

Annual General Meeting

Blackwood Uniting Church
Sunday 15th November 2015



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 15th 2015

Blackwood Uniting Church

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9. Closing

2. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

Congregational Meeting May 31, 2015

Attendance: 73 – See attendance sheets

Apologies: 14 – See attendance sheets

The meeting was opened at 11.10 am by Michael Bull as the Chair of the Congregation. Minutes were by Ewan Hazeldine in the absence of Dave Smith, Secretary of the Congregation.

Michael acknowledged the special contribution that Wendy Norris had made over the past 8 years as Chair of the Congregation.

Michael opened the meeting with prayer.

Michael welcomed the congregation to the meeting including a special welcome to Rev Paul Gillespie, Senior Chaplain of Westminster School, and the two Westminster students who had assisted in the earlier service. Michael asked for the attendance sheets to be filled in and explained the consensus voting method.

The minutes of the previous meeting, the Annual General Meeting of 16 November 2015, were accepted with no change.

Agenda

Michael advised the meeting would hear good news stories from Jacqui Harrison (Community Program), Rev Phil Hoffmann (Future Directions) and Tony Miller (Finance), and then consider our response to the departure of Rev Cogs Smith before concluding with other business.

Community Program

Jacqui noted that she had been in the role of Program Coordinator for just over a year and has thoroughly enjoyed the time. As reported to Council in December she believes there has been good progress in transforming the Program into a more sustainable format which is relevant and contributing to the wider community. She acknowledged the passion and commitment of all those involved, including tutors, staff and volunteers in this transition. Numbers involved total 250 and the program recorded a profit of \$10,000 last year, including a facilities contribution of \$3,000 to the Property Committee – the first for some years.

Jacqui noted there have been a number of new classes started, eg Mosaics, IT and Batch Cooking, with interest being sought for several others. There have been several Workshops conducted, eg Poppy Making, and a number of Events. The Craft Fair and Exhibition Days will be held closer to Christmas this year. Jacqui has conducted a student feedback process, the results of which were very positive. It also raised a number of suggestions for further improvement.

Jacqui also reported on several successful grant applications and an increasing variety of advertising media being utilised. Future directions included being responsive in planning and investigating possible affiliation with other groups, eg WEA.

She closed by expressing her thanks to all her helpers, notably Janet Paull and Penny Harper, together with the pastoral carers, Lynona Hawkins, Anne Grear and Doff Lyons.

Michael expressed thanks and appreciation on behalf of the Congregation for Jacqui's work in both Program Coordinator and Office Coordinator roles. It has been a very good start and we look forward to a great future. Rev Phil added his personal appreciation not only for her achievements but for the spirit in which they have done.

A copy of Jacqui's report is attached.

The meeting accepted the report with unanimous consensus and acclamation.

Future Directions

Rev Phil noted that in the past the church thought it had all the answers, but we now find the questions have changed! Our location at the Roundabout symbolises the old view that the church was the centre of society with clear ideas of its role and its ministers held in esteem. Perhaps this is not what it was meant to be. As contained in the Basis of Union (BOU) we are called to be a people on the way. So where we now find ourselves in a time of change we may have a better chance of living more faithfully. Phil quoted from an article by Rev Paul Turley. We are 'making it up as we go along'. It might look 'a bit messy' but it fits better with the BOU.

Phil sees three things coming out of this.

1. To affirm God is in this – do we really believe it? We don't have to worry about statistics – that's God's problem.
2. We must keep trying new things, some will work, some may crash. Saying YES to every opportunity is the way of life and vitality. Be an experimenting church. BUC is already this and will continue to be.
3. As minister he commits to give energy to making the church for our age – we will find God is there before us!

Phil outlined a possible new initiative with a Sunday afternoon series on studying the spiritual masters - eg Francis of Assisi, Thomas Merton, Ignatius of Loyola - and appealing to the wider community.

Michael thanked Phil for his leadership and expressed the hope that his enthusiasm is infectious.

Phil's report was accepted by unanimous consensus.

Finance

Tony Miller presented a brief financial report noting that after the first third of the year the operating surplus is ahead of the full year target. Offerings are showing the benefit of last year's giving program and Community Program receipts are ahead of budget. The garage sale brought in just over \$9000. While there are some further payments to come the overall position is sound, largely as a result of the hard decisions taken last year. The solar panels have already halved our power bill. The 2014 accounts have been audited and signed off.

Michael commended Tony and the Committee for a clear report and the good results so far.

The report was accepted by unanimous consensus.

Future Ministry

Rev Cogs Smith had written advising that she had accepted a call to Minister of the Word at Willunga Uniting – letter read to both services on Sunday 24 May 2015.

Chris Bray, Chair of Council, advised the meeting that Council Executive had accepted Rev Cogs' letter with sadness and regret for BUC, but in gladness for this new opportunity for her to minister in a new place. The Executive has asked a small group to commence consideration of the options available following her departure. There was some discussion regarding a lay or ordained appointment, noting the important role Cogs had played in family ministry, particularly Messy Church. Rev Phil noted that for a lay person to be considered a necessary first step would be to formally seek release by Synod Pastoral Relations from the current approved 0.25 ordained position. It was also noted that any appointment would need to fit within the current approved budget, and the impact on Rev Phil's role would need to be considered.

Chris invited any ideas or suggestions for future ministry to be given to members of Council.

The meeting formally expressed support for the process outlined by Chris, keeping in mind budget constraints and other comments made in the discussion. It was noted that any recommendations for Cogs' replacement would be brought to another meeting of the congregation.

Accepted by unanimous consensus.

