the mission priorities of the church. This may involve a collection if there are insufficient funds to meet such a request.

### ***2.3 Other requests for fundraising***

Written requests can be considered by the Council Executive and dependent on the demonstrated value of the cause to the Church or the wider Uniting Church can be approved by the full Church Council on the recommendation of the Executive.

### **4.3 Finance and Stewardship Committee**

The Finance and Stewardship Committee comprised six members:

- Phil Megaw (Chairperson)
- Jan Furness (Church Council Treasurer)
- Brian Pickering (Community Program Treasurer & Property Committee Treasurer)
- Mark Gill
- Ray Bown (Recorder)
- Adrian Brown (March to May 2013)
- Phil Hoffmann (since June 2013)

Key tasks of the Committee include oversight of church finances, supporting the treasurers in their roles, planning future stewardship/giving programs and preparing the annual overall church budget. We also receive feedback on the status of the Helen Lee Trust Fund and the recently established Flora Mansawan Trust Fund.

We have met regularly through the year. Thank you to all the members for their commitment. Again this year Jan Furness and Brian Pickering have continued their very valuable, regular and time consuming work as the treasurers in ensuring that payments are made and correctly recording all transactions. Ray Bown has taken on the task of Recorder and monitors offering income patterns.

Audited financial statements for the accounts of the church for the financial year ended 31 December 2012, were presented at the mid-year 2013 Congregation meeting.

Mission budget documents for 2014 are provided as a separate report.

*Phil Megaw  
Chairperson, Finance and Stewardship Committee  
11th November 2013*

***Mission Budget for 2014***

Please visit our [Congregation](#) page on our website to download the Mission Budget for 2014 Presentation.

*Continued...*

***...Mission Budget for 2014***

Please visit our [Congregation](#) page on our website to download the Mission Budget for 2014 Presentation.

*Phil Megaw  
Chair, Finance and Stewardship Committee  
13th November 2013*

## **6.1 Property**

### **1. Ministry Committee**

Chairman: **Tony Otworowski**  
Secretary: **VACANT**  
Treasurer: **Brian Pickering**  
Members: **Bob Lyon , Graham Brown, Danny Goldsmith, Russell Gear, Lisa Haddrick, David Hawkins, John Hewitt, Phil Marlow, Geoff McLean, Jane Palmer, Ray Pentland, Meg Pentland, Bob Potter, Jean Potter and Keith Rodda**

### **2. Finance**

#### **Position at 31 August 2013**

2.1 Opening Balance 1 January 2013	\$
2.2 Total income	\$ <i>(includes Garage Sale proceeds)</i>
2.3 Total revenue expenditure	\$
2.4 Total Capital expenditure	\$
2.5 <b>Total Sundry &amp; other expenditure</b>	<b>\$</b>
2.6 Closing Balance at 31 August 2013	\$

### **3. Headline Achievements for Last Reporting Period**

- 3.1 New computer for Minister procured & installed
- 3.2 Hard flooring stripped and repolished
- 3.3 New Manse leasing arrangements commenced 01-07-2013 for 12 months at \$410/week
- 3.4 New colour TV with DVD procured
- 3.5 New room hire process & system developed
- 3.6 High chairs for community group provided
- 3.7 Christmas star renovated and rewired
- 3.8 All routine maintenance tasks completed as per programme

### **4. Your Property Ministry Making a Difference in 2013 supporting and celebrating our mission**

Your Property Ministry is a dedicated team of people who share their enthusiasm and commitment for our mission by using their skills, experience and time to maintain and improve the facilities at Blackwood Uniting Church.

Our goal is to ensure we can continue to provide a safe and flexible environment to support community activities and mission initiatives at Blackwood.

The Property Ministry is always looking for new members, so if you are able to spare some time and want to join an active friendly group supporting our mission at Blackwood, please contact any member of the team.

