

# The 2020-21 Olive Harvest

Annual Reports  
Brunswick  
Uniting Church



Just like these olives each report is unique, contributing its own tantalizing flavour to our 2020-21 story.

Annual General Meeting - Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> June 2021

# The Olive Harvest – 2020-21 Annual Reports of the Brunswick Uniting Church congregation.

The reports in this document give a detailed picture of the ministry, mission and life  
of the Brunswick Uniting Church congregation for the year 2020-21.

The reporting timeline was extended to April 2021.

The Annual General Meeting of the congregation will be held after worship  
on **Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> June 2021**.

The meeting will be chaired by Kate Scull (Chair of the Congregation).  
Minutes will be taken by Saide Cameron (Secretary of the Congregation)

Please take the time to read the reports prior to the meeting  
where they will be formally received by the congregation.

The first three reports are from our **Ministry Team** followed by  
the **Church Council** and task groups for which they have specific oversight.

Reports from the **main committees** are similarly followed by  
committees or programs for which they have oversight.

**Social gatherings** and the **Financial Reports** round off this amazing collection

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# Minister of the Word

## **What a year!**

I was walking along the beach in Newcastle NSW while on holiday visiting family when the call came. Would I be willing to ask BUC to release me for 3 months to do emergency supply ministry in East Gippsland? My very first response was relief – here was something I could do to help in the ongoing fire cataclysm. Before that call I was feeling a powerless sense of wanting to respond but not knowing how or where or to whom. Many phone calls and weeks of planning followed, involving many of our leaders, before I found myself in Bairnsdale.

For 6 weeks I travelled widely through the region, visiting and supporting ministers and congregations. I loved the country life and the easy access to the bush. The people were very friendly, supportive and grateful for my presence. Then came the pandemic. The next 6 weeks were mostly spent at home in the Bairnsdale manse. There I learnt to use ZOOM, gave my phone a constant workout, and began exploring what ministry under lockdown might look like. The Bairnsdale worship team made the same decision as the Brunswick one, they would experiment with pre-recorded worship supported by letterbox drops and phone calls for those who didn't have access to the internet. We cooperated with congregations and ministers from other parts of the Gippsland presbytery – they wrote the liturgy each week and we made a video of it which was then viewed throughout the Presbytery. I learnt a lot working with the Bairnsdale worship team, learnings which I brought back to Brunswick with me.

## **Worship**

A little story that expresses a lot about worship in 2020: I save all my worship materials, orders of service, reflections, and any media (photos, videos, presentations) in a new folder each year. My 2019 folder contains 3 GB of data. My 2020 folder contains 360 GB. 2020 was the year of the video!

I enjoyed the creative challenge of online worship, something that could only be done with the collaboration of a large group of people. After 20 years of ministry working one way, it was hard to adjust to a different weekly pattern – my reflection had to be prepared by Thursday rather than Sunday! I loved having so many people recording themselves to participate in worship – it gave a great sense of unity in a time of separation.

The transition back to in person worship was long and demanding with a lot of extra work involved in COVID compliance. Again, it was a collaborative process and I felt well supported.

I am very grateful for the work done by the worship committee in my absence with the support of Valentina Satvedi. I was able to slot back in on my return with only minor adjustments needing to be made!

## **Ministry Team**

A primary source of support as always were the other members of the Ministry Team. We all had extra demands upon us at work and at home during the pandemic, and there were significant pastoral matters within as well as beyond the team. I believe we coped well with our pressures and stresses and health difficulties, continuing to work closely in our isolation as we explored new ways of ministering. I am proud of what we achieved as a team together and in our different areas during this most challenging time.

## **Pastoral Care**

I am in awe of the work done by our Pastoral Care leaders in my absence and of the way the members of the congregation stepped up to support one another. As our pastoral care review demonstrated, our structures of care were robust and flexible enough to adapt to the demands of the pandemic. We learnt a lot to carry forward into the future.

I felt for those who lost loved ones during the pandemic with the extra strain the restrictions imposed. I led four funerals in Bairnsdale and was involved in a few more back in Brunswick.

## **Discipleship and Education**

There were several online bible study and theological reflection sessions during the year which were well attended, but my favourite time was the Sunday morning ZOOM catchup. It was a great place for me to connect with many of our members, and to discuss the themes of the service each week. The conversations went deep, and I am interested to see how we can find a way to continue them now that we are back in person. I also led an online bible study group for our Persian speaking members.

## **Wider Church**

A greater proportion of the year than usual was spent responding to the needs of the wider church in 2020. Part of my calling to Brunswick is serving the wider church, and my time in Bairnsdale was all about that. I am very grateful to BUC for releasing me to do this important work. If we had known there was a pandemic coming, we might have had second thoughts. And I am sorry that I couldn't be there with my home community when it hit. That being said, I was confident that the congregation was held in good hands during my absence.

## **Continuing Education and Self Care**

Holidays were in short supply during 2020 and when they did come, I wasn't able to travel further than 5 kms. I got some good COVID gardening done and took and edited lots of photos – very good relaxation for me. My regular dance group was unable to meet, but we kept in touch online. I did a weekly exercise class on ZOOM and a dance class led by teachers in Tel Aviv, Israel!

The support of the wider church was vital in helping me to navigate the COVID world and I kept across various online forums.

It was a real blessing that Beth was able to come and isolate with me in Bairnsdale once the pandemic hit and she was working from home.

Like most people, I found the lockdowns very challenging, and by the end was feeling depleted, anxious and agoraphobic. This made the return to in person ministry challenging, but I feel I negotiated it well with support, supervision and well timed breaks.

## **Thanks**

Thank you to all who have helped and supported me in my ministry in this momentous year. In particular, thanks to the Ministry Team, Dave and Peter, and Valentina and Yoo Mi who filled in for me while I was away; to Helen and James for their leadership of the Church Council; to Saide for her work as Congregational Secretary and invaluable administrative support especially in making our worship videos; to Gwen for our weekly Pastoral Care chats and to all the other Pastoral Care leaders and volunteers; to Roslyn my personal ministry supervisor and Jenni our team supervisor; to Church Counsellors, committee conveners and members, property booking and maintenance folk, liturgists, music co-ordinators and musicians, worship participants.

And thank you to the God of Jesus Christ who unites us in love through the Holy Spirit even when we are separated from one another.

**Ian Ferguson**

## **Olive Way Outreach Ministry**

Like most places and most committees and sub-committees at BUC Olive Way's 2020 was a challenging and disruptive year.

### **Early beginnings of 2020**

Whilst COVID seemed a far-off news event to us at the beginning of 2020, we embarked on our new year with gusto. To be honest, it's hard to recall all the plans we had in place with all that happened subsequently. However, we bid farewell in March to Melody, our long-term volunteer as she moved down to start a new life with her daughter in Geelong. Melody is missed by all of us as she was great with our Olive Way participants, with a great sense of humour.

Our remaining volunteers were Bev Evans, Julie Perrin, Hannah (in the kitchen on Wednesdays), Sergio, Val Remedios, and Helen Burnham. We were also supported by Dom, who assisted Peter and Hannah in the kitchen and has now ventured off to start his own business in Moonee Ponds. Our little team of volunteers has been consistent and reliable, staying with us even through the lockdowns, I am ever grateful for their contributions.

It was around March when the news from a distant land seemed to draw ever closer to us and COVID infections started to appear in Australia. Part of me was convinced that it would (in the words of a former US president) 'magically disappear', but the warnings became increasingly dire and difficult to ignore (as well you will be aware). On Wednesday the 25th of March I gathered our volunteers in the kitchen and asked them if they wished to continue, given the increasing threat of COVID. Every one of those present

said they wanted to continue, so we resolved to find a way to stay open with COVID safe protocols in place. The next day, Thursday, and with more and more places shutting down, we were inundated with over 70 people through our doors, meaning the COVID safe protocols were impossible to manage. However, we resolved to continue as long as we possibly could. But by the next week it became increasingly clear that it was not going to be possible, and so the difficult decision was made to close Olive Way until it would be safe to open it again.

## **Navigating COVID19**

Our first week of the first lockdown was spent figuring out how to use Zoom, attending many Zoom meetings, and working out how we would respond to what we were facing. So, to cut a long story short, we boiled down the essence of Olive Way to focus in on what we do best. Although we do offer food, we decided to leave that to the places that were best equipped to provide food. Even though we had capacity to provide food, we thought it best to reduce the number of contact points for collecting food and work with other places that were better equipped to distribute it. Our biggest concern was for the homeless folk who were increasingly unable to prepare food, and who rely on places like Olive Way to eat. So a rough strategy was devised:

### **1) Working with partner organisations:**

This meant that we would find opportunities to work in agreed ways with other local community organisations. Given the high overlap of clientele, Brunswick Salvos were chief partners. We agreed that given we would not be spending any of our food budget, we would support them financially to assist in distributing meals. This meant that they were able to provide meals for an extra day. Peter Murphy was also seconded to them to help cook meals (up until the second lockdown). Additionally we worked with Jesuit Social Services (Ecological Justice Hub), who were providing weekly veggie boxes to us from their community garden prior to the lockdowns. During lockdown they were given funding to provide vegetarian meals for people in quarantine or experiencing hardship due to the lockdowns. Although we had a minor role in this, we were responsible for helping them gather names of people to support and liaise with them.

Similarly, we worked with the City of Moreland on a couple of areas and were given funding from the Inner North Community grant to help support people experiencing hardship as a result of the lockdowns. We sought grant funding to help homeless and vulnerable people access phone and internet services (more on this below).

### **2) Maintaining pastoral contact:**

Pastoral contact, we decided, would be where we could focus our energies. This meant phoning, visiting (when possible), and attending the meal distributions at Brunswick Salvos (permits were required for the second lockdown). Although it was patchy we were able to stay in touch with our Olive Way guests and check in with them to see how they were doing, and what (if any) support they needed, as well as providing updates (when we had them). It always surprised me how resilient they were.

## **Painting the Olive Way**

One advantage of not having anyone using the dedicated Olive Way space was that we would be able to do any maintenance work required without disrupting the usual routine. As there was no routine to be disrupted we took advantage of that fact to have it painted. Kirsty Bennett and Amelia Ware suggested a brilliant and bold colour scheme that compliments and blends in with the existing building and highlights certain features. The work was undertaken by Laurie Bonney, who did a magnificent job. We look forward to returning to the space.

## **Mobile Phones**

Early on in the lockdowns I grew quite concerned about the number of people we were in contact with through Olive Way who would not be able to access services or to be able to reach out to others when they were in need. And whilst community centres and other outreach places were shutting down their premises I became concerned that the homeless and vulnerable would fall through the gaps. Many of the homeless folk we knew in Olive Way had no mobile devices or means of accessing the internet. It was around this time that we heard of a community grant being offered by the Inner North Community Foundation. Claire Foley applied and received a grant of \$1500 to help us bridge this gap. We appealed to our networks (including many from BUC) for old but working mobile phones and worked with Better Life Mobile to help get some of these homeless and vulnerable folk connected. This meant that the various service providers could contact them when needed. It also meant I would be able to call them

and have pastoral conversations if that was needed. We were able to support around 20 people through this project, which included some homeless people staying in hotels in the city that were referred on to us by the Salvation Army in the city.

### **Restarting OW**

Navigating the various COVID protocols has been challenging when it comes to reopening and running Olive Way after restrictions. Whilst attempts were made to restart Olive Way in the middle of 2020 when restrictions eased, we only managed to reopen for a trial run at the end of the year. A trial opening was held on 16th of December. We have significantly changed our format, including what is offered for food. This has meant a move away from the traditional fare of toasted sandwiches to fresh sandwiches with fruit and vegetable items. We are temporarily serving these in compostable take away containers so that people have the option of eating them at home or off-site and to reduce the amount of washing whilst volunteer numbers are low.

Volunteer numbers will be the key in whether or not we can move back to Olive Way and when we are able to return to reusable plates, etc. This will take some time.

### **Christmas 2020**

After a pretty tough year we thought that a nice way to end off 2020 would be to celebrate Christmas together. We discussed this with Brunswick Salvos and they had had similar thoughts. Their idea was to run a week long Christmas celebration, incorporating their traditional brass band, and cuisines from different regions. We offered to host one of the days (Tues 22nd Dec) with a Persian feast. We were supported by the wonderful Reza and Nadia who worked hard and tirelessly to put together a beautiful meal of Persian rice, chicken and beef shish-kebab, with salad. We felt that it would be important to offer a place for people to sit and enjoy their meals rather than needing eat quickly at a doorway. Initially we had hoped to use the back yard of the church, but when the weather turned we decided to use the hall, carefully laying it out to enable social distancing, whilst also staggering the entry so we wouldn't be overwhelmed with people. On the whole it was a pretty successful day. We are grateful to Reza and Nadia as well as Peter Murphy for his help in cooking this wonderful meal.

### **A new pathway**

Overall, I have been amazed at the resilience of the Olive Way participants. None of them have said that the lockdowns were easy or that they enjoyed them. However, they have all responded in ways that have surprised me. To be honest, I expected the worst, half expecting stresses in mental health and other crises. This has simply not eventuated to the extent I imagined. They have shown themselves to be a tough and stoic lot, rolling with the punches of lockdown. I hope to find ways to continue to build upon that in the year ahead.

Similarly, working with the Salvos and the Ecological Justice Hub has bolstered the links between us. These will similarly need to be maintained and strengthened in the coming year as we continue to explore possible ways to work together on things and live as the body of Christ in the community.

### **The Steering Committee**

Olive Way continues to be guided by the wisdom of the Steering Committee. The current committee is made up of Richard Arnold (chair), Kirsty Bennett, Ann Soo, and Mike Dennison. This little group of people were instrumental in helping navigate a pathway through COVID and to ensure that we kept true to who we are in Olive Way.

**Peter Blair, Olive Way Pastor and the Olive Way Steering Committee**

## **Children, Youth & Young Adult Pastor**

Hi BUC folks,

I'm enjoying a slow read through Mark's Gospel at the moment, and pondering how best to report on 2020... Mark gives us little glimpses of the reign of Christ – of God's in-breaking, disruptive love.

So, this report reflects a bit on what I've learnt about God's in-breaking love in 2020. I'll do it through vignettes, little glimpses...

- The Year 7 boy who was always waiting patiently on the zoom link for Chris or me to start YUCY every Saturday night during lockdown;

- The delight of being able to provide a safe, secure and hospitable community for a tertiary student who really needed it;
- The Year 5 girl who, without any previous contact with BUC, tuned in to our Youtube services and began to ask her dad: “What do you think Hoth will predict here?”
- The chance for the ministry team to all order our favourite lunch at Acustico once again: “3 x Tri-Colour salads, please”;
- Being able to listen to Ian’s sermons, being fed by the Word (and watch them again if I wanted);
- One of the Students hosting us for Christmas dinner at the Japanese restaurant he works at – he’s sous chef now.
- Imagining what Clara would say in certain situations, then seeing the way she actually expressed it (for Children’s Time on Youtube);
- Walking across Ransford Oval with 20 YUCY kids on a balmy December night, with the sun setting;
- The patience of Caitlin Mullen as we filmed some of the Christmas Pageant on zoom;
- Greta, Rowan and Anya’s out-takes (for the Pageant)
- Laurie Bonney, our Property maintenance man, who reminds me a lot of my Papa;
- the creativity and faithfulness of the Worship Committee and musicians;
- Elaine Potter’s talent with “Goin’ to Bethlehem”;
- Icicle Tricycle deliveries, just when we needed them;
- Helen Rowe’s words of assurance when I was in hospital;
- The spirit of generosity and hospitality at the heart of BUC;
- Holidays, bodysurfing, playing cricket with my eldest son, and the chance to hang out with family and friends
- The life of Jesus, the Nazarene, this obscure person from a distant age and land who continues to inspire me in the adventure of faith.

