

Annual General Meeting

Blackwood Uniting Church
Sunday 17th November 2019



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 19th 2019

Blackwood Uniting Church

1. Welcome & Opening Prayer	Michael Bull	
2. Overview of meeting items	Michael Bull	
a. Reminder re:- Orange/Blue cards		
b. Record of Attendance		
c. Audio-recording of meeting for BUC website		
3. Approval of Minutes of Congregational meeting		
Congregational Meeting 19 th May 2019		4
Special Congregational Meeting 10 th March 2019		10
AGM 18 th November 2018		16
4. Matters Arising		
5. Voting for Church Council Members		
6. Spoken Reports		
6.1 Church Council Report	Chris Bray	21
6.2 Minister's Report	Michael Dowling	22
6.3 Finance & Budget 2019	Tony Miller	
6.4 Forward with Purpose	Peter Cranwell	
7. Tabled Reports		
7.2 Community Classes	Jacqui Harrison	24
7.3 Property	Bob Lyon	26
7.4 Family Ministries	Marnie Agnew	27
7.5 Mainly Music	Carys Penny	29
7.6 Library	Joy Belling	30
7.7 Kids Hope	Ian Penny	31
7.8 MHICC / Beacon	Bev Eccleston / Gloria McArthur	32
8. Reflection on Tabled reports		
9. Other Business		
Synod Feedback		
10. Next Meeting – Sunday, 17th May 2020 (to be confirmed)		
11. Closing Prayer		

3. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

Congregational Meeting Minutes

Sunday, 19 May 2019

Blackwood Uniting Church

Attendance: 82

Apologies: 17

The meeting opened at 11 am.

1. Welcome & Opening Prayer

Chair Ewan Hazeldine welcomed everyone present.

He opened the meeting with a Prayer.

Ewan acknowledged Janet Taylor-Hughes as the Minute Taker of this Congregational Meeting.

2. Overview of Meeting Items

The Chair advised that the meeting will be audio recorded for the purpose of reviewing the Minutes.

The Chair thanked Jacqui Harrison for preparing and circulating the reports for this meeting.

He reminded the Congregation to be mindful that this meeting is being held under the Uniting Church Safe Place Policy.

The Chair invited the Congregation to note their presence on the Attendance Sheets being circulated. Please also record any Apologies.

This meeting will be operating under Consensus Procedures. The Chair explained the process of the orange and blue cards; orange to show support and blue to question.

The Agenda has been circulated.

In the event of a formal vote, the following have been nominated as scrutineers: Ray Pentland, Michael Hughes, Bob and Jean Potter. The Chair asked if everyone is in agreement by raising their orange cards. It was upheld.

3. Approval of Minutes of Congregational Meetings

The Minutes of the Congregational Meeting held on 18 November 2018 were circulated prior to the meeting. They will be put to the AGM in November 2019 for acceptance.

The Minutes of Special Congregational Meeting, held on 10 March 2019, were circulated prior to the meeting and put to be formally accepted.

Wendy Norris moved that the Minutes be accepted. Seconded by Joan Hazeltine.

There being no questions, acceptance of the Minutes were expressed with a show of orange cards.

The Chair then moved to Reports about the life of BUC over the last six months.

4. Spoken Reports

4.1 Church Council – Rev Dr Adrian Brown

The Chair invited Rev Dr Adrian Brown and Rev Michael to present their reports on the future of BUC within the Uniting Church. Later you will be asked to vote by consensus, using the card, to indicate your choice.

Adrian began with some background.

A lot has happened in the last six months. It took us 14 months to find a new Minister. (And it seems to have worked out already!!!) And the JNC made it very clear that they didn't want to repeat the process now that we have appointed Rev Michael Dowling as our full time Minister.

Adrian noted his appreciation of Chris Bray's extraordinary leadership and effort over the last 14 months plus. Applause

We also want to thank Jacqui Harrison for keeping us going above and beyond her role. Applause.

Council has also been busy in many ways.

1. Addressing issues relating to a Child Safe environment.
2. Discussing the Spirit of Generosity programme which will guide us toward of our financial and community wellbeing.
3. Rejigging our Mission goals.
4. Conversing Presbytery structures.
5. Progressing Pastoral Partners – a Judy Hartwick initiative.
6. Working with the Technical Committee led by Peter Cranwell. This committee is responsible for the technical aspects of this property in the backdrop of the future understanding of Mission and involvement with the community. It is quite exciting and we thank Peter and his group for their work.
7. Working with the Property Committee, led by Tony Otworowski. Council is in awe of what they are undertaking and is most grateful for their work. Thank you Tony and your team.

The Chair, on behalf of BUC Council, acknowledged Bob Lyon's efforts with regard to the Blackwood Roundabout works. Discussions with DPTI is ongoing.

The Chair thanked Adrian for his report.

4.2 Finance and Budget – Tony Miller

The Chair invited Tony Miller to summarise BUC's financial situation.

The End of Year deficit of \$14,955 was forecasted at the November AGM. The major components of this deficit was the payment to Rev Phil Hoffman for unused leave and a one off payment for Jacqui Harrison's LSL fund.

As at 31 December, 2018 the cash balance was \$185,653 which includes the Manse Account balance of \$46,739.

As at 30 April 2019, we have a cash surplus of just short of \$10,000. The major explanation being that we had no paid Minister in January However, it was partly offset by paying two full time equivalent

Ministers in March when Reverend Michael Dowling overlapped with Reverends Craig Mitchell and Doug Hosking. This surplus also includes the Garage Sale (\$5,360)

When the budget was framed last year, we assumed a 13% increase in both giving and Ministers costs. Consideration of the 0.2 Ministers time and the Spirit of Generosity programme will be deferred until later in the year, as resources are identified in time.

The first Manse buy-out payment (for 2018) of \$17,700 from the Manse Account to Belair Eden Hills and Upper Sturt was made in early January 2019. The Manse Account balance is \$35,068.

The Chair asked for questions from the floor. There were no questions.

The Chair thanked Tony and his Finance Committee for their diligent work in managing our finances. Applause.

4.3 Presbytery Changes – Rev Dr Adrian Brown

The Synod have asked BUC to give our feedback as to where will sit in the new structure.

The Chair invited Rev Dr Adrian Brown to speak to this report.

Adrian explained that 14 years ago there used to be seven presbyteries. But they proved too costly.

Also at about this time, when the Assembly was considering the Ordination of gay ministers, the EMU group formed. They are vehemently opposed to this notion.

In lieu of the seven Presbyteries, Networks were formed. We belonged to the Urban Mission Network, which together with the Hope Network, proved successful.

In 2018, Synod decided that there should two presbyteries. A Non-Geographic Presbytery, called Generate, and possibly two Geographic Presbyteries.

The Generate Presbytery has four goals. Three of which are consistent with BUC values. However, the fourth goal, pertaining to marriage of a man and woman, is the bug bear.

The Geographic Presbytery has not had time to document their ethos.

