



BLACKALL RANGE UNITING CHURCHES
Comprising
MALENY, MONTVILLE and PALMWOODS UNITING CHURCHES
ANNUAL REPORTS

for presentation to the Congregational Annual General Meeting 29 May 2022



REFLECTION: A DARING HOPE

The theme of the 36th Synod of the UCA, Queensland was: *A daring hope*. The moderator's opening message came from Romans 8 and John 21. Romans 8 reminds us that we are in transit, living in a time when humanity is groaning, creation is groaning and astonishingly God is also groaning. We know this to be true: *humanity* with countless wars, unfathomable violence and indescribable suffering is certainly groaning. And the reality of floods and bush-fires is a confronting reminder of *creation* groaning. And there can be no doubt that the *Holy Spirit* is weeping in solidarity with humanity and creation, like Christ wept over Jerusalem and the lost.

It is in this context that we are reminded that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ and therein lies our hope. A hope rooted in the power of resurrection and the reign of the Lamb on the Throne.

And it is in this context that the risen Christ asks us whether we love Him and then asks us to tend and feed his sheep and follow Him! And because we have hope, and are rooted in Christ's immeasurable love, we can dare to hope and dare to follow Christ, dare to step out and feed and tend His sheep as He asked us to.

Knowing we do so not alone, but with Immanuel: God with us!

Knowing we do so, not alone but in community. And therefore we, as a community of faith following Christ along the Blackall Range, need to embrace a daring hope.

Shalom Liena

**UnitinginChrist
actingwithlove
livingwithhope
witnessinginfaith
workingforjustice**



Rev Liena meets Fritz Venzke unexpectedly at Synod. Fritz remembers that, in 2008, on his first day, at his first lecture, his first lecturer of theological studies at Stellenbosch University was none other than Liena.

MINISTER'S REPORT

Incredible. I am very aware that at the time we hold the AGM at the end of May 2022, I will have been resident in Maleny just over two and a half years! *Tempus fugit!* It would be natural then to pause and reflect over the past 30 months and the ministry within the Blackall Range Uniting Church-family as embodied in our witness and worship. However, in light of the disruption of COVID-19 since the beginning of 2020, such an exercise is somewhat challenging. In this report I accordingly take the easier route and report primarily on the past year (2021/2022). However, reflection and evaluation remain necessary, so I do call upon members of the congregation to please give feedback on the past 30-month period.

Generally speaking, I have a deep gratitude for all the activities and events that occurred in the past year, within each congregation. Moreover, a deep appreciation for each member who has faithfully been part of the life of Blackall Range Uniting Church. Thank you. Hallelujah!.

Turning then to the past year I highlight a number of matters:

Leadership: Congregation and Presbytery

Since September 2021, with the resignation of Rev. Bruce Johnson, I took over as the acting-chair of the church council. At that time, it was planned to have the AGM at the end of January 2022 and as Rev Johnson was due to be away at the end of 2021 it was deemed best for him to step aside. However, with another wave of COVID early 2022, the AGM was postponed until the end of May 2022. My gratitude and appreciation to Rev Bruce for steering us through the turbulent waters of COVID-19 in 2020 and 2021.

My acting as chair of church council has always been intended to only being a bridging arrangement, and so we are seeking to appoint a chair at this forthcoming AGM.

During the past 9 months we had an opportunity as church council to have two team building sessions on the 20th and 27th of September 2021. We have also had the opportunity of reflecting upon the structure of our church council and in what ways we could function more efficiently and purposefully as three very different 'congregations' under the oversight of one church council. The structure of church council and questions relating to the governance of the congregation and centres is being continually reviewed.



At the Mary Burnett Presbytery meeting in November 2021, I was elected as Chair of the Mary Burnett Presbytery. This coincided with the position of the presbytery minister being vacant until the 1 February 2022. Thus, for a two-month period December 2021-January 2022, I found myself, together with other members of the executive, also overseeing a number of matters in the Mary Burnett Presbytery. A particular joy of this ministry is being able to preside over inductions, and we had three in this time: Rev Maile Molitika at Nambour in January, Rev Dave Ellis at Gayndah in February and Pastor Graham Huth as Presbytery Minister in March.

Since the new Presbytery minister started in February 2022 my load with regard to Presbytery work has lessened. Presbytery work does continue to take up some of my time. However, I do believe that I can make a contribution to the work of the wider church and I expressly record my appreciation to the congregation in allowing me to serve the broader church in this way.

I also continue to serve on number of committees, local and synodical.

