

Annual General Meeting

Blackwood Uniting Church
Sunday 20th November 2016



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 20th 2016

Blackwood Uniting Church

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2. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

Congregational Meeting May 15, 2016

Attendance: 67 – See attendance sheets

Apologies: 9 – See attendance sheets

The meeting was opened in prayer at 11:25 by Michael Bull as the Chair of the Congregation. Minutes were by Dave Smith as the Secretary of the Congregation.

Michael welcomed the congregation, asked for the attendance sheets to be filled in and explained the consensus voting method.

Previous Minutes: The minutes of the previous meeting were received by the congregation but due to the late arrival it was left to the next meeting to accept or modify them.

Family Ministry

Tyler Vaughn tabled a report and delivered an overview and a challenge in addition to this report.

The family ministries are all going well with numbers rising past last year's attendance. Messy Church has 20 families attending regularly and with 45 people in attendance most weeks. Mainly music has 15 families attending regularly. These groups are beginning to see themselves as a larger family group within the church all coming from within the local area.

Tyler is expanding the use of Social Media through a site called Blackwood Community Buzz. This site is happy to advertise our non- religious activities and Tyler is adding our Family Ministry functions to it. This will widen our contact point to the community at large. A further way he suggests we undertake is to put a sticker on our window stating that "We Support Blackwood Community Buzz"

Messy Church is a family oriented church service. It is designed for families who find it hard to take part in more traditional church services. Messy Church is a palatable alternative for these families where we are focusing on experiencing the story via active involvement in the story. Active participation is impacting the lives of these people as they take these stories home and explore how they affect their lives outside of church time.

The numbers are consistent and quite large for an event of this type given that not all families can make all events in a year. There are nine families attending regularly and this make the numbers about 45 each night with more on the special event nights.

Several special event nights are planned with the last one being a movie night. These are designed to involve the whole family and to help engage everyone together in the experience.

One aspect of Messy Church worth noting is the participation of men in the activities. Messy Church is seen as a whole family activity and is an interesting time for all.

Tyler thanks all the volunteers especially Marnie for her craft and planning, Judy for helping with both craft and the kitchen and the number of present and past parents who remain engaged on an ongoing basis even though some of their children have moved on.

Questions/Feedback/Comments.

Thanks to Tyler for his work in Mainly Music. He has warm intentional conversations that help connect to everyone. He is an ideal fit to the family ministry.

Michael bull Thanked Tyler for his work and move the report be accepted.

Future Directions

Phil Hoffmann open with a joke and thanks to his family for sitting through not only the service but also this meeting. Then followed with the statement, "Much of what I want to say in this meeting I said in the service this morning. But I had better say it again".

Blackwood Uniting Church want to be involved in the community around us and relevant to that community. But we don't necessarily want the "religiousness" to define us. We want the spiritual but not the religious. So, given the journey we are on the question before us is how do we engage with the community around us?

Most families will not engage via the Sunday morning services. Our challenge is to find out how this engagement will work in the future. How will we engage with the families around us.

Just starting is the Occasional Series looking at the thoughts of three great thinkers as they cover many aspects of this question. Phil stated his intent to build another congregation and to take this group outside of the church as it exists now.

The Clusters and dear to many people and of long standing but do they invite people in and are they open at the edges. How do they serve our needs now? When people go home, what shows that they went to a meeting associated with the church? The church Council will be spending some time soon looking at how we can do this better. Phil asked, "how can we can engage with friends and spirituality and then to reach out into the community and not just to our congregation".

Phil pointed out that while we are physically in the centre of Blackwood we are not in the centre of life within the Blackwood community. We need to find out how we can get this back. Engagement is the keyword.

Phil offered thanks to Jacqui for making Phil's ideas come to life and action. He also thanked Chris Bray for being available to bounce ideas off. Chris is volunteering in the Church Office as well as being the chair of the Church Council. But probably one of her most far reaching jobs is to act as the sounding board for the Minister.

Tyler went on to show pictures of the Family Ministry as they experienced the story of Easter.

And this was followed by an informal table talk around these presentations. Members were invited to discuss how they felt about the directions shown and to comment if they felt something particularly important was raised.

Finances

Tony Miller presented the finance report. See Appendix 2 reports for more detail.

Our actual surplus last year was \$22550 and was due to the air-conditioning grant, saving with Coal leaving and Tyler commencing some months later, increased Community program receipts and a good return from the mini garage sale.

Year to Date expenditure is proportionally higher than the time would indicate but this is due to the cyclic nature of the expenditure and should not be considered a problem.

Income and expenditure are following closely and it is predicted that the shortfall will be in the order of \$2000.

A comment was made that we still need to keep the giving up regardless of the improved financial position.

A further comment was made that the solar panels will never completely cover the power used but are already showing a better return than expected due to the two power cost increases.

Michael moved that we accept this report. He went on to thank the presenters today and all those who helped them. He thanked the Leadership for their hard work, efficiency and their plans for the future.

He mentioned that Dave is standing down as Secretary of the congregation after the next meeting and asked for nominations to the position.

Next meeting is in November and will be the AGM

Meeting closed in prayer at 12:20

Dave Smith

Secretary to the Congregation

Annual General Meeting November 15, 2015

Attendance: 82 – See attendance sheets

Apologies: 12 – See attendance sheets

The meeting was opened in prayer at 11:15 am by Michael Bull as the Chair of the Congregation. Minutes were by Dave Smith as the Secretary of the Congregation.

Michael welcomed the congregation, asked for the attendance sheets to be filled in and explained the consensus voting method. He went on to explain that later in the meeting we would have the opportunity to vote for new members to the Church Council, the Elders, Synod representative and the UMN Representative. Voting slips were on the tables.

Nominated scrutineers were Jane and Phil Marlow. Accepted by the congregation.

The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted with nothing to add or clarify.

Minister's Report

Phil Hoffmann started by saying he had written 2 reports and could not make his mind up on which to present. So he was going to present both.

We are a busy community with a major event each month as well as the normal community activities and outside interests we support. Phil thanked Jacqui for her work and the energy she brought to all the things she is involved in. Phil also thanked Chris Bray for her work in the Church Council. Phil then went on to thank everyone else for their energy and drive over the last year.

This was followed with a discussion as laid out in the written report about the shifting nature of our faith and the outworking of our faith. We have accepted the role of a changing church and are working towards answering the question of how we can serve the new spirituality abroad in the world and how we are going to travel on this journey ourselves.

Phil thanked the congregation for their trust, authority, the untoxic community they represented and the freedom they have given to Phil in his role.

“Thank you good and faithful servants”.

With no questions from the meeting, Michael as the chair of the congregation thanked Phil for his report, his work and his energy.

This report was accepted by the congregation unanimously.

Church Council Report

The Church Council's report was delivered by Chris Bray.

This year has been a year of optimism. The last few years have been tough but this year has turned around and become a year of consolidation and growth. The Occasional Series, the Pink Ladies, the community involvement all point to a shinier future.

Some of the interesting questions being looked at by the Church Council are:

- What to do with the western wall of the church
- How to best use the communion table and the banner wall
- How to increase the focus on worship
- Sourcing creative worship ideas from the congregation
- What would the congregation like the Church Council to work on

To this end, Chris and the Church Council would like your opinions and ideas. Feel free to bring them up any time.