It has been documented that a well-functioning Presbytery will comprise the following characteristics (at least);

1. the interchange of ideas
2. resourcing events within and across Presbyteries
3. cross-congregational support
4. fellowship opportunities
5. leadership development
6. mission planning and action that is relevant to the congregational or faith community context
7. enhancing the quality of congregational life and witness and members' discipleship journeys
8. providing pastoral support

9. providing a support role in the placements process
10. supporting the implementation of innovative ideas and programs.

Reverend Michael then addressed the meeting as to the ethos of each Presbytery as to how it ties up with BUC.

There are three main differences between the two Presbyteries:

- Generate system has a top down style. Whereas in the Traditional Geographic Presbytery it is up to the grass roots level, together with the Minister, to develop the vision of the Church.
- Attitude to same gender marriage
- Generate see Evangelism as conversion growth whilst Transitional have a broader approach.

The Chair thanked Michael for his contribution.

The Chair invited questions or comments from the floor.

Peter Cranwell: For clarification purposes. This is a two stage process. There is a potential to create more than one Presbytery. Whatever decision we make today will be revisited in November when we will have another opportunity to vote.

Bruce Marriott: Any division between the Church is counter-productive. Is there any way that this can be avoided or is it a fait accompli?

Adrian: Answer is Yes and Yes. Second Yes is that, Synod voted last November to form the Non-Geographic Presbytery. The decision can be reversed because under Uniting Church rules, no one Synod is bound by another Synod. But the chance of that happening is fairly minimal. The Uniting Church is a very diverse Church and works best with its diversity and to split into a Non-Geographic Presbytery is in effect to deny that diversity.

The Chair tested the feeling of the meeting. He asked Adrian to read out Council's recommendation.

Council recommends:

"That BUC resolves to join the Transitional Geographic Presbytery."

Moved by Adrian.

The Chair asked for support of this proposal and then separately asked for a show of disapproval. There was no dissent. The motion was supported by way of card in consensus.

The Chair thanked the presenters. He especially thanked Michael for his deep and meaningful explanation.

The Chair announced that the decision will be recorded and Council will convey the decision that the BUC will join the Transitional Geographic Presbytery, to Synod. Applause.

Peter Cranwell reminded us that people will still be considering this transition and invites the congregation to share their thoughts on this matter.

4.4 Report from Minister - Rev Michael Dowling

The Chair invited Rev Michael Dowling to share his early impressions of his new Ministership at BUC.

Michael explained it as having been a 'whole-of-body' experience. Within weeks, he was confronted with the busiest event of the year - Easter celebrations. It proved to be a considerable learning curve.

Michael has made a concerted effort to visit the Congregation in the office, homes, at coffee, worship groups, bible studies and at workshops.

He is also engaging with the wider Blackwood community.

Michael acknowledged our Website Coordinator, Karen Collins, who has introduced a plethora of resources on the BUC website.

Michael initiated the:

- Website Resources for Personal Exploration:
 - John Gottman, Marriage
 - Compassion & Altruism Meditation Resources
 - Courses available to borrow
- Compassion Meditation Group
- Philosophers' Lunch
- Word for the Week

It's been a fascinating first couple of months and look forward to my continuing journey with you. The Chair thanked Michael for his presentation.

5. Any Other Business

The Chair invited questions and announcements

Malcolm McArthur:

Reminder about first of the Occasional Series on Celtic Christianity on Sunday 26 May.

Book Club Reminder - 'A Bigger Table' about extending the range of people that we meet.

Peter Cranwell:

Reconciliation Week: Next Sunday will be combined service at 10 am with guest preachers followed at 11 am by a walk to Colebrook Reconciliation Park with the wider community. If you need transport please contact Peter Cranwell.

Jazz Afternoon Tea at 2pm next Sunday, 26 May.

Packing Day on 2 and 3 June. Volunteers are required on Sunday afternoon and Monday down at Marion UC. Peter and Nancy would also be grateful for donations of towels and sheets.

Marnie Agnew:

Please RSVP for dinner after the Spirituality Evening.

The Chair welcomed Marnie back after her operation.

The Chair expressed our appreciation for the wonderful work undertaken by Marnie and her team involved with Children's Ministry.

The Chair thanked the sound guys and everyone else who contributed to this meeting's success.

6. Next Meeting:

The next AGM will be held on Sunday, 17 November 2019.

7. Benediction – Rev Michael Dowling

Janet Taylor-Hughes
Secretary to the Congregation

Special Congregational Meeting

Sunday 10th March 2019

10:25am start

Attendees: 103

Apologies: 7

Welcome from Chair of the Congregation Ewan Hazeldine (standing in for Michael Bull)

Special welcome to Sue Burt from Urban Mission Network chairing the JNC and the Joint Nominating Committee. We appreciate their work over a very long period of time.

Prayer from Ewan Hazeldine

Attendance sheet circulating – record name and apologies

General procedural matters – card explanation, consensus.

Two procedural matters to attend to:-

1. Appoint scrutineers. The proposal is that Phil & Jane Marlow be the regular scrutineers plus Penny Harper & Wes Bray - **Unanimous consensus.**
2. Secret ballot today – approval for the margin we are required – Two thirds majority on a secret ballot – **Unanimous consensus.**

Adrian Brown – report on behalf of JNC.

Susan will walk us through the structural process first of all and then we'll go on with the rest of the proceedings from there.

Susan Burt – This has been a long journey. It was 4th Feb that there was a special congregational meeting at BUC to approve nominations for JNC. The members have been Jane Bassham, Adrian Brown, Bec English, Bev Eccleston, Dave Smith, Geoff Thomas and two representatives from PRC Rev Philip Gardner and myself from the UMN. The JNC first met on 15 March 2018 to be briefed on the process that will be leading to a calling a minister or ministers to the Blackwood Uniting Church – a 12 month journey. Your JNC has worked diligently, carefully and proactively to arrive here today. They have also considered in various forms placements that might include 2 positions that combined would be over a full -time placement. The Synod Placement Committee offered names for the position and the JNC also brought names to the Placement Committee for consideration. When I returned from my overseas trip last May I thought the JNC's work would be almost done but I discovered it really must be all done again. As I mentioned earlier the JNC has worked diligently and carefully as they've looked at the profile of ministers and the profile of Blackwood and the person specification that the JNC prepared. The JNC will bring the name and speak to the reasons as to why they think the role is appropriate. Then there will be opportunity for questions, written ballot and formal vote. The call will then be issued by the placements committee on advice from this congregation. This will be following on from today's meeting should it be approved. Within 3 days of a decision to issue a call, a letter of call will be sent by this congregation and there is a Nationally Agreed Statement that needs to be included, and your Church Secretary will be including all of that. The Minister then responds in writing in 14 days and will sign an agreement to

the terms of placement. It will be the Pastoral Relations team in consultation with the Minister and the Congregation will set a date for the induction service. So that has been the process that has been held over the last 12 months and that will continue now for the next couple of weeks. Thank you.

Adrian Brown -It was very appropriate this morning that we dealt with the 40 days of wilderness but if we can merge old and new testament, we actually have seen the promised land and it's coming and we expect to get there within almost minutes of where we are today.

The JNC started off with a job description relating to 1.4 ministers, we reduced this to 1.2 and finally determined that we would appoint a 1.0 and that the 0.2 would be worked out during the year in consultation with the 1.0 person.