Service on Committees: Local and Broader Synodical:

With the acceptance of the role of chair of presbytery, I resigned from the Synod Ecumenical Relations Committee. During March 2022 I was nominated to the Synod Committee for Counselling (SCC) (UCA QLD). I applied to serve on this body as its purpose is to serve the church in resolving concerns and complaints laid against ministry agents across the state in conciliatory ways. Service on the SCC only

occurs when complaints are lodged – commitment to the committee is thus ad hoc and not regular. Again, I feel I have a worthy contribution to make, particularly in light of my training and experience in reconciliation and restoration.

Range Christian Leaders Network (RCLN)

On a local level the RCLN continues to meet every month. The RCLN has had a relatively active year and there has been a marked development in the unity and teamwork amongst the members of the RCLN. Also, an increased shared urgency to share the gospel along the Blackall Range.

In early December 2021, we were able to have a combined ecumenical Christmas Carol Service at Maleny, held independently from the street market. This enabled the RCLN to run its own programme and establish what is hoped will become a great event on the community calendar. In addition, we held the customary Christmas carols on the green at Montville in collaboration with the Montville Village Association. And the Easter sunrise service at Montville, held for the first time in two years again on the outlook on Razorback Hill was a blessed occasion. The presence and accompaniment of the Salvation Army band at the respective Christmas Carol Services and Easter Sunrise Service remains a joyous blessing.

Another first was a combined ecumenical service held on Palm Sunday evening in Maleny. A wonderful opportunity to worship together with friends from other denominations.

I also attend the bi-annual meetings of Queensland Churches Together and find this wide ecumenical group very stimulating.

Worship and Pastoral Care

During the past year we continued with the established rhythm of worship services:

Montville: 8:15 worship service every Sunday and Holy Communion on second Sunday of the month.

Maleny: 9:45 worship service every Sunday and Holy Communion on first Sunday of the month.

Palmwoods: 10:00 worship service every first Sunday and Holy Communion every third Sunday of the month; whilst Reflections in the garden are held on the second and fourth Sundays of the month in the afternoon.

This rhythm of services would not be possible without the assistance of Pastor Kay Nixon and the team of lay preachers, retired ministers, lay leaders and musicians across the three centres. Deep, deep thank you to each and everyone.

A further part of the rhythm is having a combined service at Maleny on the 5th Sunday of the month. These services have primarily been family services as the opportunities to hold more focussed family services remain challenging. A personal favourite is our annual harvest

festival, by nature a time of joy and thanksgiving. We were also able to celebrate special occasions over Easter and Christmas. During the Christmas services our theme for the year JOY was introduced and the sign presiding over the entrance of Maleny UC continues to remind us of the gift of JOY. We had a special service on Christmas Eve focusing on heaven meeting earth, with God and angels coming down to humanity. And of course, our Christmas lights festival continues to grow – a major effort – thank you to the team. We also had a lovely Christmas Display in the Reflection Gallery at Montville and an outdoor Christmas Carol sing-a-long in the community garden at Palmwoods. During Easter, in addition to the number of services, we were able to celebrate



Tenebrae again and we also had a special Lenten Study on the *7 sayings on the cross* and a big thank you to all who contributed to the study.

Our on-line services continue. Each Sunday a service is recorded and placed on-line and I need to emphasise the incredible work that Stuart Craig does – faithfully each Sunday, Stuart edits and uploads the services! We also had on-line Bible Studies and thank you to all who recorded reflections. You will read more about it below.

Reports on the ministries of pastoral care and prayer are found elsewhere in this annual collection and my gratitude to Dorothy Tietze for leading the pastoral care team and to Helen Uhlmann the prayer coordinator. We have had a particular focus on prayer this year and were able to unite in praying through a prayer journal during Lent and will also, like the previous year, participate in a Week of Prayer.

We are also grateful for other ministry groups within the congregation which are reported about independently such as, the Connect Groups, the Ladies Friendship, KYB, and Band of Brothers.

Erowal and Aged Care

I continue to enjoy the morning worship and Holy Communion services at Erowal. Although, we had some disruptions due to COVID and Erowal being in lock-down, we continue to hold services at least once a month, and recently twice a month. The highlight, of course, was the annual Christmas Carols sing-along. I could not manage these without the assistance of Dorothy Tietze and the regular musician Helen Bock. Also, thank you to the others who step in when I am not able to be there.



Witness

I am heartened by the number of members that are mentors at the local schools and believe this to be a very practical and critical way in which we can influence the lives of our youth.

Similarly too, the involvement of members in local community organisations like Maleny Neighbourhood Centre, Maleny Community Centre, PROBUS, U3A, Hospital Auxiliary Board, Men's Shed, Maleny Arts and Crafts, Maleny Show Society and others is inspiring.