Chris also made the point that the council minutes are available in the foyer and they encourage everyone to take a copy and feedback ideas to the Church Council.

Chris thanked the congregation for their support during the year and reiterated that the council is looking forward to the new year with renewed enthusiasm.

With no questions from the meeting, Michael as the chair of the congregation thanked Chris for her report, her work and energy.

This report was accepted by the congregation unanimously.

Community Classes

Jacqui Harrison tabled the report for the Community Classes.

Sher offered thanks to the congregation for their support. This year they made a profit of \$7500 from the Community Classes, activities they ran and fund raising.

With no questions from the meeting, Michael thanked Jacqui for her report and for her work as both Office Manager and Community Coordinator.

This report was accepted by the congregation unanimously.

Finance Report

See Tabled report from Tony Miller.

See also the Budget Power Point in Appendix 2.

This year follows a difficult year in 2014 where many hard decisions had to be made. This year we start with a bank balance of \$124,900 and have a projected surplus of \$10,000. Compared with last year where we had a deficit of \$10,900 and a projected budget surplus for 2015 of \$1,400.

These improvements have been due to increased giving, improved financial improvements in the Community Program, a reduction in ministerial cost, a particularly successful Garage sale and savings in utilities. See appendix one for more details.

The 2016 budget shows a slight deficit in income forecast. This is due to a lowering of expected offerings, no garage sale and an investment into the Family Ministry. But for all that the Finance team is happy with slight deficit.

The major cost for the coming year is for ministers and labour. This now includes Tyler and an increased Family Ministry program.

No grants were included in the budget report as these will be highlighted in the property committee report.

With no questions from the meeting, Michael thanked Tony and the Finance Team for this report and for their work in turning a deficit into a surplus.

This report was accepted by the congregation unanimously.

Family Ministry

This report was given by Michael Bull.

Tyler has been appointed as the new Family worker; unfortunately he is on his honeymoon at the moment and can't be here today. His report is submitted as an addendum to the main report.

Tyler was interviewed by Chris Bray, Marnie Agnew, Phil Hoffmann. Tyler has an interest in Social Media and plans to explore how this can be used to improve the Family Ministry in particular and church life in general. He plans on seeing how Playgroup, Messy Church, and Mainly music can connect closer with their respective communities.

Tyler plans to extend on Coral's Family Fun night and explore the idea of breakfast meetings. He has many new ideas and is settling in well.

This report was accepted by the congregation unanimously.

Property Committee

Report as tabled.

The property committee was thanked for installing the overhead projector. This will be a boon to all groups. The Property committee thanked Mainly Music for the idea.

With no further questions from the meeting, Michael thanked the property committee for this report and for their hard work over the year.

This report was accepted by the congregation unanimously.

Playgroup

The Playgroup program runs in a three year cycle and has just completed its sixth year. It has reached the stage where it almost runs itself.

With no questions from the meeting, Michael thanked the team for their report and for their hard work over the last six years.

This report was accepted by the congregation unanimously.

Other Reports

All other reports were left as tabled. They were accepted by the congregation unanimously.

Other Business

Michael made the observation that there were many church activities not captured here. Activities such as pastoral care and worship as well as many other areas that we don't capture or quantify but which are all important support and community interactions.

Michael Thanked everybody engaged in these activities.

Elections

The Congregation was asked to consider 6 people for positions within the congregation, Voting was by submission of individual slips and scrutineering by Jane and Phil Marlow.

Tony Miller as elder – affirmed by the congregation.

Ian Penny as elder – affirmed by the congregation.

Ann Magarey for Church Council – affirmed by the congregation.

Tim Lee as Synod Representative – affirmed by the congregation.

Ann Magarey as Synod Representative – affirmed by the congregation.

Peter Cranwell as UMN Representative – affirmed by the congregation.

All were accepted as nominated.

While the ballots were being counted, the congregation was asked to take part in an exercise. The question was to list something done this year past that was new to them, of standout value and a hope they have for the community. The response is listed in the appendix.

Then Phil thanked Jan Furness for the many years of work she has put in as secretary to the Church Council.

Michael then closed by thanking all involved in today's meeting preparation; Phil Hoffmann, Jacqui Harrison, Chris Bray, Dave Smith, The report writers, Sound and Media, and Mary's daughter.

Tabled Reports

See below for the tabled reports. No questions from the congregation on any report received.

Next meeting on May 15th, 2016.

The meeting was closed in prayer at 12:20.

Dave Smith

Secretary to the Congregation

4.1 Minister's Report to the Congregational Meeting

THE TASK OF THIS REPORT

How can I summarise an entire year of Blackwood Uniting Church's life and activity in a single one or two-page description? I can't. What I'd be trying to do is capture all the riches of a whole year of the life of a community – joys shared, friends supported in illness and difficult times, loved ones farewelled, the adjustments of aging, children received in baptism (sometimes four at a time!), care and kindnesses offered and given, our own reflections on living in the quiet of worship ... Life is in the moments.

All the planning in meetings (and often it feels like a lot!), all the finance discussions, all the cutting of crafts in preparation for children's activities, all the maintenance of the property, all the songs chosen and sung, all the chairs shifted and stacked – it is all for this.

So how is it all going? I intend to address that under a number of headings.

WORSHIP, PASTORAL CARE and OUTREACH

As Minister, set aside, these are the major tasks to which I devote my working life and hours.

I give myself to them as completely as I am able and hope that the community finds them fulfilled to a degree we can feel comfortable with.

But whilst representing my 'job definition', accepted at ordination, these functions are not solely mine; they are our shared community purpose. **At the community meeting on 20th [A.G.M.] you will be asked to reflect together on how we are doing at these.**

FAMILY MINISTRIES

Our family ministries programs of Play Group, "Messy Church" and "Mainly Music" continue under the dedication and giving of many wonderful volunteers. They are each their own 'communities', gatherings of friendship and support. The same nine (9) families have been at "Messy Church" for most of its times together this year, a total of 18 adults, 18 children and 13 volunteers, some of whom joined us for worship at Christmas and Easter

The community's employment of a 'Pastor' with a role to oversight, co-ordinate and develop these relationships did not eventuate as hoped. Tyler found himself 'spread too thin' with a young family and study and made the decision not to seek a further contract when his initial year's appointment ran out in October. At this stage Church Council has agreed not to advertise and go to the wider 'market' for this position but to make it known by word-of-mouth through networks in the hope of finding a suitable person.

HOW WE DO THINGS [our organisational structure, sometimes called 'Governance']

I remain grateful to the people of the community who serve in the at times tiring and difficult tasks of Church Council. Chris Bray, as Chairperson, is wise and supportive, Adrian Brown as Deputy Chair (who has filled in this year) is experienced and insightful, Bec English as Secretary and minute-taker is detailed and diligent (with a smile of understanding), and Tony Miller as the leader of the Finance Team is intelligent and mindful of community need. I thank them each, along with Ian Penny, Ashleigh Lower, Bob Lyon and Anne Magarey who are dedicated to this service. **We could do with at least one more person in this capacity.**

Blackwood Uniting has in recent years been well-served by Committees which took shared responsibility for specific facets of church life: Worship, Justice, Property, Finance, and Pastoral Care. Of these, those addressing discrete and practical tasks of Property and Finance maintain a healthy life of their own. In fact, joining the 20 or so in attendance on the fourth Tuesday of every second month, or visitors to Downer Street for their role, hearing the laughter and sensing the camaraderie one could almost conclude that the Property and Finance Teams enjoy their roles (perhaps most of the time). We are grateful for the hours given around the property in so many ways by so many people.