### **5. Property Ministry Secretary Required**

Our long serving Secretary, Bob Lyon, stepped down this year and anyone who may be interested in taking up this role please contact Tony Otworowski or Bob Lyon.

## **6.2 Community Outreach**

### ***Playgroup***

As we come to the end of the fourth year of Roundabout Playgroup we are finding that Playgroup runs smoothly, children and adults know what to expect and appreciate the diversity yet the routines of the program, relationships continue to be built, and parents/grandparents continue to volunteer to help with storytelling, leading the songs and preparing craft materials. We have between 50 and 60 families on the roll at any point in time, and a weekly attendance of between 20 and 30 families, though numbers have been down a bit lately, for no immediately apparent reason. We know that both Belair Primary School and St John's Grammar are setting up playgroups, causing Belair UC to decide to close their Tuesday playgroup at the end of 2013, but we have no idea at this stage how they will affect us. Baby Playgroup is once more on hold. The two groups we had last term disbanded as mums went back to work or decided to meet on a different day.

Around a third of the families bring two children and they really appreciate our volunteers, especially Bruce Marriott and John Whitbread, who help mums with the older children, and our hospitality volunteers who love holding babies. We thank all our volunteers for their continued faithfulness in providing hospitality and care to our families and support to the team. Since term 3 Sue Fisher (formally the coordinator of the Community Program crèche) has joined the team, and we appreciate the skills she brings. Current crèche workers, Shannon and Charlotte, also help out on occasions when extra help is needed. We continue to have a cooperative relationship with the Community Program crèche team to the benefit of both programs.

This year has seen the purchase of a new slide and the donation of a mini trampoline to add to our outside play equipment, the addition of a raised garden bed which the children enjoy watering (and recently tasted some 'early' baby carrots pulled from the garden), and the replacement of the soft fall round the play equipment; the purchase of train sets for both playgroup and Sunday morning church, and a new doll's house (thanks to Bruce Marriott for putting it together), which will now stay in church as we have an offer of a solid doll's house to replace the old battered one in the playroom. Grateful thanks to the members of the congregation who donated the trampoline and doll's house, to Meg Pentland for the patchwork wall hanging to cover the War Games board in the Hewitt Hall, to the Property Committee for the improvements to the Hewitt Hall to help with the resonating sound, and to those who undertake on-going maintenance of equipment and facilities, keeping playgroup a safe place.

Next year we see as being 'business as usual'. We have no plans for any major expenditure though the soft fall should be replaced annually and there will no doubt be on-going maintenance and replacement of broken toys etc. The bulk of our on-going expenses will be the cost of consumables – paint, paper and cardboard, craft materials. We use recycled materials wherever we can. Raising the fee to \$4 has been accepted positively by the families and means we can cover the cost of all our purchases and also contribute to other areas of Family Ministry e.g. Messy Church.

There is some crossover of families with Mainly Music and Messy Church and we continue to look for ways to keep connected with the families once they leave Playgroup. The reality – and the challenge – is that most families are not looking for something spiritual, so we simply trust that we are planting seeds so that one day if we are needed, the families will know BUC is a place they can come to, with confidence that they will be taken seriously and treated with care and respect.

Being God's presence in the community, in fact – more than a Sunday church, alternative, family-oriented and inviting them to consider the possibility of God.

And finally a word of thanks to Rev Cogs, who has so well understood our vision of a community minister for the not-on-Sunday groups, and provides wise and pro-active leadership to the team, and wise and compassionate pastoral care to our families. Pastoral care issues arise in many ways, and have included mums with depression, helping out-of-work parents find work, providing a listening ear for mums (& dads & grandparents) struggling with the terrible twos & threes or other life challenges, talking with families new to the area, and much more. Thank you, Cogs.

*Marnie Agnew on behalf of the Playgroup team*

### **Mainly Music**

Mainly music has had a successful first year and we anticipate this continuing in 2014.