The Job Descriptions talk about pastoral care and worship, but they also talk about the two things this congregation agreed should be our particular foci. One of these is to relate to family ministry or we've been talking in terms of intergenerational ministry in that sense but also engagement with the local community. We've been quite clear that these things are priorities, and in order to do that we've also believed that we should only expect this minister to lead only 3 of the 4 Sundays of the month. This is in recognition of the huge ask of that person having to actually do what we are asking. Otherwise we are just going to run them into the ground. The journey that we have taken has been a particularly onerous one in many ways, but there is no question in our minds that, in fact, the spirit of God has actually been at work because the person whose name we are going to give you shortly was not available until now. Not even to be available to be talked with or to converse with at all, and Geoff Thomas will explain why this is the case shortly. So good things come to those who wait. The most important thing that we need to share with you, apart from the name, is that when the JNC met with this person, I think that within about 2 ½ minutes there was a connection, an incredible connection and we are absolutely delighted. Everything we've seen and talked about since has confirmed that. I want to share with you just 3 things from this person's profile that indicate something that Bec English included in the minutes of the council, and it is that this person oozes Blackwood – he has a strong connection with where we are. I will share 3 things that demonstrate that.

The first is under the heading Primary Theological values - I don't see my call as a follower of Christ involving converting someone to my own thoughts and beliefs, nor do I see in the synoptic gospels a portrait of Jesus who demanded the sign-up sheet to a set of beliefs before he helped them. He just helped them.

One of the reasons why I've loved Aged Care Chaplaincy is that the very idea of me proselytising in the role is an anathema. People have their own thoughts and beliefs as do I. If I am faithful to my beliefs, I may be able to share time and space with someone else. This someone else having their own thoughts and beliefs, and sometimes in that sharing of that common ground of our humanity extraordinary things can occur. Through God's grace sometimes we can be drawn together out of our little selves into something beyond dogmas and definitions into something that might be called the Kingdom of Heaven.

And then about Worship ... Let me state at the outset that I believe that the totality of our life together should be our worship, and whatever we do each day both the sublime and the mundane,

alone or together should be our prayer. Weekly worship presents the opportunity to come together in one place, informally confirm the life of faith that we share. It affirms that through someone we share in something indescribably wonderful and hence worship should reflect that sense of wonder and gratitude. Worship should provide the opportunity to be nurtured and encouraged in the faith, challenging our pre-suppositions and most of all drawn out of our little finite cells into connection with each other and all of life. I'm a very informal person and I prefer an approach to worship that is not prescriptive but is instead willing to experiment and innovate. Whilst I appreciate competency, diligence and integrity in the approach in preparing for, and in the induction of worship. I am quite put off by an obsession on perfection in worship. God may be perfect, but we aren't, as much as we might like to kid ourselves at times.

To me that simply reflects exactly where we come to as this congregation in our approach to worship. Just to give you another illustration of the questions asked about Church administration and finances, the question reminds me of a scene in the Dirty Harry movie Magnum Force. Let Briggs be berating the Inspector Harry Callaghan for his latest excessive use of force and as he hauls him over the coals, he brags that in 30 years on the force he has never taken his gun from his holster. Callahan looks at his superior officer coolly before saying, you're a good man Briggs, a good man knows his limitations. So, with reference to Church administration and finances I'm a good man and a good man knows his limitations. Best if someone else handles this. I might add that he actually sells himself short because you'll see in fact this is no person who comes to administration in a very haphazard sort of fashion. This is the person now that we are looking to and Geoff is going to speak about his journey which is a really important journey for us and also to present his name.

Geoff Thomas - It is my pleasure to introduce to you Michael Dowling aged 60. He was born of Irish parents, raised a Roman Catholic and rejected religious faith in his 20's. He did an honours degree in science in Chemistry in Adelaide graduating in 1980. He worked in industry as a chemist with Bridgestone's and others and then as a sales person in the scientific instrument industry. He ran his own business in that area for 12 years. So, how did he come back to the faith, I quote,

"The relentless searching for God, through highways and byways, through different religious and spiritual traditions, led me, full of wonder, back to the Christian faith, only now within the Uniting Church. An ever-increasing involvement in church lay ministry led me to a 'tap on the shoulder' regarding ordained ministry, a call which, when affirmed, confirms my deepest suspicion that God does indeed have a sense of humour." He finished his BMin in 2014. He's done quite a bit of work filling in preaching but most of his time has been spent as a Chaplain with Eldercare. So, he certainly has relevant experience. So, at the age of 60, this is Michael's first parish which is interesting. Let me tell you a little bit about his personal life – he has been married twice; he's got 5 adult children. His second wife Joy suffered an acute health crisis 9 years ago leaving her dependent on oxygen 24/7 and with a raft of associated disabilities. Michael was her part time carer since that time, until 12 months ago when the situation became so bad that he left the workplace and became Joy's full-time carer. She passed away in November 2018. He's still coping with grief obviously but getting on with life and we are an important part of getting on with that life. He lives at Hackham West and will continue to do so. But the good news is, unlike his predecessor he doesn't have to rely on a battered Volvo from Sweden for transport.

Something of his attributes – He has been described as a quiet and gentle soul. He is very literate, writes well, he's a joy to read and he reads widely. He has an interest in creating the link with philosophy, science and religion in the real world. He's a good listener, and I can assure you that he will engage and he's a careful planner but at the same time a quick thinker and a good communicator and I believe that when a decision needs to be made he'll be there making it with the people but with providing leadership.

I will conclude with some words from his referee Rev Dr Les Underwood.

Michael is an enthusiastic and focused person with an enquiring mind and a thirst for knowledge and understanding. In this regard he enjoys challenges and projects which fire his imagination and the practical application of his discoveries and learning.

Michael has a strong commitment to the wellbeing of others and is diligent in the exercise of his pastoral ministry.

Michael is conscientious and thorough in his preparation and presentation of worship services.

Michael expresses loyalty and commitment to the Church and continues to seek ways to make his ministry purposeful, appropriate and significant.

The only downside I could pick is that I don't think he tells jokes. But I guess I'll just have to cope.

So, what JNC are recommending that we appoint Michael full time – the remaining 0.2, we think is only fair is to be determined thereafter by assessing the needs of the congregation.

Adrian Brown - He's a smart person and it was my privilege to be his boss for a while and in that time, I saw a very fine minister who was very well accepted within Eldercare.

Bev E – Pastoral Care - As we are embarking on a renewed approach to Pastoral Care here at Blackwood Uniting, it seems timely to share Michael's thoughts and experiences.

A 6 year placement as Aged Care Chaplain at Eldercare was a rich opportunity for Michael to provide pastoral care to the many and varied residents in his care.

Michael's colleague in Ministry, Rev Dr Les Underwood has stated, and I quote, "Michael has a strong commitment to the wellbeing of others and is diligent in exercising Pastoral Care".

Reflective and compassionate, Michael has shared the importance he places on caring, within his Ministry. When interacting with, and listening to others whose opinions may, and do, differ from his own, Michael believes that the caring offered to another is more important than any differences of opinion.