Departure of Rev Cogs Smith

The meeting sought to formally record the appreciation of the church for the ministry of Rev Cogs during her time in this place, noting her crucial role in supporting and developing family ministry programs and opportunities.

Accepted by consensus.

Michael noted that Rev Cogs' last day will be on Sunday 12 July when she will preach at a combined service, following which there will be a farewell morning tea.

Other Business

Michael noted that we are still looking for a representative on the Urban Mission Network and invited members to consider this opportunity to connect with other like-minded churches.

Closing

In closing remarks Michael noted that music contributed by Westminster in the earlier worship moved him to reflect that we are part of a world-wide fellowship, and we are on a journey together.

He also expressed thanks to all members of the congregation for the many small things that are done to build up and support our community, and often taken for granted.

Rev Phil closed the meeting with prayer at 12.15.

Next Meeting

The Annual General Meeting is due on Sunday 15 November 2015.

Ewan Hazeldine
for Secretary to the Congregation

5.1 Minister's Report to the Congregational Meeting

BLACKWOOD UNITING CHURCH: Minister of the Word's Report to AGM, Sunday November 15th, 2015

For several weeks now I have had two (2) separate reports to the community running in my head; one an observation of the life and activity of the community of Blackwood Uniting Church and the other a significant article descriptive of the future we are together attempting to shape. I haven't been able to settle in my mind which to provide for the occasion. So here's a report in two parts –

The reflection I would offer is that I consider Blackwood Uniting's 'output' quite phenomenal. Look at recent months here: we host a successful Cabaret night in March, a HUGE Garage Sale in April, roll on into a fascinating "Middle East Tour Report Night" in June, a lovely "Soup and Sweets Night" in support of Beacon Emergency relief in August, an enjoyable Community Classes Quiz Night in September, "Pink Lady Remembrance" in October to share with those of our community touched by breast cancer, before a wonderful and successful November Art and Craft Fair! Christmas is still to come! Its an impressive program of significant events.

One of the changes about us is that I perceive is that we are becoming a more event-oriented society. Increasingly people do not so the same things week-by-week, out of dedication to routine, but look more to purposeful one-off occasions. Busy people, I think, say "*I can find time for that*". And I think we have done well in responding at Blackwood Uniting.

Of course, this is built on foundations of a dedicated and active community. First in this, I count myself fortunate to serve with the Staff I share at Blackwood. It was a sadness to say 'good-bye' to Rev Cogs mid-year. Her warmth and collegiality were important to me and appreciated. Jacqui Harrison remains a true asset to this community. Her bright personality, endless good cheer and considerable abilities in her two roles are key in making such an 'output' possible. Here I express my continuing thankfulness and delight in sharing the Office with her.

I am excited by the addition of Tyler Vaughn to this team as "Family Ministries Pastor". Tyler brings freshness and ideas and is already seeking further connection points with families in our wider community circle.

Then there are the hours of volunteer contribution given by you, the people of Blackwood Uniting Church in making and serving afternoon teas, shifting furniture, preparing data shows for worship, serving on Council and committees, attending to property ... I don't want this report to be endless, but often your combined service seems to be! As Minister of the Word, I am glad to add whatever leadership and direction I can to the accumulation of this community's goodness and giving.

Meantime the practice of our community faith in worship Sunday by Sunday continues. Preparation of worship remains a core task for me as Minister. I also seek to be attentive to pastoral care. These are the functions – preaching, leading of worship, pastoral care and presiding at the sacraments – which remain definitive of the role of a Uniting church Minister.

And, of course, there are Blackwood Uniting's continuing programs of PlayGroup, "Mainly Music" and "Messy Church" in Family Ministry, and Community Classes. Again, these are the expression of faith and service of key co-ordinators and helpers which it is a delight to share! I thank you, each one.

Which brings me to the second element of this Report [or my second Report, depending on how much leeway you give me]. This time last year I reported to the community, in ever-changing circumstances, on the priority for us to be considering the shape of 'church' in the future. That, I said, necessitated us being an experimenting church. We have to try new and different things, events and activities.

Recently I picked up on an article from "The Washington Post" titled, "**Oprah's new 'Belief' series shows how dramatically the nature of faith is shifting**". That article by American church scholar and writer *Diana Butler Bass* was in response to Oprah Winfrey's own TV channel in the US screening an ambitious documentary series called "Belief," dedicated to exploring the power of religion as a force for good across the globe.

Butler Bass comments, "*The show reveals how religion itself is shifting, how we are living through a period of intense spiritual democratization [underlining mine]*". Butler Bass' own study and observation has noted, "*In all the world's religions, older forms of remote and hierarchical authority — not to mention the very idea of a distant and monarch-like God — are being challenged by ordinary people as they pray, worship, walk pilgrimages and seek the divine in nature and neighborhoods*".

Although this shakes the role of the institutional church, this cannot be a bad thing. In fact, Butler Bass calls it an '*awakening*'. She writes further in the same article, "*Across the planet, people are taking responsibility for their own versions of meaning and, in the process, are remaking faith in ways that are more inclusive, more personal, more connected to the natural world and more attentive to their community*".

Our "Occasional Series in Spirituality" has been a good fit of this purpose. It has been designed to recognise people's 'own' spiritual journey, in a new and different context. I, as proposer, and the community have invested much in this initiative and hope to build on it in the coming year.

Further, Church Council has discussed a hoped-for series of events in 2016, including hosting a visiting international teacher with a music focus. It was noted in that discussion, helpfully I think [thanks, Adrian!], that this gives Blackwood an emerging role as a centre for 'regional' provision of such ventures.