Bev Eccleston and Carys Penny have led a team of 8 regular workers and a group of 14 volunteers to provide a program which honours the aims of mainly music and seeks to introduce the possibility of knowing God, to families with preschool children. Most of these families do not attend church and may not have ever been involved in a church community.

Term 1 was a steep learning curve for us all and in term 2 our numbers increased dramatically. We had a short waiting list but all families have now been included. We no longer have a waiting list which is good as it is difficult to manage. We wish to keep the average attendance of the group to 20 families so that the team can form relationships with them and they with each other. This can mean up to 40 children though some of these are babies and not participating fully.

We have had two special events this year. Mothers' Day was the first, when mothers were thanked and celebrated for their role in the family. Fathers' Day was similar and many fathers and grandfathers came to participate in the session. Both parents were given gifts and made to feel very special. Children's birthdays are also celebrated with gift giving and balloons. Generosity is one of the five values of mainly music which set us apart from other secular groups in the community. The other values are Connection, Creativity, Celebration and Honour,( the value we place on all of life and characterises our behaviour and our interaction.)

Our team of workers was depleted during the year due to regular helpers going away for holidays and family commitments. However we have been blessed as others have filled the gaps. The volunteers who make cakes for morning tea have been very faithful and appreciated. Visitors are always welcome to come and join the fun.

*Bev Eccleston and Carys Penny (Joint Coordinators)*

### **Story Sundays**

Story Sunday has had a mixed year. The Easter Story Sunday was attended by 5 families and 12 children, but others have had none. There are 3 families who attend 'regularly' (i.e. when they can), and participation in the story and activities by these children and their parents is enthusiastic and thoughtful, often with surprising results. For example, 4 year-old Scarlett's picture for the Lord's Prayer where she wove the water (which accompanied 'our daily bread' in the story) and God's Kingdom 'on earth as it is in heaven' into a marvellous picture with a glittery starry sky and a

flowing river on a bright red background... red being the colour used in the pictures of love and forgiveness in the story.

However, while we don't want to lose Story Sunday and would like to have it there for children to grow into, we think most of the children in Messy Church families, at whom Story Sunday is aimed, are still too young. As the calendar for 2014 doesn't lend itself to regular Story Sundays on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month (owing to where Easter falls, among other things), we have changed our approach for next year, integrating Story Sunday and Godly Play stories with the Messy Church program, and having two special Story Sundays for Pentecost and in October when there is no Messy Church.

My thanks to the dedicated Story Sunday team who have been so supportive, and who have enjoyed exploring the stories and theological questions through Godly Play with me whenever there have been no children – nothing has ever been wasted!

My thanks also (again) to the members of the Helen Lee Trust, who once again supported me financially to go to the Godly Play National Conference in Melbourne in April. We use the Godly Play story-telling method in Messy Church as well as Story Sunday and we always find the children are totally engaged.

*Marnie Agnew*

### ***Messy Church***

*see Rev Coral Cogs Smith's Minister report*

### ***Community Program***

This year certainly started rough with continuing health issues for me but the Community Program operated with minimal difficulty thanks to those who stepped in during my absences. A massive thank you to Shannon, Sue, Charlotte, Meg, Rerv Cogs, and my regular volunteers Judith & Janet for helping the classes run smoothly. It is a testament to their dedication and the Community Program itself, for being able to run so well during this time.

Our regular fundraising events occurred as part of our timetable and raised a good amount similar to last year's efforts. These are looked forward to by many class members and I am regularly asked when these will be held. This year we added an extra fundraising event, the Christmas in July lunch, to aid Beacon Emergency Relief in the winter months. This was well received by class members who donated a large number of items in addition to cash for Beacon to pass on to their clients. Beacon Coordinator, Ailleen Templeton, was delighted with the response and we hope to repeat this event in 2014 for Beacon.