However, it is becoming increasingly a challenge to find people willing to attend meetings, especially night-time ones. People commit to specific passions ensuring that many expressions of our common hopes still happen, but without a team to manage them - for example, the Flora Mansawan Trust and the Walk of Reconciliation in May. **I wonder if there is another way of achieving what must be done in these areas.**

As Minister, **I would also like in the New Year to review the function of Elders.** Again, not wanting to require attendance at another meeting, three years ago we put in place an Elders role that was described as being “in the life of the community”. That was well-intentioned, but it is hard for Elders to share in the oversight of the community without getting together. At least even occasionally!

COMMUNITY CLASSES

Our Wednesday and Thursday Classes continue to be a social ‘home’ for many. I marvel at the evident ‘pastoral care’ that they provide. Jacqui is a gem as a work colleague, who approaches her task of co-ordination with dedication and enthusiasm. She is innovative and experimental, always looking to make improvements to this expression of who we are at Blackwood Uniting Church.

TO SUMMARISE

I have never felt healthier and happier in ministry. Where until a couple of years ago I felt as if I might be responsible for the changing tide of Christendom and the decline of the institutional church in the form we know it, now I feel reconciled to and comfortable with my part in its unfolding future. It remains that the current model of our activity [what I describe as ‘10:00 a.m. Sunday worship’] will clearly NOT be the expression of faith community that takes us into an unknown future.

In one of the stories in which we find our meaning, a woman of the city interrupts the scene at the home of the Pharisee to anoint Jesus’ feet with oil. Jesus commends her in the words “*She hath done that which she could*” [Mark 14:8]. I will not not do that which I can; but I simply refuse to do that which I cannot!. Or as Helen Keller said it (perhaps more clearly): “*And because I cannot do everything I will not refuse to do the something that I can do*”.

As one of our “Occasional Series in Spirituality” re-assured us from the fourteenth century thought of Julian of Norwich: “*All shall be well. All manner of things shall go well*”. Because of the God we trust and the faith that holds us, it cannot be otherwise.

Rev Phil Hoffmann

4.2 Finance & Budget for 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, the Blackwood Manse Account, 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.

Expected financial outcome for 2016

Our forecast end of year result is a deficit of \$4,197. Our 2016 Budget estimated a deficit of \$2,190. For comparison, our actual end of year result for 2015 was a surplus of \$22,550.

In estimating this end of year result the following items have been taken into account.

1. As the Craft Fair has not yet taken place, we have estimated the Craft Fair income to be \$5,000, with expenses of \$1,000, giving a net profit of \$4,000. Note that last year, the net profit from the Craft Fair was \$8,450. However, the Craft Fair will be organised differently this year, and will only be for one day, not two; so we are expecting a smaller net profit.
2. The sum of \$2,800 for a new data projector has been included in the estimate. This will be paid for this year, but is not likely to arrive until early 2017 due to delivery delays.

Some of the larger variances from the 2016 Budget estimates have been:

1. An extra \$1,500 in total fundraising over the year, due mostly to the (mini) Garage Sale, which had not been included in the 2016 Budget. (The Garage Sale itself made a net profit of \$5,600.)
2. Reduced Family Ministry staff costs (net saving \$3,800).
3. Additional Ministry and Office staff costs (extra payments \$3,500)
4. Additional Synod payments due to increase in levy to 10% -- we had budgeted on the basis of 9% (extra payments \$1,700)
5. Less than budgeted income from the hire of the Church's facilities (undershoot of \$2,000)

Estimated Offering income is very close to budget at \$169,000. This represents approximately 66% of our total income.

Further details will be presented at the AGM on 20th November.

Proposed Budget for 2017

At the time of writing of this report the proposed budget for 2017 is still under discussion by the Church Council. We again anticipate running a deficit in 2017. Some of the major factors that influence this are:

1. Anticipated reduction in income from Offerings due to members of the congregation leaving, retiring or down-sizing their contributions (reduction of \$3,000).
2. Increase in Ministry and Office staff costs.
3. Anticipated annual increase in Utilities and Insurance costs.
4. Anticipated annual increase in costs of property maintenance.
5. The level of funding of the Family Ministry Coordinator position.

Further details will be presented at the AGM on 20th November.

Tony Miller
Chair, Finance and Stewardship Committee
11th November 2016.

6.1 Church Council

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL (See Para 24, Constitution of The Uniting Church in Australia)

3.1.2 (a) The Church Council shall give priority in its life to building up the Congregation in faith and love, sustaining members in hope, and leading the Congregation to a fuller participation in Christ's mission in the world. This priority shall be reflected in the agenda of its ordinary meetings.

(b) The responsibilities of the Church Council include:

(i) sharing with the Minister(s) in mission and in the pastoral care and spiritual oversight of the Congregation;

(ii) nurturing the members and adherents in their growth in grace;

(iii) making decisions in accordance with the Regulations concerning baptism, confirmation and membership, and the keeping and reviewing of the rolls of the Congregation; (See Part 1 of these Regulations)

(iv) assisting the Minister(s) in the conduct of worship and in the administration of the sacraments;

(v) determining the time and place of services of public worship;

(vi) carrying out its functions in accordance with the Regulations concerning applicants for the specified ministries;

(vii) managing the financial affairs and the general administration of the Congregation including the reception, preparation and presentation of all necessary budgets, statements and reports;

(viii) arranging for audit, presentation and examination of the accounts of all the funds of the Congregation; (See Reg. 3.8.7)

(ix) managing and controlling property in accordance with the Regulations; (See Reg. 4.4.1)

(x) preparing and presenting to a meeting of the Congregation an annual report concerning the life and work of the Congregation including its worship, mission and service, and making recommendations with regard to the program for the ensuing year;

(xi) exercising oversight of the appointment of officers and leaders of Congregational organisations;

(xii) referral of matters to Presbytery as prescribed;

(xiii) discipline of members (See Reg. 5.1.2 – 5.2.5);

(xiv) carrying out its functions in relation to Ministers-in-Association (See Reg. 2.11.1).

Your Church Council is responsible for carrying out the above responsibilities but, necessarily, delegates some of these while maintaining oversight and responsibility for the life and mission of the life of the church in this community.

The Council meets bimonthly with the Council Executive also meeting bimonthly. Rather than give you a blow by blow description of what has happened over the past 12 months I would like to highlight some important issues which have occupied our minds.

We have been blessed with the ministry leadership of The Rev Phil Hoffmann and on the anniversary of his third year with us we unanimously affirmed his ministry and leadership and expressed our appreciation for his commitment to the life and mission of the congregation. Many of the initiatives for our mission either come from Phil or are led and carried out by him.

We have sought to develop family ministry as a priority on behalf of the congregation and this continues to flourish and run so smoothly because of the wonderful efforts of the many volunteers who work so well teams in each of the programmes. With the recent resignation of Tyler Vaughn Council has established a small group to review and make further recommendations on this matter.