Grace and peace

**Dave Hall, Children, Youth & Young Adult Pastor**

## Church Council

### THE VIBE

.... Is that it was a most challenging year. A year we will always remember as a challenge.

The new year saw devastating fires overwhelming much of the country. While on leave in January 2020, we all grieved for our world. Our first decision for 2020 was to agree to release Rev Ian to the congregation of Bairnsdale to support them for three months.

.... And then came COVID-19 and our first lockdown.

Ian is welcomed back to Brunswick.

.... Then lockdown two and (at the time of writing) lockdown three.

Council formed a COVID Response Group and oversaw the pausing of many groups. We also supported groups that wished to continue.

### IMPORTANTLY

**Worship continued every Sunday**; with an extraordinary team of contributors. It came in various forms: live streamed; pre-recorded; limited numbers at the church, with careful planning for Covid-safety for all; and other combinations showing BUC’s ability to be agile and to pivot (and to even learn a new vocabulary).

**Olive Way adapted**; finding different ways to connect and support their regular community. The collaboration of Olive Way with the Salvation Army to provide food and social connection was one of the true missional achievements of 2020.

Remarkably we also delighted in the emergence of new groups – all meeting by Zoom.

- Tim Budge’s Nudge Group
- Walking Together (with First Nations Peoples) Discipleship and Education Group
- Second Wednesday of the Month Book Club



- Parents of SMP kids' casual catch up group
- Knit & Natter catch up group

And an expansion of some other groups:

Pastoral Care became a bigger, organic, expanding, caring and loving explosion of people wanting to: cook; make phone calls; walk with others; drive others; write cards; co-ordinate people to assist with all the requests and offers of assistance.

Pastoral Care continued to show us all that the way we pastorally care for others is shared by each and every one of us...it is not for the 'Pastoral Care Team' to do the work, but for them to create an awareness of how others could pitch in to help.

Olive Arts initiated zoom sessions showcasing artist's works.

All groups had to adapt; and they did.

My personal *vibe* is one of utmost gratitude for what BUC achieved during Covid. It is also that I want to encourage everyone who reads this Report to celebrate the amazing church that we were before Covid; and what we became during Covid; and to dream and become involved in what we want BUC to be in our COVIDnormal world.

## THE HEADLINES

Reflecting on the main events overseen by Church Council from January 2020 through to March 2021

**January** – Agreement to release Ian for 3 months to support the Bairnsdale congregation following the devastating bushfires

**March** – Extraordinary Church Council Meeting held to discuss the COVID19 virus

**May** – Climate Action Plan adopted and forwarded to Congregation for their response, Ian welcomed back

**June** – I note, with great sadness, that our main agenda item for Church Council was a '*Coming out of COVID*' discussion (clearly we had no idea of what the next six months held!) A COVID Response Reference Group was formed

**September** – Agreed to host, in partnership with Love Makes A Way, a self-funded anti-racism training program; in conjunction with JAM, we sent letters of support for the UCA Assembly's "Build Back Better" document to various members of Parliament; and letters to neighbouring Uniting Churches re Climate Change Action

**October** – Decision to permanently move the AGM to later in the calendar year

**November** – planning started for re-opening. We express our sincere gratitude to the leaders and committees who have helped sustain engagement and shared connection within the BUC community during the challenging period of COVID lockdown

**December** – Thank you letter sent to Brunswick Salvation Army expressing our appreciation for their work in providing meals throughout the pandemic, the opportunity to work together and our hopes to continue to work together in support of the community; other letters of thanks sent

**January** – We start trialling live streaming

**April** – We celebrated Easter with many (but not all) members able to come to the church.

## MONEY MATTERS – IT REALLY DOES

Council is continually reviewing our finance goal, which is to maintain a sustainable pattern of income and expenditure. This year was a very volatile one, with a good short term outcome but longer term questions looming. See the Treasurer's report for details.

## THANKS, FAREWELLS AND WELCOMES

Church Council wishes to acknowledge and thank each and every member of BUC congregation, members of committees, extended community, regular visitors and those who have attended only once or twice. A special mention to our Congregation Secretary, the tireless Saide Cameron.

*There is no Brunswick Uniting Church without you all!*

Church Council is supported by, and relies upon, the wisdom and ministry provided by:

- Rev Ian Ferguson;
- Peter Blair; and
- Dave Hall

A big shout out and thanks to:

- Helen Rowe – retired as co-chair of Church Council (but remained on CC)

Church Council for 2020/21 was made up of:

- Gwen Arnold
- James Balsillie - co-chair
- Claire Foley - secretary
- Joel Hallinan
- Karlien Kok
- Jessica Kvensakul – co-chair from 10 March 2021
- Maxine Loynd
- Helen Rowe – co-chair for 2020 to 7 Feb 2021
- Amelia Ware
- Shawn Whelan, Treasurer

We look forward to the coming year – 2021/22 – a new year with new hopes and new challenges.

**Claire Foley, Secretary of Church Council**

[foleyclairep@icloud.com](mailto:foleyclairep@icloud.com), April 2021

## Culture of Safety

BUC is committed to the safety of all people involved in the activities of BUC including children and young people, and adults in our community who may be vulnerable for any reason. Helen Rowe continued as the BUC Culture of Safety Contact Person to keep Church Council and Leaders informed of policy updates and to receive confidential reports of concerns about the safety of children and vulnerable adults. Any concerns are handled confidentially according to a Synod process adopted by Council.

Church Council endorsed the annual review of programs and activities. This list identifies all Appointed Leaders at BUC who are required to hold a Working with Children Check, including roles that have direct contact with children and young people, Elders, Ministry staff and other Committee and key leaders. Records of Working With Children Check cards are maintained locally and on the Synod centralised database. The CY&YA Pastor and Committee actively support compliance with the required child safe policies. In 2020 with the introduction of on-line services and Zoom activities we were careful in the way we presented images of our children and young people. All YouTube recorded events were removed from the public domain three months after they had been aired, commencing from 29 March 2020.

We are committed to listening to children and young people and encouraging their age-appropriate participation in decisions that affect them. We remain diligent and committed to the reason we take child safety seriously – our children are precious.

**Helen Rowe**, (Culture of Safety Contact)

## First Nations Solidarity Group

### Preamble

At the request of the JAM Committee to Church Council, in October 2019 it was resolved:

- 1. That the Council approach and engage with the Wurundjeri – Woiwurrung Tribe (Elders to Elders) in order to develop an intentional relationship with the First Nations peoples.**
- 2. That BUC Council consider undertaking First Nations Cultural Safety and Awareness training.**

Church Council formed a task group, with these resolutions as its goals.

**First meetings: Dec 2019 & Jan 2020**

Jenne Perlstein, Dave Hall, Shawn Whelan, Claire Foley attending. A very clear message was formed that one of our important and first tasks was to deepen our own knowledge of First Nations peoples; and to start examining our White privilege, racism and seeking God’s guidance.

We also reached out to the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation to explore our ideas of learning more deeply; the concept of 'paying the rent'; of Cultural Awareness and Education training and an in-person initial conversation with Elders from Church Council and an Elder from the Wurundjeri.

**..... and then came Covid**

The Wurundjeri Corp asked us not to contact them again until the COVID situation made it safe to do so. Our group suspended our meetings.

**Another group with interest in First Nations began in September 2020**

This group is called the Walking Together (with First Peoples) Discipleship and Education Group. It was formed in response to interest among the congregation following a sermon by Rev Ian Ferguson.

A quick look at these two groups shows their different purpose and aims.

<b>First Nations Solidarity Task Group</b>	<b>Walking Together with First Peoples D&amp;E</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. That the Council approach and engage with the Wurundjeri – Woiwurrung Tribe (Elders to Elders) in order to develop an intentional relationship with the First Nations peoples.</li> <li>b. BUC Council consider undertaking First Nations Cultural Safety and Awareness training.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. To respond to the call of Christ to work for justice, reconciliation, and care of the lands of the First Nations peoples.</li> <li>b. To support BUC council in their goals, as our church elders engage with local elders of the Wurundjeri - Woiwurrung Tribe in walking this path.</li> <li>c. To learn more about First Nations peoples in this land now called Australia.</li> <li>d. To walk beside and listen respectfully to First Nations people’s guidance and wisdom to inform our actions.</li> <li>e. To reflect and learn about our own privilege and our part in all forms of racism (personal, interpersonal, institutional, structural).</li> <li>f. To be engaged in conversations with BUC and wider community, to educate ourselves, BUC and the wider community, and advocate about the rights of First Nations peoples and actions that can be taken.</li> </ul>

**Getting back on track**

In February 2021 we re-convened and put this recommendation to Church Council. This sets out our timeframe and goals for the coming 12 months.

**Recommendation:**

That the First Nations Solidarity Task Group, plus other CC elders who are available, meet with Uncle Bill Nicholson from the Wurundjeri Council of Victoria for relationship building and initial consultation. This would occur on a weekday for two hours between 10am and 4pm. The cost is \$700.

**Rationale:**

Wurundjeri Council have advised Uncle Bill is available for Cultural Awareness Training (up to 25 people, 3 x 2 hour blocks), and/or for consultation with smaller groups by the hour. He prefers to work weekdays between 10am and 4pm. There is a surcharge for out-of-hours bookings.

We believe that a smaller initial consultation will be a better way to establish relationship between our Councils, Elders to Elders and will allow us to talk with him about items including our Climate Action Plan, Walking Together Group, hopes to Pay the Rent, etc.

We anticipate that a full Cultural Awareness Training program for a wider group will be a likely next step. Estimated cost for the Cultural Awareness Training is \$2700, plus any out-of-hours surcharge.

The Cultural Awareness Program includes: Welcome to Country + Wurundjeri Woi wurrung traditional culture (2 hours) (must commence prior to 9:45 am)

1. Wurundjeri Woi wurrung culture (post-colonisation: Coranderk & modern history) (2 hours)
2. A. Ongoing effects of colonisation and racism on health (1hour)  
B. Question & Answer with Uncle Bill (1 hour)

**Timeframe:**

This will be guided by Uncle Bill's availability, but we would hope the initial conversation could take place in the next 4 to 6 weeks.

It took a while (and much work by Dave Hall) to organise this meeting, but eventually...

**On Friday 14 May 2021 some members of Church Council and First Nations Solidarity Task Group met with Uncle Andrew Gardiner (Uncle Bill being no longer available), and had an excellent conversation.**

We feel that, at last, we're on the road to developing a real relationship with the Traditional Custodians we acknowledge each week. Further information will be presented in the regular monthly reports and publications.

Claire Foley, 18 May 2021, [foleyclairep@icloud.com](mailto:foleyclairep@icloud.com)

## Supply Ministry Support Group

The SMSG was formed to prepare for Ian's secondment to Bairnsdale and to support Supply Ministers Valentina Satvedi-Leydon and Yoo Mi Park.

Our first priority was to communicate plans with the congregation. This was achieved through emails and updates on the website, specifically the Meet the Team page which offered profiles for Valentina and Yoo Mi.

Valentina provided 0.5 supply ministry in the areas of worship and discipleship & education working closely with and being supported by the committees. Yoo Mi provided 1-1&1/2 days supply ministry in pastoral care supported by the committee. Both were also encouraged to consult with Meg Orton re setting boundaries and clarifying expectations.

Valentina and Yoo Mi were commissioned for their roles during worship on 16<sup>th</sup> February and became part of the reformed ministry team with Dave Hall and Peter Blair. None of us anticipated the impact of the pandemic on the ministries Valentina and Yoo Mi would offer and we are forever grateful for the gracious way they adapted to the massive changes required.

As we neared the end of the time of supply ministry we met on Zoom to reflect on the three months we had shared. Both expressed their appreciation for the support received from the committees they had worked with and both experienced significant challenges in managing the increased demands and workload resulting from the lockdown

We acknowledged the haste with which these arrangements were put into place and made a recommendation to Council that our Presbytery Representatives consult with the appropriate Presbytery committee to develop a Ministry Transition resource package to support congregations when transitioning to short term supply, interim ministry or new placements.

We celebrated the supply ministry offered during worship on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> May.

**Saide Cameron**

## COVID Reference Group

In March 2020 Church Council held a special Council meeting to discuss a BUC response to the COVID-19 pandemic and to approve the formation of the COVID Reference Group. The Reference Group comprises key leaders of BUC activities, including Rev Ian Ferguson, Pastor Peter Blair, Pastor Dave Hall, James Balsillie (Co chair Church Council), Saide Cameron (Worship Committee and Communications), Amelia Ware (Worship Committee and Church Council), Julie McKinnon (BUC Bookings Officer) and Helen Rowe (2020 Co chair Church Council and Culture of Safety Contact). Synod provided regular updates and templates based on government advice which was used to develop our BUC COVID-19 Response and Recovery Action Plan. Our Plan was updated in accordance with current restrictions and government directives. Regular communication to the wider BUC congregation through the weekly and monthly bulletins has been important, with special announcements when necessary.

All on-site activities at BUC ceased to be offered in-person from March 2020 including Worship services, BUC groups and activities and hirer groups. Zoom meetings were the chosen option for Committees and several new Zoom initiatives were established for activity groups desiring to maintain contact with their participants.

Other reports in this annual collection provide more specific details of COVID responses including children and youth, pastoral care, worship, Olive Arts, Olive Way, various Committees, Persian speakers Bible study, Table Church, Church Council.

In-person morning worship services recommenced on 29 December 2020. By March 2021 some groups and Committees began to meet in-person while others opted to continue meeting on Zoom. The transition to in-person meeting is gradual as issues of room capacity, mask wearing, and personal preference are considered. A highlight of the BUC approach is our conservative, safe and pastoral approach in recognition of those in our community who are vulnerable due to health issues.

Practical tasks completed by the Reference Group included: assessment of room capacity based on floor measurements, posting signage for allowable room capacity, hand hygiene posters, QR Code posters, arranging Permits to Work for the people permitted to be on site between August and October 2020, provision of hand sanitising stations, sign-in desks and disinfectant equipment, roping off seating in the church, marking seats for 1.5 metre distancing, assisting people without smart phones to sign-in electronically, and making verbal announcements about current COVIDSafe practices at the beginning of worship services. The Reference Group supported the Bookings Officer in negotiations with external hire groups. Council approved the COVID-19 Annexure to the Standard Lease Agreement and COVIDSafe guidelines, and cleaning instructions were developed for use with internal and external groups. Welcomer guidelines and a safe approach to serving Holy Communion and morning tea were developed.

The COVID Reference Group continues as a reference point, to process government and Synod advice and to support Committees to implement practical and pastoral responses to issue arising from the pandemic.

We acknowledge with gratitude the commitment and effort by so many people towards maintaining worship, pastoral care, social connection and children's and young people's activities during this challenging period.

**Helen Rowe**

## Worship Committee

We started 2020 with clear goals, hopes and plans all the while knowing that things were going to be a little different for the three months that Ian was ministering to bushfire ravaged communities in East Gippsland. We were glad to be welcoming Valentina Satvedi-Leydon as the supply minister for worship and discipleship & education. We were, of course, totally unprepared for the impact of the COVID19 pandemic and all that it would mean for our community and the worship that we have offered to God in the past 16 months. This report seeks to offer this story in the context of our goals and what we have learnt and hope to take forward. See a more detailed report here:

<https://brunswick.unitingchurch.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Worship-2020-Annual-Report.pdf> .