Butler Bass' article is definitive of our task. And it is a potentially rich and positive one. The challenge is for us to find the means; to answer the question, 'How can we serve this 'new' spirituality of journey and discovery?'.

So to finish both reports, I am both thankful and hopeful; thankful for this community's broad- ranging service and hopeful of that future purpose. As the earliest written Scripture says in the Letter to the Thessalonians "the God who is faithful will do it."

5.2 Church Council

Following a couple of tense years and difficult decisions where much of the focus was on our financial position, 2015 was a year of optimism with a mixture of consolidation, renewal & growth. In the past 12 months we have seen many changes, challenges and opportunities:

- Changes within the Council itself - Ashley Lower joined the Council; a new Executive was elected and Tony Miller took over the Finance reins from Phil Megaw
- the Deacon's role was revised and reduced to 0.25 FTE from March as agreed at last year's AGM
- Rev Cogs accepted a call to Willunga and was farewelled prior to her Long Service Leave
- Tyler Vaughan joined us as Family Ministry Pastor
- the Community Classes continue to grow under the leadership of Jacqui Harrison
- introduction of an Occasional Series and return of Pink Lady Day
- Sunday worship and the ongoing work and life of the Blackwood Uniting Church community has been maintained & grown.

One of our key discussions was "how do we replace Cogs?" The reduction in hours had already refocused emphasis to Family Ministry. With feedback from the Family Ministry Team the decision was made to advertise as a Lay position rather than an Ordained placement. Initially the role was advertised through church networks but with no response the position was posted online at Seek. A university student who had previously completed theological studies with the Lutheran Church was interviewed by a panel and we were pleased to offer the role to Tyler Vaughan.

Some of the other issues discussed this year include:

- Copyright and how this impacts our Worship and Music
- Communication, including the Website and signage
- Worship space – "what do we do with the western wall?"
- Events – fundraising, Pink Lady Day
- Regular reports from Finance, Property, Community Classes and Ministers

Note: copies of the Minutes are kept in a yellow folder in the foyer and everyone is welcome to have a look and provide feedback to the Council.

The Council itself is very small and we rely on many different people to inform us and to undertake the work of BUC:

- Our thanks to those who make up the Property, Finance, Worship, Family Ministry and Community Classes teams – your ongoing work is often unseen but greatly appreciated.
- Anne Grear & Karen Collins – thanks for your specialist feedback regarding Copyright and Website issues respectively
- We are indebted to Rev Coral (Cogs) Smith for her graciousness in revising the Deacon's role in the light of our financial situation. It was with mixed feelings that we accepted her decision to accept a new placement at Willunga. While sad to lose her skills we are pleased that she is able to exercise her pastoral ministry more fully (& we still see her around Blackwood & the Community classes as a student 😊).
- Thanks also to Rev Phil Hoffmann who has taken on an increased load this year. His humour and down to earth approach are appreciated by all who work with him.

We look forward to 2016 with renewed optimism and give thanks to God for equipping, encouraging and prompting us to work together as a faith community.

Chris Bray - Chair, BUC Council

5.3 Community Classes

It has been a busy few months for the Community Classes with the Roundabout Craft Fair & Exhibition last weekend and I am very pleased to announce that we made a profit of nearly \$7,500. Despite some negative feedback regarding numbers we had a very successful outcome.

I would like to personally thank the following people for their help during the Craft Fair:

Sue Fisher, Sue Zilm, Kathy Herman, Doug Thompson, Chris Bray, Russell Gear, Doff Lyon, Bob Potter, the Hewitts, Penny, Glenys, Bev E, Lynona and the dedicated students and tutors that help every year with enthusiasm and no complaints.

We have had quite a successful year in regards to money raised, not only for the Community Classes but for other worthy charities such as the Cancer Council, Uniting Care and the Christmas Bowl. We held a morning tea for the Cancer Council and Pancake Day for Uniting Care. We also had a quiz night where we raised over \$1000.

Outside of the Community Classes we have run several 1 day workshops along with class members making special Christmas decorations for sale at the Craft Fair. And, let us not forget the wonderful Poppy Display for Anzac Day and Remembrance Day that the whole BUC Community participated in.

So, in talking about the money raised I am delighted to inform you all that the Community Classes bank account is looking healthy and we are once again looking at making a good profit for the year.

Our workshops were well received and we are looking at running some more next year so stay tuned for the particular craft/hobby being featured.

The Creche has also picked up with more young mums being attracted to the Free Creche whilst they stay and enjoy some time out learning a new craft or yoga.

New enrolments have been steady throughout the year and I receive several phone calls a week or drop-ins where people are enquiring about our Community Classes. It's funny when people ring up they always ask whether this is the "Community Church" on the Roundabout. I just think that it is wonderful that the community thinks this of our church as it is very true to the BUC vision statement – we welcome everyone without discrimination.

My future plans involve starting up a new class, "Mindfulness for High School Students". Getting the Gardening Group up and running again and also taking over the reins of Continuing Learning as Anne Gear will be stepping down from this role.

The BatchCooking program is going along well. We currently have 7 / 8 people enrolled in the classes. We also received a donation of \$500 from the Blackwood Rotary Club which was very well received. The money will be used to buy some new kitchen appliances, etc and Rebecca Wu (the BatchCooking Coordinator) has given me a "Wish List" of items she would like purchased. We have also purchased membership at Foodbank SA where we get discounted food for the program and care packages for those in need.