This year has seen a few changes with classes; gaining new tutors, trying new classes, some classes taking a break this year, and these changes will likely continue into next year with the changing of some tutors as others step down. Art continues to be popular especially with the Art for Beginners class being offered on Wednesday afternoons. A new mosaics tutor has seen the class slowly gain interest with new members attending on a regular basis. Yoga and Pilates also remain popular, as does all four Patchwork & Quilting classes. Next year will see the reintroduction of Zumba at a slightly later time and the addition of a chair-based Yoga & Meditation class, whilst the Beaded Jewellery class will no longer be offered.

The 2013 Roundabout Craft Fair & Exhibition has been and gone already, with mostly positive feedback for the event in general. As with all events, there is always tweaking and improvements to be done for next year. The earlier dates were well received and the weather was considerably better this year too. After initial concerns of not having our infamous Garden stall, it was fantastic to see a group gather together in the month leading up to the Fair and create a wonderful offering of plants to sell. It was a great effort and I am thankful to all who were involved! As usual the Cafe created tasty food and many good comments were passed on about the quality of the meals offered. I must not forget the massive team of volunteers who help set-up, fill various roles, and pack-down this huge event, as without these people the event would be extremely difficult to run. In general, a massive thank you to everyone who helped put on the Craft Fair!!!

Financially, the Craft Fair did well despite my concerns regarding the earlier dates and changes in the garden stall. More than 30 stall holders attended this year and the crowd appeared to have a steady flow. Whilst the finances are still being confirmed, the numbers are on par from last year. So far, approximately \$7,000 has been banked – from which the BUC Mission & Justice will have funds for their projects, donation will be made to the Act for Peace Christmas Bowl, in addition to the donations made to the Women's and Children's Hospital Renal Unit and the trust fund for Flora. Numbers won't be finalised until mid-December once the Patchwork & Quilt raffle is drawn, but the raffle is doing well and hoping to raise a similar amount to last year. Overall, I feel the Craft Fair was once again a great success and I even had one raffle prize winner tell me how impressed she was with the range, that it surpassed the one at the Wayville Showgrounds, and after attending ours she went home and told everyone on Facebook that they must attend. What great publicity!

At the moment, we are now working with Rev Dean Eland as he conducts his review of the Community Program and what we might be able to do better. I welcome Dean and look forward to what insights he can provide us for the coming years of the Community Program, and maybe beyond. From my observations he has had many conversations and has gained a good insight to what goes on here. Thank you to all who have participated and provided input to this process.

As for the Community Program itself, we have three more weeks until the end of the year, and we will celebrate this with an end-of-year Christmas lunch. I hope to have some simple games and fun activities for those attending to participate in. Planning has already commenced for next year, thanks to holding the Craft Fair earlier, and it has allowed me to start thinking ahead rather than jumping in at the deep end at the start of term one. Next year is the 40 year anniversary of the Community Program and I really want to provide the celebration it rightly deserves. I have many ideas and now the Craft Fair has passed, I can turn my focus towards the coming 12 months.

It was once again been an enjoyable year as Coordinator despite the numerous hurdles which have presented themselves. I am immensely grateful for the support, compassion and understanding I received from many here at BUC. This has been valuable. I have continued learning in this position of Coordinator and would love to keep trying new things next year, but only time will tell.

