

Annual General Meeting

Blackwood Uniting Church
Sunday 31st October 2021



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

Congregational Meeting Agenda

Sunday, 31st October 2021

Blackwood Uniting Church

1. Welcome, housekeeping and opening prayer	Wes Bray	
2. Minutes of meeting 16th May 2021	Wes Bray	4
3. Matters arising –		
▪ Presbytery rep	Wes Bray	
▪ Church activity on December 26	Adrian Brown	
4. Elections if required		
5. Spoken reports		
5.1 Minister	Michael Dowling	15
5.2 Church Council	Adrian Brown	17
5.3 Finance	Tony Miller	
5.4 Forward with purpose (spoken & written)	Peter Cranwell	18
6. Written reports		
6.1 Community Classes	Jacqui Harrison	20
6.2 Property	Bob Lyon	22
6.3 Relocation of Bike Shed Project	Tony Otworowski	23
6.4 Messy Church	Bonnie MacLaine-Mills	26
6.5 Mainly Music	Carys Penny	27
6.6 Playgroup	Marnie Agnew	28
6.7 Library	Joy Belling	29
6.8 Kid's hope	Ian Penny	30
6.9 Online worship	Tim Lee	31
6.10 Presbytery	Tim Lee	33
6.11 MHICC	Bev Eccleston	39
7. Other Business		
8. Next Meeting		
9. Benediction		

2. Minutes of the Congregational Meeting

Blackwood Uniting Church

Sunday, 16 May 2021

Attendance: 64

Apologies: 15

Meeting opened at 11:30 pm by Chair, Wes Bray.

1. Welcome & Opening Prayer

Chair Wes Bray welcomed everyone and offered an Opening Prayer.

Wes thanked Janet Taylor-Hughes for offering to take the Minutes and Jacqui Harrison for preparing and circulating the reports for this meeting.

He explained the process of the orange and blue cards; orange to show support and blue to question – and asked for the Attendance Sheets 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.

2. Approval of Minutes of Congregational Meeting

The Minutes of the AGM held on the 15 November 2020 was circulated prior to the meeting and put to be formally accepted.

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

3. Elections and Re-Elections

3.1 Church Council

Wes put to the congregation that Meg and Ray Pemberton be appointed as Scrutineers and their appointment was accepted by a show of orange cards.

Wes explained that a Ballot Paper was provided on each seat for the Election of a committee member on the Church Council. Chris Bray was the sole nominee for this position. Further nominations were invited from the floor. No additional nominations were received. Chris Bray was unanimously elected to the Church Council for another two years. The congregation showed their appreciation by a clap of hands.

Wes put to the congregation that nominations were sought from the floor for Congregational Secretary for two years. Janet Taylor-Hughes nominated for the position and was elected by a show of orange cards.

Matters Arising

4.1 Presbytery Rep

Wes invited nominations for the Presbytery Rep. No nominations were received.

4. Spoken Reports

5.1 Church Council Report - Michael Dowling & Rev Dr Adrian Brown

Adrian Brown acknowledged Chris Bray's wise and energetic leadership in her position as Chair of the BUC Church Council over a number of years. We are pleased that Chris will remain as a Member of Council for the next two years.

Over the past few months, Michael Dowling has been temporary Chair, until Adrian was free to take on the position of Chair.

Adrian thanked Tim Lee for his initiative and extraordinary commitment setting up the live streaming of Sunday services during Covid and beyond.

Council has been considering Family Ministry and recently appointed a coordinator for Messy Church and is currently considering the Children's Sunday worship.

The Forward with Purpose Group is a Think Tank which pushes and prods Council and the Congregation to develop our Ministry. The Group has been most active and have put forward many proposals for consideration. Peter Cranwell to speak to this later in meeting.

Church Council have carefully considered Michael Dowling commitments as Minister of the BUC. They have agreed that Michael's energies not just be channelled towards Sunday services but more time of his time be allocated to other aspects of Ministry.

Michael Dowling addressed the meeting. He expressed his appreciation of Adrian Brown taking on the Chair of Church Council.

There being no questions, acceptance of this Report was expressed with a show of orange cards.

5.2 Report from Minister – Michael Dowling

Michael Dowling reported his involvement in numerous activities.

Day to day activities included working with Worship Leaders and others in preparing for Worship. He has been involved with Mainly Music, Messy Church and various planning groups such as Worship Committee, Church Council and executive (fill-in chair) and the Philosophers' Lunch gatherings.

Michael has had involvement with a number of long term planning activities such as for Advent and Christmas, Lent and Easter, 100th Anniversary and the Journeying Series. He also participated in the 'Forward with Purpose' Committee, "Story" workshops and FCE Community Building workshops.

Michael conducted a list of special events including the Blue Christmas Worship service at BUC, the Anzac Day service at Blackwood and Funerals of precious individuals: Mark Simes, Yvonne Haddrick, Danny Goldsmith and tomorrow, Bob Roach.

Michael spends a considerable amount of time with Pastoral Care and keeping in touch with people.

Michael also reported his involvement with the wider Church as a member of the Synod Ecumenical Relations Committee.

Michael finished his report to invite Interruptions - "Please, feel free to interrupt me...any time!"

There being no questions, acceptance of this Report was expressed with a show of orange cards.

5.3 100th Anniversary – Michael Dowling

Sunday, 21 November 2021 marks the 100th Anniversary of the Blackwood Church building. We are going to commemorate this event in a number of ways. A small Planning Team comprising Alison Sutcliffe, Jacqui Harrison, Ian Penny, Peter Cranwell and Michael Dowling plus the musical expertise of Ros Miller and Pat Collette, has met to plan how to acknowledge this milestone.

At this stage there will be a combined 10am Worship and Thanksgiving service including a presentation by Rev. David Houston, a “Mega-Band” and multi-organist extravaganza and a shared lunch followed by a “Mega-Band” concert.

Some threads leading up to the celebratory event include video interviews with several BUC “long-timers”; creation of a “timeline” of events in BUC’s history; a display of historical memorabilia; and, artwork commemorating the centenary. We are contacting and liaising with former band members regarding the “Mega-Band” collaboration.

There being no questions, support of this Report was expressed with a show of orange cards.

5.4 Church Lighting – Michael Dowling and Tim Lee

Michael Dowling presented a verbal report. On behalf of the Congregation, he thanked Tim Lee for his expertise and considerable time and effort setting up Live Streaming of Sunday services. The congregation showed their thanks by a clap of hands.

In 2019, Tim and Jacqui successfully applied for a Synod Grant of \$10,000 to purchase appropriate equipment for live streaming. However, It has highlighted the poor lighting in the Church.

Two options have been put forward to improve the lighting directed at the lectern and the band. One is to use the balance of \$2000 from the Grant to install a basic lighting system, and the other is to raise a further \$4-5,000 to provide a quality lighting solution which will enhance live streaming into the future.

Wes invited questions from the floor.

Carys Penny asked how much it would cost to provide the quality solution to the church lighting. Tim suggested that it would cost \$6-7000, including procurement and installation.

The Congregation agreed by a show of orange cards that these proposals be considered by Church Council.

5.5 Finance – Tony Miller

Tony Miller spoke to his report and requested that the two Financial Reports be attached to the Minutes. He proceeded to give a breakdown of the BUC financial position.

The report was in two parts.

2020 End of Year Results

EOY surplus: \$42,203

Cash balance (31/12/2020): \$222,059

The Government’s JobKeeper and Cashflow Boost and the Uniting Church Foundation Grant for Service for the videoing/livestreaming (\$250,755) contributed to the 2020 surplus. The Offering income was maintained despite Covid (\$169,266).

2021 Results (to 30th April)

Surplus: \$10,853

Cash balance (31/12/2020): \$232,687

The Garage Sale profit was \$5,912. The Offering income is on budget (\$55,885). We have budgeted for operating in deficit of \$13,000 in 2021.

Tony reported that overall, finances are as expected for this time of year. There is a large surplus but Tony noted that some of the large expenses that are incurred, occur later in the year.

He reviewed the financial situation from the Balance Sheet Summary with Cash on Hand is \$232,687 which includes the Capital Reserve account, Manse Reserve account and the Future (Development) Fund.

There being no questions, acceptance of this Report was expressed with a show of orange cards.

