

Brunswick Uniting Church

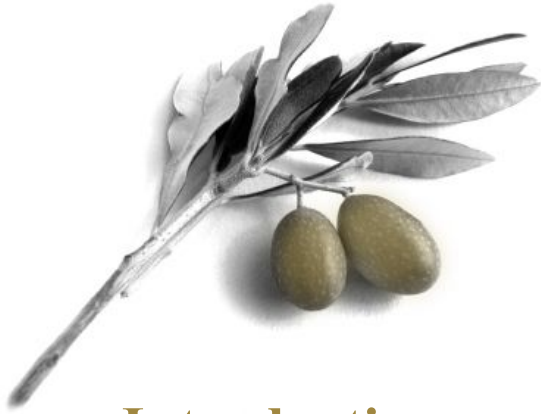


HOSPITALITY
COMPASSION
COMMUNITY



**a threefold vision
for Pastoral Care at BUC**

July 2014



BUC July 2014



Hospitality
Compassion
Community

Introduction

Over the past 6 months the Pastoral Care Committee has been working on a review of our Pastoral Care ministry and structures. This has included a series of seminars and planning sessions facilitated by Alan Niven, the professor of Pastoral Theology at Stirling College. This report offers a renewed vision for Pastoral Care at BUC with three emphases: hospitality, compassion and community. Please read and reflect on its contents – we value your feedback. The report will be formally launched at worship on Sunday August 24th, followed by lunch at which there will be opportunity for discussion and questions.



The Vision

- 1. Ministry of Hospitality –**
pastoral care through the entry stage
 - 2. Ministry of Compassion –**
pastoral care through crisis
 - 3. Sustaining and Building Community –**
pastoral care in congregational life
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1. Ministry of Hospitality – pastoral care through the entry stage

*Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.
(Romans 15:7)*

Focus

- *offering hospitality*
- *nurturing a culture of welcome for visitors and those who are wondering about joining our community*
- *providing connection points and pathways to belonging*

What?

- *Discern and appoint “Ministers of Hospitality” (in addition to Sunday morning welcomers) who engage with newcomers on Sunday morning and undertake to journey with those who want to connect with the congregation in an ongoing way over a period of up to 2 years.*

How?

- *Build relationship*
- *Introduce to others.*
- *Expose to the opportunities for involvement at BUC.*
- *Softly, softly encourage participation through personal contact, responding to interests, referral.*
- *Be driven by the needs of the newcomer.*



2. Ministry of Compassion – pastoral care through crisis

*“Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.”
(Matthew 25:40)*

Focus

- *responding immediately and in ongoing ways to practical, spiritual and emotional needs and pastoral crises in our community.*



What?

- *Form a Pastoral Needs Team that “triages” needs as they arise to discern the level of assistance needed and responds as necessary. In place of the existing “Networkers” recruit “Visitors” who connect over time with individuals and families in need.*

How?

- *The Pastoral Needs Team oversees the visitors, the foodbank, a roster of drivers, prayer chain etc. Responses may include: visiting, contacting, providing a listening ear, prayer, sending cards, food, driving, shopping, childcare, translating, referral (internal and external).*





3. Sustaining and Building Community – pastoral care in congregational life

*Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people.
(Acts 2:46-47)*

Focus

- *providing connection points for the whole congregation*
- *building community and developing relationships*
- *growing faith*
- *responding to interests and needs*

What?

- *Nurturing and encouraging opportunities for pastoral interactions and growth in relationship and community through new and existing groups and programs.*

How?

- *Keep an overview of the group life of the congregation and review regularly*
- *Survey the pastoral needs of the congregation*
- *Initiate new groups, programs or seminars to respond to particular needs in liaison with other relevant committees (e.g. D&E, JAM, Worship)*





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Pastoral Care – theological reflections

Pastoral Care is the activity of the Holy Spirit in the church to continue the saving work of the Good Shepherd. Pastoral Care is:

*the extension of Jesus Christ's hospitality,
the living out of his compassion,
the building up of his community.*

Hospitality

Jesus calls, invites, welcomes and includes us through Baptism and Holy Communion into the life of God and the community of God's people. In return he looks for our welcome of him into our lives and our world. In welcoming outsiders, Jesus embodies the prophetic cry of Moses:

For the Lord your God ... loves the strangers, providing them food and clothing. You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt (Deuteronomy 10:17-19).

In seeking our welcome Jesus identifies himself with the one in need of hospitality:

"I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me..." (Matthew 25:35).

