

Blackwood Uniting Church

Congregational Meeting Sunday 20 November 2016

Attendance: 66 as below -

Judy Adami, David Agnew, Marnie Agnew, Ros Bardsley, Ken Bardsley, Helen Blake, Mary Bown, Ray Bown, Chris Bray, Adrian Brown, Helen Brown, Graham Brown, Mary Brumpton, Ron Brumpton, Michael Bull, Peter Cranwell, Tony Dyson, Rebecca English, June Field, Jean Finlayson, Anthony Furness, Jan Furness, Karen Granger (Hoffmann), Penny Harper, Jacqui Harrison, David Hawkins, Lynona Hawkins, Gwenyth Hewitt, John Hewitt, Phil Hoffmann, Jack King, Judy Lower, Doff Lyon, Bob Lyon, Anne Magarey, Jane Marlow, Phil Marlow, Margaret McCaskill, Tony Miller, Phyl Mitchell, Lyn Muller, Carys Penny, Ian Penny, Meg Pentland, Ray Pentland, Brian Pickering, Thelma Pike, Jill Pope, Neville Pope, Jan Rawelle, Keith Rawell, Glenis Reid, Bob Roach, Christine Roach, Danny Roach, Keith Rodda, Beth Shepherd, John Shepherd, Dave Smith, Peter Stead, Richard Stead, Jan Turner, Milton Turner, Betty West, Avis Whitbread, John Whitbread,

Apologies: 20 as below-

Deb Agnew, Wes Bray, Liz Collins, Nancy Cranwell, Morgan English, Barbara Goldsmith, Danny Goldsmith, Jen Herman, Ewen Hazeldine, Joan Hazeldine, Heather Lee, Tim Lee, Ros Miller, Jean Potter, Rob Potter, Mary Stodard, Alison Sutcliffe, Trevor Sutcliffe, Elisabeth Williams, Mark Williams

Chairman Michael Bull welcomed everyone present and outlined there would be two spoken reports and an opportunity for discussion at tables to some of the questions.

Michael opened the meeting with a prayer at 11.25 am:

Loving God, we come together today asking for your guidance, wisdom, and support as we meet as a congregation. Help us to engage in meaningful discussion; allow us to grow closer as a group and nurture the bonds of community. And may we remain mindful that in all that we do here today, all that we accomplish, we seek to carry out your will for us as a congregation. We ask these things in your name, Amen.

Welcome: Chairman Michael Bull welcomed June Field as the new Secretary for Congregational Meetings and acknowledged and thanked Dave Smith for his past 3 years of service as Congregational Secretary.

Overview of Meeting items: 2 spoken reports from Phil Hoffmann and Tony Miller and then there will be an opportunity to ask questions or make comments on the other written reports circulated. Michael thanked Jacqui Harrison for getting the reports together last week and circulating them to give everyone a chance to read through prior to the meeting.

Reports to be tabled for discussion from the groups and the Orange and Blue cards on each table to be used to express agreement or non agreement in keeping with consensus for the Uniting Church. Orange cards are for agreement and Blue cards are for disagreements.

Sign up sheets: Michael requested those present to record their attendance on the sheets at the Tables and to please record the names of anyone whom they are aware is an apology..

The meeting will be recorded for the website and there will be facilities for editing later should anyone not want something recorded.

Approval of minutes: Two documents circulated with two sets of minutes.

Minutes from Annual General Meeting, Sunday 15 November 2015 and Annual General Meeting, Sunday 15 May 2016 to be formally accepted.

There being no question, agreement of the two minutes was expressed with a show of the Orange Cards.

Jacqui Harrison reported that the Craft Fair held Saturday 19th October raised \$8,600 with 600 people coming through the door. Jacqui thanked the community for their participation in so many ways to help make this event such a success .

Michael thanked Jacqui for her contribution in planning, organising, generating ideas and making decisions on how things were to be done to make it such a successful day. Michael requested the Congregation raise the Orange cards as a unanimous vote of thanks.