As ever, I am never one to be idle. Wednesdays and Thursday are crazy busy and I don't get a chance to sit down all day! I would love to have a few new volunteers to help out with a variety of tasks on the day. I find that my time is really reactive to what is happening on the 2 days and it is a struggle to be proactive.

That is a hard balancing act that I need to work on but having some new volunteers would definitely free up my “chores” that I have to do on the days.

I am continually striving to make a difference and nurture the Community Classes to make it something to be proud of with enthusiasm and positivity.

Thanks to the wonderful volunteers that help me Sue Fisher, Janet Paull, Judith Terrell and Penny Harper – I am indebted to you all. I would also like to say a huge thank you to Chris Bray who has been coming in to help Wednesdays. She is a fantastic supporter of the Community Classes and is a great help to me both professionally and personally.

And, finally I would like to thank Phil for his unwavering support, sense of humour and fantastic phone answering skills! Phil’s understanding nature makes me happy to come to work every day and he is a wonderful source of wisdom and knowledge.

I look forward to next year with enthusiasm.

Jacqui Harrison
Community Program Coordinator

5.4 Finance & Budget 2016

Our Finance and Stewardship Committee comprises Tony Miller (Chairperson), Jan Furness (Treasurer of the main Church Council Account), Brian Pickering (Treasurer of both the Property team and the Community Outreach program), Mark Gill, Ray Bown (Giving Recorder) and a minister's representative, Phil Hoffmann.

We also assist with financial administration of the Helen Lee Trust Fund and the Flora Mansawan Trust Fund.

The Finance Committee meets every two months to review the current financial position of the Church and to discuss longer term financial matters.

Financial summary reports are produced after the end of each month for presentation to the Church Executive or the Church Council (depending on which month it is) so that we can regularly monitor the trends. These are available to any member of the Congregation upon request.

Progress in 2015

A number of difficult decisions were made during 2014 in order to stabilise the long term financial position of Blackwood Uniting Church. With the prospect of on-going deficits that were likely to exhaust financial reserves in a few more years, changes were clearly needed. After consultation with the church community during 2014, a number of changes, mostly around ministry, and new initiatives were put in place. In the light of these, the 2015 budget was framed by Phil Megaw, my predecessor as Chairperson of the Finance Committee.

We started 2015 with a net bank balance of \$124,897, and our budget forecast was for a slight surplus of around \$1,400. Our current estimate is for an end-of-year surplus of about \$10,000. The reasons for this better than expected surplus are many, but some major contributions have been

1. An increase in offerings. This has occurred even though there was no formal stewardship activity this year.
2. A marked improvement in the financial performance of the Community Program in 2015. There is a slight surplus at the year-to-date, but that is before any earnings of the recent Community Fair have been included.
3. A slight saving in Minister's cost due to Cog's departure; however, these have been partially offset by costs associated with Tyler's position in Family Ministry.
4. Slight savings in electricity charges, over and above those that we originally forecast because of our solar panels.
5. A slightly larger net profit from our Garage sale than we had forecast.

Budget for 2016

We have framed a proposed budget for 2016 that is similar in most aspects to that of 2015. The biggest changes relate to the change in ministry roles with Cog's departing and Tyler taking on the new Family Ministry role. Note that there is no Garage sale this year, and so the approximately \$9,000 income that we

Overall, we are forecasting a small budget deficit of \$2,190. The Finance Committee is of the view that this is a responsible action because there is no garage sale in 2016, and we are further investing in our Family Ministry program.

Receipts		
Offerings	168,000	63.5%
Community Program	57,500	21.7%
Family Ministry	4,000	1.5%
Facilities (Hire)	16,000	6.1%
Fundraising	7,000	2.6%
Mission	5,000	1.9%
Other	6,930	2.6%
Total:	264,430	

Payments		
Minister	93,200	35.0%
Office & admin	23,850	8.9%
Family Ministry	23,000	8.6%
Community Program	56,650	21.2%
Facilities	39,250	14.7%
Synod, ICC	20,170	7.6%
Mission	5,000	1.9%
Worship	2,500	0.9%
Other	3,000	1.1%
Total:	266,620	

TOTAL: -2,190 (deficit)

Tony Miller
Chair, Finance and Stewardship Committee
11th November 2015.

6.1 Property

Committee Membership *Peter Cranwell* has joined Graham Brown, Russell Grear, Lisa Hadrick, David Hawkins, John Hewitt, Phil Hoffmann, Bob Lyon (*secretary*), Jane and Phil Marlow, Geoff McLean, Tony Otworowski (*chairperson*), Meg and Ray Pentland, Brian Pickering (*treasurer*), Bob and Jean Potter, and Keith Rodda but there is still a ***need to include new younger people*** to ensure that the committee is able to continue to maintain and develop the property to meet the ever changing needs of the Church and the many people who use our complex each week.

Blackwood Uniting Church – truly a Community Centre At a recent Mitcham Council review of the place of Blackwood Uniting in future development plans for Blackwood the Mayor acknowledged the important role of the Church in the community's future. The State Government has also recognised the Church's community role by ***approving a "Community Benefit Grant" of \$36,256*** to air-condition every area of the complex including the Chapel.

Major Developments In addition to the ***air-conditioning*** currently being installed the Committee has responded to a request from "Mainly Music" to provide a permanently mounted ***data projector, laptop computer, linked sound system and large screen*** at a total cost of approximately \$6,000. This will be a valuable asset for other Church groups and others hiring our facilities. Approval has at last been given to ***improve the rear entrance*** by widening the access ramp and the back door, and providing wind and rain protection and a roof over the ramp – this should happen during December and January at an estimated cost of \$4,650.