## **Offer worship every Sunday**

In doing this we committed to paying attention to the liturgical seasons and events beyond our doors. We wanted to ensure that we provided opportunities for questions and doubts to be explored. This part of the report will reflect initially on special services and liturgical themes and then offering worship online and then

### *Services & Liturgical themes*

We began the year with a number of big services in February including the confirmations of Michael Cameron and Bella Taranto (9/2), commissionings, blessings and sendings.

During season of Lent our overall question was 'What is the truth Jesus is calling us to?' We took this question together with the weekly questions into our celebration of Holy Week.

In May we farewelled and thanked Valentina Satvedi Leydon and Yoo Mi Park for the supply ministries they had offered (17/5), welcomed Ian back from his ministry in Bairnsdale (24/5) and on Pentecost Sunday (31/5) participated in the Assembly Wide worship series paying attention to Reconciliation Sunday.

We offered a Season of Creation from 20<sup>th</sup> September to 11<sup>th</sup> October in collaboration with the Climate Action group.

Worship during Advent & Christmas offered an invitation to reflect on God's future, the future we are called to live now shaped by the traditional Advent themes of hope, peace, joy and love. Blue Christmas worship was offered online. Caitlin Mullen-Beagley and Dave Hall worked with our young people to offer Pageant Pandemic - the movie. Christmas Eve was pre-recorded and Christmas Day was offered in-person. We continued then offering in-person services at 9:30am.

Once again we began the year offering blessings and also a farewell to Tom and Valentina Satvedi Leydon (28/2/21).

Lent 2021 offered us the opportunity explore the overarching theme of covenant, God's promise of faithful love with a beautiful rainbow gracing our space and new symbols added each week. We continued to offer explore this theme during Holy Week.

Other special services are remembered as part of a later goal in this report.

### *Online worship*

We began Lent 2020 in person and by the end we had moved to lockdown with worship initially livestreamed (22 & 29/3). As we moved through Lent to Holy Week, the season of Easter and beyond Pentecost Sunday we settled into a rhythm of offering pre-recorded worship online. Initially we recorded some parts of the liturgy in the worship space and some from our homes. As restrictions increased all parts of the liturgy were recorded from in or around our homes. We are grateful to Ray and David Cameron for setting up the use of Wirecast and then Premiere Pro to make this possible, to Saide Cameron for her commitment to communicating with and connecting people, to Ian Ferguson for bringing his particular creative eye to the presentation of service, to the musicians for their many recordings of songs and music, to Chris Magee for his professional quality filming and to everyone who participated and recorded parts of the liturgy.

Our online services were viewed and appreciated by many people far beyond our congregation. Many have remained connected and/or joined us in person. Others remain connected online due to ill health and/or vulnerability.

Weekly online worship was followed by a ZOOM gathering where people were invited to reflect on the themes of the service. This gave good opportunity for connection and deepening of faith during lockdown and was well attended.

### *Returning to onsite worship*

With the announcement of the end of stage 4 restrictions we explored how best to return to worshipping onsite. We began by offering invitation only afternoon services in November and then opening these up to all comers in December.

Following the gradual return to worship onsite we returned as a congregation in January 2021. Recognizing that this was initially only going to be possible for limited numbers we returned to

livestreaming worship using Wirecast. Technical challenges have been worked through over time and we offer our thanks to Ray Cameron for his commitment to documenting the process and training others to operate the live stream/

Trybooking was used initially to manage numbers and social distancing. Sign-in sheets and the QR code were used for recording attendance, we moved to QR code check-in only in May. We continue to ask worshippers to wear masks. We started offering tea & coffee in March and then also food from May.

### **Nurture new liturgists and prayer leaders**

This is an ongoing commitment as we seek to ensure that many voices are heard in our shared worship.

Jim Kilpatrick joined the planning team for Holy Week worship and subsequently joined the worship committee and the roster for Prayers of the People. Helen Burnham has been a member of the worship committee for a number of years and during lockdown joined the liturgist roster.

We have appreciated the offerings of regular liturgists and leaders of prayers of the people throughout lockdown and now back onsite.

Lots of support was provided to enable each of us to develop our online presence including technically. We loved being able to offer worship in different ways and became increasingly creative in how we did this as the months progressed.

### **Include, interact and engage with our young people in worship**

Our plan to address this goal included checking in with what the young people wanted in collaboration with Dave Hall, Children, Youth & Young Adult pastor.

Dave provided strong leadership in response to this goal. We have delighted in the involvement of members of the Student House Program in leading and participating in the Children's Time, offering Bible readings and prayers, participating in music teams and in 2021 joining a variety of rosters.

A significant highlight of online worship during 2020 was Children's Time. We absolutely loved the invitation to engage with the big stories of our faith with Dave and Clara Hall and sometimes Fran, Samuel and Patrick in their home, garden and local park. The Bible readings were shared by many voices, thank you to Dave for coordinating this part of the liturgy. Dave's online meetings with the SMP 3-6 group resulted in them offering predictions about the stories and an abundance of artwork which was shared as part of the service. Thank you especially to Clara for her commitment to this ministry. Thank you to all the young people who created and offered their responses to the stories of our faith. Special mention is made here of the Advent nature wreath prepared by Anya Kvensakul. A photo of the wreath was distributed with the Advent packs.

Later in the year from around October Dave invited other young people and their parents to join him in offering Children's time. We enjoyed hearing from Sam Coath, Oscar Batch and Joel Townsend, Joshua Whitty & Steph Gesling, Harriet and Clementine Loynd with Dave Miller.

### **Explore age specific services during the year**

The Nourish series was the starting point for this offering. Janet Watson Kruse and Dave Hall offered Nourish during Lent in both 2020 (online) and 2021 (in person). These three-part series were well attended by primary-aged children and their families. The 10:30am SMP program offered by Dave Hall was a very positive experience for our young people providing connection during lockdown and a different way to explore the stories of our faith.

The Student House community met weekly on Sunday evenings throughout lockdown for fellowship and discussion. This year they are hosting a Feasting Table for 16-23 year olds on the third Sunday of the month.

Table Church continued to meet online during lockdown sharing a meal and liturgy. The group is currently in recess and waiting to see what emerges now that we are able to meet in person.

### **Ensure that diverse voices and representations are heard and seen during worship**

Our hope in setting this goal was to take notice of who was 'up front' at worship. We wanted to build on our relationship with Olive Way and continue to ensure that our choices of music were gender and culturally diverse.

As noted in the introduction we were glad to welcome Valentina as our supply minister in early 2020. Valentina brought her Anabaptist tradition to her preaching and leadership of worship.

During 2020 we welcomed Geoff Thompson (12/1 & 11/10), Graeme Garrett (19/1), Peter Blair (19/4 & 8/11), Linley Liersch, Presbytery Minister (10/5), Fiona Bottcher (16/8), Dave Hall (27/12) as preachers while Valentina and Ian were on leave during their times of ministry. This year (2021) we have welcomed Narelle Collas, Presbytery minister (10/1), Graeme Garrett (17/1, 25/4), Carlyne Nunn (24/1), Peter Blair (11/4).

#### *Hearing from voices within and beyond our congregation*

Over the past 16 months we have offered worship responding to special events beyond and within the congregation. Through these services we have used prayers and music from a variety of sources, invited and heard from many voices within our congregation and responded to issues of significance in our community.

During 2020 this included Day of Mourning resources from the Assembly for 26<sup>th</sup> January 2020, Refugee Week on 14<sup>th</sup> June, 43<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary of the Uniting Church recalling the three faith traditions that formed with the Uniting Church, responding to the Black Lives Matter movement on 30<sup>th</sup> August, celebrating two significant anniversaries for our congregation on 15<sup>th</sup> November (15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the formation of BUC on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2005 and 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of reopening the worship space on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2010).

In 2020 we showed our respect and honoured the First Nations People on 31<sup>st</sup> January and responded to the bill to ban Gay Conversion therapy on Transfiguration Sunday, 14<sup>th</sup> February.

#### *Involving the community*

One of the truly beautiful things to emerge from worship during lockdown was having so many people offering recorded Bible readings during worship. Every Sunday from Easter Day onwards two people instead of one were listed on the rosters. When we eventually returned to worshipping back in the worship space we continued to have two people rostered for Bible reading and after Easter once again invited people to offer recordings of the readings and also the Acknowledgement of Country.

From September we also invited people to provide recordings of the Acknowledgement of Country and lighting the Christ Candle. We invited the people lighting the Candle to share a story about their candle or the setting of their recording. These stories were posted online and included with the post-worship email. This abundance of people participating in the liturgy helped to connect us to each other while we were apart.

For the Blessing the Animals service on 4<sup>th</sup> October we invited people to provide photos and/or videos of their pets. Ian wove these offerings in place of title slides during the liturgy. Some of the pets featured in the liturgy as well, as we made the most of the possibilities that worshipping online offered.

To help us reflect on seeing the face of God Ian invited us to send in photos of ourselves out and about in our face masks and once again wove them through the liturgy on 18<sup>th</sup> October.

On All Saints Day we prayed for the saints in our own lives and in the wider world. We shared photos of our saints, loved ones no longer with us. Ian lit many candles beautifully arrayed on the Communion Table.

#### **Offer multi-sensory experiences during worship**

During 2019 we offered many opportunities during worship to engage our senses and we had planned to intentionally build on this through 2020. As we moved into lockdown we sought out new ways to engage our senses while worshipping in our homes.

Our musicians were key to this and we are so very grateful to Natalie Sims, Shawn Whelan, Elaine Potter and Alistair Hunter for coordinating and providing recordings of songs and music for worship.

Dave and Clara Hall created life-size silhouettes of the Lenten figures to place initially around the worship space while we were together and then in the Sanctuary to feature during Holy Week worship in 2020. The silhouettes provided a strong visual presence for worship.

During Lent and Holy Week we invited people at home to have greenery and cloths liturgical colours (purple then white) in their recordings and in their homes for worship.



We explored and discussed the tensions around celebrating Holy Communion during restrictions. From May onwards we celebrated with a liturgy of Empty Hands and then Fasting from the Feast liturgy with beautiful imagery used to evoke this. We joyfully celebrated Holy Communion together in the worship space on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2021.

We invited the congregation to create a worship space in their homes each week. An open Bible and candle to light were the common elements. Depending on the theme other items were suggested including flowers, stones, coloured cloths, branches, a bowl of water. Often we were invited to share actions including opening the door to our homes, looking out the window, breathing together, noticing what we could hear, feeling our feet on the ground.

### **Explore daily practices of faith**

This is an interesting goal to reflect on and the one we have spent the least amount of time addressing specifically. During Holy Week 2020 prayers were posted each day to encourage daily prayer practice within our community. It is our hope that during lockdown the worship we have offered and the opportunities to contribute in new and interesting ways has allowed us all to reflect on, engage with and experience our faith differently.

### **Conclusion**

We acknowledge two significant deaths for our congregation - Klaus Fiedler (21/9/20) following a tragic accident and Una Trigg (22/9/20) after a long and fulfilling life.

Mention has to be made here of the Notices segments regularly offered by Matthew and Michael Cameron, as it doesn't really fit anywhere else. Many people commented on how much they enjoyed having notices offered in this way during lockdown. Much family hilarity was enjoyed in producing these segments.

The worship committee (Ian Ferguson, Saide Cameron, Natalie Sims, Kirsty Bennett, Jim Kilpatrick, Helen Burnham, Dave Hall, Jenne Perlstein and Amelia Ware) adapted to the many challenges of meeting by Zoom, planning and preparing for worship in the many forms it has taken over the last 16 months. We have reflected constantly on what we are offering, what is working, what we can do better or differently. We have celebrated the connections made and rejoice in the fully opened worship space. We are eternally grateful to everyone who has contributed to the worship we have offered. We rejoice in the diversity of voices and faces and the willingness of people to join new rosters and learn new skills.

2020-21 has been an experience that we could never have imagined or planned for. As a congregation we have responded and adapted, moving beyond the familiar, beyond our comfort zones as people of faith, pilgrim people, people of the covenant, followers of Jesus. In all that we have done together while we were apart and now as we continue to return we can be confident that we are known, held and blessed by God whose love knows no barriers - ever!

**Saide Cameron**

## **Christian Meditation**

The Christian Meditation Group began 2020 meeting concurrently with the Olive Way at 11 am on Tuesdays. We followed the John Main tradition of meditation and had a small but faithful group of meditators.

When the Olive Way closed due to Covid in March 2020 we had to cease our meditation meetings .

In April 2020 a WhatsApp meditation group was established. Whilst it was not possible for some people to join this group, others joined for the first time. Eventually a group of around 15 signed up and meditation took place for around 30 minutes four days a week. This was especially important for many participants during the Covid lockdown during the winter of 2020, and a real sense of support and community developed.

During 2021, as Covid restrictions have eased, the WhatsApp group has continued to meet, albeit on a less frequent basis. We now meet on Tuesday and Thursday mornings at 8 am and have a regular "attendance" of between 5 and 8 participants.

Anyone interested in joining the WhatsApp group is welcome to contact me at [richarn50@gmail.com](mailto:richarn50@gmail.com)

**Richard Arnold, May 2021**

## Table Church

Table Church meets on a Sunday evening, in different people's homes, usually on the fourth Sunday of Table Church started 2020 in fine spirits. From an email around that time, it looks like we had 14 people at a gathering at the end of January. However, like so many other areas, COVID-19 decided to crash our party/table church gatherings and we stopped for a while. However, around about April, we decided that we were not going to be defeated by anything like a global pandemic. So we went online! Zoom came to the rescue. Especially in those early days, it provided lots of us with a chance to link in with others from the church community and be reminded of all the connections between us.

That pattern of virtual table church continued for most of the year. Technology challenged some of us initially, but TC members are resilient and persistent and we overcame all the challenges that technology threw at us. Numbers varied but there were usually around 6 - 10 folk gathered around our coffee tables, our candles and our soup or similar substitutes. Virtual reality also allowed us to get people involved from across Australia and we had people around the table from Darwin, Aireys Inlet and Apollo Bay. That was nice!

When we could, we even experimented with a few people meeting in person, usually at our place with others connected online. For some of us, table church was one way we could connect with others, when our lives were very restricted and even semi-isolated. However, for others, sometimes Zoom was just too poor a substitute for IRL interactions. For some of us too, after a week of work Zoom, the thought of another Zoom on Sunday was not always appealing, as much as we missed our friends around the table.

When things eased off in November, we all agreed to take a break. There were lots of things happening for Christmas and some of us wanted to focus on getting back out there, particularly when guidance about in-house gatherings was uncertain.

In February 2021, we looked again at Table Church. Some of us struggled with availability, all of us struggled with energy to organise and we were also uncertain of how to structure the new normal table church: online, in homes or a mixture of both? With gratitude for all we have experienced and shared in Table Church we are now having break. We may have one final table dinner/church/gathering in the near future. One day, down the track, this idea of Table Church might burst into regular practice again, so stayed tune, or better still, take it on yourself!

**Tim Budge, on behalf of the BUC TC**

## Pastoral Care Committee

As a church we value welcoming all, caring for each other and nurturing the faith and community of people at Brunswick Uniting Church (BUC). During 2020 and despite all the lockdowns and greatly reduced activity outside the home, the Pastoral Care teams continued offering pastoral care, in slightly different ways, to the individuals who are part of BUC. Pastoral Care comprises four teams of people in the Ministries of Hospitality, Compassion and Community and in the oversight Pastoral Care Committee.