Our strong involvement with Chaplaincy in the schools across the Blackall Range continues. And as reported elsewhere we are having great joy and fun with our monthly 'sausages for chaplaincy' sausage sizzle outside Woolworths. And as the team will narrate it is far more than selling a sausage or two – it is about conversations. Interaction with the community. The church being present in the market-place. Big thank you to the members and friends who participate in this activity.

We also had super fun with the garage sale held in early November 2021. Apart from raising some funds for the mission work of Presbytery we connected with friends and the community across tables of books, bundles of clothes, stacks of plates and glassware and bric-a-brac. Again, thank you to Jocelyn, Helen, and the merry team, including of-course the men.



Our congregation continues to work closely together with the collective community group Speak Up Now and in collaboration with them we unveiled red benches at Maleny in December 2021, at Montville on 8 May 2022 and at the community garden, Soil & Soul at Palmwoods on 22 May 2022. Also, with the support of Speak Up Now we launched a new area of ministry, the Conversation Hub. The Conversation Hub is another missional outreach of the congregation which helps facilitate difficult conversations, especially those related to family matters. We are glad that an article in the Hinterland Times, helped put the Conversation Hub on the map and we have had a number of conversations and this in small ways give witness in the community.

Indeed, our prayers are that these initiatives will provide witness of our calling to spread the Good News of the kingdom of God.



Communication and Publications

Communication is primarily what keeps us and our three centres in touch. We are fortunate to have a number of publications; the weekly *Our Common Life*, the regular *New Vine* (which is more than a quarterly magazine!) and of-course our continuing post and on Facebook and on the website. We are indebted to those who faithfully keep these publications going: Graham, Jing, Sue, Stuart, Kay and others.

Financial

It would be irresponsible of me not to call your urgent attention to the financial state of our congregation. Although, our reserves are relatively strong, our annual deficit is particularly concerning. In 2021 the budget deficit was R40,000 and the actual deficit \$15,000 – that is \$15,000 debited against our reserves. Also, for the 18-month period 1 January 2022 – 31 December 2023 a budget deficit of more than \$60,000 has been budgeted for. This trend is clearly not sustainable – our reserves will simply run out!

May we, individually and collectively, truly bring this matter to the Lord in prayer, but also place it before our own doorsteps.

Conclusion

I am not alone in mourning the unexpected passing of Reverend Ron Potter on 3 July 2021, and I remain sad that I could not have sat at his feet a while longer. Yet, we are grateful that we can continue to be nourished by his legacy in words and images.

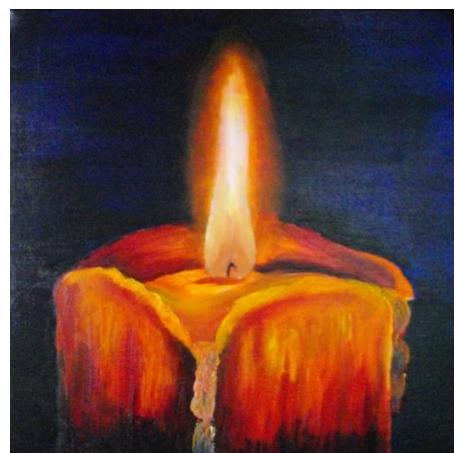
I conclude with one of his poems and an accompanying painting.

Light One Candle

*I cannot floodlight the world,
but I can let my flickering candle
illuminate one small part of it
provided I am prepared
to give myself to the burning.*

Artist and Poet: Ron Potter

Liena Hoffman
Minister and Acting-Chair of Church Council



BRUC OFFICE REPORT

As an admin and reception role, I support the minister Liена and the church members of the Blackall Range UC congregations when they need help.

The main jobs are

- To support the Minister for special events and regular tasks. Or other duties required from the Minister.
- Prepare the weekly *Our Common Life*. Send it out to congregations by email, print it out for Maleny church, and deliver it to Ben Bryce members.
- Helping the team to produce the quarterly *New Vine*.

During operating hours of the church office, I provide friendly support to the community and congregations members.

- Stuart Craig has helped to set up the church website calendar from Google calendar, which is easy to find an available date.
- Answer the phone, assisting as required.

Keep updated and fill in the information with Workplace Health and Safety and Child Safety documents.

- Fill out the form and send it out to register the Church Blue Card and record them.
- I remind the church members when the expired date is and help renew the card.

Jing Wang

BRUC SOCIAL MEDIA

Over the past few years, the church has initiated and grown several forms of social media. The Blackall Range Uniting Church has our main website, ourcommonlife.org.au, and each of the worship centres has sub-domains, maleny.ourcommonlife.org.au, montville.ourcommonlife.org.au and palmwoods.ourcommonlife.org.au. These contain information that pertains only to that worship centre.