Minister's Report:

Phil Hoffman then spoke on his Minister's report. Phil recapped his report and outlined the Primary purposes and Secondary purposes of the Church.

Primary ones touched on were:

Community, Faith, and Care of one another

Phil spoke that sometimes as a Church we get caught up as the secondary ones, our programs and activities are the secondary activities of the Church and for a long time the Church generally has a focus on secondary activities and overlooks that we only do these as another purpose for the connection, community and the care.

Phil reflected on the Church and where it is and where it might be in the future and expressed the future is actually focussing us. People have busy lives and because of that these people long for the Primary purposes that the Church can offer and do not have a lot of space for the secondary ones.

Hallmarks of future will be authenticity and giving people help with their lives and reminded the congregation of philosopher Alain de Botton who he had previously quoted.

“Life is hard, it is not easy out there and how much help do we give people to live their lives”.

Phil expressed that this must be one of our primary offerings to help people live their lives.

The importance of sharing of bread and hospitality.

What are we here for? Why are so many others not here?

Phil shared his three reasons that they do not know we are speaking of:

Self Reflection

Faith development

Community Care

People do not know what we are on about or they do not need it in the form. There is a communication gap and often the Church is at fault for the communication gap - have we communicated effectively what we are really on about?

Secondally they do not really know what we are on about.

The challenge is to find other forms and it has become clearer to Phil that these may be a shared meal, bread broken together and giving help with their lives and authentic caring relationships are the hallmarks.

Alain de Botton is a reformed atheist who does not want to argue with the Christians, but is one who respects what Christians are on about and wants to begin a Church as an atheist as he sees the value of Shared Bread and giving help with lives.

Phil expressed the difficulty in summarizing his year in the life of a Church in a two page report

His highlight in ministry is when he sees people of God extending a simple gesture of care and support like driving someone home or to hospital appointments. Phil expressed the buzz he receives on hearing the news of care of others from people within the community. He believes his job is to foster a culture where those things happen and in this community that does happen.

Requested Congregation need to reflect on pastoral care and outreach in this meeting.

It is time for review of our Family ministries, play group messy church and mainly music that have continued under the direction and dedication of wonderful volunteers for which we are very grateful.

Employment of a Pastor to give attention and oversight and to develop Family Ministries did not work out as hoped but the faithful people in our community have enabled these ministries to continue. We now need to decide what sort of person we need to find to enable these ministries to continue. This aspect needs clarification and thought as it is difficult to find the right person.

Is it to guarantee our future like people getting excited about a baby born in our community this week? Church needs to value what we have in the here and now. Why are we so keen to find a new Family Ministries volunteer? This is an aspect of our community life that needs some clarification and thought.

How do we express and embrace the things identified above and make sure they continue to happen. Messy Church and Mainly Music are their own little communities and whatever happens has to happen in those communities.

Phil wrote a heading in his Report known as Governance (the organisational structure) which is a challenge for Churches these days.

We are gifted with people in the community that serve in these roles on Council and current people are:

Chris Bray as Chairperson who makes sure these things happen

Adrian Brown as Deputy when Chris is not available

Bec English as Minute taker is very detailed

Tony Miller as the leader of the Finance Team

Phil acknowledged and thanked everyone including Ian Penny, Ashley Lower, Bob Lyon, and Ann Magarey who have dedicated themselves to the task of Church Council.

Phil expressed we could do with another person in that capacity.

Blackwood for a long time has committees of Worship, Justice, Property, Finance and Pastoral Care.

Property and Finance maintain a healthy life of their own and their task is well met but it is obvious it is difficult to find people who have time to attend meetings particularly at night.

People commit to specific passions to make sure things happen without relying on a committee

As Minister, Phil would like to review the function of Elders and when and how they meet in the New Year.

Important that people identify who takes this role of Elder in the Community.

Community Classes go from strength to strength and Phil acknowledged the initiative of Jacqui Harrison and her creativity to make these all happen and expressed that she is a gift to the community. Jacqui had been working on this for a whole year, thinking of ideas and revamping the whole concept. Jacqui loves a challenge and always gives me an answer to an impossible idea.

