

Observations about the past year: Ross Huggard, *Chairperson*

Annual General Meeting: Sunday 15 March, 2020

Once more, it is my great privilege to highlight some of the significant aspects of our life as a diverse, active and forward-looking congregation over the last 12 months, both as your Congregational Chairperson and Chair of Church Council. As always, forgive any glaring omissions I may inadvertently make in this brief review of our church activities in 2019.

In this Christian season of Lent, with Christ's sacrifice is so present in our minds, we remind ourselves that our Christian witness has never been more important in our increasingly secular, selfish, hedonistic and often uncaring world. We can proudly stand with the Uniting Church in its outspoken criticisms of those government policies which make refugees outcasts and cut overseas aid. The recent historic bushfire emergency has given rise to a generosity of time, money and support for victims. Now, with the unwanted arrival of COVID 19, there will undoubtedly be further opportunities for us as Christians to reach out to those in need. Clearly, there has never been a more important time for us to stand with other Christians to proudly proclaim that which Christ through his words and actions extols us to do.

It is important that we publicly acknowledge the selfless dedicated service to our congregation by those elected by you to exercise decision-making and spiritual leadership, just as we will today elect new Church Councillors and Elders. Without their selfless commitment we would simply not be able to function as an effective Christian community. Allow me to acknowledge on your behalf the huge debt we all owe to our indefatigable Treasurer, Keith Holmes and to our ever-reliable Church Council Secretary, Kerry Pederick. I also wish to especially acknowledge the unceasing service exercised by those no longer able to be actively involved, including long-time Elder Bev Fowler, who has been a stalwart in this congregation over many years, including helping to bring together the former Wesley and St Andrew's congregations into our now unified High Street congregation. I also wish to thank Jackie Annable for her invaluable contributions to Church Council as an outgoing member.

Some key facets of the 2019 year have included, exercising our Christian witness in the community:

- The wonderful pastoral support and care provided by Rev Arthur Poole, our appointed Pastoral Care Worker, who regrettably was obliged to resign at the end of 2019, for personal reasons
- Reappointment of Hannah Dungan as our Youth Coordinator, following confirmation of our successful application for a 4 year grant from Synod Mission Funds
- Escalating demand for the support provided by Operation Larder, with wonderful organisational and financial leadership provided by members of our congregation in its 37th year of operation. The leadership of Dawn and Graham Peacock and Nylma Carruthers is exceptional. These indefatigable individuals continue undaunted by the growing financial and resource-providing tasks imposed on them, but this is becoming ever harder.

- Continuation of the provision of a special weekly sausage sizzle for the needy in Frankston
- Ongoing support for the Voices of Frankston choir
- Our ongoing outreach and support to the students at Monash Peninsula through the ministry of our Chaplain, Mandy Lake, and pancake breakfasts
- Continued oversight and facilitation of Safe Church practices, also by Mandy Lake
- Continued successful operation of a Friday Playgroup, coordinated by Emma Lindenburg
- Elders, those who record worship, hospital and aged care facility visitors and those who transport elderly shut-in folk to special Tuesday communion services and reach out to those who are frail in body or mind, and require spiritual nurturing and the love of Christ
- LEGS and UC Mission Guild which support those further afield who require our support and financial assistance. We should also acknowledge the leadership of several key individuals in ensuring that we consider our responsiveness to the plight of others, especially to Dawn Peacock in her ongoing championing of the amazing Christian outreach of Tom Sutherland in India and the continuing commitment by the congregation to his wonderful Christian mission, to Helen Beeby's leadership for support for Indian women, to John and Marion Coulson and Tim and Mandy Lake for their work in East Timor, to Karin Jooste for her commitment to Lent Event, to Edna Runciman for again overseeing Christmas Bowl collections, to Virgil Snyder for overseeing Sammy Stamp here...my apologies to many other people I should also have mentioned!
- Our two wonderfully successful 2019 fetes, so ably coordinated by Kay Burdett and Marg Scarlett and their ever-reliable committees
- All those who so consistently and reliably ensure that our worship space functions so effectively and seamlessly, especially Alan Jenkins, who constantly monitors, oversees and upgrades all our computer, sound and IT equipment, and for our willing team of sound desk and computer operators comprising Robert Downing, James Briggs, Karin Jooste, Murray Burdett and others.
- Our choir which nurtures and enhances our 9am worship through music, so ably led by Bronwen Matthews, with her trademark effusive smile and talented organists, Nylma Carruthers and Elaine Keynon and others. We need to acknowledge their dedication, along with that of so many loyal long-time choir members, and some new ones too!
- Our talented bands and music groups which energise the contemporary service so powerfully with a means of choral worship, with its stalwart members Kerry and Russell Pederick, Mike Guest, Tim Lake, John Annable, Valmai Scully and others, must also be gratefully acknowledged.
- We should also acknowledge and recognise the commitment and efforts of the COG team who so reliably plan, facilitate and help to deliver the contemporary services each week. Special tribute needs to be made to Mike Guest who is stepping down from his long-time role as assured, organised and ever-reliable Chairperson of COG
- All those who Chair and lead other church groups and organisations: thank you!
- Following the successful 2017 restoration of our historic organ, another successful organ recital by well-regarded and talented organist, Lachlan Redd in June 2019

- Jill Cayzer's wonderfully supportive work as funeral verger
- Church Council and the Management Committee which ensure that the operations of this vibrant and diverse church community are efficient and supportive and its physical buildings and resources are well-maintained and appropriate. Murray Burdett, as Chair of the Management Committee has continued to enact the detailed plan he has so skilfully developed for the oversight of our physical church resources which will undoubtedly stand us in good stead for the future. So much careful planning and oversight goes into each and every improvement Murray oversees.
- David you have enriched our worship in new and exciting ways and I am sure will continue to challenge us, provoke us and enrich our living faith, in your ever effusive, cheerful and energising manner and expose us to new songs and expressions of faith on our shared journey. I must also sincerely thank you for your wise counsel and leadership on Church Council and your capacity to diffuse challenging situations with your characteristic Christian optimism and effusive laughter.
- Indeed, we are also much blessed to have in our midst a special group of retired ministers who continue to support worship, especially Rev Arthur Poole and Rev Alan Matthews.
- I also wish to acknowledge the wonderful support given to our Ministry team and the congregation by our dedicated and talented office secretary, Jacqui Harris.

Finally, I want to express my thanks to Karin Jooste, who is again undertaking the key role of Minute Taker. We are all most grateful, Karin!

I look forward to continuing to accompany you on our shared, sometimes challenging, but always love-infused, Christian journey of witness.