At the beginning of 2020 and with no indication of how the year would change so dramatically, Ian answered a call to spend approximately three months in the Bairnsdale region assisting the Ministry there with the aftermath of the fires. During his time away February-March, BUC was very fortunate and indeed blessed to have the locum pastoral care services of Yoo Mi Park (now a Minister of the Word) and Minister of the Word Valentina Satvedi-Leydon. Expectations and pre-planning for the locum services of Yoo Mi and Valentina had to change with the changing circumstances of the COVID lockdowns and restrictions. They both showed flexibility and the ability to wholeheartedly adapt to changed needs of the congregation and the best way to offer pastoral care. Yoo Mi focussed primarily on the Pastoral Care Compassion Ministry and worked closely with this team, particularly Gwen Arnold, in setting up and initially participating in phone trees for relevant BUC people. We thank Yoo Mi and Valentina for their faithful service during this time.

BUC is generally experienced in pastoral care by all its congregation and 2020 showed that so many people, unasked, kept in touch with others, checking in to see how a BUC person was going, checking to

see if for example, food or an “over the fence” chat would be appreciated, organising daily walks or bike rides together and so on.

### **The Pastoral Care Oversight Committee**

The major goal of the Pastoral Care Committee for 2020 was to conduct a review of BUC’s pastoral care model, something that was well overdue. It may have seemed counter-intuitive to do this in the year of our lockdowns and restrictions. However it turned out to have some distinct advantages, particularly as Zoom was used to easily join into various groups for their feedback, as well as the congregation as a whole and to individuals. Additionally one-on one phone calls and emails were used where required.

The Review team comprised, Rev Ian Ferguson, Gwen Arnold, Jane Allardice and the Rev Dr Anne Mallaby. Anne is a semi-retired lecturer in Pastoral Theology at Whitby College and her tenure on the review team was approved by Church Council. She was a very valuable and experienced member of the review team and we were fortunate to have the benefit of her knowledge, wise counsel and enthusiasm in guiding zoom discussions.

After a period of detailed discussion and planning, zoom sessions were organised and finally a report written of the findings, for general distribution. Very briefly the feedback was very positive for the model of Pastoral Care BUC currently offers. There were also a number of recommendations to improve and update its administration, policies and training, all of which can be found in the report. A revamped Pastoral Care Oversight Committee will be attending to these recommendations in 2021.

Monitoring of the Pastoral Care of the congregation as a whole during 2020 was set up largely by You Mi and the Compassion Team at first and then included Ian on his return in May. The whole congregation then participated in checking in with each other in many different ways. This 2020 year emphasised that people at BUC see that Pastoral Care is a whole of Community responsibility. So a big shout out to you all!

On behalf of Pastoral Care Sheila Calwell continued to write cards to different people in the congregation for celebrating joyous occasions and for offering sympathy and support on the death of family or friends. Thank you Sheila for your constancy and pastoral care in writing these cards for our congregation members.

The people in the three Ministries were intentional and committed about their pastoral care roles with a firm belief that pastoral care is a fundamental aspect of our faith. The Pastoral Care Committee thanks them for their continued commitment to the congregation in this area.

Pastoral care touches all aspects of our life together at BUC and we continue to delight in the rich and varied life of our community of all ages and cultures and in our relationships with each other.

**Jane Allardice**

## **Compassion**

### **Where do we start?**

2020 was a year with many different challenges.

As the year commenced, we were all aware of the bushfires in so many areas of our country and particularly in the East Gippsland/NSW coastal areas where members of our congregation holiday and have friends/relatives.

In March 2020, the PCC team was nervous but pleased as BUC agreed to release Ian for 3 months to minister and pastorally care for those in East Gippsland living amid the trauma of the aftermath of the devastating fires.

We welcomed Yoo Mi (who had just completed her Theology training and was awaiting a placement) as the Pastoral Care Pastor during Ian’s absence. Yoo Mi worked closely with all the areas of Pastoral Care (Hospitality, Community and Compassion) and met with the Pastoral Care Compassion team on a fortnightly basis. Initially this was face to face but after only a couple of weeks everything changed as we all became aware of COVID 19.

As we all faced the uncertainty of COVID 19, and the possible impact on our community, the wonderful members of BUC illustrated how we are all part of the body of Christ, and many responded to our requests and volunteered to support each other by ringing, cooking, shopping, driving, walking alongside, donating, sewing, writing to, praying for, and delivering to, thus ensuring the BUC community was supported as we faced the unknown of pandemic times.

With the lockdowns and restrictions firmly in place the PCC Team of Ian (upon his return), Glenice, Leanne and Gwen zoomed fortnightly to coordinate and review pastoral care compassion needs and organise things such as special treat deliveries (Icicle Tricycle) to Families, student house members, and (home baking) to those living alone. Again, as we planned this we were blessed with the skills and compassion of members who generously supported this initiative.

A significant “cook up” ensured we had plenty of food in the PCC freezer for delivering to families as a special treat or when health or family challenges occurred. We were also pleased to work closely with our CYYA Pastor, Dave Hall, to provide several meals for our Student House members as their part time jobs dried up, and they were isolated from their families.

As we all got used to “seeing” each other virtually (via zoom/ facetime/WhatsApp) we were blessed by those who maintained contact with those not so familiar with technology through phoning, writing and when allowed dropping off groceries etc. Over the fence coffees and chats, and social distance walking also assisted in keeping people connected and feeling part of the community. It was valuable working with our Olive Way Pastor, Peter Blair, to assist some of our members who did not have/ or were challenged with mobile phones.

Then as we “masked up” a request for material and sewers was launched, and we were again blessed by mask makers (100+ sewn) for Olive Way and Salvation Army guests, and some other members of the BUC community.

So much happened during 2020, and together we faced the challenges.

During 2020, amidst all that was occurring, Glenice Cook diligently maintained the Prayer list and ‘prayers’, for those requesting prayer for a variety of reasons. We give thanks for this aspect of Pastoral Care at BUC.

We were also pleased to work alongside Associate Professor Ann Mallaby for several months later in the year, as Pastoral Care at BUC was reviewed

Thank you all for “pitching in” and upholding our wonderful community. We rejoice that the Pastoral Care Review, with its recommendations, will guide us into the future, as we continue the task of ensuring all our community are loved and supported by us all.

**Gwen Arnold**, on behalf of PCC Team – Ian, Glenice, Leanne, Gwen

## Hospitality Ministry

The Hospitality Team consisted of Jane Allardice, Sheila Calwell, Ray Cameron, Ian Ferguson, Graham Lawrence, Michael Rigby and Clare Keogh. In offering hospitality to newcomers in cooperation with our congregation the Hospitality Team is responding to Romans 15:7 Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

The unusual year of 2020 threw up great opportunities and some challenges in our contact with people new to BUC. The focus of the hospitality team in this year was to keep in regular contact with those newly arrived at BUC since November-December 2019 and we did this by phone, email and over the fence chats. It was a great opportunity to have one-on-one conversations and get to know people and their lives more deeply during this time. The challenges arose where we were yet to get contact details for a few, before the first lockdown and not being able to introduce them to others and to the variety of our paused BUC activities.

Due to the brilliant IT team at BUC and all the participants in the Church Services, BUC offered on-line services via YouTube. Many new people watched these services and some made contact with us,

enabling us to keep in touch and then welcome them in person once services started again in the Church buildings in mid to late December 2020.

In 2020 we recorded at least 26 actual encounters with individuals and families visiting our worship for the first time, either on-line or at the beginning and very end of the year in person. This is not an exhaustive list as many who watched our services were from places outside Melbourne and even outside Australia.

In early March 2020 a Welcoming Ceremony was being planned. This Ceremony provides an opportunity for people to claim BUC as their home church. However Victoria went into its first lockdown the week before it was to be held. So this significant event will wait for kinder times.

Our usual bimonthly Hospitality team meetings changed to a weekly Zoom meeting at first, as a way to check in on each other in our isolated bubbles and on the people in our telephone trees. Then as the year progressed, we met fortnightly and then monthly. I thank the Hospitality team members for their ongoing enthusiasm and sense of responsibility for the important role in which they participate.

We look forward to welcoming others in person in 2021 as we are welcomed by God in Christ.

**Jane Allardice**

## Community

The Community Team has not met formally since July 2019 however conversations about various community related events and activities have continued in large part by email.

In 2020 we hosted lunch after the AGM in February and then as we moved into lockdown ensured that a committee was in place to organize what became the first ever virtual camp enjoyed through shared activities, Zoom gatherings, recipes for dinner and a pre-recorded concert. The camp theme was Connecting and the Saturday program on 23<sup>rd</sup> May provided delightful opportunities for doing exactly that. Thank you to Courtney Rohde, Shawn Whelan and Amelia Ware for connecting us so efficiently.

We also offered an invitation for people to participate in virtual Fabulously Fancy Feasts by dressing up, creating a meal at home and zooming in with other guests. A small number of people took up and enjoyed this invitation.

In 2021 we returned to camping in person over the weekend of 23<sup>rd</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> April. Our theme for this camp was Love in Truth & Action. It was definitely good to be back in the familiar restorative surroundings of the Adekate campsite, reflecting on the theme, playing games, bushwalking, eating meals, singing into the night and simply enjoying great company. Thank you to Courtney Rohde, Shawn Whelan, Catherine Drimmel, Leigh Johnson, Dave Hall, Ian Ferguson and Alistair Hunter for a great weekend away. The Community Team is looking forward to reforming and responding to the recommendations from the Pastoral Care 2020 review.

**Saide Cameron**

## Children and Youth Committee

2020 was Dave Hall's first full year in the role as Children, Youth and Young Adult Pastor after joining us in May 2019. Whatever Dave had planned for 2020 I doubt it included a lot of what ended up happening.

Pastoral and emotional care became very important during various lockdowns. The Committee is grateful for the work done here for young people and their families, by Dave, Ian, the Pastoral Care team/s, other parents and the wider church community through phone calls, care packs with ice-cream, craft activities, a lockdown cheer-up concert, etc. BUC parents met online a few times to relate stories of lockdown and find a laugh or two in shared struggles.

2020 was a year of adaptation and flexibility in providing programs for our young people. Many of our regular activities were reimagined to work via Zoom or similar. Children's Time during YouTube church was a particular highlight for many families. It was wonderful to see our young people using their creativity to illustrate Bible stories. I know some children (and grown-ups!) looked forward to watching children's time each week, and felt refreshed through the creativity of our children and youth.

Another highlight was the amazing Christmas pageant (including its extensive bloopers content!). The Committee is very grateful to writer and director Caitlin Mullen-Beagley, Dave (producer and editor) and every person who gave their time, energy and creativity to support the pageant and our young people.

In December we hosted a pizza and games night on the church lawn. It was the first chance for many of our children to see each other in person for many months, and a lovely way to reconnect before summer holidays and the new year. We also managed to host an end-of-year YUCY Youth Group in the park, with pizza, water fight, Werewolves, kicking the footy, and crowning of Astrid Gemmell as our lockdown games champion.

### **Membership and meetings**

Last year's report indicated we would trial Zoom meetings. Safe to say we are expert now, and in 2021 will meet in person and via Zoom.

<b>Stayers</b>	<b>Sadly leaving us</b>	<b>New</b>
Catherine Drimmel	Anita Brown-Major	Joel Hallinan
Chris Emanuel	Tim Winkler	
Dave Hall	Claire Foley	

We are sad to farewell all who left the Committee. We particularly thank Anita for her leadership as Chair. With these departures we are on the lookout for those who can add their skills and interest to our CYA team.

The Committee warmly welcomes Joel as new Chair going into 2021.

### **Youth Group**

Friendship among our youth group was particularly important in 2020, a year when opportunities for time with friends were few. Chris and Dave ran various online games. Kahoot!, Imapuzzle, Skribblo, Escape Rooms, ZoomOut, Werewolves. This important fellowship continues into 2021, with a strong cohort of youth getting back to in-person gatherings. This includes youth from BUC, as well as Fairfield UC, Grace Tree, Brunswick Baptists, and (later in 2021) Fitzroy North Church.

### **Sunday Morning Program**

Our Sunday Morning Program kids provided a lot of the creative artwork that made Children's Time during YouTube church such a success. These young people also joined into an after-church Zoom group each week. The Committee would like to thank Clara Hall for her fantastic contributions in re-telling the big stories on Abraham and Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob, Leah, Rachel, Joseph, Moses, Miriam and Joshua. By his own admission, Dave would have been in a bit of a pickle without Clara as his partner in these videos.

### **Olive Pips**

We offered a couple of playgroups in 2020 – one before lockdown, and a few during lockdown. The kids had a good time sharing favourite stories and doing scavenger hunts – collecting shoes, wooden spoons, pieces of fruit.

Janet Watson-Kruse hosted Nourish – a Godly Play program for kids aged 3 to 11 via Zoom this year. Over three sessions Janet kept children entranced by the story of Jesus at Easter with her amazing story-telling skills – ably assisted by Dave behind the lens.

### **OG**

2020 was a real challenge to engage with what we call the OG (or Older Group, aged 16 to 24, approx). We had a couple of zoom Bible studies, which were good, and delivered some gifts to those knee-deep in VCE exams.

(Spoiler alert: some good news on the OG front for the 2021 report...)

### **Safe Church**

Keeping children, youth and vulnerable adults safe is our number one priority. At BUC we pride ourselves on best practice when it comes to safe church policy and procedures. While we didn't meet in person often in 2020, safety issues can still arise, including online. Thank you in particular to Helen Rowe as our Safe Church Officer, and to all who work to uphold a Safe Church.

## **Review**

The 5-year review of our work was due in 2020. Covid put a halt to that. We are moving to establish the review in 2021.

## **Student House**

Please see separate report from the Student House Committee

**Joel Hallinan** (Chair, CYYA Committee)

## **Student House Committee**

Throughout 2020 we welcomed new residents Bridie Turner, Ralph Eduardo, Robert Sargent, Matilda McClintock, Jungwoo Choi, Ben Hon and Owen Sun into the community.

Other changes to the community included some additions to the committee and departures from the Student House Community. Into the committee we welcomed Kenna Morrison, who is showing to be an extremely valuable member, her insight is greatly appreciated by the committee and the Student House Community. We also farewelled Amanda Lees and Bonita Best from the committee and extend our sincere thanks to them and their contributions to the life of this Student House community.

Sam, Quilan, Charlotte, Bridie (current) and Ralph (current) have been wonderful student committee members over the past 18 months, and a core part of helping ensure the Student House Committee is both more responsive to the needs of the residents and develops leaders in each of the houses. Having student representation on the committee has strengthened its overall effectiveness and helps to better align the work of the committee to the needs of the community.

From the Student House Community, we also farewelled Quilan Goff, Charlotte Pitt, Cecily Xiang, Jean Saker, Jungwoo Choi, Jason Kang, Samantha Scicluna and Hannah Friebel – please keep these wonderful people in your hearts as they continue to embark on their respective new stages of life.

There's no doubt everyone is aware of the type of year 2020 was, and the Student House was not spared from any of the disruption resulting from COVID lockdowns (especially missing the retreat in 2021!). What was extremely heartening however, was the way the residents of both houses looked out for each other and really demonstrated the traits of a strong community during this difficult time.

Over 2020/21 the community continued to maintain:

- Monthly dinners (restrictions permitting)
- Virtual catchups
- A very exciting working bee
- Promotion of key activities in the life of BUC for Student House residents to attend.

The committee extends an abundance of thanks to Dave for the tireless work he put (and continues to put) into the activities, pastoral care, and overall life of this community. He was the driving force behind the continuation of these activities, especially during such an unusual and trying time.

There were also many wonderful connections made between the students living and learning together in the houses, and engagement with Brunswick Uniting more broadly especially during a very disrupted 2020. During the virtual services, students contributed acknowledgements of country, worship music, readings and attended the virtual church camp! The Student House Committee is excited to keep ensuring that residents are involved and embedded in the life of Brunswick uniting going forward and explore new ways of involvement.