Council has also had a focus on the finances of the church and acknowledges the invaluable work carried out by the Finance Committee in assisting this responsibility to occur so smoothly. We are also very mindful of the way in which you, the congregation, have made it possible for us to regroup and move forward once again after some very difficult financial decisions had to be faced over the last few years. Less hair has been torn out and more opportunities created because of your collective effort and the work of the Finance Committee.

The workhorse of the church is to be found in the Property Committee whose stewardship of our property has been superb. We have benefitted by the care and commitment from this group in many ways over the years but their stewardship has made a difference to our budget and comfort in a very practical fashion.

We have also wrestled with the management of the manse in working cooperatively with the former churches of the Blackwood Parish (Belair, Blackwood, Eden Hills and Upper Sturt) and in the process of reviewing the previous Memorandum of Agreement when the Parish was dissolved in 1999. Many circumstances have changes since then and it is timely that there should be a re-negotiation of how we work together with respect to the manse and other matters.

We have also seen a resurgence of the Community Programme and the support received through the church office. We acknowledge the leadership of Jacqui Harrison and her work with the many helpers as this is the front door for the church during the week.

The Council also expresses its appreciation to the many who volunteer each week in support of our mission and worship life. The list is very long and very important.

The Church Council is glad to be able to serve you and its compact size works very efficiently and it is an opportunity for others to serve as we seek to carry out the work and mission in this place as faithful servants of our God.

The Rev Dr Adrian Brown, Acting Chair

Ms Rebecca English, Secretary

6.2 Community Classes

It has been a busy few months for the Community Classes with the Roundabout Craft Fair & Exhibition with the Craft Fair & Exhibition coming up on the 19th November.

This year we have changed the Craft Fair & Exhibition to be a one day event. As we struggle to find volunteers every year it was decided at our Community Classes Management Committee meeting to pare it back to the one day. Hopefully the numbers will still be the same and we hope to make a profit again, maybe not as much as last year but here's hoping. The emphasis will also be on promoting the Community Classes with many demonstrations during the day and official "sign-up" table.

We have had several workshops during the year such as Mosaic's and Overlocking with good attendances. It seems workshops and classes held outside of the working week are good for a lot of people.

My plans next year include a Friday evening Craft Class where I am hoping to capture the School Mum's interest. I will advertise this in the new-year to all the local schools and hopefully get a good attendance. The program aims to be responsive in our planning – if there is enough interest in a class then we will endeavour to offer it within cost constraints.

In regards to fundraising, next year one of our fundraising efforts will be Flowers for Mother's Day. We hope to make a profit from this and boost our funds at the beginning of the year. We have raised money for other worthy charities throughout the year such as the Cancer Council, Uniting Care and MND. We also donate toiletries and beanies and blankets to the Homeless Shelters in Adelaide every week.

The Crèche has picked up this year with more young mums being attracted to the Free Crèche whilst they stay and enjoy some time out learning a new craft or yoga. I thank Melody Hayward, Jenny Millstead and Shannon Fisher for their ongoing commitment to this role.

Our Art Classes are very popular and I already have new enrolments for next year's Art for Beginners Course. Thanks to Doug Thomson who teaches for 6 hours a week at the program. Also, the Patchwork & Quilting, Mosaics and Knitting & Crochet classes are doing well with numbers increasing every term.

The Continuing Learning program is still running well and we thank Rev Phil Hoffmann, Joan Hazeldine, Anne Grear & Jan Furness for their input. Dr Don Hopgood always draws a good crowd and we hope to see him back next year along with some other exciting and interesting topics.

Our Needlework & Embroidery classes have also expanded with a new tutor and classes held on Friday mornings as well.

The BatchCooking program is going along well. We currently have 7 / 8 people enrolled in the classes. We are also running a Food Program with the Red Cross on Tuesdays for 6 weeks and have 8 people enrolled in this course. The BatchCooks participated in one of our fundraising dinners earlier in the year and are very appreciative of the support that the BUC gives them.

In regards to our financial position, the Community Classes are expected to generate a profit by the end of the year. The Community Classes continue to connect with the local community, raise money for charity, and enhance the public profile of BUC. I believe the classes benefit both the community and the church, and I intend to ensure that they remain relevant and viable into the future.

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. My role a lot of the time at the classes is as a listener and I love to put a smile on everyone's face that I come into contact with. I firmly believe that *"laughter is the best medicine"*.

Thanks to the wonderful volunteers that help me; Sue Fisher, Shannon Fisher, Chris Bray, Janet Paull, Judith Terrell, Penny Harper, Doff Lyon and Bev Eccleston – I am indebted to you all.

And, finally I would like to thank Phil for his unwavering support, sense of humour and fantastic phone answering and photocopying 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

6.3 Property

The Property Committee aims to provide well maintained and appropriate facilities for the many Church and community groups using our premises.

Committee Membership At the beginning of 2016 Mark Williams and Peter Smith joined Graham Brown, Peter Cranwell, Russell Grear, Lisa Haddrick, David Hawkins, Phil Hoffman, John Hewitt, Bob Lyon (Secretary), Geoff McLean, Phil and Jane Marlow, Tony Otworowski (Chair) Ray & Meg Pentland, Brian Pickering (Treasurer), Bob and Jean Potter, and Keith Rodda.

Major Projects and Improvements These include completing the **back entrance verandah** and the installation of **air conditioning** to all rooms of the complex, acquiring a new **copier printer** for the Office, major service of the **dishwasher** and repaint and **upgrade of the Kitchen**, provision of new **larger tables** for the Quilters and others using the Coffee Lounge, additional **security** to cover the Hall and Chapel, replacement of one of the **data projectors** in the Chapel. The generous donation from the Haddrick family will pay for new **storage cupboards** for music, amplification and other equipment to be installed in January in the western alcove of the Chapel.

Routine Maintenance – repairs to furniture and equipment, cleaning gutters, polishing floors, painting, care of the grounds and gardens, and a host of other tasks are largely done at no cost by members of the committee. Two additional **“Handicapped Spaces”** will be provided in the carpark when weather and activities permit.

Fundraising and Finances - the **Mini Garage Sale** in April raised \$5000 and use of the Church as a **Polling Centre** for the Federal election with the associated sausage sizzle and plant stall raised a further \$5000 for the Church. A similar **Mini Garage Sale** is planned for **1st April 2017** focusing on plants, books, clothes, and any other stalls offered by specific Church groups.

Hire of Facilities and future Property Development Jacqui Harrison assisted by Penny Harper and Sylvia Sita continue to manage the regular use of Church facilities by more than **30 Church and Community groups** plus many “one off” activities by a variety of groups. These activities each year provide approximately \$15,000 towards property costs and help to build our relationships with the wider community. At the invitation of Mitcham Council 2 members of the Property Committee participated in an **“Imagine Mitcham”** workshop in an effort to improve Mitcham Council’s support for the Church’s community activities. A major aspect of this is to ensure that Church access and Church programs are not compromised by proposed to traffic flows through the roundabout.