Routine Maintenance is an essential part of the Committee's role including painting inside and out, floor polishing, window and carpet cleaning, cleaning gutters and drains, maintaining church furniture and fittings, kitchen and office equipment, organ and piano tuning and many other minor maintenance tasks. Early in the year the committee did a major ***upgrade of the "Wet Room"*** off the 'Dene room. *John Hewitt* also coordinates a small team of aging workers who do a great job in ensuring that the ***Church gardens*** always look attractive – they would welcome any additional volunteers.

Hire of Church Facilities continues to be an important ***\$15,000 per year income*** source which has been managed by Meg Pentland and Jacqui Harrison in the office. Meg has recently stepped down from this role and ***a volunteer is being sought*** to replace her. Anyone interested is asked to speak to Bob Lyon. A new computerised booking program is currently being trialled to improve the effectiveness of the booking process.

Garage Sale This year's Garage Sale was again very successful ***raising \$9,320*** and building good relationships with our community.

Blackwood Manse is "owned" by the 4 Churches of the old Blackwood Hills Parish but has been managed on their behalf by the Blackwood Property Committee since 1999. This is currently privately rented out and could provide a future income stream for the 4 Churches but there is also a need for some major upgrades (including a major kitchen upgrade) to this 43 year old building.

Bob Lyon - Secretary

6.2 Playgroup

Playgroup on Monday morning gives me the best antidote to my chronic Monday-itis – it gives me a reason to get out of bed, something to look forward to and a feeling of anticipation of meeting families who really enjoy their 1 ½ hours with us. After 6 years we are coming to the end of our second 3-year rotation of programs (much like the 3-year lectionary) and while we make minor adjustments as we see fit, we find that Playgroup almost runs itself on the day. Of course, a lot of preparation still goes on behind the scenes – the rosters for morning tea and story & song time have to be drawn up, the database kept up-to-date, playdough & crafts prepared, the rooms set up with toys and paints, play equipment brought out for outside play, tree litter swept from the asphalt – but because we have a team of people who are each responsible for just their particular part of it but no-one has to do everything, everything gets done and it works.

When the families arrive the children make a bee-line for their favourite activity, and parents and grandparents settle in for an hour and a half of intense play with their child. An added bonus is conversation with other parents/grandparents, and caring volunteers from BUC who build trusted relationships with the families. And Tyler is quickly finding his feet in the important role of providing a listening ear and pastoral care. Currently we have 35 families on the roll, with regular attendance each week of between 16-20 families, with 20-30 children. We have a dozen or so families with 2 children and several more mums expecting their second in the near future. It is a measure of the success of the program that families keep coming back, and that dads and grandparents feel welcome, and children love to bring their visiting relatives to Playgroup. We have two parents on the planning committee, and several more who help with crafts, storytelling and singing. We would love to welcome new volunteers, particularly helping with set-up beforehand and cleaning up afterwards, even if only to fill in while regulars are away, or to join the morning tea roster, tell a story or sing some songs, or hold babies while mums do activities with their older child. It really is a rewarding experience to serve the families in our community during this season of their lives.

Marnie Agnew

6.3 Mainly Music

The mainly music program has now been in progress for nearly three years. The leadership this year has been Carys Penny, Judy Lower, and Bev Eccleston as music leaders. Jan Furness was also a leader in term 1. Unfortunately Jan has not been able to continue in this role but we thank her for her help.. Special mention must be made of Ray and Mary Bown, Gwenyth Hewitt , Anne Grear, Rachel Williams and Sue Fisher who have been regular in their dedication to mainly music over the past three years. We thank Rev.Cogs Smith for her support during our first three years and welcome Tyler Vaughn as our new pastoral care pastor. Rev. Phil Hoffman has also been involved in many sessions and his presence is always appreciated.

The team of 14 dedicated members and 6 cake makers make the sessions run smoothly and well. There is always room for more volunteers to relieve when people are on holidays, especially in term 3.

The average number of families attending is 15 with about 30 children. There are 31 families on the roll but attendance is inconsistent.

The leaders attended two conferences and an area meeting which were inspiring. Each term there is a team meeting to discuss our values and learn more about the main reason for mainly music.

Carys Penny

6.4 Justice Report

The members of the BUC Justice group met in December 2014 to plan for 2015. It was decided that the focus of the year would be those days or weeks on the SA Synod and Presbytery calendar with a justice and / or solidarity theme.

Rev Phil drew up a table of these special times, with people allocated to help. This has worked well in most instances.

DATE	EVENT
Beginning Feb 18	LENT
MAY 3	Frontier Services Sunday
(Friday) MAY 15	International Day of Families
MAY 26	National Sorry Day
MAY 27 – JUNE 3	Reconciliation week
(Friday) JUNE 5	World Environment Day
JULY 5 - 12	NAIDOC
AUGUST 30	Refugee & Migrant Sunday
OCTOBER 10 World Mental Health Day OCTOBER 11 Anti-Poverty Week	Local [Blackwood] Needs
NOVEMBER 29 – DECEMBER 24	ADVENT

Due to a combination of factors the group has not met during the year, and some burning justice issues have not been covered. I apologise for this, and plan to discuss this at our next meeting where we shall set in motion the plan for 2016.

Anne Magarey

6.5 Urban Mission Network

When the Uniting church abandoned its previous structure of regional 'Presbyteries', it allowed, indeed expected, individual churches to gather in like-minded 'networks' in their place. Blackwood has since been a part of the 'Urban Mission Network'.