BLACKWOOD UNITING CHURCH - Finance Report to 31st December 2020

Item	Budget 2020					Actual 2020 (as at 31/12/2020)					% of full year
	MAIN A/C \$	PROP-ERTY \$	COM-MUNITY \$	MANSE \$	TOTAL 2020 \$	MAIN A/C \$	PROP-ERTY \$	COM-MUNITY \$	MANSE \$	TOTAL \$	
RECEIPTS											100%
1 Offering - all services	163,000				163,000	169,266				169,266	104%
2 Community Classes income (fees)			45,000		45,000			36,986		36,986	82%
3 Community Classes other income (incl. Craft Fair)			7,000		7,000			915	-	915	13%
4 Manse rental income				23,300	23,300				21,302	21,302	91%
5 Hire of facilities		16,000			16,000		8,266			8,266	52%
6 Miscellaneous & Donations	1,500		1,500		3,000	619	500	1,045		2,164	72%
7 Weddings&Funerals					-	3,506				3,506	
8 Family Ministry	3,500				3,500	1,900				1,900	54%
9 Interest earned	1,500	10	60		1,570	1,394	2	15	16	1,428	91%
10 Mission giving (see line 36)					-	5,196				5,196	
11 Fundraising (incl. Garage Sale)	3,500	6,300	1,600		11,500		3,162			3,162	27%
12 "Way Forward"						350				350	
13 Grants (incl JobKeeper, Cashflow Boost, UC Found.)					-	28,059		222,696		250,755	
14 transfer from Community (see line 44)		3,000			3,000		3,000			3,000	
15 transfer from Manse (see lines 44)		5,000			5,000		5,000			5,000	
16 transfers from Main Acct (see lines 44 & 45)		16,000	2,000		18,000		16,000			16,000	
17 Gross Receipts	173,000	46,310	57,160	23,300	299,870	210,290	35,931	261,658	21,317	529,196	176%
18 less internal transfers etc	-	24,000	2,000	-	26,000	-	24,000	-	-	24,000	
19 Receipts as per Mission Budget	173,000	22,310	55,160	23,300	273,870	210,290	11,931	261,658	21,317	505,196	
PAYMENTS											
20 Ministers costs (JK)	103,000				103,000	102,782				102,782	100%
21 Family Ministry - provision for payroll costs (*)	20,000				20,000	7,917				7,917	40%
22 Office - payroll costs (JK)	21,000		21,000		42,000	21,192		21,192		42,384	101%
23 Office - operating	4,200				4,500	4,475				4,475	99%
24 Utilities (power, phone,water, internet, insur etc)		14,000			14,000		14,507			14,507	104%
25 Cleaning contract		14,500			14,500		11,982			11,982	83%
26 Property Maintenance		6,000			6,000		7,068			7,068	118%
27 Capital Expenditure		8,000			8,000		1,087			1,087	14%
28 Manse - maintenance & expenses				6,000	6,000				9,307	9,307	155%
29 Expenses (Misc, petty cash, Garage Sale, Craft Fair)	2,000	1,800	3,500		7,300	1,495	923	3,416		5,834	80%
30 Wedding and funeral expenses					-	815				815	
31 Family Ministry - expenses	2,500				2,500	1,657				1,657	66%
32 "Way Forward" expenses						1,471				1,471	
33 Worship & Music, Education, Pastoral Care (+)	3,000				3,000	11,385				11,385	379%
34 Community payroll costs - tutors (JK)			40,000		40,000			194,214		194,214	486%
35 Resource Centre	250				250	92				92	37%
36 Advertising / promotion	500				500					-	0%
37 Mission Giving (see line 10)					-	12,802				12,802	
38 Presbytery B Additional Levy	1,660				1,660	3,324				3,324	200%
39 Synod Mission & Service (incl. Redress)	16,882				16,882	16,903				16,903	100%
40 Local mission - Kids Hope	1,100				1,100	1,264				1,264	115%
41 Local mission - ICC	2,320				2,320	1,740				1,740	75%
42 Payment to Belair, Upper Sturt				10,000	10,000				9,985	9,985	100%
43 transfer to Property (see lines 13, 14, 15)	16,000		3,000	5,000	24,000	16,000		3,000	5,000	24,000	
44 transfer to Community Classes (see line 15)	2,000				2,000					-	
45 Gross Payments	196,412	44,300	67,500	21,000	329,512	205,313	35,566	221,821	24,292	486,993	148%
46 less internal transfers etc	18,000	-	3,000	5,000	26,000	16,000	-	3,000	5,000	24,000	
47 Payments as per Mission Budget	178,412	44,300	64,500	16,000	303,512	189,313	35,566	218,821	19,292	462,993	
48 Cash Operating Surplus/ (-) Deficit	-23,412	2,010	-10,340	2,300	-29,642	4,977	364	39,837	-2,975	42,203	

(*) payroll, Technical Facilitator (Tim Lee)

(+) includes video project equipment and expenses
(JK): JobKeeper helps pay Michael, Jacqui and CommProg tutors

Note: blue = internal transfers

BUC Balance Sheet (31st December, 2020)

ASSETS

	YTD Earnings	Balance
Cash (Operating accounts)	43,801	97,099
Capital Reserve Account	308	26,485
Future (Development) Fund	1,069	72,291
Manse Account	-2,975	26,184
	42,203	222,059

LIABILITIES

Current (GST, payroll, LSL, Disaster Fund, deposits,)	13,402
2021 Manse payout to Belair, Upper Sturt	10,071
	23,473

TOTAL EQUITY

198,586

Other Accounts Administered by BUC

	YTD Profit / (-) Loss	Balance
Helen Lee Trust Fund	437	14,970

BLACKWOOD UNITING CHURCH - Finance Report to 30th April 2021

Item	Budget 2021					Actual 2021 (as at 30/04/2021)					% of full year
	MAIN A/C \$	PROP-ERTY \$	COM-MUNITY \$	MANSE \$	TOTAL 2020 \$	MAIN A/C \$	PROP-ERTY \$	COM-MUNITY \$	MANSE \$	TOTAL \$	
RECEIPTS											33%
1 Offering - all services	167,000				167,000	55,885				55,885	33%
2 Community Classes income (fees)			55,000		55,000			16,742		16,742	30%
3 Community Classes other income (incl. Craft Fair)			7,000	-	7,000			355		355	5%
4 Manse rental income				23,000	23,000				7,650	7,650	33%
5 Hire of facilities		12,500			12,500		3,576			3,576	29%
6 Miscellaneous & Donations				-	-	259	445	513		1,218	
7 Weddings&Funerals				-	-	320				320	
8 Family Ministry	3,500				3,500	967				967	28%
9 Interest earned	800	-	5	10	815	440	0	18	4	463	57%
10 Mission giving (see line 37)					-					-	
11 Fundraising (incl. Garage Sale)	3,000	6,000			9,000		6,241	53		6,294	70%
12 "Way Forward"					-					-	
13 Grants	-				-					-	
14 transfer from Community (see line 43)		3,000			3,000		1,500			1,500	
15 transfer from Manse (see lines 43)		5,000			5,000		2,500			2,500	
16 transfers from Main Acct (see lines 43 & 44)		16,000			16,000		8,000			8,000	
17 Gross Receipts	174,300	42,500	62,005	23,010	301,815	57,871	22,263	17,682	7,654	105,470	35%
PAYMENTS											
19 Ministers payroll costs	104,000				104,000	34,102				34,102	33%
20 Messy Church Coordinator - payroll	4,320				4,320	816				816	19%
21 Office - payroll costs	21,200		21,200		42,400	6,617		6,617		13,234	31%
22 Community payroll costs - tutors			43,000		43,000			8,478		8,478	20%
23 Other payroll costs (+)						1,945				1,945	
24 Office - operating	4,500				4,500	1,335				1,335	30%
25 Utilities (power, phone,water, internet, insur etc)		14,000			14,000		2,155			2,155	15%
26 Cleaning contract		16,000			16,000		5,885			5,885	37%
27 Property Maintenance		8,000			8,000		931			931	12%
28 Capital Expenditure		37,500			37,500		2,545			2,545	7%
29 Manse - maintenance & expenses				7,500	7,500				1,580	1,580	21%
30 Expenses (Misc, petty cash, Garage Sale, Craft Fair)	2,000	1,800	4,000		7,800	65	1,019	1,614		2,698	35%
31 Wedding and funeral expenses					-					-	
32 Family Ministry - expenses	2,500				2,500	715				715	29%
33 "Way Forward" expenses					-	235				235	
34 Worship & Music, Education, Pastoral Care	3,000				3,000	1,071				1,071	36%
35 Resource Centre	200				200					-	0%
36 Advertising / promotion					-					-	
37 Mission Giving (see line 10)					-	1		40		41	
38 Presbytery B Additional Levy	3,340				3,340	664				664	20%
39 Synod Mission & Service (incl. Redress)	16,984				16,984	3,607				3,607	21%
40 Local mission - Kids Hope	1,100				1,100					0	0%
41 Local mission - ICC	2,320				2,320	580				580	25%
42 Payment to Belair, Upper Sturt				10,100	10,100					-	0%
43 transfer to Property (see lines 14, 15, 16)	16,000		3,000	5,000	24,000	8,000		1,500	2,500	12,000	
44 transfer to Community Classes (see line 16)					-					-	
45 Gross Payments	181,464	77,300	71,200	22,600	352,564	59,753	12,536	18,249	4,080	94,617	27%
46 Cash Surplus/ (-) Deficit	-7,164	-34,800	-9,195	410	-50,749	-1,882	9,727	-567	3,575	10,853	
47 Cash Operating Surplus/ Deficit - ex Capital Expenditure	-7,164	2,700	-9,195	410	-13,249	-1,882	12,273	-567	3,575	13,398	

Technical facilitator (Tim)*

Note: blue = internal transfers

Notes:

Garage Sale takings
less Garage Sale expenses

6,241
328
5,912

BUC Balance Sheet (30th April, 2021)

ASSETS

	YTD Earnings	Balance
Cash (Operating accounts)	3,531	57,420
Capital Reserve Account	70	26,554
Future (Development) Fund	365	112,656
Office LSL Provision	3,313	6,313
Manse Account	3,575	29,744
	10,853	232,687

LIABILITIES

GST, payroll, LSL, Disaster Fund, deposits held,	13,192
2021 Manse payout to Belair, Upper Sturt	10,071
	23,263

TOTAL EQUITY

209,424

Other Accounts Administered by BUC

	YTD Profit / (-) Loss	Balance
Helen Lee Trust Fund	1	14,970

5.6 Welcome to Blackwood / Forward with Purpose – Peter Cranwell

Peter read from his written report.

In Nov 2019, the “Forward with Purpose” presentation was made to this congregation. It stated that: “Blackwood Uniting Church is a progressive community of faith, right in the heart of Blackwood, wanting for itself and the local community to continue to flourish”.

So how have we been progressing?

A lot of data was collected through surveys and workshops completed in early 2020.

A long list (over 300) of “low hanging fruit” items that could be considered for early action was prepared and some have been instigated.

Unfortunately, Covid put an enormous handbrake on everything, but we have slowly been getting the train back on the rails.