*Riki Owens-Bennett*  
*Community Program Coordinator*

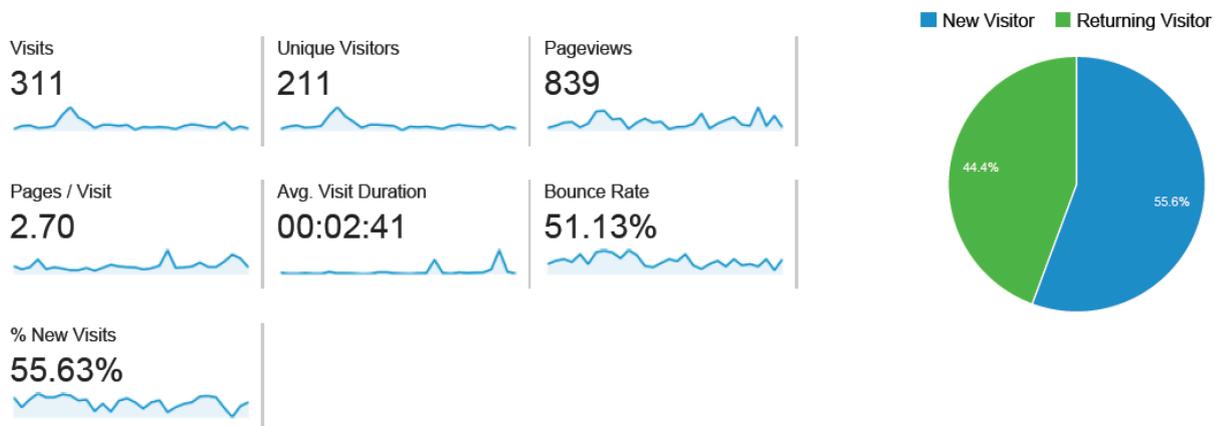
## 6.3 Website

The BUC website (<http://blackwood.unitingchurchsa.org.au>) has been through some exciting changes over the few months since our last report.

Two training sessions were hosted by us on May 14<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> with Al Brockelhurst, of the UC Congregational Websites team. In addition to some Uniting Church people from other congregations, we also had two people from the Natural History Society of South Australia attend. About 15 people from our BUC community took part in one or both sessions. The sessions were good covering a lot of material, but we will be following these up with our own smaller tutorial sessions where our team members can get more one-on-one guidance on how to do what they'd like to do for our website.

As we try to reach out to our wider community through all our various programs, the website has had some success in attracting "New Visitors" to our pages. This can be seen from the September analytics (the October ones are not yet out at the time of writing and it will be interesting to see what happens as a result of the Roundabout Craft Fair and Exhibition event pages).

### 211 people visited this site



Al Brockelhurst was instrumental in our first attempt to do a live webcast of the [Celebrating of Peter Collins' Life](#) service. There were some technical hitches (live 'n learn), but the possibilities for making this sort of broadcast available for more of our services, especially Christmas, are being looked at now by the IT and website teams and we are all excited about these developments. The IT team are also making digital recordings of the services and these will soon be made available. Please ask if you're interested.

Rev Phil Hoffmann has developed an information page with Riki's help for our Worship and Music Leaders called "[Worship Leading Resources](#)" under Downloads. Last month's statistics showed this page to be the third most visited page on our website!

Do take time to review the news articles that you also see in your newsletter as they offer you even more interactive information on many of the items.

We always have more room for people who would like to share further development ideas for the website or get involved. Perhaps you have a particular area of interest you'd like to see made available? Don't worry about needing to be a geek – it's all pretty easy (I promise!) and training will be provided. Please get in touch with Karen Collins via [buc.website@gmail.com](mailto:buc.website@gmail.com). *Karen Collins*

## **6.4 Mission & Justice**

The Justice Group was convened early in the year, after consultation with Rev Dr Dean Eland, the BUC supply minister. Members were Ian Penny, Council representative; Enid Innes, Christa Megaw, Malcolm McArthur, Ewan Hazeldine, Jane Bassham and Anne Magarey. Anne took on the role of coordinator of the group.

Proposed activities for the year were decided upon, with key people from the group supporting different activities. These activities were based upon special Sundays and weeks, outlined in the UCA SA Calendar.

This year we have supported:

- Reconciliation Sunday 26 May
- Environment Sunday 2 June
- NAIDOC Week 7-14 July
- Refugee and Migrant Sunday 25 August
- Social Justice Sunday 29 September
- Christmas Bowl.

A special Service of Lament for Refugees and Asylum Seekers was conducted at BUC on 25 August. This was well attended, with people from other denominations and Greens Senator Sarah Hanson Young present. Mark Riessen, from the Church of Christ, participated.