Manse Management At the request of Belair, Blackwood, Eden Hills, and Upper Sturt Church Councils the Blackwood Property Committee has just completed a **\$25,000 upgrade of the manse** kitchen, carpet replacement, and a number of other improvements. The Manse is currently being rented out and could potentially provide a small regular income to each of the four Churches.

Bob Lyon - Secretary

6.4 Playgroup

Playgroup is coming to the end of its seventh year and continues to be a valued presence in the community. Numbers are generally being maintained around 15-20 families each week, though numbers were down in term 3 as many families reported continual or prolonged sickness in their families. We have a growing proportion of families bringing two children, either current families having their next child or others coming back with their second child after a period of absence. We also have a sizeable proportion of children being brought along by their grandparents, and several fathers who attend regularly. We try to follow up on families who don't come for a while and consequently have been able to provide incidental pastoral care to several families who have had specific problems, e.g. new babies with health issues, mothers with post-natal depression. This can only be general in nature and initially consists of keeping in touch, letting them know that we haven't forgotten them and we are there if we can help in any way.

We continue to provide a mixture of free play, including indoor play, playdough, painting and outdoor play, and a themed program of activities through stories, music, crafts and colouring in. Themes for the year have been Friends (including Pancake Day and Easter), Seasons: Autumn into Winter (including Mother's Day, Reconciliation Week, World Environment Day and a visit from the Nature Education Centre), My Body (including Father's Day and a mini-Olympics) and this term the theme is Animals, including Grandparents Day and a special Christmas celebration to finish the term.

We continue to be grateful to all our volunteers, including weekly regulars Carys, Glenis, Jean, John, Bruce and Sue Fisher, the very faithful hospitality team who provide morning tea each week, those who give their time to cut out shapes and pictures for the craft activities, those who help set up and pack up each week, and the singers and storytellers, including a couple of very talented parents, who enrich our program each week. We recently welcomed Jacqui Harrison to our singing team and are delighted to be able to make use of her talents and experience. We are also grateful to Church Council and the property committee for their on-going support and assistance. Without the continuing support of the whole church the playgroup would not function as well as it does. Thank you all.

Issues for 2017:

- Volunteers: We are often looking for people to help out on either a regular or casual basis – joining or just filling in on the morning tea roster, helping with setting up or cleaning up afterwards or being on the welcoming desk when regular volunteers go away, reading a story or singing some songs with the children, cutting up craft items. We'd love to hear from you if you can help out even once in a while. 'Regular' for the morning tea roster and singing songs and reading stories means twice a term usually. Dates are negotiable.
- With Tyler's departure and with Bruce on the sick list, some help with cleaning up from 11.20-ish would be appreciated for the rest of this term.

Marnie Agnew on behalf of the Roundabout Playgroup Team

October 2016

6.5 Mainly Music

Mainly music is now in its 4th year of operation and has had consistent numbers over that time. The average attendance is 14 adults with 20 children most weeks. Tyler Vaughn the Family Ministry Pastor attended most weeks and his presence was useful especially in relating to dads in the group. His help will be missed.

There are 20 volunteers from our church community including 6 cake makers who provide morning tea for the parents. The music leaders are Carys Penny, Bev. Eccleston and Judy Lower and the welcomers are Gwenyth Hewitt and Rachel Williams. Ray Bown leads the data team including Milton Turner, Neville Pope and Anne Gear. Mary Bown and Jan Turner head the hospitality team who prepare fruit for the children and morning tea for the parents with many other volunteers helping over the year. Sue Fisher and others care for the children during playtime. The team members meet once a term to discuss ideas and re-affirm our goals.

Our aim is to present our belief in God to families in a positive, non-threatening way and give pastoral care to all who attend. We have begun providing a meal to those who have need of it, such as the birth of a new baby. We are encouraging the parents to help each other in this way. Some families attend other children's activities such as Playgroup, Messy Church and Family fun nights.

Six families attended the "Breakfast together" on Oct 22nd and the total number of attendees was 40 including congregation members and mainly music helpers. Some of those had never participated in a music session before.

The values of mainly music are Celebration, Hospitality, Honour, Creativity, Connection and Generosity. The team members pray before each session and during the session we sometimes introduce a serious topic for deeper thought for the parents. We also discuss the learning of musicality and other aspects of child development.

Easter, Christmas, Father's and Mother's day are celebrated each year.

Christmas is a time when we stress the relevance of the birth of Christ and each family receives a gift which reinforces the true meaning of Christmas.

Those who attend give very positive feedback and enjoy the many aspects of mainly music.

Carys Penny

6.6 Messy Church

We continued to meet regularly on the first Sunday of the month during term time. Numbers have been consistently around 7-9 families with a total of 18 families on the roll, including 5 new families who have joined the MC community in 2016. We also maintain contact with a number of families from past years, who have not attended this year but who have long-established links to the church family. We have been thrilled that a number of families come regularly to both 9.15 worship on Sunday mornings and Messy Church, and others come to 9.15 occasionally or for special occasions like Easter and Christmas. While Messy Church will always be a congregation in its own right, building links between the two congregations helps families develop a sense of belonging to the whole Blackwood church community.

Themes for the year ranged from the transfiguration through Palm Sunday and Easter to Shel Silverstein's story *The Giving Tree* (presented by Bev Eccleston using her felt board materials) and in the latter half of the year, stories from the lectionary Gospel for this year, the Gospel of Luke. We will end the year with Messy Christmas, and will invite all families to worship with us on Christmas Eve and indeed over the whole Christmas period. As in past years we will give a take-home bag to families, with Christmas messages and a small gift from the BUC community. This year the plan is to include something for the children to make or do leading up to Christmas. If anyone would like to contribute to the cost of these bags please see Marnie Agnew. The cost will be between \$5 – \$10.

Three movie and pizza nights were held at the end of terms 1-3, with 4-7 families attending each time, including 1 or 2 from Playgroup and Mainly Music as well as from Messy Church. With Tyler's departure the future of these events will have to be revisited, including one scheduled for term 4.

Volunteers are crucial to the running of Messy Church and we have a team of faithful workers behind the scenes and up-front to whom we give grateful thanks. This year we welcomed Judy Lower to the crafts team, and Angela Smith to the welcoming desk mid-year, and we have farewelled several of our regular volunteers. We give special thanks to Glenis Reid who maintained the database and was the welcoming presence on the desk from our first Messy Church in 2012 until this year, and to Christine and Danny Roach who have been part of the team from 2013 until Christine's recent accident. Their contributions have been greatly appreciated and we are sorry to lose them from the team. We also acknowledge Dave Smith's on-going commitment to Family Ministry at both Messy Church and the 9.15 congregation, and his continuing membership at BUC following Rev Cog's move to Willunga. His contributions are always valued.

On-going issues:

- **Family Ministry position:** Council has authorised the formation of a small group (representing Messy Church, Playgroup and Mainly Music) to review and recommend action relating to the Family Ministry Role. The congregation will be kept informed.
- In the meantime our team of very capable volunteers will ensure that Messy Church continues to function as well as it always has.
- **Highlight:** Through sharing over the communal meal the families own Messy Church as their community.
- **Challenges:**
 - **Once-a-month contact** limits our ability to build relationships within the community. How can we increase our contact in ways that suit the families?