But we now have:

Weekly on-line services. Still getting 138 log on’s each week

- A 100th Anniversary celebrations of the sanctuary foundation stone laying is being planned for November this year with potential that some things may be permanent.
- A significant increase in the use of public art has occurred with more planned.
- BUC is now a member the “Community Connections” group facilitated by Pilgrim Uniting.
- A Building Fund has been set up as part of BUC's " Forward with Purpose" planning to provide funds specifically for major capital projects related to building and property enhancements.
- Advertising through Blackwood Times articles and social media
- Change the Occasional Series to “Journeying...” with 5 programmes this year
- Based around the success of the first “My Story” workshop, a series of related workshops are planned:
 - Another “My Life Story” session
 - “Making my Wishes Known” (Advanced Care Directives)
 - “Death Café”
 - “Aged Care Options”
 - Allison arranged the “Angel Project”
- A number of new community classes programmes have been introduced. They include:
 - A needlework workshops on Smocking
 - A workshop on making face masks
 - A Mosaics class
- They also did some Stobie pole art designs for the Blackwood Action Group exercise
- And had a Christmas Food Drive for Beacon
- A photography workshops is about to start – but we need some more participants if possible
- The very popular Bike Shed from Belair has now been moved to our premises. This needed urgent action and needed to be looked at initially from a temporary point of view while the longer-term options are developed. Tony Otworowski is the project manager and his report appears in the Minutes.
- We are continuing to work on a number of other plans including:
 - Possible Grow Mental Wellbeing programmes

- Potential Carers SA – Carers Wellbeing workshops
- Possible Narrative Therapy programs
- Planning on enlarging the memorial garden
- A lot of work has been going on in the background looking at what facility rejuvenation would be required to achieve the aims of the Council to make it a more welcoming, functional and flexible space. As a result, recently, five potential options for facility upgrade developed through the Property Committee were considered by Council. We have now started the initial discussions with Synod about process, limitations, financing etc as well as developing plans to get quotes to be able to present a full picture to the congregation later this year for discussion.

So, I think it reasonable to say, quite a deal has occurred, especially in the planning phases. But there is certainly a need to continue to do more if we can. Especially in trying to implement more collaboration or partnering situations, to reduce the work burden on just a few. This I think will be our next big challenge.

Just this week, Michael, Nancy and I visited “The Junction Community Centre” in Ottaway to hear their story. The profile of their clientele is very different to ours, but the principles of what they have been doing is in quite similar. It was great to witness a flourishing community that has occurred through a lot of dreaming, planning and effort, but in the process seems to have created a sustainable model through the participation of the whole community not just a few loyal parishioners. Very encouraging to us for what we are doing here!

There being no questions, acceptance of this Report was expressed with a show of orange cards.

We thanked those people who provided reports which were succinct and easy to read.

5. Any Other Business

6.1 Bike Shed Update - Tony Otworowski

Wes Bray delivered Tony Otworowski’s Bike Shed Update report.

The BUC Bike Shed Community outreach programme has been operating for over twenty years based in accommodation at the rear of the Belair Uniting Church and successfully managed and operated by BUC during this period.

The current number of community participants is ten.

The Outreach activity provides recycled bicycles to charities, school programmes, refugees and the general public.

The annual income generated from this community activity for 2020 was \$7,000.

At the request of the Belair Uniting Church Congregation this facility is to be fully relocated to Blackwood by the end of May 2021. The interim location for the operations of the Bike Shed team will be the Aldersgate Room with additional storage provided in existing sheds kindly donated by the owner of 18a Coromandel Parade and the existing BUC container in the BUC car park. It is proposed to operate on a Monday.

This relocation is fully supported by BUC Church Executive and Council with funding from an existing budget allocation.

The sketch design options for a new structure to support this outreach programme will be developed for the BUC Property Committee, Church Council and Synod approval during June 2021.

The target for completing the detailed design, planning approvals and construction to the new structure is by the end of March 2022.

Penny Harper and Lynona Hawkins advised that the Bike shed regularly contributes monetarily to the Outreach Programme.

This report has been presented to the Church Council.

There being no questions, acceptance of this Report was expressed with a show of orange cards.

6.2 Sunday 26/12/2021 – Worship or not or alternative?

This year Christmas Day is on a Saturday. We invited the Congregation to form small groups to discuss and report their thoughts on whether Worship be held on Sunday 26 December 2021 and if not, what alternatives there might be.

Ideas that arose from these discussions included:

- What does Synod suggest, have they considered having a bye or some alternative such as a community lunch and share the leftovers?
- Plan a Church community lunch – shame to have church closed on a Sunday
- Wide community picnic outside the church to involve the local community
- Have a picnic at Wittunga or Belair National Park
- Host an Ecumenical service – maybe in the Park and combine with local churches
- There is a huge amount of pre Christmas Worship preparation. Give the service a bye – this time of year can be very stressful. Or maybe something more leisurely.

The Chair made notes and will pass then onto Council or Michael.

7. Any Other Business

We invited further business from the floor.

7.1 Serving of Food at the Church

Helen Janz asked if BUC would request a clear directive from Synod regarding the serving of food at BUC during Covid.

Jane Marlow advised that there should be no self-serve and BUC should refer to their Covid Safe Plan. BUC could also cross reference with SA Health.

8 Next Meeting – AGM, Sunday, 31st October 2021

9. Benediction

Michael Dowling closed with a Prayer and thanked everyone who was involved with this meeting.

Meeting closed at 12.30 pm.

Janet Taylor-Hughes
Secretary to the Congregation

5.2 Minister

I begin my report with a confession.

I don't think I have been doing a very good job recently.

Prior to accepting the position of minister at Blackwood, I made clear to the selection panel that I had no interest whatsoever in becoming a workaholic minister. I expressed to them that the last thing I wanted, when people looked at me, was to see someone who was “clearly too busy to bother with my particular problems.” If that was how people perceived me then, in my view, my ministry was a failure, regardless of whatever else I might achieve. My confession relates to the fact that, very possibly, over the past few months, people may have had that impression of “busyness” when looking at me. If this has been the case for you, then I am deeply sorry, because that is not the sort of ministry to which I aspire. My confession told, I move on to some specifics of the last year.

It goes without saying, but I shall say it anyway (while seeking to minimise verbosity), that a large chunk of my energy continues to be directed to “the weekly pattern” that represents our worshipping life. This involves, amongst other things, preparation for the Sunday message and worship, liaising with the wider worship planning team as appropriate. One of the most enjoyable aspects of this weekly pattern is the often-rich personal connection and discussion with worship leaders. I truly love the wide diversity of personalities, perspectives, and giftings of the members of our worship team, and I benefit deeply from this rich diversity.

There have been lots of projects that have drawn my attention during the year, and of which I'll make brief mention.

The 100th Anniversary of the present BUC building, which we will celebrate on 21st November this year, has involved a series of regular meetings with a planning group, and the progressive completion of a series of tasks. I am deeply appreciative of the efforts of those involved in this project: Alison Sutcliffe, Jacqui Harrison, Ian Penny, Peter Cranwell, Tim Lee, Ray Bown, Ros Miller, Pat Collette, and others, including the many who graciously agreed to be interviewed for their reflections on this anniversary. Sunday 21st November should be a wonderful celebration of our centenary!

The “Forward with Purpose” project was rebooted after a COVID-induced period of quiescence. I am very grateful for the energy and commitment of the members of the subgroup involved: Anne Magarey, Tony Miller and Peter Cranwell. Lots of things are happening in the background when it comes to possible building modifications, driven with so much energy by Peter Cranwell, the Technical Committee and the Property Committee (which will be covered by separate reports). Our focus upon “story” at Blackwood – providing opportunities of many and varied kinds for people to share and engage with story – has expanded this year, with us running a number of story-related workshops: Making My Wishes Known; Death Café; Simplifying Aged Care; helping facilitate the establishment of a GROW mental wellbeing group at BUC; and a re-run of My Life Story (which has been rescheduled).

The Forward with Purpose sub-group has also spent considerable time envisaging for 2022 a series of workshops that will focus on environment, climate and sustainability. In a way, this kicked off with our involvement as a church on Sunday 17th October and Monday 18th October with the Climate Global Day of Action. A banner, wonderfully designed by Tim and Heather Lee and created with the efforts of many of our members, calling for immediate and bold climate action on the part of our political leaders, has been prominently displayed at the front of the church. On Monday 18th October, a number of Uniting Church members, including the Moderator Bronte Wilson, and Philippa Rowland of the Interfaith Dialogue, gathered at the front of the banner, with the moderator offering a prayer for discernment and action. Next year, we have ideas for a number of events on the general topic of climate and environmental sustainability. Stay tuned!

Our *Journeying* series (formerly the Occasional series) has, once again in 2021, been a terrific way to explore and share spirituality in a way that is much broader than normally understood by “church.” The planning group of which I’m part - Lynona Hawkins, Malcolm MacArthur, Peter Cranwell, and now Ashleigh Lower – have very creatively envisaged, planned and brought to fruition, incredibly diverse events focussed on:- **music, art, word, science and wonder**, and, still to come in November, **belief**. Our planning session for 2022 suggests that next year will be a very exciting year for Journeying, once again.

My involvement in Mainly Music, Messy Church, and Philosophers Lunches, as well as connecting with some of the many groups that operate without our church, continues to be rich and enjoyable.

As always, the richest and most meaningful part of my work continues to be those moments of pastoral connection, often with members of our faith community but sometimes with total strangers.

I am immensely grateful to the many people in our faith community who, so regularly, cut me lots of slack, forgive me when I forget things, and step in when I am overwhelmed or inadequate. Special thanks go to the magnificent Jacqui Harrison, the ever-positive and big-hearted Chris Bray, the ever-accommodating and utterly brilliant Tim Lee, the indefatigable vision of Peter Cranwell, and the steady and wise counsel of Adrian Brown. There are many others, too many to name, and to whom I am also grateful. Most of all, I am grateful to all of Blackwood Uniting Church for granting me the immense privilege to be your minister.