Looking ahead to 2021/22, we would like to look at ways we can continue to better nurture this community, especially as life in the houses continues to return to normal. There is so much life and energy among the students in the house and we are all very excited for what the new year will bring. The Committee is also getting ready to welcome new students to fill the remaining vacant rooms and forecast a full house from about mid-year.

We will begin the second half of 2021 with a postponed but never forgotten Student House retreat by the sea, which we are all looking very forward to.

**James Balsillie**

## Justice & Mission Committee

The JAM committee is continually inspired by the work of individuals and groups within and beyond our congregation in working for justice and supporting people in need. Often this work happens as part of the natural rhythm of our congregation's life and other times action is taken in response to newly emerging issues and/or crises. This year the committees that we support faced the challenge of continuing to work within the context of the restrictions and lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our two goals for 2020-21 are:

1. Encourage, enable and support the BUC community in engaging in environmental and social justice issues (both within the congregation and wider community)
2. Provide support to JAM related committees and programs in their endeavours and ongoing function.

The year began with lots of plans including creating a mural for the storage sheds, trialing Olive Way in the main hall, our presence at the Sydney Rd. Street Party, possible FUNdraising activities, participation in rallies and actions. Before too long we found ourselves in the space of needing to support our related committees and programs as they worked to find new ways to offer their particular ministries. There is much to celebrate in how new things emerged through 2020 and into 2021.

The committee was sad to give up our practice of meeting for a meal for our monthly meetings with the transition to meeting on Zoom. We did manage to share a virtual meal a few times through the year and were absolutely delighted to finish the year with a meal hosted by Gwen & Richard in December and our traditional January BBQ hosted by the Camerons at the start of 2021.

In May 2020 we recognized that it would be good to let the congregation know what was happening in various ministries. A mini-series was offering during worship in May featuring Gwen Arnold - Pastoral Care, Ann Soo - Olive Arts, Peter Blair - Olive Way and Linda Wanna - Olive Pesto.

The **Olive Way Steering committee** supported Olive Way Pastor Peter Blair through the changes to the ministry offered by the Olive Way program during 2020 and returning in 2021. See the Olive Way Outreach Ministry Report for all the details.

The **BUC Arts committee** provides support for the Olive Arts Collective and Olive Pesto, liaises with the ArtStop program and receives proposals for projects and programs. We have delighted in celebrating the Olive Arts and Olive Pesto as they navigated the challenges of restrictions, lockdown and re-emergence. See the reports to follow from the committee, Olive Arts and Olive Pesto.

The **Olive Arts Collective** led by Ann Soo, Leanne Salau and Phil Kreveld began 2020 welcoming a wide range of people including many from other community groups that were no longer receiving funding. Eight artworks were contributed to the Art for Heart Exhibition. The program closed its doors on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> March and moved to offering support for artists at home through the provision of art materials and regular phone and email contact. Phil Kreveld provided tutorials by email. In July this ministry took a new form of Olive Arts on Zoom.

The **Olive Pesto group** usually meets on the second Saturday of the month. In response to the lockdown a Facebook group was set up by Linda Wannan gathering 40 members in 2 weeks. Members decided to meet using Zoom to gather and create together twice a week. These gatherings were hosted by Joanne van Ravenswaaij and Ann Soo. Our group was the only one in the Asia-Pacific region to host an online World Wide Knit in Public Day on 13<sup>th</sup> June. The Olive Pesto returned to the Youth Hall with great joy in April 2021.

Our **FUNdraising program** started the year with a BBQ & Pool party hosted by Susan & Wayne Matthews. Money raised at this event was shared between the 'Go paint the sheds' project (\$187.00) and support for Ian's discretionary use during his supply ministry in East Gippsland (\$302.40). All other planned fundraising activities were cancelled with the exception of an online catalogue for the Act for Peace Christmas Bowl Appeal. Our thanks to providers of items for the catalogue and to all who supported it.

Our participation in the **2020 Sydney Road Street Party** was managed by the Climate Action Group. We handed out bookmarks featuring slices of Ann Soo's paintings and an invitation to explore our Earth button page. 'A call for a sustainable Australia' postcards were also handed out featuring addresses to key politicians. Our rainbow offered an invitation to provide a personal commit to climate action. We



invited the Australian Religious Response to Climate Change and Love Makes a Way to participate in our program. Space for scones and art making was offered in the Youth Hall. Sadly, there was no SRSP in 2021. We are looking forward to 2022!

The **Asylum Seeker Welcome Centre** closed its doors to clients and moved to a relief model providing food and support parcels to clients. Donations were provided from a wide range of external donors. The ASWC is gradually returning to regular activities.

The **Food Co-op** reopened to new members at the start 2020. In the face of lockdown a final distribution day for 2020 was held on 21<sup>st</sup> March before going into recess. The committee surveyed members in December 2020 about reopening. The Food Co-op sought the support of the JAM committee to work through a range of operational issues. Saide Cameron met regularly with the committee in March and April 2021 to establish a review 'The story so far - the next chapter' which will take place beginning in May 2021. We acknowledge Helen Rowe's decision to conclude her role as Co-ordinator and thank her for her leadership.

The **Love Makes a Way group** offered 'Phone calls for Freedom' training in May which was positive both as a form of action and community building. The group invited our congregation to participate in Allyship and Anti-racism training. The two sessions were offered in February 2021 and were well attended. We acknowledge Abi and Leanne's strong commitment to peaceful demonstration in support of the men held in detention and celebrate the release of a number of them in January and February 2021. Protests will continue as long as these men remain in detention. We sent a statement to politicians in protest.

The **Climate Action Group** helped develop a timeline for the launch of the Church Council's Climate Action Plan. The launch was somewhat delayed and was formally launched during the Season of Creation series in September 2020. Jamie Thom provided information about actions for inclusion in the weekly Olive Press. The CAG continues to have a support and encouragement role as Church Council oversees the implementation of the Plan.

Our congregation is leading the way on climate actions within the Presbytery and Synod. An article about our work features in the Synod JustAct newsletter. Richard Arnold prepared a response to the Synod's Consultation Paper on Climate Change. The response was passed to Council for approval and submission to Synod. The focus of CAG for much of 2020 was on advocacy with Friends of the Earth which appears to have had a positive impact on State Government policy. The group also took an active role in the Season of Creation worship series. We were encouraged to make a **commitment** to take individual action on climate change. We are delighted that Richard has joined the Synod Climate Action Group and has been speaking to other congregations about Climate Action. We joined the Australian Religious Response to Climate Change organization. We joyfully rung our bell as part the world wide climate action event on 11<sup>th</sup> March. Our actions have also featured on the Zero Carbon Moreland page.

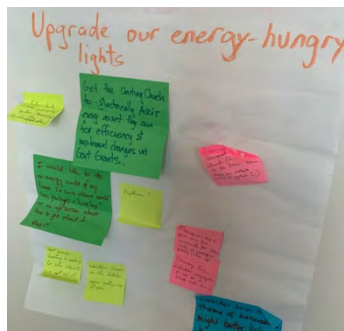
The **Tower Room Window** featured displays for Holy Week, Refugee Week, Graeme Lamming's artwork, Knit for Climate, Advent, Time for a home and more. A trial of a digital display was also installed in the TRW from late November.

We delivered gifts of homemade biscuits to residents of **Stewart Lodge** recognizing that our traditional carols gathering was unable to go ahead.

After a year like no other the JAM committee (Gwen Arnold, Richard Arnold, Abi Benham-Bannon, Kirsty Bennett, Saide Cameron, Leanne Salau and Ann Soo) is amazed at what has been offered and achieved. All our programs continued to function and thrive through uncertainty the many phases of restrictions, lockdown, returning and reopening. We look forward to offering our continued support and always remain open to new ways of being the people of God at work in the world.

**Saide Cameron**

# BUC Climate Action Group



12 January 2020 ideas generated at morning tea after worship



1 March 2020 Sydney road street party ARRCC at least 7 signups



July 2020 Release of the Church Council plan with Church Council agreeing to 100% Green Energy for the church



September/October 2020 The Season of Creation messages

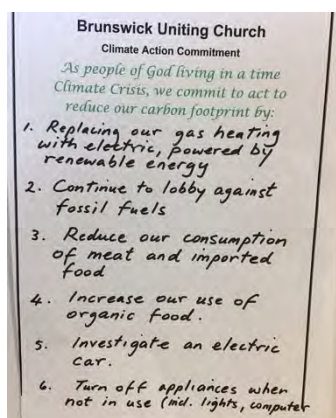
If you are interested in joining the group contact Richard Arnold [richarn50@gmail.com](mailto:richarn50@gmail.com)



24 September 2020 participating in Common Grace Prayer Vigil



25 September 2020 Small scale actions – SS4C



Making your Personal Commitment an on-going campaign



Participating in the Peoples' Climate Action Plan with Friends of the Earth



Ringling the bells with ARRCC/Greenfaith on 11 March 2021



Displaying banners on the church fence and tower



Investigations have begun by the Property Committee to implement the energy consumption goals in our Climate Action Plan



Planning for an Ecotheology learning community (study group) activity

**Jamie Thom**

## BUC Arts

The BUC Arts committee, convened by Ann Soo (creative lead) and Saide Cameron (administrative lead), provides support for the Olive Arts Collective and Olive Pesto, liaises with the ArtStop program and receives proposals for projects and programs. As restrictions and lockdown came into place the committee's main priority was to liaise with leaders of the OAC, Olive Pesto and ArtStop both during lockdown and as we began to emerge.

BUC Arts is also the starting place for our biennial exhibition. The committee invited the OAC to present a proposal for creating a mural for our new storage sheds. 'Go paint the sheds' was presented and approved. Priscilla Manthey and Tonia Beggs were supported to provide programs (Mechanics of the Eye and Freedom through Movement). Unfortunately, these projects and programs were unable to go ahead due to the pandemic. We provided support for the online Household of God project.

The **Arts Access ArtStop program** started offering their NDIS funded program on Tuesday mornings in 2020. This followed extensive trials in 2019 and the development of a new Memorandum of Understanding in December 2019. During lockdown the ArtStop program was offered very effectively to clients using Zoom. The program has returned in 2021 and is now offering a morning and afternoon program on Tuesdays. We celebrate the strength of this program under the leadership of artists Alistair and Emily and volunteer Aaron. Ian Ferguson, Ann Soo and Saide Cameron meet once a term for Arts Access Coordinator Rachel Edward. The relationship with Arts Access and our congregation has been greatly strengthened following the 2018 review.

We have already begun planning for and are looking to the biennial exhibition to be held later 2021 coordinated by Courtney.

We offer our thanks to committee members Leanne Salau, Ian Ferguson, Simone Alesich and new members Courtney Rohde, Bev Evans and Annie Quail. Ann Soo will conclude as the creative lead convenor in 2021. We offer our thanks for her inspiring leadership of this committee since May 2017 and informally of the growing arts community since early 2016.

**Saide Cameron**, BUC ARTS Co-convenor,

## Olive Arts Collective

### **Olive Arts**

The Olive Arts Collective embraces, welcomes and encourages artists, aspiring and accomplished, to come together and express their passion for creativity in many diverse forms.

The venue for companionship and artistic expression is the Youth Hall - a charming, light filled space which provides a warm ambience for all participants to rest, stay a while and create.

Olive Arts re-opened on January 27th, 2021 after 10 months of lockdown due to COVID 19. It was a somewhat uneasy beginning because social distancing restrictions meant that we could only accommodate eight participants (excluding leaders) in the Youth Hall. However, everyone was understanding and aware of the limitations and we were able to accommodate our wonderful artists in a safe environment.

Sanitising the tables, chairs (even the doorknobs) and placing signage on entry and exit doors meant extra work, but we knew what was required and were satisfied that all COVID regulations were met for the safety of all participants. Hand sterilisation upon entry and name and contact numbers entered onto a list were also a requirement upon entry to the Youth Hall. As a continued precaution, this is still a necessity for participant safety.

Olive Arts welcomed back many of the artists from 2019 and it was great to see the art work created by these talented people while in lockdown. Many thanks to Ann Soo and Leanne Salau for providing and delivering packages of art materials during this difficult time. Many of these people had no other access to these necessary art items which helped them stay focused on their artistic pursuits.

Art materials such as various paper grades, sketching pencils, coloured pencils, fine liners, charcoal, watercolour and acrylic paints are stored in the Youth Hall. Recently, pen & nib holders and Drawing Ink were purchased for artists and have been well received. Artist quality watercolour paper was the latest purchase as one of the artists has displayed extraordinary skill in watercolour painting, and with Phil Kreveld's expert advice and tuition she has produced work which is exceptional.

Ann Soo continues to host Zoom meetings on Thursdays. This is an invaluable social connection for all artists who may not be able to attend Olive Arts. Ann's sessions are inspirational and engaging. She brings artists from all genres to peoples homes and therefore provides a most valuable insight into the 'World of Art' for all to appreciate, communicate and interact from their own homes. Thankyou Ann.

At the last BUC Arts meeting, Ian Ferguson expressed a request for art work to be displayed in the Tower Room Window as it has been well received by members of the public. I hope to address this soon. Perhaps need a theme?

The Church Hall recently housed a display of paintings from a local artist who has unfortunately moved from Brunswick and taken her work down. The request for art from our Olive Arts artists to be displayed in the hall has been acknowledged and I hope to set up a semi-permanent display for all to view in the very near future. It would brighten up the space and give pleasure to those who use the hall - the Congregation members and Olive Way patrons too.

An exhibition of Olive Arts creative work is a major goal, and I hope after our next BUC Arts meeting in late April this goal can be realized (perhaps scheduled for later this year).

Last week Olive Arts received a very generous donation of art books. These were very much appreciated by everyone in the Youth Hall that morning and will provide much inspiration and quiet perusal for all, now and in the future. Sincere thankyou to Helen Burnham's friend Bette for her amazing generosity and to Helen for transporting them to Olive Arts.

It is difficult to project the future with COVID still looming. I am wary of inviting more people into the Youth Hall at present. We have reached a satisfactory capacity in the past two weeks and am reluctant to break regulations relating to social distancing, therefore this practice will continue to be implemented.

I wish to acknowledge Graeme Galloway before ending this report.

Graeme came to Olive Arts regularly as a professional artist and was always willing to share his ideas and demonstrate his wonderful painting skills to a very willing audience. Graeme is very much missed by all of us but is enjoying his new location in Castlemaine. Thankyou for sharing your knowledge, skills and wisdom with Olive Arts, Graeme. You are a wonderful mentor.

Sincere gratitude to Leanne Salau, Ann Soo, Phil Kreveld, Saide and Ray Cameron, Abi Benham-Bannon, Ian Ferguson, Peter Blair and Helen Rowe for supporting me in my new role at The BUC Olive Arts Collective.

**Beverly Evans**

### **Olive Arts on Zoom**

Olive Arts on Zoom was a creative weekly response to not being able to meet at our regular venue in 2020. With the cold winter months looming in Stage 4 lockdown, Olive Arts on Zoom was intentional so we could maintain conversation, connection and community as we faced uncertainty. Auspiced by the JAM committee, the weekly Zoom meetings held a space where friends continued to meet and also welcomed visitors from our congregation and beyond. We were open to new ways of relating as making art alongside each other was temporarily put aside. Instead, we entered a new flexible dimension. We capitalised on the power of sight and sound.