Networks exist for collegiality and fellowship, to support similar churches in mission perspective. However, much of the previous 'work' of Presbyteries, in, for example, placements and discipline, are now handled centrally by committees and agencies of the (one) Presbytery. Other churches in the Urban Mission Network include, by way of information, Morialta Uniting, Clayton-Wesley, Rosefield, Church of the Trinity (and many others).

The UMN meets four times a year to gather people of churches with similar mission goals (as its name suggests). These meetings, which include a shared meal, often have a focus on some shared aspect of church life, for example, the Moderator's campaign to alleviate domestic violence, or hearing from one of the Synod's "Mission Resourcing" areas, for example, "youth and children's ministry" or the "Centre for Music, Liturgy and the Arts".

Previously Rev Cogs Smith and Rev Christa Megaw (when in her International Mission position) have been active in the UMN, each being on the 'reference group' to manage its activities. At that time Wendy Norris faithfully represented us at meetings of the UMN. In 2015, Phil Hoffmann has attended to represent Blackwood. This Sunday's meeting of the community will hear nominations for new people to take up this role.

Rev Phil Hoffmann

6.6 Kid's Hope

When you see a laughing face enjoying the interaction you are having, it makes it all worth-while and the getting up early to prepare, part of the enjoyable experience. Whether it be playing games, talking, making cars, boats, cooking, painting or making something with Lego it's part of what we do to build our relationship and help our Kids Hope child feel someone cares, or to build interactive skills with a child who needs our interaction. Being a Kids Hope Mentor is a very responsible role that we all take very seriously by coming each week at the same time for one hour come rain or shine for most of the school year.

This year, we have eight men and two women from our church working at the Blackwood Primary School mentoring students as part of the World Vision Kids Hope Program. The Church and the School have been partners for now 7 years and many of us have now been with the program since its inception.

The mentors are working across a range of ages within several classes each operating differently according to the needs and interests of the child plus some school work where this is helpful. The main goal is to develop a relationship with the child and support them to see their school experience is positive and interesting. The school is very supportive and grateful for the work we are doing and the Christian Support Worker, Dianne Deed is accommodating and helpful. We are always on the lookout for more mentors so if you are willing and able to support a child in 2016 by mentoring them for one hour a week for each of the school terms (give or take holidays etc) I would appreciate your call.

The Kids Hope 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.

Ian Penny-(ph 08 82784114 email pennyic@bigpond.net.au)

Kids Hope Coordinator Blackwood Uniting Church

6.7 MHICC

Blackwood Uniting continues to play its part in the Mitcham Hills Inter-Church Council [MHICC]. This is an important expression of our Uniting church's commitment to ecumenism and co-operation with other churches. Bev Eccleston, Gloria McArthur and Rev Phil Hoffmann attend these meetings on our behalf. At its Annual Meeting in March, the Inter-Church Council elected Phil as Chair, replacing Bridgid Medder after two years of faithful service. This involves Phil in additional responsibilities on the Executive and attending induction services for new Ministers to the area, for example, Rev Nick Denny-Dimitriou recently come to All Hallows Anglican from Cyprus.

In 2015 meetings have been hosted at the Blackwood Hills Baptist [March], here at Blackwood Uniting [May], Coromandel Uniting [July], Belair Anglican [Holy Innocents; September] with a meeting to come in late November. At each meeting we hear from the host community something of their current ministry emphases. We also have a shared topic for churches to reflect on at each gathering, for example, *'What is the current age profile of your church community?'*, *'What are your focus areas of ministry?'*

MHICC continues to support the Christian Pastoral Support Worker program, now renamed as 'Pastoral Care Workers' (PCWs). In 2015 we have farewelled Nina Corlett-McDonald after 11 years of service at Hawthorndene Primary, and will soon be replacing Rebecca Vale at Coro Primary. Blackwood Uniting makes an annual contribution of \$2360 from Budget towards the management of these positions by the Inter-Church Council.

Our other combined function is Beacon Emergency Relief which continues this year under a new co-ordinator, Jenny Horne, a previous volunteer worker in Beacon. Blackwood Uniting shared in a "Soup and Sweets" evening with Church of Christ friends on August 1st which contributed over \$700 towards Beacon.

Rev Phil Hoffmann

6.8 Library

“Books are a staircase to unknown worlds” Jason Ellis.

This year we have added 42 books to our collection, 38 of which have been donated. Eight issues of *Australian Leadership* have also been donated.

Among our acquisitions is “*Man’s search for meaning*” by Viktor Frankl. This is the story of his struggle for survival in Auschwitz and other Nazi concentration camps. This remarkable tribute to hope offers us an avenue to finding greater meaning and purpose in our lives.

Another acquisition is Valerie Volk’s “*In due season: poems of love and loss*” Early in 2008 Valerie’s husband was diagnosed with cancer and she began to write the poems of the period that led to his death after many months of hospitalisation. This is a gift of grace and companionship to all who grieve.

In “*Walking free*” Munjed Al Muderis tells the story of his flight from Iraq, his time in the Curtin detention centre and his eventual success in becoming an orthopaedic surgeon.

Grandparents can find many books in the library to entertain their grandchildren.

Thank you to all who have donated books to the library and all those who have returned their books on time.

Joy Belling

6.9 Synod & Presbytery Meeting

This seemed to me to be a very unusual meeting, with the most controversial proposal for the first two days being the rules of business. Eventually there was some debate over the involvement in the National Church Life Survey. This is a crucial tool for planning in a modern society & I found the reluctance to participate extremely worrying.

Sue Ellis was elected as Moderator-Elect to server as Moderator from October 2016.

Most people seemed very relieved to finally see a balanced budget after several years of difficulty.