Rev Michael Dowling
Minister

5.2 Church Council

Since our last report earlier in the year your Church Council has devoted a lot of its time to planning matters as exhibited from both the Forward with Purpose group and the Property Committee. We have approved seeking quotes from architects to develop concept plans for our remodelling with its focus on developing our ministry with the community. We have also looked at arrangements for the location of the bike shed as it has now moved from its previous home at Belair UC.

Council is most appreciative of the advice and work that is done and continues to be done by both the Forward with Purpose group and the Property Committee. Their vision and wisdom are so highly valued as they serve the mission and purpose of the church here in the Blackwood community.

Our live streaming ministry continues to develop as it fills an important outreach. Tim Lee is to be thanked for his commitment as the live stream team continues to grow.

Council highly values the commitment of the dozens of people who work to make our Sunday worship time effective. One can feel exhausted when you add up the numbers involved on these rosters. These volunteers are typical of the many people in this congregation who serve ever so quietly, yet effectively, in each of the ministry arms of our community. Thank you to each one of you.

Two other issues have exercised the Council of late. One is what to do about worship on December 26 which follows on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. After wrestling with this Council has decided that there will not be a service at Blackwood on December 26. We encourage you to watch an online service or revisit one of ours.

Another issue which requires your support and action is in the filling of vacancies on your Church Council. After several years of wise and thoughtful service Ashleigh Lower has resigned to serve in other areas of our church and we thank him for his creativity. Ian Penny is also seeking to resign as an Elder as his term has come to an end. Ian has served the church on Council with great distinction, including being its Chair. Ian's wise counsel and commitment to being visionary over a number of years has made a difference to our mission. He is seeking a replacement as he cannot go on forever!

Church Council fills a significant role in our governance, and I would encourage you to think seriously about being prepared to serve on this body. Either nominate or speak to a member of Council about what is involved.

Blessings

Adrian

The Rev Dr Adrian Brown
Chair, Blackwood Uniting Church Council

5.4 Forward with Purpose

16TH May 2021 to 20th Oct 2021

In Nov 2019, the “Forward with Purpose” presentation was made to this congregation, which stated that:
“Blackwood Uniting Church is a progressive community of faith, right in the heart of Blackwood, wanting for itself and the local community to continue to flourish”.

I reported status to the May Congregational meeting, so this short report is just for the last 6 months, not in any particular order, but identifying those activities happening that are in-line with that vision:

- A 100th Anniversary celebration of the sanctuary foundation stone laying is being planned for 21st November. Most details are now organised with a lot of work to occur in the week leading up to it. Basically, will consist of a combined 10am service followed by lunch then a PSA of music finishing about 1:30 in the afternoon. A digital presentation of the journey of the church will be showing continuously before the service and during lunch. A display of interesting artifacts, photos etc will also be available. Interviews of members of the congregation will be shown too.
- Weekly on-line services continue. Average is going down slowly, but over the last 6 months it has been about 60 each week.
- We are endeavouring to commission a public art sculpture to be placed on the outside of the hall wall on Coro Parade. Hoping for this to be completed for the centenary of the opening of the church in April next year.
- Have let Mitcham Council know the external wall of the Deane room could be available for a suitable community mural.
- BUC continue to attend the “Community Connections” group every couple of months, facilitated by Pilgrim Uniting. Lots of sharing between congregations occurs.
- Advertising through Blackwood Times articles and social media continues
- 4 “Journeying...” events so far this year. Attendance has been 45 to 145!! Already planning next year’s programme
- Another “My Story” workshop has been run as well as
“Making my Wishes Known” (Advanced Care Directives)
“Death Café”
“Aged Care Options”
- A number of new community classes programmes have been introduced.
- Potential Carers SA – Carers Wellbeing workshops.
- The very popular Bike Shed is going well.
- The Grow Mental Wellbeing programme has started
- Possible Narrative Therapy programs – still in discussion
- Still planning on enlarging the memorial garden
- Finally, a lot of work has been going on in the background looking at what facility change would be required to make it a more welcoming, functional and flexible space. Contact has been made with the Synod Property group, who have been quite helpful and approving of the way we have been moving forward on this project. As a result, an Request For Quotation has been called for Architectural services to develop proposals, based on thoughts prepared by the Technical Committee. I already have one quote and expect a second within 2 weeks. An assessment will be made and a recommending report put to Property Committee and Church Council soon afterwards. The RFQ requires a fixed price for the development and design of a recommended option/s, costed, with 3D fly through prepared and presentation made to Council. Separate indicative charges have also been

requested for preparation of drawings and specifications, calling of tenders, appointment of a builder and administration of the build contract. This information will enable informed decisions to be made on what we should do in regards facility development.

In the last couple of weeks, I have spoken to some people from other congregations who are either struggling themselves or know of ones that are. We need to remind ourselves that we still have a vibrant and flourishing community of faith here. This of course doesn't just happen by itself, but takes intentional action by many, as we all endeavour to follow in Christ's example in all we do.

Peter Cranwell
Technical Committee

6.1 Community Classes

This year has been ticking along nicely. We seem to be getting new people enrol every week for all classes.

This term (Term 4), we are very pleased to welcome the Blackwood Scrabble Club as part of our Community Program. They previously met at the Blackwood Community Centre but due to its upcoming renovations, this was no longer viable. They are all very happy to join us. Approximately 20 people are attending each Wednesday afternoon. I have advertised the new class on Facebook and our website which has attracted new players as well.

We have 4 full classes, being the Mosaics, Patchwork & Quilting and Art Classes which is great. We have even had more people join other classes that haven't seen new members for years! It seems that the 'mindfulness' adage is starting to garner recognition.

One area that will need attention next year is our Needlework & Embroidery classes. We have not had a teacher all year and have lost students due to this. I will endeavour to find a teacher for next year for these classes. The commitment of teaching every week seems to turn potential tutors off.

In terms of fundraising, we raised close to a \$1,000 for the Cancer Council Biggest Morning Tea in Term 2. Due to COVID restrictions, we have not planned anymore fundraisers as yet.

In March of this year, I organised an "Open Day" for our classes where we opened up our doors and let people wander around to look at all the classes in action and speak to the tutors and participants. We had a few people come along and these turned into enrolments for classes.

Another new thing that we thought would work was a Photography Workshop. Unfortunately, due to a slow uptake, this course did not go ahead. We will try and reschedule this for next year.

Also, the 'My Aged Care Options', 'My Life Story', 'The Death Café' and 'Making your Wishes Known' workshops have been held this year with an external facilitator, Rhonda Smedley. These sessions were well attended by mostly "Church" people. The 'My Life Story' sessions were rescheduled for next year due to a slow uptake, but I now have 6 registrants.

In big news, I have stepped down from running the Craft Fair this year. Michael Dowling and Chris Bray approached me to assist with this and I was very relieved as I am involved in the 100th Anniversary of the Laying of the Foundation Stone and a myriad of other things. They have formed a committee led by Chris Bray and the planning has been fantastic. I am very thankful for this assistance.

The other massive news for this year is that the Bike Shed has finally moved from the Belair Uniting Church. They have now fitted out the Aldersgate Room for repairing bikes. This has really been an asset to the BUC with their current 'donations' being \$20,000. The aim is to now build a shed at the back of the Manse, which Tony Otworowski is managing and projecting leading.

Lastly, I would like to thank my wonderful volunteers:-

- Penny Harper – does the new books every term and looks after the registrations plus counts the money for me every Friday.
- Jan Furness & Brian Pickering – banks all the Community Classes money and Jan assists with catering requirements
- Tony Miller – pays everyone & does all the finances for the Community Classes
- Tony Otworowski, Bob Potter, Russell Grear, Trevor Sutcliffe – move the furniture and set up everything ready for Wednesday morning.
- Nancy & Peter Cranwell – assist with planning and general day to day tasks as needed.
- Sue Fisher, Judith Terrell & Janet Paull – assist with the running of the program. They are the backbone of this program and I would not be able to do what I do without them.

- And lastly, Chris Bray who has stepped up big-time this year! She anticipates everything I need to do and assists me seamlessly on a day-to-day basis. I feel I am almost job sharing with Chris and this has worked really well.

Thank you to all of you – it is much appreciated. I hope you all get as much pleasure out of helping as I do having you all around. Some days the office is full of giggles and life – we have had some great times.

We have people who make important connections with others; who knows where these will lead? We have people take on the burden/joy of being available as a listening ear, a lifeline to the outside world and most importantly as a friend.

Thanks to all who help make this program a success.

Jacqui Harrison
Community Program Coordinator

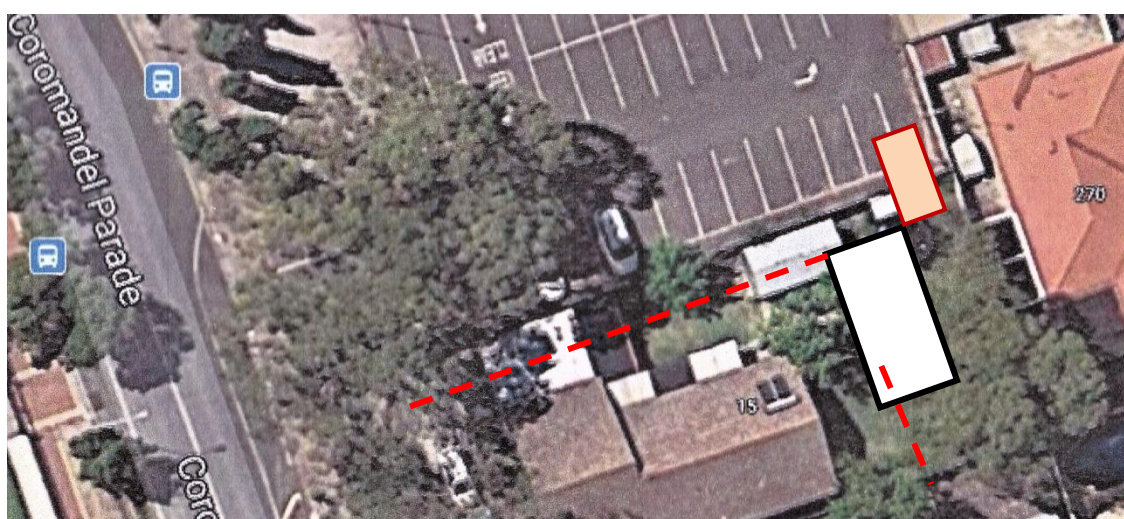
6.2 Property

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

Early in the year Brian Pickering retired and was thanked for his many years of service as treasurer and committee member.