Participants wished to share their work and therefore the OA on Zoom facilitator created a power point for each interested presenter. This enabled artists to have their work seen and a special story to be told. Fellow participants were taken on a journey as they experienced colour, texture, narrative and creative /artistic expression that opened doors, insight and appreciation. We felt sustained as the weeks went by. We had the opportunity to witness the creative outpouring of so many artists and creatives in many forms. For instance: painting, photography, felting, writing, poetry, drawing, installation, collage, sculpture and more. What an incredible collective body of work!! It fed the soul during what was an uncertain and challenging time.

Of note, we had the privilege of Nasir Moradi supported by Sophia Walsh show his powerful and evocative work from his quarters in Broadmeadows Detention Centre. We were all deeply moved and came to appreciate even more that inspite of Zoom's limitations, there also lay tremendous opportunity and innovative possibility to stay connected and even deepen those connections.

**Ann Soo**

## Olive Pesto

We are a craft-based mission activity with the motto “We Make, Learn, Laugh and Share”.

February 2020 saw our last pre-COVID meeting. Fortuitously, our yarn stash reduced dramatically by our giving to a local young woman who included “Yarn Bombing” in her school teaching.



From March 2020 onward we had no second-of-the-month meetings. Instead, to keep in touch with our wide community membership, a Facebook Group page was set up, and an occasional Newsletter was produced by Helen Rowe. Zoom “Knit and Natters” were hosted over the

year by Ann Soo, Joanne Yi Van Ravenswaaij, Natalie Papworth and Leanne Salau. There was good participation, great fun to be had.



Our participation in the annual WWKIP (Worldwide Knit in Public Day) in June 2020 was assured by having the only “Online” group in the Southern Hemisphere, with Zoom meetings morning and afternoon, plus

individual outdoor activities where people were asked to take photos and submit to the FB page.



Everyone kept knitting for KOGO and red beanies for Love Makes a Way (LMAW), with deliveries for KOGO being regularly taken to Lincraft (when they were accepting items) by Leanne Salau and Ann Soo.



Early April 2021 we met for the first time in 14 months in the light, bright, sunny and warm Youth Hall, for good yarning (both types!). Half of those present were from the wider community, not the congregation.

For those that like numbers, members on the BUC Olive and 160 on the email list. We the monthly Saturday meetings COVID safe 70 at the WWKIP Day this 12 June 2021, being called “Wrap with Love”.

we’ve currently 61 Pesto FaceBook Group, have about 20 turn up to and are planning for a

**Linda Wannan**

## Love Makes A Way North group

As for everyone, 2020 and early 2021 have been a strange time of much change (and creative adjustment!) for our Love Makes A Way group.

We have learned how to continue to take action in lockdown and how to meet and pray together online. We have seen incredible 'wins' (including the incredible release of many people from detention earlier this year) and continue to support those still locked up through music, advocacy, and presence. Listed below are a few highlights from our year, including ongoing actions we are taking (that anyone and everyone are welcome to join us in!).



**Sydney Rd Street Party** – March 2020: We held a presence outside Brunswick Uniting Church, singing and storytelling to engage passers-by in justice for people seeking asylum.

**Palm Sunday 2020** – April 2020: We engaged in online action as part of the 'Walk' Together for Refugees online rally – including compiling and sharing a video with photos of people with their 'Palm Sunday prayers' for refugees.

**Phone Calls for Freedom** – May 2020: We held two online Zoom sessions as a space for training, mentoring and guiding people through making phone calls to politicians to call for freedom. This allowed many people to not only make phone calls on the day, but to have the confidence to do it again!

**Phone Ban Bill** – Win!: We joined in the efforts of many advocates to stop a new bill that would allow refugees in detention to have their phones forcibly removed (their only lifeline to friends, family and legal support). We engaged with our networks, created new relationships with Tasmanian church leaders, and collaborated with Common Grace to ensure that many Christians were aware of and could take action on the issue.

**Time for a Home/Human Rights Day** – December 2020: We engaged various Christian communities to take action as part of Human Rights Day and the Time for a Home campaign.

**January/February releases:** Many of our friends and fellow freedom-fighters were released from detention! Love Makes A Way had a regular presence at Park Hotel/Prison during this time – both to celebrate with those released, and to support those left behind.

**Palm Sunday 2021** – March 2021: Many of us attended the Walk for Justice for Refugees, along with those from many congregations and Christian communities.

**Singing outside the Mantra and Park Hotels/Prisons** – December 2020 – April 2021 (ongoing): Since December of 2020, and alongside the daily protests, the wonderful Phil Hudson has been leading us in

song regularly outside the Mantra (December) and Park (January-present) Hotels – where many people seeking asylum remain locked up indefinitely.

This music has been a wonderful way to engage with and support our friends inside – sometimes sharing a dance to the music through the far-off, tinted windows, and filming or livestreaming so that we can share with everyone inside. It gives us all (refugees and advocates alike) strength, energy and hope.

**Daily protests** – December – present: We continue to have a regular presence at the daily protests outside Park Hotel/Prison, including a weekly sing with Phil. Around 34 people remain locked up indefinitely here, along with more at MITA (Broadmeadows), around the country, and offshore. The situation becomes more unbearable every day for those detained, and the daily protests are vital in helping to show all people locked up by Australia that they are not forgotten – that they are seen and they are welcome. The protests are every day outside 701 Swanston St, Melbourne: 5:30pm weekdays, and 3pm weekends. Everyone and anyone are always welcome to join us.

We continue to meet monthly, to pray, to plan action, to engage Christian communities in these issues, and to amplify the voices of the people who continue to suffer from the injustices of our government. We always welcome new members and new creative ways to work for justice and freedom.

**Abigail Benham-Bannon**

## Brunswick Uniting Food Co-Op

This report covers the period January 2020 to May 2021 to align with the revised reporting timeframe of Brunswick Uniting Church.

2020 began normally with distribution days in January and February. When COVID restrictions came into force we held a well organised COVIDSafe distribution day, with thanks to Ashley Hurrell for her thorough planning and coordination. In April we cleared most of the stock of dry food products from the store-room and offered individual pick-up or delivery. Months later, in January 2021, we offered remaining stock at reduced prices to minimise wastage. Thanks to Julie P, Valentina, and Judith for assistance with pre-packaging.

In 2020 the Committee met four times via Zoom to plan for re-opening of Food Co-op when COVID restrictions allowed. Distribution days were suspended for thirteen months. A poll of members in October 2020 received a positive response - two thirds of members indicating their intention to commit to one- two-monthly attendance when Co-op re-opens. In 2020-21 we continued to support the Indigenous Hospitably House (IHH) in North Carlton through provision of supplies at cost price, donations of prizes for the annual Trivia fund raiser, and a donation of dry food products for the household. Grace Tree Community in Coburg also received a donation of food products.

Three members retired from key volunteer roles including Rostering, overall Co-ordination, and procurement of bulk supplies. The lack of availability of volunteers to fill these roles prompted the Committee to seek support from Church Council to review future options for the operation of Food Co-op.

The Committee met with representatives from the Church Council and the Justice and Mission Committee in March 2021. Agreement was reached to develop Terms of Reference for a collaborative self-review and to seek a facilitator who shares the values and ethos of the Food Co-op. The Committee has maintained communication with Food Co-op members during this preliminary planning stage. The review is scheduled to commence in June 2021 with opportunities for members to contribute to the process.

Cleaning of the storeroom and equipment and restocking bulk products occurred ahead of a distribution day on 15 May 2021. Thanks are expressed to Valmai, Abi, Julie H and Helen for this preparation.

We extend gratitude to members of the Committee who held the reins in 2020-21 and during the COVID pandemic – David Cook, Ashley Hurrell (Rosters until April 2020), Tess Alston (Treasurer), Abi Benham-Bannon (employed Purchasing Officer), Geoff Thompson, Helen Rowe (Co-ordinator), and Valentina Satvedi-Leydon (until January 2021). We acknowledge Volunteers who assist with procuring bulk products - Julie Heller receives the cleaning products and delivers to the storeroom each month. Helen Rowe orders and receives bathroom soaps and pasta products. Christine Hornby has retired from a

long-term role of ordering, receiving, and delivering tea and coffee, walnuts, and quinoa. We express our gratitude to all members who offer their time as volunteers on distribution days. Several of our members have relocated to other suburbs or interstate. Some have joined other food collectives that sprung up during 2020. Our Food Co-op began in November 2000 through the initiative of a few dedicated church members and now has approximately 60 member households representing the church congregation and the general community.

We hope to celebrate our 21st Birthday in style, later in the year, with past and present members.

**Helen Rowe**

## Discipleship & Education Committee

### **The first challenge**

We started the year with plans to develop and extend the small group focus which we had been working on in 2019.

This was almost immediately reorganised by Ian's call to Gippsland following the summer fires of 2019/20, and the need to select, settle in and support a Supply Minister. We were very fortunate that Valentina Satvedi was available and interested in taking up that role. Her participation in the D&E Committee during 2020 gave us a valuable new perspective on the congregation and the work of Discipleship and Education.

### **The second challenge**

Despite the stopping of face-to-face gatherings from early March, because of the covid outbreak, some things we had planned for the year were able to be continued though in a different form.

- The Post-Service discussion group on Sunday's went on -line and had a steady following throughout the year.
- A book study on *God and the Pandemic* by Tom Wright went ahead, but it appeared to us that many people who joined in the first session were actually looking for connection with other members of the congregation, as much as discussion about the book. The importance of social support became evident and was facilitated through other activities such as Table Church or the craft group.

### **Choosing self care**

Later in the year and with Ian's return, the level of overload on all the ministry team and congregation leaders became obvious. We made the active decision to not commence any new activities in the second half of 2020. Two items with other groups had been proposed and we committed to be involved with Diversity Training with JAM, (which has been completed,) and work on some form of theological reflection to support the work of the Climate Action Group when these were possible.

### **What is the future?**

The stress, anxiety and major social disruption of 2020 has led us to reflect on what it means to be "Church" in this changed world. Although the worst of the pandemic seems to have passed in Victoria and we are "getting back to normal", the key questions still remain. What have we learnt as individuals, as community and congregation and how do we "do Church" into the future.

**Meg Orton**

## Walking Together Group

Our group commenced in September 2020, in response to interest among the congregation following a sermon by Rev Ian Ferguson.

Since then –

1. We have formed group goals as follows:

The working goals of the BUC Walking Together D&E group as we learn and unlearn are:

- 1) *to respond to the call of Christ to work for justice, reconciliation, and care of the lands of the First Nations peoples*



- 2) *to support BUC Church Council in their goals, as our church Elders engage with Elders of the local Wurundjeri – Woiwurrung Tribe in walking this path*
  - 3) *to learn more about First Nations peoples in this land now called Australia*
  - 4) *to walk beside and listen respectfully to First Peoples' guidance and wisdom to inform our actions*
  - 5) *to reflect and learn about our own privilege and our part in all forms of racism (personal, interpersonal, institutional, structural)*
  - 6) *To be engaged in conversations with BUC and the wider community, to educate ourselves, BUC and the wider community, and advocate about the rights of First Nations peoples and actions that can be taken.*
2. Undertaken a 'common vocabulary' process: researched and discussed the use and meaning of words often used in relation to First Nations peoples: some examples - Dreaming; First Peoples; Second Peoples; white fragility; white privilege; and discussed the words contained in BUC's own Acknowledgement of Country.
  3. With approval from the Worship Committee, we prepared an Order of Service for worship on the Sunday following 26 January. We wanted a service that reflected on, and acknowledged that, many First Nations people find this day not a celebration but a day of mourning.
  4. Encouraged all members of the Congregation to tune in to the Change the Heart Service that was held online on the night before 26 January. This service was formed by Common Grace and led by Aboriginal Christian leaders Auntie Jean Phillips and Brooke Prentis.
  5. Created a private Facebook page as a way of sharing ideas.
  6. Arranged a Fitzroy Cultural Walk discovering sites of significance. An invitation will be extended to anyone to attend. This is to be on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2021.
  7. Prepared and lodged a submission with the federal government, supporting a constitutionally enshrined First Nations Voice to Parliament and referencing the goals of the Uluru Statement from the Heart.
  8. Some members attended the Anti-Racism training that was run by BUC, in conjunction with Love Makes A Way, in February 2021.

The group continues to meet, currently on the 2nd Monday of each month at 7:30pm. All are welcome.

**Claire Foley**, on behalf of the WT group, April 2021, [foleyclairep@icloud.com](mailto:foleyclairep@icloud.com)

## Communications Team

### **BUC Website**

Our website continues to be a vital entry point to the life of our congregation and community. As the way we met and gathered changed dramatically in 2020 we added a new section to the Welcome page - BUC responds to COVID-19. Through this section website visitors were able to access up to date information about the ways in which we were offering worship, pastoral care, outreach and financial support for the work of our congregation. A YouTube button was added for worship and later a 360 Tour button. As we emerged from lockdown a new page was created to provide up to date information about how we were 'Moving Towards COVID normal.

**360 Tour** - We offer our thanks to Chris Magee for this window offered into our worship space while we were unable to worship onsite. For many people it was the only access to the building over many months. Clicking through the tour provides access to pages of the website, information about the particular space, sermons and stories.

**Ministry Stories** - This blog became a way of capturing worship for the week with links to the sermon, the YouTube recording, prayers and the order of service.

**Our Stories** - Two series were offered on this blog. **Riding the Waves**: Peter McKinnon, at the invitation of the Pastoral Care Committee, interviewed 12 people through which we were offered insights into how they were managing during the lockdown. **Lighting the Christ Candle**: Saide Cameron invited people to provide recordings of them lighting a candle in their homes for worship and to share a

story about the candle or the setting. A wonderful range of other stories about worship, reopening, events and social justice actions are shared through this blog

**Sunday Prayers and Sermons** were posted weekly and shared to our Facebook page.

**Updating pages** - Keeping our website fresh is a key part of communications work and involves updating pages with new and current information and stories.

- The Earth Button page was significantly revamped with pictures and a new blog - 'Talking about the Climate Crisis...'
- The Worship, Olive Way, Olive Arts and Growing in Faith pages were updated regularly as these ministries changed and adapted to the impact of restrictions and emerging from them.
- Stories about Liturgical Seasons and special events were posted to the relevant pages

### **Worship emails**

As a companion to offering worship online emails were sent out on Saturdays and Sundays using Mail Chimp. Saturday emails introduce the theme and provide a link to YouTube and the order of service. Sunday emails provide a direct link to the service recording, prayer post and full order of service. In 2021 the Sunday emails also provided invitations to explore different parts of our website and to also highlight various other events and information.

### **Newsletters**

- The Olive Press (weekly newsletter offered as an e-newsletter via Mail Chimp and on our website, *the printed format disappeared during lockdown*). There are 375 email addresses on the list for the Olive Press. Approximately 34-50% of subscribers open the email (more during lockdown) with anywhere from 9%-20% clicks on links within the mailout.
- The Olive Branch (monthly newsletter by email and printed).

**The Olive Branch** has two key sections – Meditations and News from the committees. Other sections include the Worship Calendar, Regular & Special Events, Reports from committees & Notices. Peter Blair, Olive Way Pastor, offered inspiring stories from the Olive Way ministry. Many stories/reports from the Olive Branch are extracted and posted via blogs and linked to pages on the website. Special editions of the Olive Branch were produced for the Season of Creation, Advent & Christmas and Lent & Holy Week.