Arguably the highlight of the meeting was a service in recognition of service of 10 retiring ministers, including Rob Stoner. In contrast there was one proposal for ordination.

Encouraging reports were received regarding partnerships with churches in The Phillipines, South Korea, Papua New Guinea and Thailand.

Notable developments included a new building for Playford Uniting Church and significantly upgraded facilities for Congress at Salisbury North.

Prompted by the increasing number of part time placements, it was resolved that study leave entitlements could be used for the continuing education requirements of an alternate vocation. While this was prompted by part time placements, the requirement that this apply only to part time placements was removed from the final proposal.

A number of workshops under the banner of “Blue Sky Space” were conducted, under the titles of Church Planting, Every Member Ministry/Leadership Development, Discipleship, Evangelism, Intergenerational Ministry and Justice & Compassion.

Tim Lee

6.10 Flora

Background

February 2010 Blackwood Uniting Church (BUC) group went to West Papua as the Mission group had committed to partnership and wanted to meet our partners. To ensure support across regions within Papua, the UCA has allocated different UCA congregations interested in supporting this work to different areas of West Papua. Blackwood Uniting church's focus is on Numfor and Biak islands, in Papua.

BUC parishioners went to Numfor, met church members and saw the Medical Clinic being set up in Wansra village, in part funded from Henley and Fulham UC. We met many members of Wansra village, including Flora Mansawan. Flora was about 3 years old and has a deformity of her lower left leg. There was a decision as well as supporting important community work on Numfor and Biak Islands, to support Flora to have a better quality of life.

Since that time Blackwood Uniting Church members have worked with Synod SA Mission and GKI to find ways of helping Flora to have her leg assessed and treatment started. A Covenant of Partnership was set up between SA Synod, GKI and Blackwood Uniting Church to support Flora Mansawan to have a better life, and a Trust Fund was also set up, which BUC oversees. Adam Trethaway, International Mission Officer, Mission Resourcing SA, was BUC's link to GKI and the work we support, including supporting Flora.

Changes on the SA Synod and UCA mission partnership front

There have been changes in SA Synod in relation to mission. Adrian Nippres is now the International Mission Officer after Rev Christa Megaw and Rev Adam Trethaway finished. [Mr Nippres plans to visit Papua in early December 2015 to assist us in discerning the next phase of our Partnership with GKI.](#)

UCA Partnerships have been reviewed at the national level. A paper on review of international mission partnerships was discussed at the Annual General Meeting of Presbytery and Synod 30 October 2015. Proposal for international mission partnership include to maintain a Partnership relationship with Gereja Kristen Injili Di Tanah Papua (Evangelical Christian Church In The Land Of Papua (GKI)) via the principal framework and projects managed by Uniting World, directly through limited congregationally driven activities and focus on supporting educational activities and building relationships. West Papua & BUC support of Numfor etc was mentioned & agreement re BUC support to continue, the report notes there has been significant projects and activities pursued to give effect to the Partnership which include: 1. Supporting medical treatment for Flora, who is a young woman from the Island of Numfor, to obtain a prosthetic foot - run by Blackwood Uniting Church

Where are we up to with helping Flora to have a better life?

West Papua and the remote island of Numfor do not have infrastructures nor expertise to help those with disabilities, so it has been a challenging undertaking for us all over the last 5 years to seek assistance for Flora. Since the initial visit of BUC members, Rev Adam Trethaway and more recently Elna Kapisa have both visited Flora and her family on Numfor, but Flora is yet to receive medical assistance. Communication with designated GKI members has been difficult at times for a variety of reasons. In 2014, a member of our congregation, Dr Lyn Muller came across Indonesian not-for-profit organisation Pusbadi Bali, which focuses on Rehabilitation, Education, Empowerment, and Advocacy for people with disabilities, including prosthetics. After email communication, BUC has teamed up with Mr Latra, Founder and Director of

Pusbadi Bali in January 2015 to help Flora, with GKI links providing the connection to Flora on Numfor Island. There have been 2 attempts to visit Flora this year to assess her: the first Mr Latra and technicians went with Dr Muller, but at the last section, from Manokwari to Numfor, the ferry didn't come due to bad weather. Planes are grounded for maintenance work in January as it is cyclone season. During this time Mr Latra established connections with local clinics and took the opportunity to assess 5 men in need of prosthetics or education about prosthesis, who were from Manokwari. The second attempt was to be in July 2015, but volcanic ash near Bali grounded all flights for a number of weeks, and the window of opportunity Mr Latra had was lost. Mr Latra plans to visit Numfor later this month (November 2015). Mr Latra spoke at BUC service about Pusbadi Bali organisation and his visit with Dr Muller to Manokwari when he was in Adelaide November 2015. There are 3 others on Numfor who also hope to be assessed when Flora is.

BUC brief is now expanded to help Flora and others with Disabilities in West Papua.

Financial support

Flora's story has really struck a chord with some groups the community in Blackwood and beyond, including BUC Community Program Patchwork and Quilters, children from KUCA Campout and a couple from Semaphore. Along with fundraising from the BBQ at the BUC giant garage sale; West Papuan cards sale and the patchwork and quilters fundraising efforts (\$750) for Numfor and Biak, and Flora; it appears that we may have an annual donation towards supporting Flora of around the \$200-\$300 mark which is great. In May 2015 Jane Bassham raised \$ 1,790 for Flora and others with disabilities in West Papua cycling 900km Mawson Trail on a supported trip.