Pastoral care, connection and the building of relationships will take time. However, remembering the high esteem in which Michael is held by Eldercare, along with his gifts and abilities, we believe that his experiences in life have prepared Michael admirably to become our new Minister here at Blackwood Uniting.

Dave Smith – Family Ministry - As you have heard the JNC had a number of criteria at the forefront of our minds when we looked at ministerial candidates. One of these was Family Ministry. In itself this term is a shorthand label for a much bigger function. In our minds it covered our current programs of Messy Church, Mainly Music, Playgroup, the Community Program and such like, but

more generally it is about connecting with the community around us. The internal parts of this work are often referred to as Intergenerational Ministry.

Michael has very little direct experience running a classic Family Ministry program as we know it. What he does have is a very strong vision of how the church can relate to the community around it and the enthusiasm to make this happen. Michael will rely strongly on the existing teams in these areas but when you look at his characteristics you can see that this will not be an issue. Michael has a tremendous ability to connect with people, he has a lot of energy, he automatically undertakes initiatives to improve the services he is involved in and he has a strong vision about connecting the church to the community around it.

When we were talking to Michael about connecting to the wider community he spent some time talking about connecting to the business community and how providing a chaplaincy to the street could work.

While talking with Michael about Blackwood we covered the fact that we have 3 distinct congregations and the need for meaningful intergenerational worship across this group. Michael put forward several ideas on things we could try. Now, normally anyone from outside trying to tell me how to do my job would get my back up immediately. But Michael continued with the statement that these were ideas to show how he was thinking not what he wants done. His direction will be to meet with people and groups to see how he can best fit into their activities rather than to tell them how to do their job.

So, in summary, Michael is enthusiastic about Blackwood's intergenerational worship, Family Ministry and enabling Blackwood to interact with the wider community. His strengths are his ability to connect with people, his energy and his ability to generate ideas and initiatives.

Questions

Marnie Agnew: I'm just a little concerned that you are talking in terms of only looking at 0.2 once Michael's had a chance to settle in if we vote him in because I don't think 0.2 is viable. So, I think we should not limit ourselves to that but be prepared to go to the 0.4 and not make any decisions today about whether it should be 0.2 or 0.4. **Geoff Thomas** – I think that's probably a fair comment but an initial decision was mooted that it be 0.4 and I can tell you there was a substantial amount of push back on that because of whether or not we could afford it. So, my suggestions would be that we look at the size of the job and then make a decision as a congregation as to what level it might be. My personal view is that we could always indicate how much time we need or is ideal. It is important that Michael be mentored. It is important that all ministers be mentored. What the JNC has suggested is that they take on that role and then he can decide what mentoring group he wants and I'm sure that we'll be more than happy to step aside. So let's take it step by step. First parish, recently lost his wife, let's take it nice and gently and not push too hard and I'm sure it will all turn out extremely well.

Any other questions?

Ewan Hazeldine

Time to vote.

Thank you for those reports. Good comments JNC.

Community Time Announcements (while we wait for scrutineers to collate the votes)

- Garage Sale
- Safe Church – Called to Care course

Chris Bray -Further to Adrian's comment that if we assume that we vote yes – then Michael will actually start a week tomorrow. He will not conduct services until Doug & Craig move. Doug's final service will be March 24 and Craig's final service will be March 31st and Michael will start preaching from the 7th and will be here through Easter. It's really exciting times for the Church.

Result of the Ballot thanks to the scrutineers is:-

Yes 107

No 0

100% in favour of issuing a call. Wonderful result.!

Chris Bray - Thank you to the JNC – a motion on behalf of Chris Bray and Ewan Hazeldine. It is with pleasure that we move and second that the Blackwood Uniting Church thanks the members of the JNC, Jane Bassham, Adrian Brown, Bev Eccleston, Bec English, Dave Smith, Geoff Thomas, Susan Burt and Phil Gardener for their faithful hard work and perseverance over the last year. The JNC will now be officially disbanded as of today. **Unanimously agreed.**

End of meeting – closing prayer by Doug Hosking 11:03am.

Jacqui Harrison
Standing in for the Secretary of the Congregation

Congregational Meeting Minutes

Sunday, 18 November 2018

The meeting opened at 11.21 am.

1. Welcome & Opening Prayer

Chair Michael Bull welcomed everyone present.

He opened the meeting with an Opening Prayer.

Michael welcomed Janet Taylor-Hughes as the Congregational Meeting Secretary.

2. Overview of Meeting Items

Chairman Michael Bull thanked Jacqui Harrison for preparing and circulating the reports for this meeting.

He outlined the format for today's meeting.

He explained the process of the orange and blue cards; orange to show support and blue to question.

The Chair asked for the Attendance Sheet to be circulated and to note any Apologies.

The Chair assured the assembly that although the meeting will be audio recorded, the recording was for the purpose of reviewing the Minutes and will not appear on the website.

3. Approval of Minutes of General Meeting held 20 May 2018

The Minutes of the General Meeting held on 20 May 2018, Chaired by Ewan Hazeldine, were circulated prior to the meeting and put to be formally accepted.

There being no questions, acceptance of the Minutes were expressed with a show of orange cards.

4. Matters Arising

There were no specific matters arising which will not be addressed in Reports.

5. Spoken Report

The Chair invited Adrian Brown to speak to the meeting on behalf of the Church Council in the context of the Finance Report and Budget.

Adrian reported that the BUC Council find themselves in a strong position and on the cusp of making some important decisions.

The Council has been frustrated in their search for new Ministry but not deterred. In response to concerns about our Church's ability to fund 1.4 full time equivalents, the Council fine-tuned the Ministry to 1.2 and developed job descriptions accordingly; 1.0 to focus on engaging with the community and family ministry, and; 0.2 to focus entirely on pastoral care.

Adrian reiterated that even though we have been without a permanent Ministry for twelve months, BUC has moved forwards and not stayed with the status quo.

With regard to the Budget, it has been a long time since BUC has looked at the Planned Giving programme. Council believes we need to challenge ourselves and invest in the Ministry and the BUC community.

Adrian expressed our gratitude to Reverends Craig Mitchell and Judi Hartwig for their leadership.

The Chair thanked Adrian for his words.

The Chair reminded us that Rev Phil Hoffman left twelve months ago and left the Congregation in shock at his unexpected early resignation. The Chair agreed that despite our lack of permanent Ministry, we have in many ways moved forward. It is a tribute to the Ministerial group – Adrian Brown, Malcolm McArthur, Judy Hartwig, Craig Mitchell and Rev Doug Hosking and those who led Worship and contributed to pastoral care.

5.1 Finance and Budget – Tony Miller

Tony Miller apologised that there was not a written Finance and Budget Report available for circulation prior to the meeting. An electronic version will be emailed to everyone. He spoke to his report which was projected on the screen.

Tony reported that there will be a projected deficit of \$13,500 by the end of 2018. In the main, it is due to two one-off events; payment of Annual Leave to Rev Phil Hoffman, and; contribution towards Long Service Leave for Office Manager, Jacqui Harrison.

Tony made special mention of significant events which have contributed to BUC income; Garage Sale; Craft Fair and Community Events; Quiz Night; Donations; Hire of Church facilities; Offering and Family Ministry Programmes, and; BUC expenditure; direct giving to Mission; property improvement ie external signage, security cameras in foyer, and; purchase of data projector.