Buildings are important for the Church's Mission and so are the people who maintain them and plan for the future. In this Centenary Year we recognize the wise decisions of our forefathers in choosing this site and those who over the last 50 years have been responsible for the ongoing development of the property enabling the range of activities which currently link us with the wider community and ensure that we are "not just a Sunday Church". For our Church's Mission to continue we need younger people to join the committee and have a hand in what is possible over the coming years.

Proposed Bike Workshop & Storage Container - Relocating the Bike Shed to Blackwood has been possible by temporarily converting the Aldersgate room into a workshop space until a **new Bike Workshop** costing approximately \$40,000 can be provided. The workshop will be located on the back of the manse block - see the plan below. This will also involve resurveying the manse boundary to formally transfer the area behind the manse shed and the southern row of Church car park spaces to the Church property.



Workshop 12m x 6m



Bike Storage Container 6m x 2.4m

--- New Manse boundary

Car Parks are essential for the activities held on our property. Only one will be lost for the Bike Workshop project. Two temporary "Disabled Parking" signs are available when required to increase the number of disabled spaces from 4 to 6.

Room Hire is a major source of income and is down on previous years due to Covid19 but slowly increasing as some regular users return and several new groups are now regularly users. This is also an important part of the connection with our community.

Repairs and replacement of equipment is essential in ensuring that our facilities provide for the needs of the Church and community activities. During the last year we have replaced the manse dishwasher and stove cooktop and the Church kitchen hot water service. Repairs and maintenance is ongoing to gutters and blocked downpipes, kitchen zip hydroboil, cleaning carpets, cleaning and repairing chairs, sanding and resurfacing the small tables, repainting tired areas, trimming the trees, regular checks of all electrical equipment and much more.

The Church Gardens are a credit to the small team of gardeners and provide an attractive setting for the Church and for those remembered on the Memorial Wall.

Bob Lyon
for BUC Property Committee

6.3 Relocation of Bike Shed Project

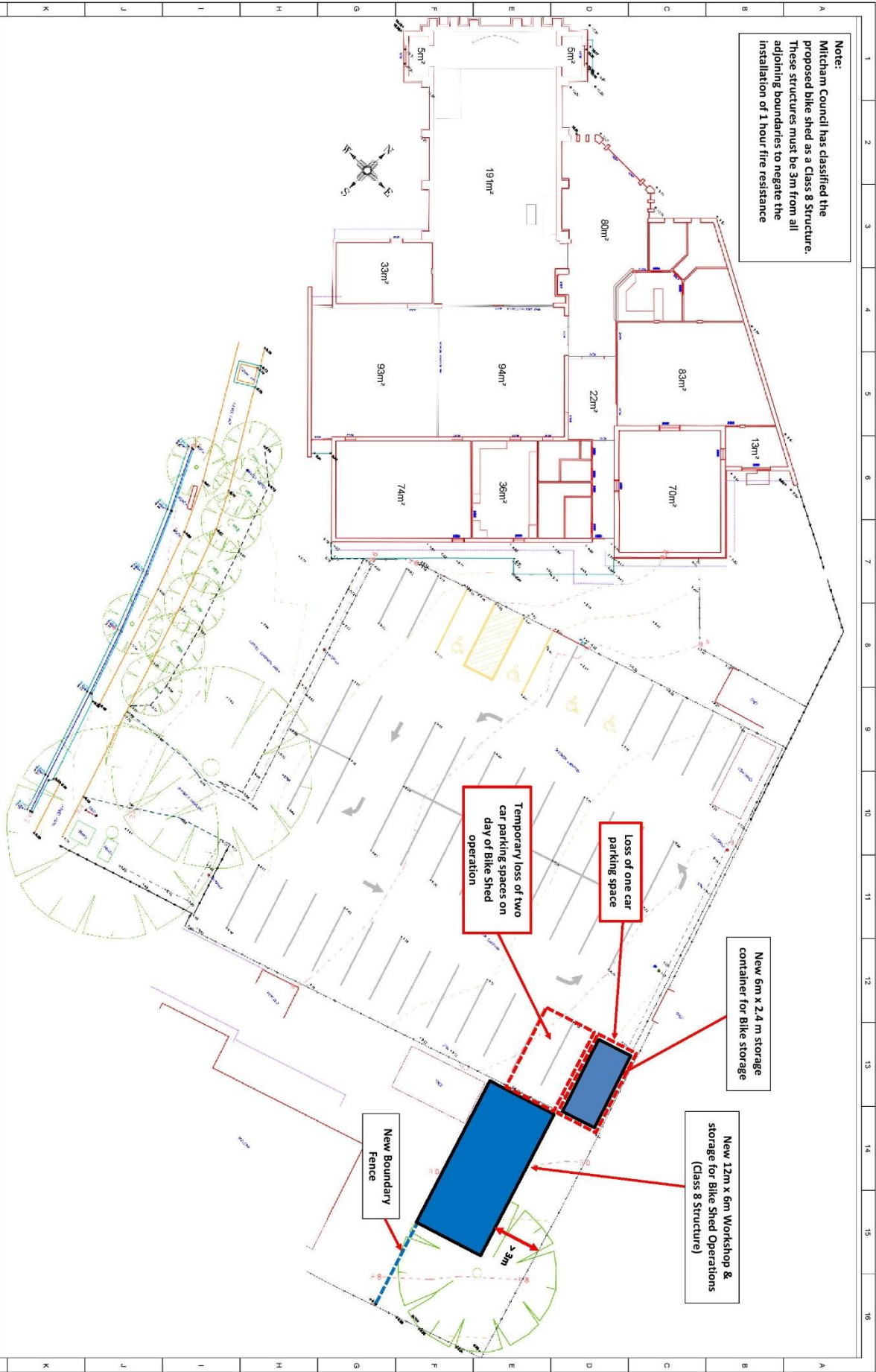
Summary

- The BUC Bike Shed Community outreach programme has been operating for over twenty years based in accommodation at the rear of the Belair Uniting Church.
- This Community activity has been successfully managed and operated by Blackwood Uniting Church during this period.
- Current number of community participants is ten.
- The Outreach activity provides recycled bicycles to charities, school programmes, refugees, and the general public.
- Annual income generated from this community activity for 2020 was \$7,000.
- At the request of the Belair Uniting Church Congregation this facility is to be fully relocated to Blackwood by the end of May 2021.
- The interim location for the operations of the Bike Shed team will be the Aldersgate Room with additional storage provided in existing sheds kindly donated by the owner of 18a Coromandel Parade and the existing BUC container in the Church car park.
- The interim Bike Shed facility is proposed to operate initially on a Monday.
- This relocation is fully supported by BUC Church Executive and Council with funding from existing budget allocation.
- The proposed sketch design option 5 attached for a new structure to support this outreach programme has been agreed by the Property Committee and Church Council
- Detailed quotations will be obtained for this proposed option by end of November 2021
- The target for completing the detailed design, Synod approval, planning approvals and construction of the new structure is by the end of May 2022.

Tony Otworowski
Chairman, Property Committee

(See plans attached)

Note:
 Mitcham Council has classified the proposed bike shed as a Class 8 Structure. These structures must be 3m from all adjoining boundaries to negate the installation of 1 hour fire resistance



DATE: 20/01/2023
 DRAWN: [Name]
 CHECKED: [Name]
 APPROVED: [Name]
 PROJECT: [Name]
 SHEET: [Name]