Meditations have been offered by members of the congregation:

- Reflections on a call, Jesus and Sophia, A Lament, Taking up our cross for BLM, A Blessing for the Emergence, Christmas Blessing for the Emergence, Theology and Art, A carpet of Green - a Palm Sunday Reflection, Signs of Easter Hope in a Fire Zone, by *Ian Ferguson*
- Blessing the dust, by *Jan Richardson from Circle of Grace: A book of Blessings for the Seasons*
- Transitions, by *Valentina Satvedi Leydon*
- What does Peace mean to you, by *Yoo Mi Park*
- Sorry Day Reflection, by *Dr. Deidre Palmer, President, UCA Assembly*
- Committing to Climate Change, by *Richard Arnold*
- Thinking about angels, by *Saide Cameron*

Special News stories (*written by Saide Cameron as part of Worship or Pastoral Care News*) have included:

#### **2020**

- Commissioning, Confirmation & Sending out (9/2)
- Blessings (16/2)
- Ordination & Induction of Fiona Bottcher (9&16/2)
- Sydney Road Street Party (1/3)
- Farewell to Ruth & Felix (22/3)
- Holy Week Worship
- Celebration of Supply Ministry (17/5)

- Church Camp online (23/5)
- Pentecost Sunday (24/5)

#### **2021**

- Student House Blessing & Farewell to Valentina & Tom (28/2)
- SMP Blessing (7/3)
- Farewell Laurie (18/4)
- Church Camp (23-25/4)

A number of people 'Shared their Faith' in this occasional section and other parts of the Olive Branch:

- Honouring my Great, Great Grandfather, by *Meg Orton*
- A secondment update, by *Ian Ferguson*
- Tribute to Klaus Fiedler, by *Alistair Macrae*
- Walking Together as 'First and Second peoples', by *Jenne Perlstein*
- Time for a home, by *Leanne Salau*
- A road trip story, by *Julie Perrin*
- Supporting the Uluru Statement from the Heart, by *Claire Foley*

### **Publications**

Annual publications – the Olive Harvest (collection of Annual Reports) and Directory were produced and distributed on 16<sup>th</sup> February and 22<sup>nd</sup> March respectively in 2020. In 2021 the Directory was published on 30<sup>th</sup> March and the Olive Harvest on 30<sup>th</sup> May in line with the change of date for the Annual General Meeting.

Other regular publications are the

- Olive Bite – a monthly welcome leaflet for newcomers & visitors. *This is yet to be reintroduced in 2021.*
- A Community Map prepared by the Community arm of the Pastoral Care Ministry – a bright and colourful document provides information about the groups and activities of the congregation together with contact information, *also yet to be reintroduced* and
- Bi-monthly Rosters which organize the participation of up to 97 individuals in leading, organizing & contributing to Sunday morning worship. Guidelines for these roles are produced on behalf of the Worship Committee and made available by email and on the website in pdf files

### **Leadership Photoboard**

Kenna Morrison takes and provides photos for the photoboard which includes Ministry Team, Elders, Congregation leaders and First Aid Officers. The photos are also published on the Meet the Team page of the website. Both are updated as required throughout the year.

### **Facebook**

The BUC Facebook Group provides another space to advertise events and share stories. The sermons and Sunday prayer posts are regularly shared from our website. We now have 253 members, an increase of 55. The BUC Facebook Page is administered by Ian Ferguson and Saide Cameron.

### **Membership**

The BUC Congregation database was extensively updated as part of the Membership project. See the Congregation Secretary report for details.

### **Photocopier, Bookmarks, Postcards & more**

Postcards, posters and Real Estate Boards (REB) are usually produced in abundance to publicize, invite & engage people in a wide range of aspects of our community life. There was much less work in this area.

- Most notably REBs were provided for Holy Week and to share news of worship offered online
- Sydney Road Street Party - postcards and bookmarks were prepared to promote our commitment to climate action
- Postcards were prepared for Advent and Christmas worship
- Copies of the Pastoral Care Review report were printed

### **Other tasks**

Various documents, invitations and Synod e-new were distributed via the church email group system. Links to the Christmas Bowl stories were included with the Olive Press mailing during Advent and Christmas.

Administrative tasks include:

- maintaining & buying consumables for the photocopier,
- providing name tags,
- organizing and managing email groups.

A number of other tasks are managed as follows:

- The CYYA Pastor and the Hospitality Team now manage photo permissions. An opt-out approach is taken with respect to adults.
- The Website Team (Saide Cameron, Ian Ferguson, Shawn Whelan) oversee the presentation and content of the website with Ian contributing lots of fabulous photos.
- Jane Allardice and Lauren Reader prepare worship slides with Saide Cameron occasionally filling in.
- Naomi David, member of the Finance committee manages the Finance page in the Members Section.
- Abi Benham-Bannon took over maintaining and managing copyright licenses and posting the Presbytery newsletters in the latter part of 2020

Thank you to all these people. We hope to have a longer list of thank yous in the 2020 Report.

The bulk of the Communications work is undertaken and managed by the Communications Coordinator (*that's me!!*). There are many tasks that can be done in your own time at home including posting stories for your particular area of ministry. If you have an interest in joining the Communications Team please let me know. Training and guidelines will be provided.

**Saide Cameron**

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## Property Committee

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We recently said goodbye to Laurie Bonnie as he enters retirement. It was fantastic for the Brunswick Uniting Church to be able to formally thank Laurie for all of his efforts and say farewell at the church service on 18 April 2021. He has been our "go to" hands on handyman for eight years now, and his absence will leave a large hole in our capabilities to see property matters attended to. We are looking for someone new to take on this role: hands on with the tools, good at organising tradespeople, good negotiation skills, able to attend to urgent matters promptly and work on a fee-for-service type arrangement. The Committee is currently following up on a number of potential replacements.

The COVID lockdown resulted in a significant pause on property matters, with the hall and church and other buildings having reduced use, and tradespeople unable to come onsite to attend to routine (non-emergency) work. The grass grew long and the BUC site was unkempt for many months. As activities have returned to near normal in 2021, there has been significant catchup on many jobs that were waiting for restrictions to ease across many of our sites. Property committee met over Zoom during the lockdown period and continues to generally meet this way, though face to face and onsite meetings are also occurring where beneficial.

Unfortunately, Jenny Hunter and Andrew Gemmel have had to resign from the committee this year, and we thank them for their work and contributions. Following Dave Miller joining the Property Committee in February 2020, the current membership of the Property Committee is Andrew Moorhouse, Ray Cameron, James Clough and Dave Miller. As always, we would welcome additional members.

We have engaged a building inspector to carry out detailed condition reports on the properties, to formally document recommended and anticipated maintenance requirements and estimated costs for the next 5 -10 years. These reports will assist with our planned maintenance schedule and forecast budgeting. We are awaiting these reports which should be finalised by June.

We engaged the social enterprise "Hope@Hand" to attend to the lawns as COVID restrictions lifted (in a paid capacity), and we will continue to explore using them for garden maintenance if required. We are also working with the student house committee to explore the possibility of students routinely helping with mowing the lawns.

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Listed below are the more significant jobs completed, (the many minor ones omitted), and at the end, the list of current activities.

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## **Worship Space**

- Guttering rain heads installed to stop water leaks, following roof leak inspection undertaken by drone camera
- Mortar repairs and water damage repairs throughout
- Apse painted
- Existing Emergency lights replaced, and alternative lights installed, tested and documented
- Evacuation lights repaired and upgraded
- Music amp inspected
- Replacement Laptop sourced for AV
- Fan light ventilation panels made operational
- Down lights replaced
- Lintel repaired
- Entrance guttering cleared.
- Substantial clean of the belfry and making the church bell functional again.

## **Hall, Kitchen and Olive Way & Gardens**

- Working Bee undertaken in February 2020 which included graffiti removal, weeding, mulching, removal of old tree pots, window cleaning.
- Bollard condensation venting
- Installation of roof over BBQ and mower storage cage.
- First aid equipment maintained, including the registration of the Defibrillator with Ambulance Victoria, and replacement of the Epipens
- Oven door seals repaired
- Dead trees removed
- Lawns mowed by property committee members and by the social enterprise Hope@Hand after COVID restrictions lifted
- Water tank pump replaced and powercord protected
- Slater pest control
- Notice board hazard attended to after blew off,
- 1800 phone number organised and cancelled for Olive Way
- Door draught brushes installed (west Hall doors)
- Window frames reglazed and painted
- Olive way painted internally
- Dishwasher repaired.
- Broken tree pots removed
- Freezer thermostat replaced
- Wall plaster repairs
- Outside tables repaired and painted
- Toilet seats replaced
- Further Pigeon mess removed and additional pigeon spikes installed to prevent recurrence.

## **Youth Hall & Ministry office**

- New storage sheds painted with undercoat
- Perspex installed over cracked window
- Door lock upgraded for safety

## **ASWC**

- Removal of excess compost bins (with remaining bins now managed by ASWC)
- Mouse pest control
- Mortar repairs
- External light installed
- Keysafe installed
- Door lock upgraded
- Hot water dispenser repaired

## **4 Merri St Cottage**

- Carpet Mats provided
- Side fence and gate repaired
- Lawns mowed

## **Manse**

- Plumbing blockage cleared
- Shower tiling repaired
- Toilet repaired

## **Bucknall Court (student houses and unit).**

- Carpets steamcleaned and carpet replaced in two rooms
- Range of general maintenance matters addressed
- Air conditioning unit installed in unit 1
- Both internal and external painting undertaken
- Security camera quotes obtained
- Gutters cleaned.

## General:

- Draft project plan prepared for Climate action to support carbon neutrality and the move to be carbon positive
- Ongoing management of GMK and other keys
- Engaged contractor to provide updated property inspection reports to guide future activity
- Essential Safety Measures audit undertaken, and annual audit arrangements instigated.
- improved signage regarding emergency exits and key contacts.

## Current activities

- Finalise the reinstatement of the brick wall at 278 Brunswick Road, Student House
- Emergency light replacement in Olive way and church spire tower/room.
- Establishing arrangements to meet new laws related to property maintenance for landlords (mainly concerning the testing of smoke detectors annually, and electrical wiring and appliances, and gas appliances every two years, and the maintenance of testing records).
- Receiving the finalised the Property Maintenance Reports, detailing planned maintenance works for up to a 10-year period.
- Installation of security cameras at the student house. An additional quote is being obtained due to the amount of work required for the installation.
- Establishment of ongoing arrangements with student house and potentially Hope@Hand for ongoing lawn maintenance and church gardens etc.
- Investigating the feasibility of the installation of an ethernet cable from the store room to the music pit to enable improved internet access and easier live streaming.
- Replacement of the freezer in the hall kitchen.
- Participation in the signage committee to improve and make best use of the signage across the BUC site.
- Working with Church Council to establish updated governance arrangements regarding expenditure approval and circumstances requiring further endorsement by church council.

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## Property Committee Profile

The Property Committee has responsibilities similar to those of a landlord for the Congregation's properties. These include:

- the buildings on the Church site (Church, Hall, Youth Hall, ASWC)
- 4 Merri St (rental property)
- the Manse and
- the student houses and unit (rental property) at Bucknall Court.

The Congregation's properties enable us to live out our vision and mission as outlined in the *working together* set of documents.

The Property Committee undertakes the maintenance of properties through a program of planned activities (as identified through periodic building reports), as well as unplanned items that arise that require short to medium term attention.

The property committee generally meets monthly, and invoices for agreed works undertaken are forwarded to the Finance group for payment.

Particular thanks to Ray Cameron who has done the minute taking, agenda preparations and monthly reports.

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**Andrew Moorhouse**

## Bookings Officer

### Looking Forward Into 2021

It was obviously a very difficult year for all the groups who regularly use our church for small business and community activities.

But, they have remained hopeful, that as this new year unfolds, groups may blossom back into life.

So, my report is looking forward. The Covid group is working hard to see if all groups can recommence safely and within Covid guidelines, and we are being as creative as we can to try and make this happen.

**Julie McKinnon**, Property Booking Officer

## Treasurer

At the time of publication, we're still working on finalising the annual financial reports for 2020-21 and the draft budget for 2021-22. These will be circulated separately before the AGM. Church Council has seen and is comfortable with preliminary versions of these reports – it's just a few bits and pieces that need finalisation.

In the meantime, I'd like to make a few general comments about "the year that was".

- As you may know, Church Council agreed to change our financial year. So, rather than 1 Jan–31 Dec, our financial year will be 1 May–30 April from now on.
- Rather than have an additional (and very short) in-between "year", we elected to extend the 2020 financial year to 30 April 2021.
- As it turns out, this has conveniently lined up with the period during which BUC received JobKeeper support from the Federal Government, and with the period in which we could not run a range of activities or hire out facilities to others. As a result, the immediate financial impacts of the Covid crisis are largely contained within this one extended financial year. Next year's patterns of income and expenditure should be relatively "normal" (whatever that will mean in our post-Covid-crisis world).
- BUC members have been very generous throughout 2020, responding to invitations to give electronically to support both BUC and (through our missional work) the wider community. Weekly offerings for the year were actually higher than had we budgeted. *Thank you very much!*
- However, we can no longer count on one particularly generous member, whose contributions to our general budget and Olive Way had totalled \$50,000 for a few years. Looking ahead, without JobKeeper to fill that gap, we will need to do (and Church Council is planning to do) some hard work on both our income and expenditure. *Watch this space!*
- I have been blessed with wonderful support from the Finance Committee (Linda Wannan, Mal Rowe and Naomi David), and – when services were allowed – from several volunteers who faithfully counted and banked the cash offerings. Although we couldn't meet in 2020, we kept up with all necessary tasks throughout the year.
- We have also been very grateful for the fine work of our (very part-time) staff members Abi Benham-Bannon and Maria "Sasha" McGrath. Without their work on the day-to-day accounting, the Treasurer's job would be very difficult. With it, and the support of the Committee, it's quite manageable.
- Speaking of which...I have signalled to Church Council that I'm willing to continue my "Interim" appointment as Treasurer into 2021. Having said that, I would love to start training (and eventually to hand over to) a new Treasurer. I can do this job, but it's not where my main gifts or passion lie, and there are many other things I'd love to contribute through BUC. If you think you could even consider taking up the Treasurer's role, *please speak with me about what's involved*. I promise not to twist your arm!

**Shawn Whelan**, BUC Treasurer, 18 May 2021

NB – Financial Statements will be made shortly before or at the AGM.

## Congregation Secretary

Only one meeting was held in 2020 – the Annual General Meeting in February.

Recognizing the challenges of holding the November Congregational Meeting when we were unable to gather in sufficient numbers in person Congregation (Kate Scull, chair and Saide Cameron, secretary) and Council leaders (Helen Rowe, co-chair, James Balsillie, co-chair, Shawn Whelan, treasurer) met to plan how best to respond. We also used this opportunity to address the timing of the Annual General Meeting. The outcome of this meeting was the decision to delay both meetings and hold them together on 6<sup>th</sup> June. This decision was shared with the congregation in a letter dated 25<sup>th</sup> October. Elders whose terms were due to conclude in November 2020 agreed to extend their commitment to the June AGM.

### Annual General Meeting

**The AGM, chaired by Kate Scull was held after worship in the church on 23rd February 2020.**

**Thirty five** people attended with sixteen apologies offered. The agenda items were presentation of the Olive Harvest (collection of Annual Reports), 2019 Finance report and 2020 Budget, an update from Council, election of Office Bearers for 2019 and offers of thanks.

**Annual Reports:** Twenty eight reports were presented by Kate with opportunity for questions and comments. The Olive Harvest (collection of these reports) was accepted by consensus as were the Finance report and Budget presented by our Treasurer Shawn Whelan.