Pastoral Care is welcoming others just as we are welcomed by God in Christ.

Compassion

Jesus saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things (Mark 6:34).

Compassion is the expression of God's saving love for the world. Out of compassion, Jesus teaches, heals, comforts, forgives, confronts evil, births a new family of God's people, and ultimately suffers death on the cross. Pastoral Care is this self giving love in action.

Community

Jesus said, "Follow me and I will make you fish for people." And immediately the fishermen left their nets and followed him (Mark 1:17-18).

The first act of Jesus' ministry is to call disciples, to gather a community around himself. The church is that same community, that family extended to the ends of the earth. The Acts of the Apostles shows us a church community dedicated to worship and prayer, table fellowship, shared possessions, and the care of the needy among them. Pastoral Care is the nurture of such a community.



Pastoral Care – practical notes

From the sessions led for us by Alan Niven.

Hospitality

A pastoral carer takes the role of a host offering hospitality, but also the role of a guest asking permission to enter the space and life of another.



Community

A pastorally sensitive community:

- *provides safe places to explore, question, doubt*
- *provides a theology of journey rather than arrival*
- *provides resources for the dark places of pain*
- *provides models of alternative theological understandings*
- *provides models of honest Christian life*
- *provides room for emotions and intuitions.*

Compassion

Seven Pastoral Care Principles: healing, guiding, sustaining, reconciling, nurturing, empowering and advocacy.

Where in our congregation's life do these things already happen and how can we enhance them? Where else can we make them happen?

The World Health Organisation gives the following practical definition of the compassionate care shown in Pastoral ministry:

Pastoral Care is predominantly a 'ministry of presence and support' through:

- *establishing of relationship*
- *engagement with another*
- *hearing the story*
- *enabling of pastoral conversation in which spiritual wellbeing and healing may be nurtured*
- *companioning, supporting persons confronted with profound human issues of meaning and aloneness, death and dying, loss.*



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People and Programs

Our current model of Pastoral Care is under strain. At the moment, all our resources are directed into “People Centred Care” with a focus on one on one connections. Each member of the congregation is matched with a “networker” who keeps in contact with that person or family and supports them in times of need. However numbers, geography and the availability of volunteers put pressure on this model – people can fall through the cracks. And it doesn’t necessarily take account of, celebrate and enhance the numerous other places in the life of the congregation where pastoral care happens informally and organically.

Another model of organising pastoral care is “Program Centred Care”. While certainly not doing away with one on one connections (so basic to expressing a ‘ministry of presence’), this model takes a more systemic approach. It considers all aspects of the congregation’s life, and nurtures opportunities for hospitality, compassion and community building through existing relationships, groups and committees, as well as new programs.

The threefold vision outlined here rethinks the way we do our People Centred Care and develops this further into an intentional focus on Program Centred Care. If we want to continue to grow in numbers and serve all the people we would like to reach, perhaps beyond the size where it is possible to know everyone in the congregation, we will need a Pastoral Care ministry that can adapt and cope. We believe this vision has that capacity.





Strategy and Administration

Through our work with Alan Niven, we affirmed the importance of good administration for an effective Pastoral Care ministry – particularly in a congregation of our size or larger. We wish to ensure that each person is equally and carefully valued. This vision will require the following.

Oversight, Reporting and Supervision

The Pastoral Care Committee (which reports to the Church Council) oversees the ministries in the areas of Hospitality, Compassion and Community. It organises supervision and training, resources and review for those “on the front line.”

Recruiting and Training

Recruit through discernment and conversation volunteers for the Pastoral Care Committee, the Pastoral Needs Team, Hospitality Ministers and Visitors. Safe Church processes need to be followed. Resource volunteers for their roles, with appropriate training and support.

Communications

In liaison with the Communications Team, put information sharing processes in place to assist welcoming, and so that needs and issues are directed promptly to the relevant people. Carefully observe the requirements of confidentiality and ensure that ‘referral’ guidelines are clearly understood.

Consultation and Research

Consult with the members of the congregation regarding particular needs and interests. Visit, explore and, as appropriate, draw on programs and resources used successfully in other places.

Education

Educate the congregation about the new structures and encourage their use.