PROPOSED BIKE SHED
 OPERATIONAL STRUCTURES
 OPTION 5

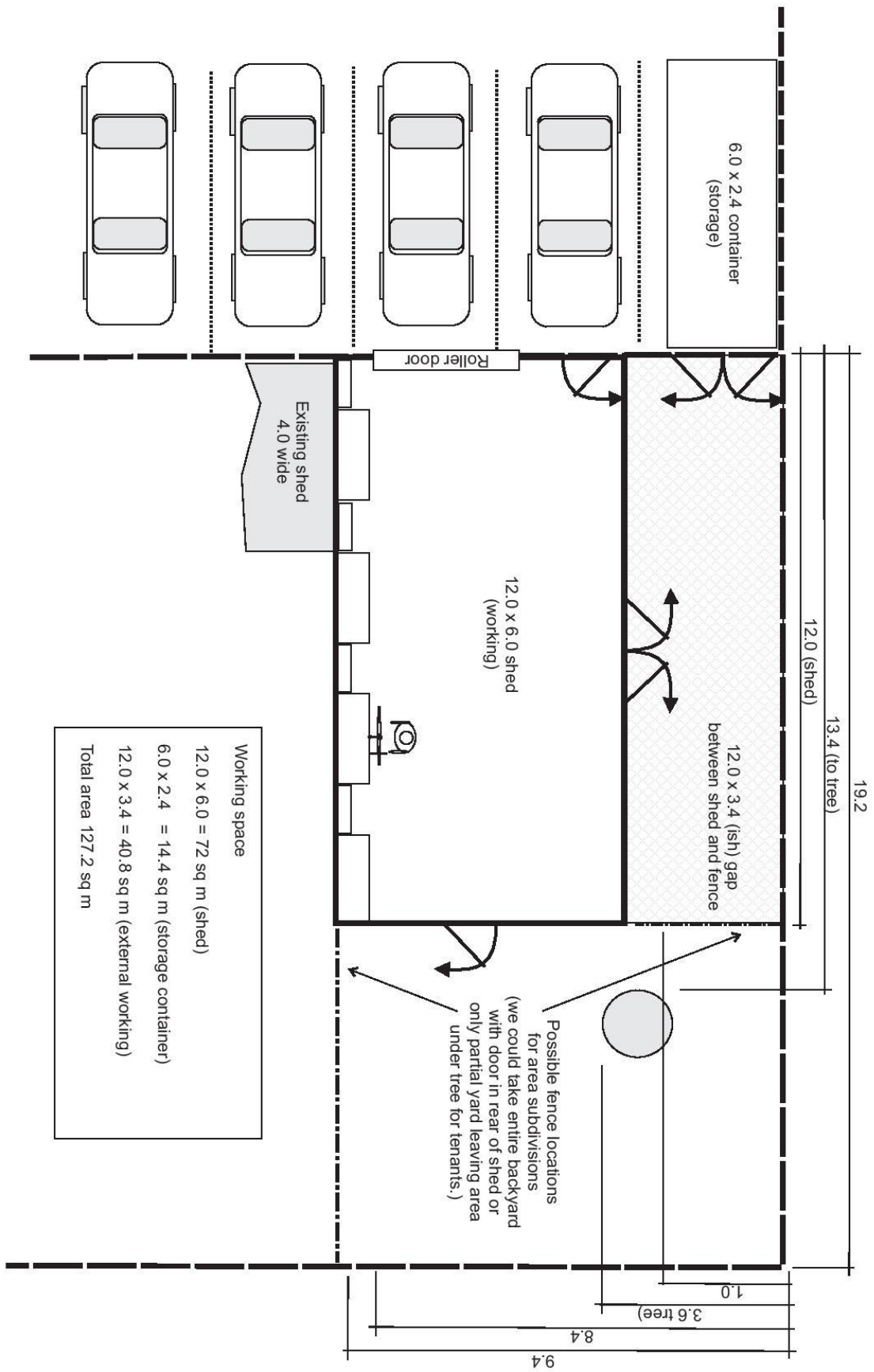
NO.	DATE	REVISION

PROPOSED BIKE SHED
 OPERATIONAL STRUCTURES
 OPTION 5

Appendix E

DATE	REVISION	REVISION	REVISION

Blackwood Uniting Church



6.4 Messy Church

Messy Church has undergone several changes this year: a few key members stepping back from their roles and Bonnie Mills being appointed to the new role of Coordinator. We are so grateful to our regular volunteers as they show up and make the whole session come together every time, running the event smoothly. We are looking to gain more regular volunteers on the planning team, as well as hopefully acquire a few more people to help out at sessions, as we have lost a few committed members this year.

We ran Messy Church sessions in February, March, May, June, and September, as well as inviting our Messy Church families to join with the full Church congregation in the April Easter service. Our numbers have fluctuated quite a lot through this year, having our largest attendance at the March service, with 20 families, and then numbers decreasing again to our lowest this year, of only 9 families, at the September service. This latest decrease in attendance may be partly due to the lockdown in July (which led to the cancellation of the August Messy Church), and ongoing COVID restrictions and regulations.

We have been doing sessions along the theme of Characteristics of God, and exploring stories that illustrate some characteristics, and that as we are created in God's image, that they are also characteristics of us humans, including how we can practice and reflect upon their embodiment in our lives. There has been plenty of sensory & messy play, as well as introducing a craft with a nature focus on most sessions. Peter & Nancy Cranwell have been helping facilitate the older young people group, alongside the craft/activity sessions that are open to all.

We have also had a volunteer thank you tea, at which we discussed experiences of being volunteers, and shared feedback on our Messy Church. Into the future, the team hopes to be able to contact families that haven't returned since 2020, and reflect on methods of transitioning between activities/focus, as well as to make clearer, the invitation to the families to engage with the Sacred at Messy Church.

Bonnie MacLaine-Mills
Messy Church Coordinator

6.5 Mainly Music

The year has been successful for mainly music in spite of the restrictions for Covid 19. We have operated most weeks except for the lockdown of two weeks last term.

However the uncertainty and fear of infection has affected our numbers of attendees and the average has been 11 families with 12 to 14 children per week. This was a drop of 5 families from 2019 but the last few weeks have seen new families coming. The wearing of masks for adults has also been difficult as the program is all about singing.

We have had the continuing faithfulness of our volunteer team of 19 without which we could not operate. Each has a special role to play and is essential for the continued presentation of the sessions which have an impact on families who do not attend this church and in some cases, any church. This is a community outreach which has now operated for 9 years.

Each term we meet as a team and share interesting aspects of the philosophy of mainly music. The last one was a hub meeting presented online by the central office for all the groups. It was about listening attentively, caring and sharing the Gospel in a gentle manner. The presenter was Richard Black who is a psychologist and a preacher and was a useful and practical session.

Rev. Michael Dowling's support is very important as he has become part of the group and chats with the adults over morning tea as well as providing thoughtful think spots from time to time.

The family breakfast held in August was attended by 40 people and 7 children who loved showing off their mainly music skills. It was an opportunity for church families to see what happens on Friday mornings and meet some of our regular m.m. members. Thankyou to all who helped make that a special occasion, especially **the team members** who came early to set up, cook and serve .

Celebrations of Easter, Mothers' and Fathers' day and Christmas are always highlights throughout the year when we invite grandparents and others who do not usually attend. An open invitation is extended to all church members to come to any session. Your prayers for the continuation of this program and for our young families are very much needed.

Carys Penny
Mainly Music Coordinator

6.6 Playgroup

The year has had its challenges again, and it took families a while to come back after the COVID lockdowns and restrictions of 2020. But in terms 3 and 4 numbers have risen again in spite of the restrictions; families are coping well with QR codes, masks, social distancing and COVID-safe practices. We have a number of grandparents coming, where both grandparents come, and it is a good mix of generations and genders. The children enjoy the activities, stories and songs and love the parachute at the end of the session. We have had a number of families express their thanks for the way we run the program and the lovely atmosphere in the group.

This year we have explored themes of the 5 Senses, Families, Physical Activity and the Olympics, and Australian Animals. Special celebrations were held for Pancake Day, Easter, Mother's Day, Reconciliation Week, World Environment Day (we gave each child a daffodil bulb in a pot to take home and look after till it flowered in spring), Father's Day and we had a Mini-Olympics to end term 3. We will finish term 4 with a special Christmas celebration and a graduation ceremony for any child who is moving on to Kindergarten or school next year.

Special thanks go to the team who have faithfully continued to turn up and provide the wonderful space that is Playgroup. Thanks to Carys, Jean, Jackie, Bruce and Tony, to those on the tea roster who help provide the hospitality that is an integral part of the program, to the craft preparation team of Helen, Claudia and Jan R., and to Glenis for standing in for Jackie on the welcome desk from time to time. Thanks also to Penny and Jacqui in the office for admin support. I'm particularly grateful to the team for carrying on without me for most of term three while I had my hip replacement, and to Carys for standing in for me as coordinator during that time. It certainly is a team effort.

2022 will be our thirteenth year of Playgroup, and we hope for a good year, in spite of the uncertainties regarding COVID and the proposed opening up of the state and the country. Thanks to Jacqui and those at BUC responsible for our COVID safe planning – we rely on you to keep us on the right track and advise us on COVID protocols.

We have a three-year rotation of programs but after 4 rotations in 12 years I'm getting a bit bored so I'm adding different themes, books and crafts to keep the programs fresh and creative. I try to include books that are multi-cultural, inclusive of difference, and in particular Indigenous stories and images. Anyone who would like to join the team in any capacity, but particularly reading a story or singing songs would be very welcome.

Marnie Agnew
Coordinator

6.7 Library

“Books are quiet. They do not dissolve into wavy lines or snowstorm effects. They don’t pause to deliver commercials. They are three dimensional having length, depth and breadth. They are convenient to handle and completely portable.” Anonymous.

Fifty books have been added to the church library this year. Twenty eight of these are adult books, fifteen are children’s books and seven have been donated by the community program.

We have several new books on Aboriginal themes including “A voice in the wilderness, Listening to the Statement of the Heart” by Celia Kemp. “Anadity” by Denise Champion is on Aboriginal spirituality.

“Loving your friend through cancer: moving beyond “I’m sorry” to meaningful support” by Marissa Henley contains useful information and practical hints.

Julia Baird’s book “Phosphorescence; on awe, wonder & things that sustain you when the world goes dark” is described by Annabel Crabb as “a boundlessly generous book full of little luminous treasures.”

Thank you to all who have donated books to the library.

Joy Belling
Librarian

6.8 Kid's Hope

Our involvement with the Blackwood Primary School mentoring children has been severely effected in the last two years as a consequence of Covid-19.

We have 4 mentors who are still willing to mentor, when we are able, however the SA Government on the advice of Health authorities, is reluctant to allow non essential people into schools. This is to limit the spread of the virus and to protect people, such as we, who are vulnerable because of age or who are severely compromised healthwise. So we are in hope that sometime in 4th term we will get to see our children again but it appears extremely unlikely at this stage.

During 2021 we have worked for a short time during first term but have been asked to put the program into recess until further notice.

Our mentors are keen to assist our children but may well need some external motivation to kick us off next year.

Ian Penny
Coordinator

6.9 Online Worship

I must start by saying this is a group effort, and many thanks to the team, Peter Stead, Anthony Furness, Mark Gill, Ray Bown doing 11am services most Sundays, and to Jacqui for the crucial advance step of creating the links in advance each week. In practice it's also a collaboration with the crew on the data projector, most often Richard Stead and Tony Miller – supported by Elisabeth Williams, Claudia Cliff and Milton Turner setting it up, and the Sound desk crew including Russel Grear, Peter Stead, Mark Gill, Ray Bown & others.