The BUC has the complete control of the Blackwood Manse after buying out the other Churches which historically had financial interest. It has been agreed that BUC will pay the other Churches a proportionate amount over the 2018 to 2025 period from annual rental receipts. There is a potential financial risk if; a future Minister requires accommodation; rental income reduces, or; capital improvements become necessary; however contingencies have been put in place to reduce this risk.

Tony turned to the Finance Committee's planning for next year. The major cost component being the increased Ministry from 1.0 to 1.2 to better service our BUC goals for 2019.

Tony pointed out that the projected 'Planned Giving' is slightly down and is of concern. In order to fund our aspirational goals, the BUC needs to; increase the value of the stewardship programme by 20% which is an average of \$30 per month by each giver; attract new givers, and; increase the pool of givers from family ministry families.

Tony thanked the members of the Finance Committee – Brian Pickering, Jan Furness, Ray Bown and Mark Gill - for their contribution over the past year.

The Chair thanked Tony for preparing the Budget and his over-sight of the Finance Committee over the last year. Further feedback is invited once the Finance Report is circulated.

The Chair asked for our appreciation and expression of gratitude for the Finance Committee by a show of orange cards. The Report was accepted.

The Chair acknowledged the dedication and commitment of all our BUC Volunteers for service to the Church and external communities.

6. Tabled Reports

The Chair commended the following reports to the meeting.

6.1 Church Council Report – Chris Bray

6.2 Community Classes – Jacqui Harrison

6.3 Property – Bob Lyon

6.4 Family Ministries – Marnie Agnew

6.5 Mainly Music – Carys Penny

6.6 Urban Mission Network – Peter Cranwell

6.7 Status of Joint Nominating Committee – Adrian Brown (Supplementary Report)

7. Reflection on Tabled Reports

The Chair asked the meeting if there were any questions out of these Reports.

Penny Harper asked if the Ministerial positions had been advertised interstate. Adrian Brown replied that the net had been cast widely with no success.

Acceptance of Tabled Reports was expressed by the meeting by a show of orange cards.

The Chair thanked the Council for their contribution. In particular the Chair asked that the leadership of Council Chair, Chris Bray be mentioned in the Minutes. A unanimous show of orange cards reflected support for Chris who is an apology for this meeting.

The Chair asked that our appreciation for Jacqui Harrison service be minuted and acknowledged by a show of orange cards. Her Community Classes Report is a credit to her. It was also of interest to understand that the outreach programme makes donations to the; Epilepsy Foundation; Frontier Services; Cancer Council, and; War Memorial Service on Remembrance Day. Jacqui is linking with the Coromandel Community Centre, organising our involvement with the 2018 Blackwood Pageant and has initiated funding for cookery skill classes.

Christine Roach asked that Marnie Agnew and Carys Penny be thanked for their immense contribution to the growth of Family Ministries. The meeting expressed their thanks with a show of orange cards.

8. Other Business

8.1 Craft Fair

The Chair invited Jacqui Harrison to report on the recent Craft Fair. Jacqui was pleased to announce that the Fair had produced a \$6000 nett profit and this year attracted the largest number of stall holders and positive feedback. Jacqui thanked the congregation for their support and encouragement and she felt blessed to work at BUC. She acknowledged Rev Judi Hartwig, who was such a great support to her, together with Lynona Hawkins, Doff Lyon and Bev Ecclestone and Carys Penny.

8.2 Update from Joint Nominating Committee JNC – Rev Adrian Brown

Adrian promised to keep the Congregation informed.

8.3 SA Presbytery and Synod Meeting Feedback

The Chair invited Rev Judi Hartwig to report on the recent three day SA Presbytery and Synod Meeting which she attended with Peter Cranwell, Tim Lee and Steph Decker.

Judi invited Peter, Tim and Steph to report on one 'positive' of the meeting.

Tim is encouraged that the Uniting Church is for the people by the people. He was particularly interested in the Bible Studies segment.

Steph was interested in how the Uniting Church was heading towards the future. She is affirmed of getting together and sharing our strengths and stories.

Peter was impressed by the strong leadership shown by the Moderator, Sue Ellis and Interim Secretary, Rod Brown, during the meeting.

Judi reported that in all the years she has been attending Presbytery, this year's meeting was 'tension filled' and the most difficult.

She was happy to report that Liz Dyson is to be ordained as a Deacon in the Uniting Church.

There was recognition of long service by ordained and lay preachers.

Judi commends the new theological course, Venture, being run by the Uniting College, for people of mature years.

The Indigenous group reported that they were working towards a balanced budget. They invited all Uniting Churches to hold a day of mourning on the Sunday before Australia Day.

The creation of the Synod Circle of Transforming Justice to manage cross cultural and diversity issues was announced.

There were two contentious issues discussed at Presbytery: the Assembly has been asked to reconsider the 'understanding of marriage' and it was resolved to hold a meeting for this purpose on 12 January 2019, and; it was resolved to form the Mission and Non Geographic Presbytery.

Judi read a letter from the Moderator Sue Ellis.

The Chair thanked Judi, Peter, Tim and Steph for representing BUC at the Presbytery meeting.

The Chair again expressed gratitude to Reverends Craig Mitchell and Judi Hartwig for their support.

The Chair thanked everyone for their contribution to the running of the Church and suggested that we find time to appreciate and thank individuals when the occasion arose.

9. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Sunday 19 May 2019 TBC

10. Closing Prayer

Rev Judi Hartwig closed the meeting with a Prayer.

Meeting closed at 12.31 pm.

Janet Taylor-Hughes
Secretary to the Congregation

6.1 Church Council Report

As predicted in last year's report, 2019 has been another interesting year.

Following several conversations JNC were pleased to recommend to a Special Meeting of the Congregation in February that BUC invite Rev Michael Dowling to fill the full-time Ministry placement. It was with great joy that both the Congregation and Michael agreed and his Induction Service as held in March.

While Rev Judi Hartwig finished at the end of 2018, Craig Mitchell returned for February & March which enabled a handover to Michael.

It's been a steep learning curve for Michael but he's fitted in really well. Pastoral Care & preaching in particular have been greatly appreciated.

Throughout the year Council has focused on reviewing our Vision and looking at what BUC can achieve in the short & long term. In this process we value the support of both Council members and the Technical Committee, especially Peter Cranwell who has attended Council meetings to aid discussions.

While looking for a new Minister, Council started meeting monthly to handle the business as well as the dreaming of the Church. In the new year we plan to return to bi-monthly Council meetings with the Executive meeting alternate months.

Special thanks this year to Adrian Brown who Chaired Council Meetings while I was unavailable and everyone who shared Minutes while Bec was on maternity leave.

Chris Bray
Chair, Blackwood Uniting Church Council

6.2 Minister's Report

Let me say, by way of introduction to this, my first Blackwood Minister's AGM report, that I feel incredibly lucky to be your minister. "Don't you mean *blessed*, Michael?" I hear you say. No, I mean *lucky*. I am actually quite a fan of the theological concept of luck, and I do indeed feel so *lucky* to be here (Hint: this is a teaser for an offline conversation, maybe at a Philosophers' Lunch?!).