Proceeds from the cake stall at the Craft Fair will support ongoing work.

*Anne Magarey*

## **6.5 Urban Mission Network**

Thank you to all involved with the meeting we hosted at BUC in June. It was appreciated by the group.

Next meeting is at Uniting College Brooklyn Park on Thursday November 21 6pm for a 6.30pm start. Please contact us if you would like to go and we can carpool.

In February 2014, there are 2 workshops for Church Councillors at Pilgrim Centre. These workshops have been helpful in the past for other groups.

Please follow the church website for bulletins and updates.

*Wendy Norris*

## **6.6 Kid's Hope**

This year, we have nine men and three women from our church working at the Blackwood Primary School mentoring students as part of the World Vision Kids Hope Program. There are a further 5 people having a rest for the year.

The Church and the School have been partners for now 6 years.

The mentors are working across a range of ages within several classes. Each operating differently according to the needs and interests of the child, some constructing model engines, others small cars or painting besides a bit of school work where this is helpful. The main goal is to develop a positive relationship with the children and support them to see their school experience as positive and interesting. Later this term we will be meeting with the parents and students to gain and deepen the relationship with the child and their families. The school is very supportive and grateful for the support we are giving their children and the Christian Support Worker is accommodating and supportive of each of us. We are always on the lookout for more mentors so if you are willing and able to support a child by mentoring them for one hour a week for each of the terms (give or take holidays etc) I would appreciate your call.

Kids Hope, a World Vision Program, meets the needs of vulnerable children in our community and is one way in which we (Blackwood Uniting Church) show God's love in a constructive and purposeful way.

In addition to the people working as described above in Blackwood Primary School we have another skilled church member mentoring the School's debating team which gained success at the State Primary Schools Debating Competition during third term. Another has volunteered to take the School Council Minutes in meetings; subsequently the school will pay \$30 per meeting into the Flora Mansawan Trust Fund. We all feel very much a part of the primary school community and are valued members of the school's support group.

*Ian Penny  
Kids Hope Coordinator Blackwood Uniting Church  
Ph - 8278 4114 / Email - pennyic@bigpond.net.au*

## **6.7 Mitcham Hills InterChurch Council (MHICC)**

Comprising at least 10 local Churches, the Council enables ideas to be shared, offers more co-operation between denominations and provides a forum for suitable decision making for our district.

A major programme is the ongoing financial support for the CPSW's (Chaplains) in most local schools. Recently at both Services, we welcomed the CPSW from Blackwood Primary School, Dianne Deed who shared her joy and positivity in working with the children there, especially those with special needs. Dianne appreciates the way she is valued, and she values those among us who are involved in Kids Hope.

Prior to the August meeting we participated in a Workshop on Receptive ecumenism (renamed by Rev Phil as responding to other's beliefs.) This topic challenged us to learn to celebrate the various differences between us and other denominations, after all, we are all part of God's world.

*Bev Eccelston*

### ***Beacon Emergency Relief***

The September Beacon News letter has been available in the foyer for the past few weeks. Hopefully you have been able to read it.

Special mention should be made of our own Community Program, who supplied gifts and food for **CHRISTMAS HAMPERS IN JULY**. Eighteen hampers including a cooked chicken each, bought with cash donations, were packed, distributed and gratefully received.

The Lions Club of Blackwood will again assist us in packaging **CHRISTMAS HAMPERS** for distribution to twenty of our client families in December. Three strong, active men from this church volunteered at the Lions' Shed through the month of September, amounting to \$840 added to our bank balance which can be used for administration. This partnership with the Lions' Club forges a strong link within the community.

The Green Dispensary and Blackwood BankSA will again be supporting BEACON through their Christmas tree donations. Please check them out!

**Our Coordinator AILLEEN TEMPLETON'S** resignation has been regretfully accepted. Due to Aileen's compassionate understanding of people, and her administration skills, the program is well recognized amongst other agencies and clients. As volunteers we have greatly admired these skills and her energy in following up clients, grant money, and community awareness.