- **Future directions:** What will we provide for children once they outgrow the 'crafts' age?
- If you would like to join the volunteer team there are various ways to help: planning, preparing and supervising the crafts; playing/singing for music at chapel time; assist with the meal – helping in the kitchen, cooking the occasional barbeque tea, or preparing salads; maintain the database. No skills, time or assistance offered are ever turned down! See Marnie or Carys or Phil if you are interested, or Judy Adami for helping in the kitchen.

Marnie Agnew on behalf of the Messy Church team, October 2016

6.7 Justice Report

This year the Justice Group continued much the same as the previous year. As is the case with other BUC committees, members had many claims on their time. Our minister Phil Hoffmann suggested the group not meet unless there was a pressing need, and justice issues were incorporated into Sunday morning services. When the need arose, members spoke about specific issues, or organised a speaker, as occurred with the progress of Flora Manswara's treatment.

The group is waiting for this congregational meeting before organising a meeting to discuss 2017.

Anne Magarey
Convenor

6.8 Urban Mission Network

When the Uniting Church re-structured from previous regional 'Presbyteries', it allowed, indeed expected, individual churches to gather in like-minded 'networks' in their place. Networks exist for collegiality and fellowship, to support churches with 'like-minded' mission perspectives. Blackwood has since been a part of the 'Urban Mission Network'. We contribute \$1700 a year out of the Budget to the running of the network, which supports Susan Burt as its part-time co-ordinator.

The Urban Mission Network comprises 34 congregations, which are, from its website: *"located mainly in civic and regional centres and on main thoroughfares. Members of the Network share a clear understanding of being called to give witness to the love of God in Christ as word and deed in environments which are primarily urban, secular and culturally diverse. Network members have a sense of mission in the wider community and share a conviction that we must engage with that wider community in order that the Gospel may bring about both personal and social transformation."*

Other churches in the Urban Mission Network include, by way of information, Morialta Uniting, Clayton-Wesley, Rosefield, Church of the Trinity (and many others).

See: <http://www.urbannetwork.org.au/> (which includes copies of the regular Network 'Bulletin')

The UMN meets four times a year to with a shared meal and a focus on some shared aspect of the host church's mission and life. This year meetings have been held at Clayton-Wesley and its ministry with refugee populations, including their "Hope Café", at Flinders University looking at the "Welcome-Friendship Centre" with people of other faiths and Mitcham Village Uniting and its link with the local arts centre.

The final UMN meeting of the year will be later this month at Morialta. It is quite likely that Blackwood will be asked to host a meeting in 2017 [which we haven't done now since June 2013 – including providing a meal for 60 people].

Peter Cranwell is our current representative at meetings of the UMN, with Minister Phil Hoffmann. As a further UMN function, Phil represented the network in a 'Consultation' Review of Eden Hills Uniting during this year.

Rev Phil Hoffmann

6.9 Kid's Hope

This is the 8th Year that we have been engaged in mentoring children at Blackwood Primary School and some of us have been there all the way through. The task is still the same but the children are different with some of us mentoring 3 children during this time. Each child is unique in their needs and interests and so each requires slightly different skills from us. This in itself can be challenging as they may ask if they can practice their bowling or batting skills, requiring us to bowl or bat to them for some time. So the mentoring sessions can be physical. Other times they want to make something which can challenge us beyond our normal skill level but this helps us to use our brains to develop new skills. So the experience is rewarding for both parties. Others of us have more sedate children who like talking, reading, playing games and being helped with school work they need to do. One of our number has made engines with his child interspersed with building the child's basic skill level.

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. That is apart from our own holidays which might be for several weeks and in those situations we send postcards showing them where we are and what we are doing.

This year, we have eight men and two women from our church working at Blackwood Primary mentoring students as part of the World Vision Kids Hope Program. Their main goal is to develop a relationship with the child and support them to see that their school experience is positive and interesting. The school is very supportive and grateful for the work we are doing as they identified that the child would profit from our support. The school Christian Support Worker, Dianne Deed is accommodating and helpful and would do more if we needed her help but on the whole we are self-reliant bunch. Dianne has organised 'get togethers' with parents and their children so we can get feedback from the parent about how their child is going.

Kids Hope is for all of us a rewarding experience as we get to know the children and see over time their progress which for some, when you look back, is spectacular but there are many student needs in a school as children can be held back by personality, ability and sometimes less than an ideal home life. We can't change their circumstances but by being there we can help them see someone who is just there for them each week, especially when they need it. We are always on the lookout for more mentors so if you are willing to give the time and able to support a child in 2017 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

6.10 MHICC

The Uniting Church's self-understanding is not only that we are linked rather than independent 'units', (so that what happens at Booleroo somehow impacts our life at Blackwood), but also that we share in Christian mission and service together with other local churches. That is, we are decidedly ecumenical. We are called to build the kingdom, not the empire (our own).

It is in fulfilment of this vision that we participate in the local Mitcham Hills Inter-Church Council. And because they are nice people.

Our two major activities that we are committed to are

- 1) Support of Pastoral Support Workers (PSWs, or 'chaplains', if you will) in five local schools [Hawthorndene, Coromandel Valley, Blackwood and Belair Primary and Blackwood High]. Hours for service in this role are made available out of a combination of Government funding, 'top up' by the Inter-Church Council and the schools themselves
 - For which we make an annual contribution of \$2360 from Budget
 - And which will face new demands in 2017 as the State Government has recently decided NOT to fund three (3) of these [Blackwood, Hawthorndene and Coromandel] after a review and according to their measure of social equity and
- 2) Beacon Emergency Relief and its outreach in practical assistance, financial counsel and support.

The past year of activity of the Council have included meetings hosted at the Belair Catholic [March], Blackwood Lutheran [May], here at Blackwood Uniting [July – on one representative's special Birthday], Coromandel Anglican [September], and with a final meeting to come at Blackwood Churches of Christ.

HIGHLIGHTS for the last year have been

- A well-attended [50 + people] combined "*Blue Christmas*" Service hosted by Belair Anglican and Uniting churches, clearly meeting a Christmas-time need for people facing the Season in sadness and/or loss
 - To be repeated in 2016 on Thursday December 22nd [church venue to be determined]
- Co-operation with churches of Mitcham on the plains in a "*Mayor's Prayer Breakfast*" [July], a well-attended gathering of local business, school and church groups which also raised funds for Schools Ministry Group.
- A "*Beacon Cake and Produce*" stall on a Saturday in June outside local shops, which gathered people of our member churches in support of joint welfare venture.

CHALLENGES for us to consider:

- The attendance of local clergy at MHICC night-time meetings is low
 - For which there may be historical reasons,
 - and noting growing numbers of part-time appointments, making priority for this function in reduced (paid) hours harder

Phil is prompting discussions to consider an alternative meeting time in 2017 (eg over a lunch)

THANK-YOU

Bev Eccleston, Gloria McArthur and Rev Phil Hoffmann attend these meetings on our behalf, with Phil serving as Chair of the Council.

As at end-2016, Gloria has decided not to continue as a representative after 13 years of faithful service. Gloria is a friend to many in local churches and her keen and dedicated work in Inter-Church activities, including Lenten Studies and Beacon, is greatly appreciated.