So...what have I been up to these first seven months?

I'll get to the nuts and bolts in a moment, but an ongoing thread for me during this time has been finding my rhythm as a congregational minister. I have discovered that this rhythm is very different to that of aged care chaplaincy, so it has taken me a number of iterations to settle into my present pattern which, to be honest, is still a work-in-progress.

As well as the 'doing' aspects of ministry - working collaboratively to prepare for each Sunday's worship, sharing the Sunday message, engaging with many and varied groups in our BUC community, and offering pastoral care as appropriate - there have also been opportunities for me, in this new phase of ministry, to 'step back' from what I'm doing, and to reflectively ask the bigger picture questions about what exactly I am trying to achieve in this role. The clarification provided by this reflection has been tremendously helpful, as it reaffirmed for me that which is most important in my ministry: *people*.

Blackwood Uniting Church operates many, many different *programs* and *groups*. Blackwood Uniting Church does many, many good *things*.

But all of this is dependent upon *the precious individuals* who run the programs, and the groups, and who do the things!

As such, I see the core of my ministry as forming and developing quality relationships with precious individuals, not just within our worshipping communities, but also within the many community classes, linked groups, and indeed the wider Blackwood community, and rippling out into the wider world. Naturally, it takes time to build such relationships, but I have been focussing intentionally on doing so, having extended catch-ups with people in their homes, in coffee shops, and at the church. I have delighted in this getting to know people; it is the single most enjoyable aspect of my role, and a large contributor to me wandering around with a smile on my face much of the time!

This intentional getting-to-know people has made far more enjoyable the various task-oriented activities, such as participating in various meetings, participating in planning sessions for the future, and participating in such activities as Mainly Music, Messy Church, Resthaven Singalong, and the Philosophers' Lunch, because I am participating in these tasks together with people that I am coming to know and love. The developing connection with people also means that sharing messages on Sunday (something that I truly love) is made so much richer for me because I am sharing with precious people who have, in so many cases, invited me into their lives.

I have enormously enjoyed learning about the diverse gifts and passions of the members of Blackwood. We have here, in this community, people with brilliant minds, people with huge hearts, people with sublime gifts, and people of inspiring passion. A delightful part of my role is recognising and affirming these diverse personal attributes, gifts and passions in the people I encounter.

The diversity here at BUC is an expression of the Apostle Paul's metaphor of 'The Body of Christ' and how, through recognising and embracing our diverse gifts and attributes, we can achieve so much more than in operating as isolated individuals. I am a firm believer in that wonderful concept of *synergy*: of the whole

being greater than the sum of its parts. This has been particularly noteworthy in the many discussions I have had around the topic of 'church future' for the Blackwood Uniting Church. What we are endeavouring to do is to bring to bear on this question our marvellous diversity of gifts, passions and viewpoints, so that the end result will be so much richer than any single person's "vision" could ever achieve. If there is to be a vision for the Blackwood Uniting Church, it has to be *our* vision, for we are in this journey *together*.

In these first seven months, there has been much laughter and frivolity. There have also been quiet, and serious, and painful moments. We have lost beloved members of our community during this time, and our community continues to uphold their grieving families in love.

In drawing this report to a close, I reiterate how lucky I feel, not only to have been chosen as the minister here at Blackwood Uniting Church but also, wonder upon wonder, to have met and fallen in love with Karen, and for the community to be so delighted for us both.

I am honoured to be a member of an extraordinary community of caring people, a community whose collective quality is demonstrated by the quality of the *relationships* between its members, and between those members and all the individuals we encounter.

None of us here at Blackwood Uniting Church know what the future will hold. What we do know is that, as a community, we are called to face this future united as the Body of Christ.

What a magnificent community of people!
What a privilege to be the minister here!

Michael Dowling
Minister
November 2019

7.2 Community Classes

Community to me is everything ... my goal for the Community Program is to include everyone and not discriminate. I want to get the word out about this fabulous program and one of the best ways to do this is by word of mouth and our annual Craft Fair.

A few highlights from this year are as follows:-

Class numbers have risen, in fact we have 6 classes that are at capacity. Every week we seem to have more people join us which is mainly down to word of mouth.

We have just had another successful Craft Fair – we had 39 stallholders – our biggest number yet and we have made a profit of nearly \$7,000.00. In saying this I want to re-iterate that I am all about “Community” and not about profit making. I would like to personally thank Sue Fisher, Chris Bray, Doff Lyon, Penny Harper, Janet Paull, Judith Terrell, Meg & Ray Pentland, Lynona Hawkins, Bev Eccleston, Vicki Staude (our newest volunteer), Sue Zilm and the Quilting girls and of course the cavalry – the men and women who helped with setting up and packing up. As you know for this massive day to come together there is a lot of behind the scenes work to do. I appreciate all the help I get from many different people in the community and every little bit counts. Helen Keller quotes, “Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much”.

Our finances are in the black, which is always a good sign. Our bank account balance as of 12th November was \$22,000 and we are running slightly ahead of budget as far as expenditure is concerned and income is as budgeted.

The Bike Shed is going along nicely. Peter Jones is doing a marvellous job managing the volunteers and the Bike Shed is growing rapidly. Peter has contacts in so many fields such as SAPOL, Bike SA and bike shops all around SA. I would also like to thank and acknowledge Lynona who goes to see the men and women at the Shed every week without fail and bakes morning tea for them. I am always in awe of the quiet unassuming way she does this and she is an absolute asset to not only the Community Program but the Church as well. Whilst I was at the Shed last week Peter Jones presented me with \$500.00 in cash which he has collected from sales of bikes.

Also, this term we welcomed Yi & Dong – two Flinders University Social Work students. Their roles have been to assist me in the office with various duties, seeking out opportunities to communicate with people, learn from people to get an understanding of diversity and needs, undertaking practical tasks such as group facilitation, help with set up/clean etc. Yi undertook a “Chinese Cooking Class” on 3 consecutive Thursday afternoons which was well attended and Dong undertook 3 consecutive art projects and stories at Playgroup. We thank Yi & Dong for their contribution to our Programs.

Fundraising

At the end of Term 1 we held a Biggest Morning Tea and raised \$450.00 which went to the Cancer Council Australia.

Term 2 we sold Mother’s Day Flowers and made a profit of \$500 for the Community Classes.

Then Term 3 we held several fundraiser such as a “Scone Bake-Off” and a “Sausage Sizzle” run by Russell Gear, Tony O and Bob Potter. All of this money amounted to \$500.00 which was then announced and given to Janet Woodward of Frontier Services at the Craft Fair.

In the Winter months every Wednesday lunchtime we have Soup and bread. A volunteer brings in a big pot of soup and we charge the students \$2.50 for a cup and a piece of bread. From this we are earning approximately \$40 - \$60 a week.

In conclusion, I would like to thank everybody for their support and encouragement and kind words and suggestions and cake and chats and let you all know that I love working here and it's all because of this community.