It would be great to have one or two more people able to do the streaming desk. I'd ideally like to be doing half the 9:15 services with others taking on this once a month each. The 11am services are typically relatively easy with no band so no great computer or video experience is required.

Special thanks to Jan Furness and Michael for being able to produce an entirely on-line service at very short notice for the Sunday in lockdown in July. The effort was obviously appreciated by many with 214 views total.

I've had a look at what a few other churches are doing. Some are using Zoom, which does facilitate active involvement of remote participants. But I find it interesting that for Blackwood we might only have 2-6 people on-line at the time of the live service, many more people join in later. So asynchronous participation has become a significant feature. I don't know how many people are re-watching after being present to catch up on the detail in Michael's sermons – I do know that at least some people do this (myself included on occasions). The streaming video has replaced the audio recordings of services and sermons that we've had available for many years, firstly on cassette, then CD, then online.

I had the opportunity to drive the live streaming for a Pilgrim service. While they have nicer cameras (at a corresponding price!) they have opted for a much simpler and more limited control system. This does not readily facilitate multiple sources such as a camera and projector feed which we do utilise extensively. So I remain satisfied that we have a good system for the budget available. Obviously it would always have been nice to spend more, but realistically I think we do very well.

Michael's lively style offers a challenge to adequately capture. I've sometimes used one of my own cameras which can track a moving target, but its wide angle means I have to position it closer which is slightly awkward.

Numbers of participants do vary. Those joining in live may be from 2-12 for a normal Sunday, but these numbers rise to between 20 & 70 by the end of the week. Significant services can be higher.

Special services such as Funerals and Weddings can also be streamed, and some of these have had over 100 participants. Other events such as the Journeying Series are popular. I've wanted to do something special for these special events, so Michael's spectacular Journeying Through Science has taken a while, but is now available. Thanks to everyone for their patience. <https://youtu.be/tqfwUStgERO>

While YouTube offers statistics of the number of 'views' I prefer to think of people joining in the on-line worship as participants. Looking at the detailed information it's clear that some people don't 'participate' for the entire service so it is difficult to really accurately assess the level of engagement.

However the feedback I receive is that people do value the experience of being able to join in when they cannot physically be present. This is clearly important to them so in many ways I feel the number of views is not significant, if it helps someone be connected it's worthwhile.

YouTube does create auto captioning/subtitles. However the voice recognition remains shall we say a work in progress. Sometimes the results are entertaining. Most of the time the intention is reasonably clear, I'm not aware of instances of it being misleading. Appreciation of this function has been expressed by those who are hearing challenged as well as those whose first language isn't English. Where there

would be benefit in strengthening this facility it is possible to download the subtitles, make corrections and upload the more reliable version. I've not done this for BUC so far though.

The lighting within the sanctuary has been a problem for as long as I can remember. Finally something is, er, will be happening. The proverbial 'slow boat from China' is no longer metaphorical. Somewhere in the freight system there is a container with some lights that will enhance not only the streaming quality but also the in-house experience. There will be two stages of installation, at first supporting just the most common western facing configuration, then additional lights to support the northern facing configuration and increased flexibility. There will be simple one button controls for the typical Sunday configuration with the option of detailed control for special occasions.

The streaming desk has been designed to be flexible, it can be moved from it's usual back corner to other rooms and this has happened occasionally. I hope soon to re-jig the setup to enhance it's use for other options such as Zoom meetings. The streaming facility also makes it possible to show the live stream output in house on the hall screen when we have large numbers spilling into the hall back area.

I have done one 'outside broadcast', streaming the Ordination of Oliver Ponsonby via the Blackwood account. So it is technically possible to do things like Church in the Park online.

There have been a few glitches. Often it's possible to work around a temporary glitch and some services haven't been online live but uploaded later. We had no internet connection one Sunday, and unfortunately I spent too long trying to resolve this major problem to get the recording happening.

Finally, thanks to all those who do participate in the on-line worship experience. There's no point in putting this out to the cloud just because we can. It's the people involved that make it worthwhile and I do believe that this does make the Blackwood UC Community stronger. It's been an interesting experience managing this, I think the strongest sense of being in the right place at the right time I've ever had.

Tim Lee

6.10 Presbytery

The Presbytery of Southern SA continues to be in a phase of development, with many of the initial ideas hampered by pandemic conditions while other aspects firm up.

Peter McDonald is the chairperson-elect, or as he likes to describe himself, trainee chairperson. Lorraine Schroder has taken over from Max Howland as secretary. Ian Dow is the Presbytery Minister and we've already had him preach here at Blackwood one Sunday. He offers a valuable unifying presence to the diverse churches, spiritually as well as geographically.

The most recent Presbytery meeting at The Corner UC, Warradale, 17th September, was a Friday evening beginning with a shared meal and time shared getting to know people. The decision was made to ordain Oliver Ponsonby as a Deacon, which was followed up quite quickly with his ordination. Oliver attended Blackwood for a while when he was living in Glenalta and I like to think this time contributed to his pathway to this role. This included the Induction of Ian Dow as Presbytery Minister.

The Presbytery also had a formal Reception of Rev Christine Gilbert as a minister in the UCA. The UCA generally is happy to welcome ministers from other denominations, but there's a formal process which perhaps compares to the Ordination in which the person acknowledges their commitment to the values of the UCA found in the Basis of Union. We have a number of ministers working in the Presbytery who have come from other denominations.

The Presbytery also celebrated the Induction of Jensi as Minister at Willunga congregation.

The Presbytery of Southern SA continues to work with UAICC as they grow into some of the functions typically undertaken by a Presbytery within their membership.

I continue to be a member of the Standing Committee of the Presbytery of Southern SA. This I find a somewhat perplexing role, there are various speciality functions that seem to me to be most relevant to the ordained staff of the Presbytery & I continue to seek what is the best expression of my role.

I was also elected as a Presbytery representative to Synod and with Sandy Boyce to the Assembly meeting. This took place as a mainly on-line meeting from Qld. The highlight of the meeting to me was the induction of Sharon Hollis as President, replacing Diedre Palmer, and the election of Rev Charissa Suli as President Elect. She takes on the role as of the next Assembly meeting in three years time, from 2024-2027. The significance of choosing a leader who is a young woman of colour should not be underestimated. The words of the departing, incoming President, and President elect gave me hope for the Uniting Church in Australia as a strong group with insightful leadership. The detailed report Sandy & I compiled for the Presbytery is available for anyone who would like it. The Assembly meeting was not technically concluded, business decisions are expected to be discussed in an in-person meeting some time around July next year.

I feel very encouraged by the various expressions of faith within the Blackwood congregation and feel a strong sense of connection with the vision for the future of the UCA expressed by Charissa in her nominating profile.

In a slightly related role I am in the organising group for the Daring conference which will be held at Blackwood, June 2022.

<https://www.unitingnetworkaustralia.org/daring-2022/>

This event demonstrates one face of the inclusivity of the UCA.

Tim Lee
BUC Presbytery Rep

A report from the Uniting Church 16th Assembly to the Presbytery of Southern SA meeting September 2021

by Presbytery appointed delegates Rev Sandy Boyce (Pilgrim UC) and Tim Lee (Blackwood UC)

The triennial Assembly meetings of the Uniting Church are the national decision-making forum where elected members decide the UCA's national priorities, guide the life of the Church and its advocacy, resolve any burning doctrinal issues, and choose national leaders.



In preparation for the 16th Assembly, members joined in the online pre-sessions with the various agencies and boards in the Uniting Church - Uniting Care, Frontier Services, Uniting World and so on, as well as with the Assembly Resourcing Unit and Circles of Interest. There were several on offer in each session so it was a fleeting glimpse of some of the work of the agencies rather than individual presentations to Assembly members.



Given the disruption of the pandemic, the Assembly meeting proper was held online on the weekend of 17-18th July, in lieu of the original plan to gather on Queensland's Sunshine Coast over five days. The innovation of an online meeting enabled the Church's national work to proceed and it was encouraging to see that so much was achieved and so seamlessly including the voting. The agenda for the online meeting was for essential business – the installation of a new President, the election of a President-elect and the election of members of the Assembly Standing Committee. There was no opportunity for proposals, which will be postponed until the Assembly can reconvene at a face-to-face gathering, hopefully sometime in 2022. It also meant there was no chance to revisit the 15th Assembly's historic decision to allow UCA ministers to conduct same-sex marriages as some members may have hoped would happen.



There were less members (down from 265 to 188). It was very pleasing to see how many delegates were in the 'young adult' age group, and a number from cross-cultural backgrounds.



The Assembly began with the installation of the new President, Rev Sharon Hollis - the third woman to hold the position and the first ordained woman since church union in 1977. She follows on immediately from ex-President, Dr Deidre Palmer. Deidre's installation in 2018 had many hundreds in attendance, followed by an in person Assembly meeting. The installation of the new President, Rev Sharon Hollis, had to be done with only a handful of people present, and viewed online by delegates to the Assembly and by a much larger group from across the UCA and ecumenically, and with partner churches able to view online as well.



Sharon's theme for the triennium is 'Dwelling in Love'. In a powerful sermon reflecting on the theme for the Assembly, "Dwelling in Love", Sharon encouraged UCA members and the Church to be upturned and transformed by the radically inclusive love of God.



"The love Paul talks about (in his letter to the Corinthians) is active, tough, resilient and long suffering. This love risks the fragility of human flesh in the incarnation. It crosses boundaries. It raises up those who religion and society have excluded. It endures the cross. It rises again. As Christians any talk about love has to be grounded in God's love for all that God creates. Creation itself is an act of love, an outpouring of God's creative love in making something out of nothing and vesting it with God's goodness, God's image. God's nature is to continuously love creation and all God's people. God's love is not overcome by our failure or faithlessness, it is not defeated by the evil of empire or the death dealing of idols. It does not give up on us even when we give up on ourselves. It lives among us - blessing, giving new hearts, rising to keep on loving". A welcome and Acknowledgement of Country was offered by Interim UAICC National Chair Ps Mark Kickett, who invited us to remember and hold in our hearts the First Peoples who walked on this land. He also presented the Congress report, and shared via video, stories about relationship, culture and faith from our First Peoples.