Phil expressed he will take his part in this community but has a realisation that he cannot do it all and is not going to try anymore.

Phil referred to Mark 14: Verse 8 -

“She hath done that which she could”

Phil expressed he has never been in a better place in Ministry and is healthier, happier in his task and loving Ministry amongst the congregation and developing a clearer role in what he is meant to do and it means shaping the unknown future.

Phil quoted Julian of Norwich from Spirituality Sessions -

“All shall be well, all manner of things shall go well”.

Christine Roach expressed thanks to Phil for the incredible care shown while she was in hospital and of the care to her family at the time.

Michael asked for any questions re Phil’s report and requested a show of cards for acceptance of Phil’s report. The report was unanimously accepted.

Michael expressed the joy he felt on reading Phil’s report and heartened but not surprised reading the words from Phil that he has never felt happier and healthier in Ministry at Blackwood.

Finance Report:

See Tabled report from Tony Miller Chair of Finance group.

Tony comment on the success of Craft Fair and reviewed the situation for 2016 with a projected end of year deficit of \$1,058 - less than the budget forecast of \$2,190 – See Tabled Report.

Major variances from 2016 budget were due mainly to mini Garage Sale, reduced Family Ministry costs and successful Craft Fair – See Tabled Report

The increased costs have been due to additional Ministry and Office Staff costs, increase in Synod levy and hire of Church facilities less than budget.

This year Finance and Council decided to present the accounts of the Church in a slightly different way to make things clearer to the general congregation. See Tabled Report for more details

Tony requested any questions and then outlined the features of 2017 Budget. See Tabled Report for more details.

The 2017 budget shows a net deficit of \$13,610 almost entirely due to provision for a Family Ministry co-ordinator.

Council discussed these issues and believe at the last review 3 or 4 years ago the community expressed strong commitment to Family Ministry, so to respect that point of view this has been retained in the budget. This deficit can be absorbed for one year and maybe two but Council propose to make provision this year and then undertake a review as to what is the most appropriate way for to build community with young families.

See Tabled Report for summary of Budget for 2017

Tony requested Congregation approve Church Council recommendations as per the Tabled report and asked for any questions or comments from the congregation.

Carys Penny commented on the position of the Family Ministry worker and requested congregation think about giving \$5 more per week to cover the income of the Family Ministry worker to enable growth.

Tony thanked Carys for her comments and agreed that if our income grows it would no longer be a deficit.

Michael thanked Tony and requested acceptance for 2017:

- 1 - to budget provision of 10 hours per week for Family Ministry Co-ordinator
- 2 - review on outreach mission in relation to families.

There was unanimous acceptance of both and Michael thanked Tony for the detailed report and the conscientious way he was maintaining stewardship of the Church funds.

Ian Penny spoke to request congregation search their hearts to give more so we have a bigger income and our budget can be healthy.

Tabled Reports

Michael outlined all the Tabled reports and requested questions or comments from congregations on these reports and expressed the sense of breadth and depth of what is happening within the Church.

Acceptance of Tabled Reports was expressed by the meeting.

Michael outlined the purpose of the work sheets circulated to tables and time to talk together requesting a rating on 1- 10 in categories of Worship, Pastoral Care, Outreach. Everyone was encouraged to discuss these 3 areas, what are your views, what is going well, how can we improve, are there any new ideas in relation to those categories or in relation to future directions.

Tables were divided into groups to cover a different theme for 25 minutes and encouraged everyone to capture key points to be handed in at the end but to have an open, frank discussion.

Michael requested sheets be placed at the front and thanked everyone involved in setting up for the meeting and preparing spoken and tabled reports. A reminder was given to everyone of the combined service with the Church of Christ next week and encouraged everyone to bring a plate to share.

Next Meeting – Sunday 21 May 2017.

With prayer from Phil, the meeting closed at 12:30

June Field

Secretary to the Congregation.