Jacqui Harrison
Community Program Coordinator

7.3 Property

Property Committee Membership Graham Brown, Peter Cranwell, Russell Gear, **Lisa Haddrick**, David Hawkins, John Hewitt, Bob Lyon (Secretary), Geoff McLean, Phil and Jane Marlow, **Tony Otworowski** (Chair) Ray & Meg Pentland, Brian Pickering (Treasurer), Bob and Jean Potter, Peter Smith and Mark Williams.

Committee Role - The primary role of the Property Committee is to ensure that the Church complex is well maintained and appropriate for the more than 30 Church and community groups that use the complex on a regular basis. It also needs to plan for the future.

Funding for property development, maintenance, insurance, security, cleaning, power, and other ongoing expenses comes from **room hire** providing around \$16,000, **garage sale** profits of \$4,500, a **transfer from general funds** of \$12,000 and a transfer of \$5,000 from **manse rental**. Since the closure of Eden Hills Church Blackwood can expect to retain a similar amount from manse rental over the next 7 years until Belair and Upper Sturt's interest in the manse have been fully paid out. At the end of 2025 all income from the manse will be available for Blackwood Church projects. There are also considerable savings from the **many voluntary hours** contributed by members of the committee.

Major work over the past 12 months has included a major **Foyer upgrade** including a **new carpet**, upgrades to the **Hall Sound system**, replacing the **box gutters** and other **gutters** and **repairs to the Manse fence**.

There have also been **many other tasks**, mostly done by members of the committee, such as **repainting** in several areas, **upgrade of the children's play area**, **replacing curtains** in the Aldersgate room and **blinds** in the Coffee Lounge, cleaning windows, chairs and carpets, and polishing the hard floors,. They have also repaired damaged tables and chairs, regularly cleaned airconditioner filters, carried out minor repairs to door latches, blocked toilets and many other ongoing issues including keeping the gutters and Church surrounds clean, . The **Gardening team deserve special thanks** for a great job throughout the year particularly during and following the roundabout upgrade. The roundabout contractors demonstrated their appreciation for the Church's cooperation by installing **slate edging** to the Coromandel Parade garden borders, replacing 6 shrubs, and providing **removable bollards** for our northern driveway.

The Church complex is used by large numbers of people creating a challenge to ensure that it is always clean and suitable for each of the many users. The Property Committee is working with the cleaners to ensure that cleaning is done efficiently.

Early in the year **Synod's Property Officer** inspected our Complex and the manse to document the state of our buildings and our care of this valuable resource. We were complemented on our ongoing property management.

Change is inevitable - almost 2 years ago a **local architect** was asked to provide advice on possible future **changes to the Church Complex** to meet the needs of the Church over the next 20 to 30 years. A small group led by Peter Cranwell is working with Church Council and the Property Committee to plan the future direction of our Church and the related changes to the property. It is worth noting that it is almost 100 years since the current Church was built and almost 50 years since the major property redevelopment in 1972 provided the range of rooms currently used every day and night by both Church and Community groups.

Bob Lyon
Secretary, Property Committee

6.4 Family Ministries

Roundabout Playgroup

Playgroup has continued to provide a welcoming, enjoyable and happy place for families this year. We have had a steady enrolment of 20-25 families which changes from term to term as children and families move on to other things, but we have a core group of regulars who come consistently, weather, illness and other life events permitting. We have a small but steady intake of new families and a number of families who come back after a break with their next child, and we continue to have a large percentage of the group made up of grandparents who find it a good place to bring their grandchildren, and 5-6 fathers who attend with their children.

This year we have varied the programs a little: as the three year cycle entered its fourth rotation, this being the tenth year of operation, we felt it could do with some fresh content. In term 1 the theme was Friends and included Easter; in term 2 we explored Autumn into Winter, with Mother's day, Reconciliation Week and World Environment Day all celebrated. In term three we introduced a new theme – Out of this World: storied of space, myths and magic, starting with the 50th anniversary of the first moon landing, and including unicorns, elves, Jack and the Beanstalk and more. We finished term 3 with a dress-up day and a face painter. In fourth term we have been fortunate to have three Chinese-themed stories presented by Dong, one of the Flinders University students doing his social work placement at BUC. Dong chose the stories and designed the crafts for three weeks, including a panda story and craft; The Four Dragons (a story of the four great rivers in China) and Nian, the fierce lion in a Chinese New Year story. It was good to have stories and crafts from a different country. We thank Dong and Yi for their presence and help with Playgroup in both terms 3 and 4. For the rest of the term we are telling more animal stories with a difference – seahorses, giraffes, penguins, a story from Africa and the Hare and the Tortoise. We will finish with a celebration of Christmas, with Christmas crafts, carols, Christmassy food and a telling of the Christmas story.

As we come to the end of our tenth year we feel we still have something to offer the community which is appreciated and valued by the families who attend. We thank the volunteers who come faithfully every week to provide morning tea, take charge of the welcoming desk and the database, who help set up and pack up, who read stories, sing songs, play with the kids and make the playgroup the very welcoming place that it is. It is because of your hospitality and commitment that the playgroup continues to be a lovely place to be. We look forward to continuing in 2020.

Marnie Agnew on behalf of the Roundabout Playgroup team

Messy Church:

With input and guidance from Craig Mitchell we were able to put together an excellent schedule for the year with stories and activities on the theme of 'Narratives of Jesus', starting with the boy Jesus in the temple, and moving onto his baptism, then Jesus calling his disciples, and then exploring Jesus as storyteller, miracle worker, healer, friend, and ending with the Lord's Prayer and Christmas. Numbers have been pretty consistently good, with attendances up to 70-75 people on a number of occasions, and we have continued to add new families as the year progresses. Several families have also started coming to Sunday morning 9.15 worship, and the invitation to attend the Easter morning service with special activities for the children was again well received and responded to. We issued a similar invitation at Pentecost but it was not so successful, probably due to it being on the June long weekend.

This year we have tried to offer several different types of activities, starting with introductory activities in the chapel for the first 10 minutes as families arrive. Our regular craft and activity time includes a Prayer Space, Story Space, food activity, 3-4 craft activities, a science activity (provided by Rev Michael) and an

active space where children are able to be more physical. In addition we have added an extra component with Peter Cranwell taking the older children for separate activities more suitable to their age group. Originally we envisaged it would cater for the high school students and possibly year 6 students, but we've found a number of the year 5s are ready for something a little more challenging and have opted into this group as well.

The on-going success of Messy Church is due to the dedication of the volunteers, from those who plan, prepare and implement the activities, present the worship time in the chapel, prepare and serve food that Judy Adami's excellent planning and provision seems to feed the hungry hordes with ease, clean up afterwards, provide a welcoming presence at the desk and maintain the database, provide the music and operate the data projector and sound system, and more. It is a whole team effort and without each of you it wouldn't be possible. Thanks also to Rev Michael for his participation and input. We hope we haven't thrown you into the deep end too brutally. We will meet in January to plan for the next year and look forward to continuing to be open to new possibilities in 2020.

9.15 am Children's Corner

Once again a welcoming presence is provided in the Children's Corner in the 9.15am service, and is left set up for the 11 o'clock service. I appreciate it when some of the chair people help set it up beforehand or when we can set it up after mainly music on a Friday. It is usually cleared away on Monday morning before or after playgroup, except when there is a concert on Sunday afternoon or Probus on Monday morning, in which case someone has to come back on Sunday after the 11am service to clear it away.