Mark is to be received as a Minister of the Word in the Uniting Church tomorrow afternoon at the conclusion of the Synod Expo. We welcome his ongoing leadership and continue to pray for him in his national role with Congress.



As the Assembly meeting got underway, President Sharon Hollis welcomed UCA members watching online, overseas guests watching online from around the world.



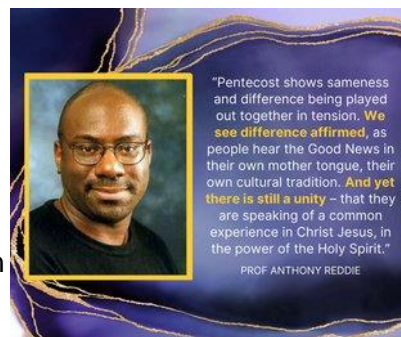
Ex-President Dr Deidre Palmer delivered an address reflecting on her term. She encouraged UCA members to remain strong and full of hope in the midst of the challenging global context. She highlighted ways she has seen God's grace and hope - in our covenant relationship and walking together as First and Second Peoples; the Uniting Church as a multicultural and intercultural community in Christ; and our participation in God's renewal and healing of the whole creation. "These last three years have taught me that we can plan, imagine a way forward - and be totally disrupted.



But we are a people of Resurrection – we follow a risen, crucified Lord, who is with us always and empowers us to be a people of love, reconciliation, and hope. You are witnesses to this hope as you gather here. God is always more than we can imagine - more loving, more inclusive, more creative, more willing to work with our frailties, more able to equip us with gifts and strength than we had thought possible. As the Uniting Church may we continue to be shaped by the abundant grace of God and bear witness to Christ's liberating love'.



Every Assembly, members have an opportunity to hear a presentation at the Cato Lecture. This year, it was black liberation theologian and Director of the Oxford Centre for Religion and Culture Prof Anthony Reddie. He reflected on what it means to hold together our oneness and our diversity. He said, "Holding together unity and diversity, particularity and universality, the sense of being one but also respecting our particular differences ... is something the church has asserted but rarely practiced well. I believe this is an ongoing tension in which the power of the Holy Spirit enables us to both celebrate those things that make us specifically who we are, but also affirms our oneness and affirms that we are all made in the image and likeness of God." It felt like a fireside chat, and an invitation into a conversation on the issues he raised. It will need time to for further reflection, because we are so used to dealing with polarities and dualities rather than finding a way for both/and, which requires wisdom, grace and a willingness to make space for unity as well as diversity. Prof Reddie's presentation is well worth watching online.



Despite being physically apart, 16th Assembly members, and others from across the Church, shared in prayer and worship. On Day 1, members finished the day in prayer with the practice of The Examen led by Rev Sally Douglas. On Day 2, First Nations leaders from Nungalinga College in Darwin led the Bible Reflections. Speaking from their own cultural and theological perspectives, the leaders shared on the theme "Dwelling in love". Assembly members were placed in breakout groups and had an opportunity to reflect on what they had heard.



Our National Assembly is led by Colleen Geyer (General Secretary). We are fortunate to have such committed and skilled people to lead our church, and it is so wonderful to have strong women able to offer leadership at this time. Not to exclude men, but to have women's gifts affirmed. The Assembly agreed to extend the appointment of Colleen.



A new Assembly Standing Committee was elected (including 5 from SA - Rev Sandy Boyce, Anna Wilson, Rev Linda Driver, Kerry Wilson and Rev Philip Gardner). Of the 18 members elected at the Assembly, 14 are new members. The Synod General Secretaries and Assembly Associate General Secretary also attend the meeting.

The Assembly meeting also made appointments for the Advocates for the Circles of Interest, and Chairpersons for Assembly Agency Boards and National Committees. A Minute of Appreciation was observed for those who have served faithfully in the national life of the Church.



The meeting ended with the announcement of the voting for the President-elect. Reflecting ahead of the meeting, Matt Pulford (previously the lead Communications person for the Assembly), wrote: "The most interesting choice at the meeting will be among the candidates for President-elect. This choice is a tantalising litmus test of the UCA's self-image. Of the four candidates, three are ministers of a Pacific Islander background (note: one name was withdrawn before the election). The Assembly, whose members are overwhelmingly white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant and are part of the Baby Boomer generation, have until now, never elected a person of colour to be their spiritual leader and the public face of the Uniting Church. Culturally and linguistically diverse candidates for President-elect have presented themselves unsuccessfully on a number of previous occasions. For a Church that has publicly supported causes like Black Lives Matter and for whom inclusion is a pillar of its identity, this choice of future leader looms as a moment of truth. ***Is the UCA ready for a President of colour?***"



As it turns out, yes, and overwhelmingly.

Rev Charissa Suli was elected, the youngest woman elected to the role and the first person from a CALD background to serve in the role. It demonstrates the UCA's commitment to representing the diverse community that makes up the UCA membership. Charissa is only the second ordained woman to hold the position. She will serve from 2024-2027. Charissa is currently National Consultant with the Assembly. She has more than 20 years experience in cross cultural and intercultural ministry in the Uniting Church. She was ordained in 2014 and served in congregational ministry at Dapto Uniting Church in NSW.

In her response to the announcement Charissa said: "This is truly an historic moment for the Church. This is ground-breaking that you call a Second Generation Tongan Australian, still in her thirties. Today we move forward because of you all. I am conscious of people, both known and unknown, who have prayed, sacrificed and struggled for this moment. But let us celebrate it and give thanks for what God has done and

continues to do through your witness to Christ's radical hospitality. This is the Uniting Church I have come to know that has given me the space to grow and be challenged, the opportunity to try new things, to call me into mission and to exercise my discipleship and affirm my gifts as a leader, even if I looked different or did things that were different from the status quo." She paid tribute to those who had nurtured, encouraged and empowered her to realise her gifts of leadership and invest in the leadership of the younger generations of the Church. In particular she thanked her mentors Rev Jason Kioa, the former Chair of the Tongan National Conference and Rev Tony Floyd, who she said, "opened my eyes to the possibility of ministry and leadership."

A few thoughts from her profile, A Vision for the UCA:

- I want the UCA to be a welcoming Church that is joyful, accepting, hospitable and life-giving to all
- I want the UCA to be a Church that affirms a variety of expressions of faith to deepen our understanding of God and our neighbour; a Church that is unafraid, even proud of our diversity
- I want the UCA to be a Church that bears witness to the Gospel and fulfils God's mission in every aspect of our ministry as we follow and apply the life and teachings of Christ in everything we do
- I want the UCA to continue to be a justice-seeking church that faithfully addresses racism, gender justice, and the effects of climate change,
- I want the UCA to be a Church that presents a strong and positive identity front and centre across the Assembly, Synods, Presbyteries, Congregations and Parish Missions and their respective Agencies, across Uniting Church schools and with our global ecumenical partners.
- In a world where many borders and minds are closed, I want the UCA to keep thinking globally and maintain a strong commitment to the ecumenical movement.
- I really want a UCA that walks the talk when walking together as First and Second Peoples in Covenant with the UAICC. And I want a UCA that embraces digital technologies to
- communicate with all generations inside and outside our communities to spread the Gospel in rural and urban contexts, focusing on daily ministry rather than just Sunday ministry – to be a Church that helps people find faith and live out their faith on a daily basis.

Charissa committed herself to "serve the Church faithfully, leading it into the love of God, with Jesus Christ as my shepherd, and trusting the Holy Spirit to lead me each day."

In the closing worship, 16th Assembly members were invited to write or draw a prayer for the reconvened Assembly in 2022. A final blessing was offered by Synod of Queensland Moderator Andrew Gunton from Sunshine Coast where the reconvened Assembly will meet: "Bless us in our gathering and our scattering. Bless us in our decisions and our discipleship. Bless us as we anticipate taking our leave and as we are excited for gathering together again."



More can be read here, including links to sessions on Vimeo,
<https://uniting.church/16thassembly/>
<https://uniting.church/16thassembly-news/>
<https://vimeo.com/unitingchurch>

6.11 Mitcham Hills Inter-Church Council

The M.H.I.C.C. Is a vital group in our area, and is represented by 8 or 9 local churches, keeping in touch with each other through the marvellous efforts of our Secretary Maxine Moore.

The Schools Ministry Group administers the many PCW's in our State, and our Area representative attends our meetings and keeps us up to date.

Our 5 local schools have 7 Pastoral Care Workers, and this is very special.

At Blackwood High we have the longest serving PCW in the State, at Blackwood Primary and Hawthorndene there are now 2 PCW's for the first time, Coromandel Valley and Belair Primary each have 1 PCW. The value of these wonderful people is now being well recognised, and for some, extra funding is provided by their school. Wonderful!

The Beacon Emergency Relief Program is well established here in the hills, and provides excellent service to many families in need.

Operating on Wednesday mornings at Blackwood Church of Christ, Beacon offers Counselling, referrals to appropriate Govt. Departments, food vouchers and support at different levels.

Beacon members wish to convey their unfailing appreciation for the support generously given by our congregation when donations are sought. You are amazing!

With Christmas coming there will be a need for further donations of cash or goods.

Remembering that our refugee families have different food requirements, it would be so appreciated if we offered cash at this time. If you care to do so, here are the details,

Bank S.A. BSB 105-078. A/c. 66137840. Many, many thanks, Gloria and the Team will be delighted.

This year our deeply appreciated 'Blue Christmas' service will be held at Holy Innocents Anglican Church on a date yet to be announced. We shall keep you informed as soon as possible.

**Carys Penny, Bev Eccleston
BUC MHICC Reps**