**Council Update:** James Balsillie, Council Co-Chair, provided updates on:

- the decision to adopt a co-chair model for Council
- a vote of thanks to Linda Wannan and Shawn Whelan for their work as Treasurer and Chair
- thanks to Saide Cameron for her many contributions to the congregation
- information about reviews and projects underway and planned

**Election of Office Bearers:** The outcome of the election of office bearers for the congregation was for current office bearers to continue in their roles

- Congregation Chair – Kate Scull
- Congregation Secretary – Saide Cameron
- Presbytery Representatives (2) – Kate Scull, Jamie Thom

### Membership Task Group

A task group was established in August 2020 to review our existing database with particular attention to be paid to age groups, membership and level of participation. The Task Group (Saide Cameron, Glenice Cook, Jane Allardice and Ian Ferguson) developed a collection document and engaged the support of 16 additional people to directly call people to collect the requested information. The database was updated over time with outcomes of the review reported in detail to the May 2021 Church Council meeting. This was a time consuming and very rewarding project resulting in a much more useful database. It also made completing the Synod Community Life Survey for 2021 much more straightforward. See the full report here: <https://brunswick.unitingchurch.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Membership-Task-Group-2021.05.12.pdf>

### Other tasks

- Regular tasks:
  - maintained the official roll of Baptized and Confirmed members and Members-in-Association,
  - maintained the record (including lengths of terms) of Council members
  - provided letters of transfer for Rachel, Kathryn and Thomas Dan-Uren, Sharon Hollis
- Provided oversight of storage provisions for the congregation, ASWC and ArtStop programs
- Sent emails regarding arrangements for Ian's secondment to Bairnsdale and supply ministry for our congregation
- Responded to an incident regarding our Real Estate Board detaching and hitting a passer-by
- Provided contact details for the Synod and Presbytery Directories
- Purchased a gift and card for Fiona Bottcher for her ordination.
- Received letters of thanks from Bairnsdale re Ian's supply ministry offered there.
- Completed the Synod Community Life Survey (17/7/2020)
- Supported the ordination of Yoo Mi Park



- Organized the Agenda, Election of Elders and Annual General Meeting for 6/6/2021
- Completed the Synod Community Life Survey (15/5/2021)

Saide Cameron

## Presbytery

The Presbytery of Port Phillip West began 2020 the way it always had and surely always would, with a face-to-face meeting at Hoppers Crossing in February. We were delighted that the Presbytery would begin the year with a full complement of staff at long last, as we celebrated the inductions of Rev Linley Liersch and Rev Narelle Collas into Presbytery roles. Linley, who was previously in Western Victoria, became our new Mission Development Strategist/eLM liaison (eLM, “equipping Leadership for Mission”, is a unit of Synod that provides resources, education and engagement). Narelle came to us from Western Australia to fill our second Presbytery Minister placement, working alongside Rev Jeanne Beale.

Those halcyon days of early 2020 also saw the joyful ordination of Fiona Bottcher as Deacon at Brunswick Uniting Church and her induction a week later as a Mental Health Chaplain in the hospital and community for the Presbytery at Sunshine Uniting Church.

With the arrival of COVID-19, Presbytery learnt (along with everyone else) that ‘the way it’s always been’ is not actually the way things must always be. In our first fumbling Zoom Presbytery-in-Council meeting, we shared stories of how our local churches were rising to the challenges and were terribly proud of our congregations’ creativity in finding innovative ways to pull together as communities to love and support each other despite physical distancing and lockdown. Throughout the year, this terrible pandemic also showed us opportunities; while forcing postponement of many plans it proved fertile ground for new ideas and growth, both in individual congregations and the Presbytery as a whole. As ministers and laity deal with the difficulties of new ways of worship and being church in online spaces, it does raise issues of how to retain the new connections some of us have made, such as bringing worship to people who can’t or won’t attend church in person.

For example, Presbytery-in-Council by Zoom actually prompted higher numbers in attendance. Oddly, Zoom also gave us more time with other members of Presbytery during the meetings, because we dealt with the written reports mostly before the actual meeting. The meetings become a time for presentations, news and important business-like elections, interspersed with discussion and prayer in small groups. We report details of the more interesting presentations of these quarterly meetings in the *Olive Branch*.

It has long been a strategic objective in our Presbytery to improve communications and story-sharing across the Presbytery. When people were not able to meet face-to-face, this became a high priority as we wished to generate a sense of connectedness and share useful resources Presbytery-wide.

Therefore, the Presbytery ministry team began a regular newsletter, which was well-received. In 2021, our Presbytery of Port Phillip West joined forces with the Presbytery of Western Victoria for a new newsletter, “*The Westerly*”. This newsletter is being published twice a month and is a great source of information for events coming up around the two presbyteries. Our Presbytery also has a new website, <https://ucappw.org.au> (still a work in progress).

The forced shift to virtual meetings also broke down geographical barriers, prompting our Presbytery to share various training sessions and workshops across the wider church. Our Pastoral Care training has even had attendees from New Zealand.

We had considered returning to a face-to-face Presbytery-in-Council meeting in February 2021, but fortunately had already opted to stick with Zoom before Victoria’s snap lockdown. In the now familiar routine, we flashed our consensus colours up using virtual backgrounds, entered break-out rooms for prayer and discussion, and forgot to (un)mute ourselves.

The Synod meeting at the end of February was also held online. Ian Ferguson, Fi Bottcher and Geoff Thompson were among the clergy representatives from our Presbytery. The Presbytery also achieved the Synod’s targets of 50% of representatives under 50 years old and 30% from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

After two postponements due to COVID, Yoo Mi Park (who worked with our pastoral care teams at Brunswick Uniting Church early in 2020 while Ian was in East Gippsland) was ordained at Brunswick Uniting Church at 2pm on Sunday 14 March 2021, prior to her formal induction into Eltham Montmorency Uniting Church, where she had already begun working under COVID.

Kate continues attending Presbytery Standing Committee, after being re-elected for a two-year term in November 2020. Standing Committee met again in person in April 2020 (now she's vaccinated, that feels safe enough!) Jamie zooms into the Mission, Strategy and Education Committee, which he joined only a few meetings before the first lockdown. In early 2021 he has also attended some worship services in congregations where members of the committee are conducting mission studies. We are hoping for more face-to-face meetings this year, beginning with Presbytery-in-Council on 8<sup>th</sup> May. However, the Presbytery also hopes to retain the positive benefits of our new technological expertise, possibly by investing in tech for blended meetings in future.

**Jamie Thom and Kate Scull**

## Mulling

Mulling is a group of younger adults who meet to explore faith, spirituality, and community. Members take turns to arrange activities and host events. Attendance continued to wane this year, partly because of COVID. Thank you to Simone Alesich for helping to organise events.

MAY Interfaith in the time of COVID – hosted by Simone Alesich with Jenne Perlstein

AUGUST Architecture and God's call – hosted by Simone Alesich with Kirsty Bennett

SEPTEMBER Poetry readings – hosted by Maggie Haines

NOVEMBER Mulling in the park: Climate change, BUC and theology – hosted by Simone Alesich with Richard Arnold

As of May 2021, there is no Mulling coordinator and no new events are planned. Please let Maggie Haines know if you are inspired to coordinate Mulling in the future.

**Maggie Haines and Amanda Lees**

## Out & About

Out and About is for older adults and their friends. We usually meet for weekday social meals or excursions throughout the year. But 2020 was not a usual year! We enjoyed lunch together at Marcella's café in the last week of February 2020 before COVID restrictions put a stop to our socialising in person. However, this did not stop us keeping in touch! Our members participated in various Zoom events - Table Church, Knit and Natter sessions, Olive Arts, and the after-sermon chats on Sundays. Some were involved in the Pastoral Care ministry of phone calls and food delivery. The group has not reconvened as yet but looking forward to getting Out and About again in 2021.

**Helen Rowe**

## Sacred Harp Singing

The Sacred Harp Singers continued to meet during COVID by holding Zoom Singings (Zingings!) from April 2020. Although the format meant we couldn't actually all sing with each other, due to delays in internet speeds, we learned from other Sacred Harp singers in the USA and other parts of the world, that we could share a video on our screen, and if everyone was muted, we could each sing along to our favourite songs, and share each other's company between the singing. We learned many new songs this way. Although it felt strange at first, this was a great way to keep our community together, and to sing with people in country Victoria, Sydney, Brisbane, and in the USA. Singers joined us from California and Alabama, even though it was the middle of the night for them.

Even though it was fun to sing “with” people around the world, we were so happy to sing together outdoors as restrictions lifted. In December, we met at Edinburgh Gardens to sing in the park under the Jacarandas, on a day that seemed sunny, but turned to quite heavy rain. We persisted with umbrellas, but after a while decided we needed to stop. Nevertheless, although we were few in numbers it was with much joy to sing together in real life.

After another Zoom Singing in January, we were pleased to sing together outdoors once again in February and March when we sang in the rotunda in Curtain Square. This was a great space to sing in, and we amused many small children, and some adults by doing it. We also received requests to sing Happy Birthday to picnickers in the park. It was a delightful place to sing.

In April, due to colder weather, earlier sunsets, and continuing easing of restrictions, we returned to our usual practice of singing together in the Hall. We are singing with more space around us, and with open doors to allow air circulation. Since returning to our usual location, we have been once again welcoming new singers each month to join us.

We will not be holding our All Day Singing, which is normally in July of each year and welcomes singers from around Australia. We hope to be able to do so in 2022.

Throughout the year, members of the group have offered pastoral care to each other in times of trouble.

**Natalie Sims and Shawn Whelan, May 2021**

## Book Group

### **Membership**

We are a dedicated group of 10 people that enjoys consistent attendance from all its members. Some of the people in the group have a connection with BUC and others do not. We find that having 10 people in the group provides lots of diversity of opinion and interests, while still allowing sufficient time for all to participate, therefore we are unable to welcome new members at this stage. However, during this year we played a part in connecting people interested in a daytime Book Club and have been pleased to see that group flourish.

### **Adapting to the times**

After one in-person meeting in February, the pandemic hit and lockdowns followed. Like so many other groups, we had to adapt to meeting online. At first we tried using Skype, but this didn't work well for us, so the following months we used Zoom. Initially we used a free account that only allowed 40 min sessions, which was problematic. Then we were given access to the BUC Zoom account and were able to book 90-minute sessions – thanks Church Council! We had struggles with connection and took a while to gain confidence with the new format but eventually we had all members participating. When we started holding meetings online, we fully expected that we would be back to meeting in person by Spring, but of course that was not to be and we finished the year meeting online. However, by the end, we saw the benefits of online meetings on cold, wet, dark winter nights and decided that maybe a mix of online and in-person meetings might be a good option in the future.

On Zoom we celebrated Janet's special birthday with each of us having our own piece of cake and a candle. We heard about Jill's celebration of her special birthday with car loads of friends or family driving by.

In sad news we heard of the deaths of Jeanette's and Christine's mothers. We are grateful that, as a group, we could connect with each other's lives during Melbourne's long lockdowns.

### **Book Selection**

Due to the pandemic, libraries closed so the reliable choice of book sets from the Moreland Libraries dried up. But libraries were adapting too, buying up multiple use eBooks, in particular classics, and together with free eBooks from Project Gutenberg, we were able to continue reading the same book together.

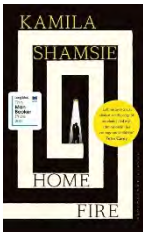


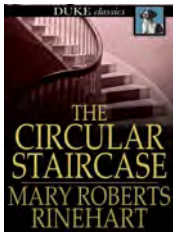


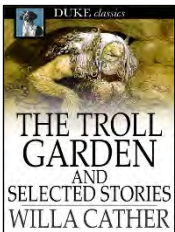
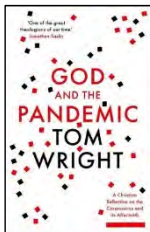
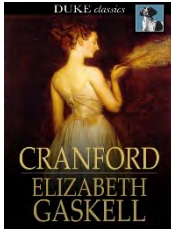


Where appropriate we incorporated a discussion of movies related to our reading. For example, many members accessed the 2017 eMovie **Mary Shelley** (on Beamafilm via the library) in conjunction with our reading of *Frankenstein*, and several of us watched the TV series **Cranford**, either via YouTube or on DVD from the library, while or after we read the book.

We also shared some of our favourite short stories as well as other books, audiobooks and movies that we had been enjoying.

These are the books we read together in 2020:

Often, we finish book club with the reading of a picture book. Together we experience a whole story from beginning to end. Sometimes the books contain an important message and sometimes they are just for fun. They stimulate our minds, foster creativity and stimulate discussion.

In November, our final meeting for the year, we shared books we had read during the year that resonated with us, our top TV or movie viewing and/or a Christmas story. Here is what we came up with:

<p>February</p>  <p><i>Home Fire</i> by Kamila Shamsie</p>	<p>March</p>  <p><i>Fighting Islam</i> by Susan Carland</p>	<p>April</p>  <p>'Choose your own' Georgette Heyer detective or romance novel.</p>	<p>May</p>  <p><i>The Circular Staircase</i> by M.R. Hinehart</p>	<p>June</p>  <p><i>Call of the Wild</i> by Jack London</p>  <p><i>Frankenstein</i> by Mary Shelley</p>
<p>July</p>  <p><i>The Troll Garden and Selected Stories</i> by W. Cather</p>	<p>August</p>  <p><i>God and the Pandemic</i> by Tom Wright and short stories</p>	<p>September</p>  <p><i>Cranford</i> by Elizabeth Gaskell</p>	<p>October</p>  <p><i>The Toys of Peace and Other Papers</i> by Saki</p>	<p>November</p>  <p>To finish a difficult year, we shared books that brought us joy or inspired us.</p>

Click [here](#) (or see link below) if you are interested in our 2020 list of books that inspired us. During the last session of the year Jeanette introduced us to *The Gift of Reading* edited by Jennie Orchard, an anthology of essays including Robert McFarlane's essay which inspired the collection. This book became the springboard for our holiday reading.

We are grateful for Jeanette's on-going leadership.

<https://app.box.com/s/xgcw3p31mcx5aa34icm4joo0ipfmmmy3g>

Christine Hornby and Faye Findlay, on behalf of the BUC Book Club

## Daytime Book Club

### Second Wednesday of the Month Book Club – A daytime meeting

It is a remarkable achievement that many new activities started up during the challenge of the first COVID year – 2020.

Our book club was one of them. Our first meeting was held in October 2020.

We have had good interest with our zoom meetings. Our format – different from the evening book club – was proposed by one of our initial members.

Format: Bring a book of your choice, to discuss. Each member comes to book club with a book they have read.

Everyone brings a different book to the meeting. Each member talks about the book they have read. These books have varied from discussions about children's books; history books; art books and various novels. Whatever appeals to you is of interest to us!

If the reader is willing, they can offer their book as a loan to another member of the club.

In 2021 we experimented with different ways of meeting. Now, in April 2021, we meet in person in the Worship space at the Church. This was another experiment with the safety of us all being paramount and it worked well.

**Claire Foley**, April 2021, [foleyclairep@icloud.com](mailto:foleyclairep@icloud.com)

## Saturday Coffee Group

On the first Saturday of the month a group of women from our community meet at Marcella's café at 2.30 pm which is north of the church on the same side of Sydney Road.

Our activity went into recess during Covid lockdown but most of us were still in contact in some way – knitting on zoom, olive arts on zoom, after worship chat on zoom. Thank goodness for technology and the way it enables us to connect.

Usually we are a group of four to six, but can be one or two, or occasionally a larger, noisier group. Over a cuppa we share our challenges and joys of life. All sort of topics are discussed – politics, knitting, ageing, families, reading, travelling, pets etc,etc.

It is a very relaxed and informal group so if you are free on the first Saturday of the month come and join us. Come whenever it suits you.

If you would like to know more about this group please chat to me after church or give me a call on 9386.1484.

**Leanne Salau**