Blackwood Rotary has supported the prosthetics for 4 men from Manokwari, which will be delivered when Mr Latra travels to visit Flora on Numfor Island. BUC will also contact Blackwood Primary School to see if they are willing to support Flora and others with disabilities from West Papua.

Money in the trust fund is audited annually. There is currently a total equity of \$11,623.48 this year. Ask Brian Pickering if you would like further information.

Next Steps

Plan for Rev Phil Hoffmann, Jane Bassham & Adrian Nippress to Review the Covenant of Partnership & Trust Fund to reflect current situation with. Adrian Nippress plans to visit West Papua in December, including Numfor Island. BUC are planning to have Mr Nippress speak at church in January 2016.

What can I do?

Join the Facebook page HelpFlora to keep informed about Flora's progress. Contact Jane Bassham for further information. Donate money. Pray for the people of Papua, including indigenous Papuans and leaders in the GKI church.

Summary

Whilst progress has been slow, the key foundations are being put in place. Funds are solid. I look forward to being able to report direct assistance to Flora Mansawan soon! There remains support for this work at the BUC & SA Synod level.

Some photos:

Where is West Papua (just above Australia) & Numfor?



Rev Leanne Jenski presenting the minister with a UCA emblem, Wansra village, Numfor Island, Feb 2010.





Photo of Rev Leanne Jenski with Flora Manswara, at Wansra village, Numfor Island, Papua. February 2010.

Some photos:

November 2010 BUC Community Program Patchwork and Quilter classes raffle for Flora



Some Community Program quilters at Blackwood Uniting Church Hall, with the quilt being raffled for Flora, and the mini-quilt that was given to Flora. November 2010.

August 2011 – Adam Trethaway visited Numfor and gave Flora Manswara the mini quilt.



Flora Manswara and her Mum, when Adam Trethaway presented Flora with the mini quilt, Numfor Island, Papua, August 2011.

November 2012 BUC Community Program Patchwork and Quilting classes were fundraising again, including for Flora.





6.11 Flinders Medical Centre

The Flinders Medical Centre multi-faith chapel is located on Level 4 and is available for prayer (included is a Muslim prayer space), quiet time, meditation or quiet conversation. It is open from 8:00am to 8:00pm.

Worship services are held in the chapel on Sundays at 11:00am (and other times as arranged). The morning worship is for all denominations celebrated by a rostered chaplain and is open to patients, visitors and staff.

Blackwood Uniting Church, along with other churches, is rostered on to support this service once every 3 months.

Helpers arrive at the chapel at 10am and report to the chaplain and together decide what wards they will visit. These visits have a two fold purpose:-

To provide pastoral care in the form of a friendly visit where appropriate and offer prayer at the service or occasionally by the bedside.

To accompany any patients interested in the service and able to attend, to the chapel, usually in a wheelchair.

The services are small and simple and always include communion. Having a musician adds an extra dimension to the worship and we have been fortunate to have a few musicians to call on and at the moment are relying on Jeff Hunter who entertains anyone waiting for the service to start as well.

The team of Jeff Hunter, Tony Miller, Dave Smith and Anne Grear continue to take their turn in supporting the Chaplain every three months finding the encounters with patients and the intimacy of the “low key” service a blessing.

Anne Grear

Addendum 1: Family Ministries Report

The family ministries at Blackwood Uniting Church are currently working quite well, at least this is what I have gathered from the leftover materials and reports from this year. Each of the programs appear to be meeting their specific niches. Next year, 2016, should be used to expand the already running programs; more ministry opportunities need to be created to maximize our contact hours with the families associated with Messy Church, Playgroup, and Mainly Music. Because we already have a large and active volunteer base, starting new programs should be easily managed. As I have seen, our volunteers are enthusiastic about their programs and they are eager to find other ways to expand the ministry of the church. The focus for 2016 will be on finding a way to create new ministries that can grow our family programs by using the tools already at our disposal.

Since we are looking at the potential of opening up new ministry programs, I must here indicate my plan *not* to pursue a youth ministry program, at least not in 2016. Many volunteers have mentioned their desire to see a Blackwood Uniting youth group. My reasons for avoiding opening up a new youth ministry program is because we lack the demographic to do so, and because there are already *several* youth groups already in effect in the Blackwood area. Trying to establish a new youth group would require us to poach attendants from the already established ministries. This would be counterproductive to effective Christian ministry. Instead of refocusing our ministry we should expand the programs we already have. Our church is inclusive and family oriented - we should consider opening up more programs to the Blackwood community. We have a large volunteer base and should find a way to use this in new ways. I would propose starting a new quarterly community breakfast program - we provide a play area for the kids, have a *big breakfast*, and then invite attendees to join us in the church hall if they want. We could merge our normal services for this day and aim to include the breakfasters in the service if they want to join. Start the breakfast at 9 with a service at 10:30 - those who don't want to come to the service may stay and chat. I also want to use these breakfasts to keep in touch with the Blackwood community by finding out what needs they have that we could provide services for - if they need an after school care program, for example. I would propose starting this program in late January or February next year. We could even do mid March. This is an early example that may be expanded upon during the break as we consider new ministry avenues.

As I have mentioned, my goal is not to create programs for demographics we don't already have programs for. The families involved with our programs view them quite favourably. The only noticeable concern by the Messy Church congregation appears to be the long periods of time when there are no programs running. It is crucial that we increase our contact times with these families, even if the primary focus is not to proselytize. I believe the best indicator of a successful ministry program would be when we see families consistently attending multiple programs. According to last year's AGM report, this was already beginning to occur, and I would like to see it continue into 2016 as it appears to have done this year.

Tyler Vaughn
Family Ministries Pastor