Rev Phil Hoffmann

6.11 Blackwood Reconciliation Group

For several years now BRG has met at Holy Innocents Anglican, Belair. A chance encounter with Lowitja O'Donoghue Phil at the ordination of Denise Ryan in 2014 saw Phil agree to have Blackwood Uniting host meetings here [without charge]. BRG meet the first Wednesday of each month in the Dene Room [*"Blackwood Circle of Friends for Refugees"* are in the Coffee Lounge at the same time].

BRG's main task for several years now has been oversight and management of the former Colebrook homes site on Shepherd's Hill Road, as a memory of aboriginal children being taken there after being removed from their families. This gives us a significant national site right here locally deserving of respect and attention. People of Blackwood Uniting have had significant roles in the dedication and setting aside of this site.

Keeping Colebrook includes hosting groups who visit to see the "Weeping Mother" and hear the stories of the 'Tjiti-Tjuta', the little children. These include a Reconciliation Week [May] gathering of local schools in the driving rain! The upkeep also involves maintenance of the surrounds, for which a working bee was held on the last Sunday in September. This is a challenging requirement given that many of the current members of BRG are becoming 'senior'. Aspects of control of Colebrook are being given to the Aboriginal Lands Trust, though this causes sadness to the original Colebrook 'kids', now in their eighties, as they did not share the experience there.

An added major initiative this year was the "Walk of Reconciliation" as a public way of marking Reconciliation Week. This was a joint venture between BRG and the community of Blackwood Uniting and saw some two hundred people of various community groups walk together from the round-about to the site, where, on a cold winter's day, stories, soup and sausages were shared. BRG has written a similar event into its calendar for 2017.

Regular meetings of the BRG hear from guest speakers presenting on some aspect of relations between Aboriginal and settler Australians. The recent AGM (October) made local teacher and UC member Brian Wicks co-chair with Carol Morrison.

Believing that Reconciliation is a key national issue and the link with the BRG a significant community partnership, Phil attends these monthly meetings and would welcome any who share a heart for relations with our First Peoples.

Rev Phil Hoffmann

6.12 Library

“Reading is a means of thinking with another person’s mind; it forces you to stretch your own” *Charles Scribner jr.*

The library’s aim is to support 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 and from the Adelaide Theological Library’s sales.

This year 68 books have been added to the collection. 15 of these books have been donated by the Community Program and five books have been purchased. We have also purchased two DVDs. “God’s Outlaw: the story of William Tyndale” and “Christy: choices of the heart.” Any suggestions for suitable DVDs would be welcome.

There is now 20 books by Henri Nouwen in the library. The latest acquired second hand book is “Walk with Jesus: Stations of the Cross”. This book of meditations by Henri Nouwen is inspired by a series of drawings of Sr. Helen David represents traditional Stations of the Cross through the passion and suffering of the world’s poor.

Recent additions to the library are displayed in the library, listed in the newsletter and found in the website.

Thank you to all who have donated books and to Rev. Phil Hoffmann for his many suggestions for books.

Joy Belling

6.13 Synod & Presbytery Meeting

One person's perspective – Tim Lee.

Synod began Wednesday evening with the Installation of the new Moderator, Rev Sue Ellis. Each moderator shapes the direction of the UCA slightly differently. Her profile described her vision for the UCA as “Sue’s vision for the Presbytery/Synod is linked to the image of the Mustard Seed tree in Matthew’s gospel, sheltering and providing for many creatures, within the breadth and diversity of the Uniting Church, beginning from a small seed of faith shared with another. Deeply rooted in Christ, the Church is called to grow into a place of nurture and discipleship, hospitality and caring compassion.” Sue’s chosen banner symbol represented this.

Days began with Bible Study led by Ruthmary Bond on Relational Evangelism. Sowing that mustard seed through our relationships with those around us.

One highlight I think of all Synod meetings, showing the hope for the future of the Church is the ordination proposals. This year Linda Driver and Will Hall were approved for ordination.

As the Synod meeting is the AGM of a business operation, there is the inevitable formal matters to attend to, but the budget having survived the storm of past years has become much less contentious. Discussion of executive stipends lead to proposal for a future discussion on the theology of stipend.

Thursday afternoon included a recognition of service including lay preachers with Thelma Pike amongst those awarded. There were a number of other proposals for recognition and appreciation of members including Dr Marelle Harisun’s for her pioneering work in creating and implementing Safe Church Policies.

What was expected to be a highlight was the Friday evening Generation Y presentation. It was introduced as “something different to what you might be used to” and proceeded as something indistinguishable from what I experienced when I was in my 20’s. One of the leaders told of the need of mentoring, and suggested that music be limited to material written since the year 2000. However, the most enthusiastic response I’ve ever heard to Christian music was to a Wesley hymn – in a modern arrangement.

Other speakers mentioned the media attention to other churches, unaware that they are latecomers to the party and ignorant of the achievements and activities of the Uniting Church.

Isaac Newton in 1676 said: “If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants.”

It struck me that we may have done poorly in offering the shoulders to stand on.

Tim Lee

6.14 Flora

Summary of 2016

Still trying to help Flora Mansawan! There has been 1 failed attempt to see her this year in May 2016 by Mr Latra's team. For the first time a technician made it to Numfor Island but Flora didn't make it to the assessment location. We are unsure why, but there was heavy rain all day in the region. The technician was able to measure up one other person on the island at this time.

The prosthetics that had been measured and made previously (in January 2015 when Dr Lyn Muller was also there) were delivered to 3 others on Manokwari (those prosthetics were funded by Blackwood Rotary). This has made a big difference to those Papuan's and their family's lives.

Adrian Nippress International Mission Officer has been our latest connection to SA Synod. BUC has hosted 3 meetings of the "West Papua Support group" that Adrian has convened in February, May and September 2016. Adrian visited West Papua in December 2015 and almost made it to Numfor Island to see Flora Mansawan, but the flight didn't go ahead and he had to travel on elsewhere. He met with GKI leadership at this time, including with Jappy Rumbrar, (I believe his role is a liaison connection for West Papuan GKI with partner churches). We had met with Jappy in West Papua and when he has been in Australia in the past. The journey to help Flora and now others with disabilities in West Papua has been shared with and agreed to be supported by the South Australian West Papua Support Meeting group in May 2016.

Jane Bassham, Rev Phil Hoffmann & Adrian Nippress have reviewed the Flora Mansawan Covenant of Partnership & Flora Mansawan Trust Deed Fund to reflect current situation to include helping Flora *and others with disabilities in West Papua*. Jane liaised with Mr Latra about including his organisation in the Covenant of Partnership, which he agreed to via email. In August we updated our Covenant of Partnership to reflect the expanded scope of assistance to Flora Mansawan "and others with disabilities in West Papua" and Mr Latra and Puspadi Bali's role <http://www.puspadibali.org/> in providing the expertise to enable assistance to occur and some change to expectations/responsibilities in relation to GKI accordingly. The Trust fund and CoP have been tabled and approved at BUC Council 17 August 2016 and the CoP has been signed by BUC and awaits signing by the other partners, namely Adrian Nippress/SA Synod; GKI and Mr Latra (who has agreed in principle to it).

Adrian Nippress plans to visit West Papua again in late 2016, including Numfor Island. We are hoping that the pre-work will be done so Mr Nippress can coordinated sign-off of the updated Covenant of Partnership with Mr Latra of Puspadi Bali and GKI when he is there.