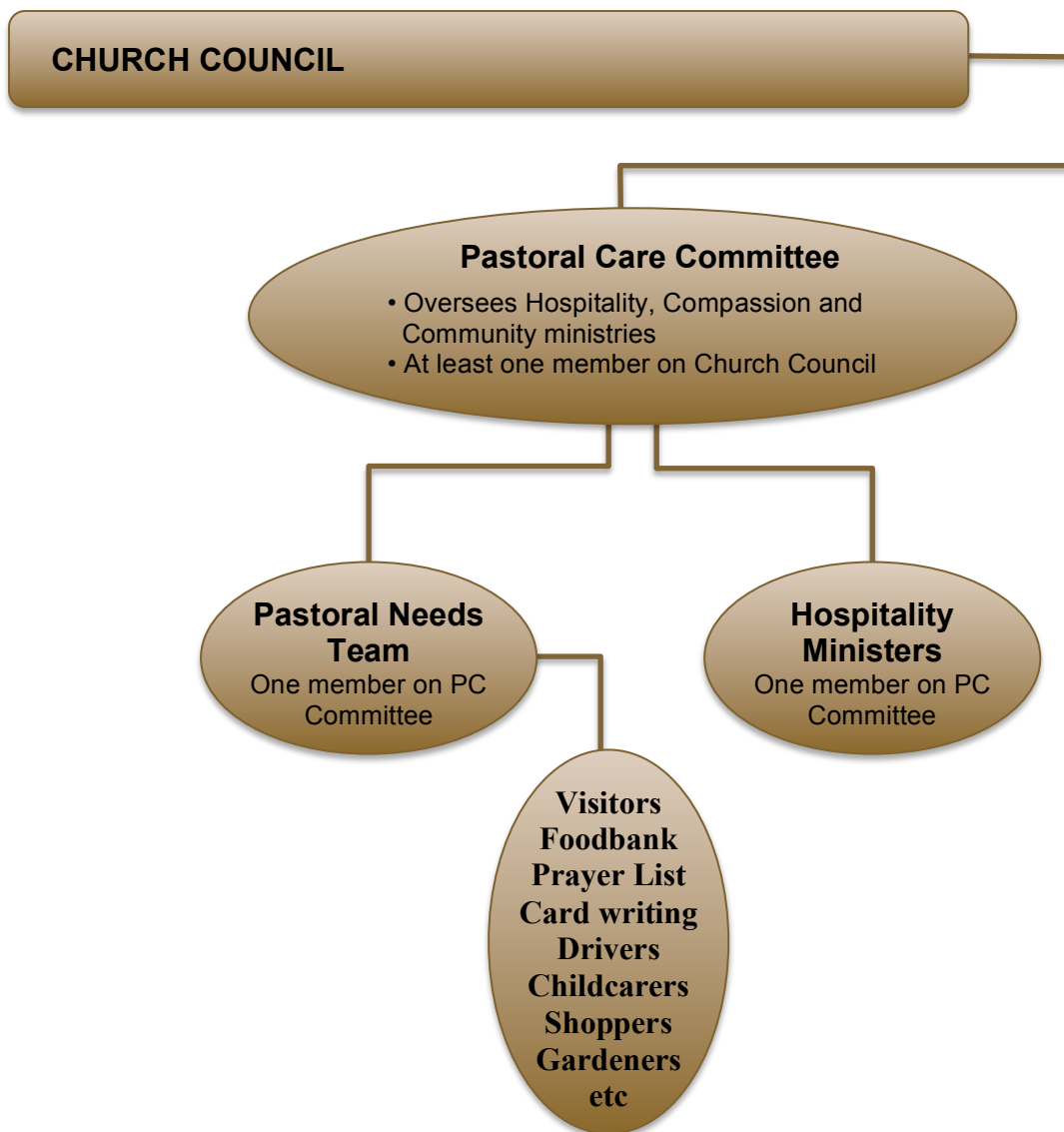
Other Committees

Liaise as necessary with other committees as they all have clear pastoral influence and input e.g. Discipleship and Education and JAM re existing and new groups; Worship Committee re newcomers to worship and welcoming ceremonies; Communications re information flow; Church Council re calendar management.





Administrative Structure





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Next Steps

August

- Circulate the report

Sunday August 24th

- Formally launch the report

Late August through September

- beginning with lunch on August 24th Consult, discuss, receive feedback and edit as necessary.

Tuesday October 14th

- Adopt vision – Church Council meeting

October and beyond

- Implement vision – Pastoral Care Committee (with support from Alan Niven).
- Recruit volunteers – Assets Based Community Development process with the Justice and Mission Committee

Feedback

Please send any feedback, comments or questions to the Pastoral Care Committee via iferguson@icloud.com and leannesalau@hotmail.com