If you know of someone who could help with part of the job Aileen has been doing, please contact her (M 0410 002 909), Bridgid Medder (Chairperson of the Mitcham Hills InterChurch Council), or Gloria McArthur (8278 1294).

*Gloria McArthur*

## **6.8 Library Report**

The library's aim is to support the mission of the church in its commitment to justice, learning, service and care. This is achieved by purchasing material and selecting appropriate books, DVDs and CDs from donated items.

Recent additions include "Jesus through Middle Eastern eyes" by Kenneth Bailey which is a good reference book and "The good life" by Hugh Mackay which has been popular with the congregation.

Several new books have been added on Spirituality. These include "Children's spirituality" by Christopher Nye and "The Celtic way of prayer: recovery of religious imagination" by Esther de Waal.

Andrew McDonough's humorous talk at a recent library meeting was interspersed with animated stories about "Cecil the sheep", "Webster the duck", and "Basil and the Echidnas". Several of his books have been added to the library collection.

This year we have created a new section in the library for Mainly Music parents so they can borrow books for their children.

The "Books for Bibliography" brochure has recently been updated and can be downloaded from the church's website.

Thank you to all those who have donated books, CDs and DVDs to the library, and to all those who have suggested new items.

*Joy Belling, Librarian*

## **6.9 Synod & Presbytery Meeting**

Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> October to Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2013  
Adelaide West Uniting Church

At a service on Wednesday night Dr Deidre Palmer was installed as the new Moderator of the Synod of SA and the Chairperson of the Presbytery. She urged that engagement with one another in conversation be embodied in a “Community in Christ, Living Compassion and Hope”.

### **Some key issues;**

- Rev Rob Brown, Executive Officer of UnitingCare of SA spoke of Uniting Church agencies and schools.  
He spoke about risk management and our relationship with them going into the future. This was a passionate and emotional topic and created much discussion. It seemed there was not enough information to make an informed decision and it was decided to delay this until next year. The proposal was reworded.  
That the Presbytery and Synod resolve to;

*Request UnitingCare SA continue its intended dialogue with all agencies and schools with a view to presenting to the 2014 Presbytery & Synod options for maintaining an appropriate expression of that relationship.*

*The dialogue will take into account the expressed value that the church places in the relationship with agencies and schools whilst also giving consideration to risk management.*

- Recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in the Australian Constitution. This proposal was passed by consensus.
- Ben Myers presented two bible studies & introduced the relevance of ancient theologians, pastors and thinkers within the context of our world today.
- Recognition of Lay Preachers who had served 40 years in their communities. Two of these were Enid Ninnes and Wes Bray.
- The Changing Landscapes Working Group discussion on future direction of the church. This work and discussion is ongoing.

These are only a few of the key points.

The discussions and deliberations of this meeting were embodied in worship; song, prayer and communion.

*Jan Furness*

## **6.10 Dried Fruit Sales**

### **Dried Fruit sales since July 2013**

At an Executive meeting of the BUC Council on 16 July 2013, approval was given to allow for half of the profits from dried fruit sales to go to Frontier Services for Alice Springs Oldtimers, and the remaining half to Motor Neurone Association specifically to help provide speech assistance in the form of iPads with speech programs to sufferers who can no longer speak.

Purchases since 17/7/13 to now (paid for up front by Geoff and Mary Thomas and reimbursed), have involved 4 invoices totalling \$3,777. Profit on these invoices (disregarding stock on hand) is \$268.50 plus \$240 already given to the Community Program from fruit sales at the Roundabout Craft Fair & Exhibition.

We have had our final order for 2013 so sales will be all profit. There will be a distribution of profits according to the above split at the end of January.

Special thanks to the Tuesday Bible Study girls who have adopted this program now that I cannot speak so easily. It means that the suppliers Lofflers, Frontier Services and MND can all still benefit from this venture.

*Regards Mary Thomas*