Money in the trust fund is audited annually. There is currently a total equity of \$11,623.48 this year. Brian Pickering has further information about that if needed.

What can I do?

Prayer power!!!! In particular that Flora will get the help she needs and that those involved will have wisdom about the best way to make that happen. Jane is considering going over in 2017, but this needs prayer and careful consideration and planning if it is to be effective.

Thanks for on-the-ground contact via Rev Yahuy in Sentani to Rev Prakoso on Numfor & Flora & her family
Thanks for Mr Latra and the Puspadi Bali organisation's expertise and willingness to help Flora and others with disabilities in West Papua.

Thanks the journey to Help Flora has meant 4 others with disabilities in West Papua have also been assisted.

Thanks for the amazing support of the communities in Adelaide for Flora Mansawan in particular, and others with disabilities in West Papua.

Pray for the people of Papua, including indigenous Papuans and leaders in the GKI church, and that our partnership with GKI is one that remains meaningful and helpful. Also pray for our GKI brothers and sisters and all our friends in West Papua.

Join the Facebook page HelpFlora to keep informed about Flora's progress. Contact Jane Bassham for further information.

Donate money.

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.

The extended mix, for those who want to know more.....

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 visited Papua in early December 2015 to assist us in discerning the next phase of our Partnership with GKI. Unfortunately his planned flight to Numfor Island did not occur and he ran out of time to visit Flora and those on Numfor Island.](#)

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 6 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 January 2015 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.

Mr Latra and his technicians returned to Manokwari in May 2016 and were able to fit 3 of the 4 men they had measured up over a year earlier. There was a lot of difficulty organising a flight to Numfor Island and on the day the technician was able to fly there for the day it was raining and Flora did not make it to the airport where the assessment was supposed to occur. The Puspadi Bali technician was able to measure up one other man on Numfor.

BUC brief is now expanded to help Flora and others with Disabilities in West Papua. We have submitted an updated Flora Mansawan Covenant of Partnership and the Flora Mansawan Trust Deed to BUC council for approval to reflect this.

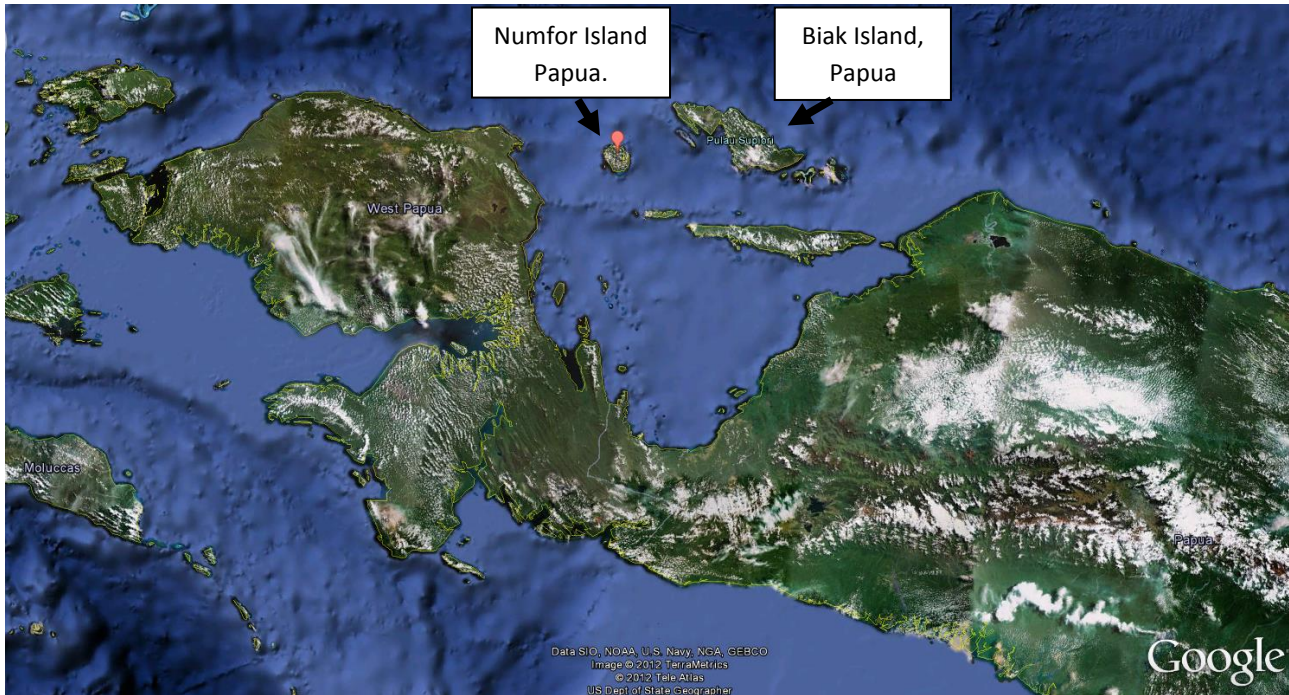
Financial support

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 were delivered when Mr Latra and team tried to visit Flora on Numfor Island in May 2016. BUC will also contact Blackwood Primary School to see if they are willing to support Flora and others with disabilities from West Papua, if needed.

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.



Flora Mansawan, Wansra Village, Numfor Island Photos from Elna Kapisa's visit in 2014



Jane Bassham

6.15 Blackwood Circle of Friends for Refugees

Another year of standing with refugees

Our work has continued in three areas ;

- Direct support
- Advocacy and community awareness raising
- Fundraising for the needs of refugees in and beyond our community

Some of the highlights include:

- A significant increase in fundraising from events such as our multicultural dinner, vintage fashion parade, Tapas night and Bunnings BBQ, assisting at the Lions Shed, selling tickets for St Jude's players, selling spice packs and much more.
- Attracting financial, legal, medical and in kind support for a family on a bridging visa: this continues. This has been a major focus of some dedicated members
- Funding a young African man's legal expense : escaping after being victim of violent homophobia
- Visiting, writing letters, emailing and ringing politicians in an attempt to modify refugee policy and challenging them at pre-election public meetings
- Using social media, our Facebook site to educate about refugee issues and refute the myths
- Assisting refugees to access sewing machines, fridges and other necessary household items
- Running a write to the Prime Minister stall about refugees at the Mitcham Council Multicultural Fair
- Lobbying successfully, with many others, for SA to be declared a Safe Haven Enterprise Visa (SHEV) region. This means that refugees who get these 5 year visas can stay in SA with the friends and supports they have.
- Funding TAFE training so refugees can get jobs.
- Alerting major supermarket chains that refugees sometimes have the right to jobs and asking them to employ refugees
- Speaking at events including the Mitcham Council, the Blackwood resident's association and local churches.
- Reuniting a mother and son (hiding in Pakistan from Afghanistan) after years of separation.

2017 Challenges

- More members who will take on a role however small
- Find clever ways to raise more funds: Government policy= legal fees= \$10000 at least per person
TAFE FEES: \$ 3000 each for a basic qualification
- Find clever effective ways to combat myths and celebrate a fair, humane and multicultural Australia

Tricia Rushton

6.16 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 twofold 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