Generally we usually have had only a few young children come, with the occasional visit from grandchildren who have been with their grandparents for a sleepover, but recently we have had several families come looking for a family-friendly church. If they continue to come regularly it will provide us with a major challenge: how to accommodate up to a dozen children and how do we progress from the idea that the children will use the space provided for their activities during the service, to actually incorporating them in the worship service as part of the congregation? If we continue to get older children (not just pre-schoolers) coming, we need to instil in them the expectation that they will come to church to be involved in what is going on, not just head for the children's corner and stay there, to play. The families concerned do want their children to be in church with them, but it is not feasible to provide activities for a large number of children in that space. I envisage a story time when the children sit with the rest of the congregation so it's a story for everyone, and prayers and other activities where the children can be with the rest of the congregation for active participation in the worship. Now there's a challenge for the worship leaders and the congregation!

Marnie Agnew

7.5 Mainly Music

Mainly music has nearly completed seven years of operation.

The music leaders are Carys Penny, Bev Eccleston and Judy Lower and the welcomers are Gwenyth Hewitt and Mary Brumpton. Ray Bown leads the data team including Milton Turner and Neville Pope. Mary Bown, Jan Turner, Helen Brown, Bev Thomson, Claudia Cliff, Lynona Hawkins and Doff Lyon are 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. Two new volunteers have come from the community program and we are delighted to have them as regular helpers.

The area coach, Heather Bickerdike, who lives in Melbourne, encourages Carys through regular phone calls and prayer. She also makes suggestions for the development of our group. This year we had an online, live video meeting with other groups and a leader from Melbourne. It was interesting and we were very thankful that Ray Bown was so competent with the computer in helping us join in.

Other family ministry activities such as Messy Church and playgroup are promoted and the families are encouraged to attend. Several families who come to Messy Church have first been to mainly music.

This year we have had a number of families return with a second or third child. We often get encouraging feedback about the service we offer especially from Mum's with young babies. They love to have few moments to themselves when we care for their children and they can enjoy the morning tea and adult companionship.

Our Prayer teapot has been used more this year and we are confident that many prayers have been answered. The teapot is available for confidential requests for help and as a team we take them very seriously. It has been good to have Michael Dowling attend regularly and give helpful input on many occasions through the think spot, in the sessions.

All congregational members are welcome to come and visit on a Friday morning, share morning tea and watch the music session.

Carys Penny

7.6 Library

“Reading broadens the mind, heightens the senses, and enlivens the spirit. It gives hope, drive and inspiration.” Richard Branson.

This year we have added 40 books and 3 DVDs, mainly through donations and book sales. We were fortunate to receive many books from the former Eden Hills Uniting Church library.

At book club this year we have read three books which deal with social justice and all three are in the church library. “A bigger table” by John Pavlovitz maintains that churches should welcome everyone who wants to come. “No friend but the mountains” was written by Behrouz Boochani on Manus Island. This book was laboriously tapped out on a mobile phone and translated from the Farsi. It is a lyric first hand account of his journey to Christmas Island and his treatment on Manus Island. “Outspoken” is a memoir by Rod Bower about his life and his road signs and social media posts which have been challenging and controversial.

“Frog and Toad” was donated by Dr. Craig Mitchell and “By word and deed” was donated by Rev. David Houston.

Recent additions to the library are displayed in the library as well as appearing in the church newsletter.

Thank you to everyone who has donated books and made suggestions for purchases.

Joy Belling

7.7 Kids Hope

This year has seen our mentor numbers shrink from 8 to 4 as a result of personal issues, having a break or retiring after a time of good service. So, we are in need of some volunteers to swell the numbers for 2020. Some action has taken place here as a recent volunteer will take our numbers to 5.

The needs of the students at Blackwood Primary School are constant and never seem to diminish as new children are enrolled or a child is faced with a new issue and needs help from a kindly adult who will listen, help them a bit with school work such as reading or mathematics, construct things, teach them to cook, paint or play games to enable them to have fun and a sense of achievement.

The school is a medium sized primary school of about three hundred students, has some excellent teachers and support staff and very good facilities. You feel valued and supported by the teachers and staff as you enter and leave the school after mentoring. One could guess that such a school wouldn't need the extra support that we provide and think that other activities are better served through you volunteering. Well that in some cases may be true however, young children are in their formative years and are vulnerable to setbacks, if they occur, and some need the support of a friendly, kind adult to assist them through the difficult times and help them to relax and grow in confidence so they can learn. That help can make a huge difference in their lives as we have witnessed, not necessarily in a moment but over time and our support puts a smile on their faces and builds confident steps into the future which for some isn't easy.

Kids Hope has a training program which is well researched and presented to equip the new mentor with ideas and skills so they can take their place in the school easily even if tinged with a little apprehension initially which soon disappears.

I challenge you to think deeply about volunteering as the need is there and it is constant. We volunteer to mentor a child for as long as they need it which in many cases means until the end of year 6. This may seem a long time but for most of us that isn't hard because we enjoy getting to know the child and working with them for an hour a week for most weeks of the school year. Remember that you can make a difference and help a child to be more confident at school and for their future. This is helping God to make a difference through us.

Ian Penny

7.8 MHICC / Beacon

This council is an initiative of local churches with three areas of mission.

To facilitate communication and connection with the Word and the Work of Christ in the local community;
To support and encourage the work of Pastoral Support Workers (P.S.W.'s) in local schools;
The continuing support of Beacon in offering emergency relief and support to those in the hills-community seeking assistance.

Twelve local churches are involved in the Council, and committee representatives come from amongst them:

Chairperson	Dan Aubrey	Coromandel Valley Uniting
Vice Chairperson	Ross Hill Brown	Holy Innocents Anglican
Secretary	Maxine Moore	Church of Christ
Treasurer	Chris Lehmann	
Ex Officio	Jenny Horne	Catholic Community

We are indeed blessed to have 5 wonderful P.S.W.'s in our local schools – Blackwood High School, Blackwood Primary, Belair Primary, Coromandel Valley Primary and Hawthorndene Primary.

Insufficient funding is offered to maintain these important postings, so we Churches contribute a levy, and fundraising events are arranged. Recently a Film Screening at the Capri Cinema raised \$400. Well Done!

Bev Eccleston

BEACON Oct 2019 marks the 10th anniversary of Beacon's operating in this area as part of the Mitcham Hills Inter-church Council. Beacon arose from the vision of Rev Mark Reissen and Rev Leanne Jensi who saw a growing need for such a service within the community. Credit should also be given to Aileen Templeton the first co-ordinator, and to the band of volunteers who put the program on a sound footing. In the first years Beacon received some government funding but has relied upon the generosity of the personal donors, local churches, schools, community organizations and businesses for practical and financial support for the past four years.

Although Beacon operates out of the Church of Christ premises, the 13 volunteers are drawn from the churches in the Mitcham Hills area.

It is through the generosity of donors, and the dedication of volunteers that this service continues.

Gloria McArthur