Similarly, there are four Facebook pages, one for the Blackall Range and one for each of the worship centres. In addition, email is used to distribute the weekly newsletter, *Our Common Life*, and other information to the congregation, including links to the E-Services and other online material.

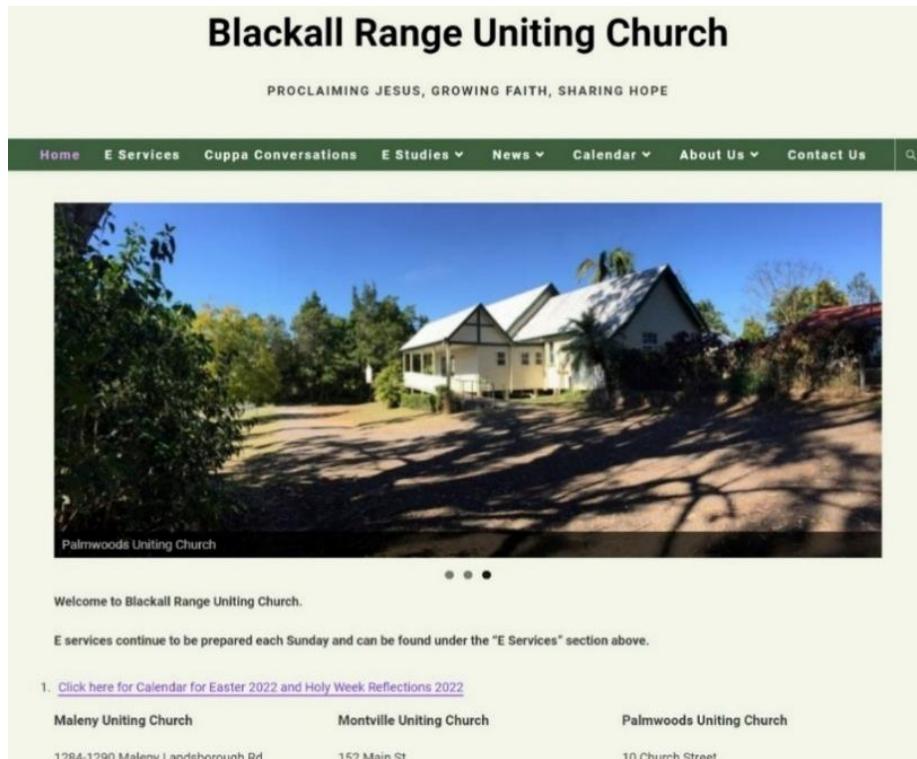
The main website contains a brief description of each of the worship centres, contact information and service times as well as:

- E-Services, which are video recordings of most church services from April 2020 on, when videos were first made of the services, because of COVID restrictions.
- Cuppa Conversations, which are recordings of interesting conversations that Liена had with church members and others.
- E-Studies which are some online studies developed by the minister and members of the congregation.
- News, which includes copies of *Our Common Life* and *The New Vine*.
- Calendars. There are two calendars. One is for church activities at each of the worship centres and the other is for hall hire.

The worship centre websites contain information about church services, ministry and outreach and other information about that worship centre. The Maleny website also has a catalogue of the books in the church library and an audio archive of sermons made at Maleny before the services were videoed. Many website views come from congregation members or possibly others watching the E-Services (about 25-50 each week) or other online videos soon after they are released (up to about 80).

The websites were created and are maintained by Stuart Craig.

The Facebook pages contain posts from the minister and members of the congregation that provide information about church activities as well as other items that may be of interest. The pages are maintained by several congregation members. Many posts get over 80 views, quite a few posts exceed 160 views and the post advertising LightUP@Christmas exceeded 4100 views.



Part of front page of the main web

Stuart Craig

NATIONAL CHURCH LIFE SURVEY

The Blackall Range Uniting Church participated in the NCL Survey in March this year. Organisers of the NCL Survey were expecting 3,000 congregations from all denominations across the country to take part this year.

Across our 3 sites (Maleny, Montville and Palmwoods), we submitted 53 surveys, 3 coordinator surveys and 1 leader survey. Results of the Survey will be available to congregations in June/July this year.

Peter Callaghan

MALENY ANNUAL REPORTS



MALENY UNITING CHURCH

Sunday services at Maleny at 9:45am were held throughout 2021, except on 1 and 8 August, when COVID intervened. There were periods of no singing or singing through masks, or no morning tea which made the congregation appreciate what they used to take for granted. Attendances varied between 24 and 78, averaging a little over 54. Most services were videoed and shown online. Two children were baptised during these services and there were two memorial services during the year.

There were interactive family services, combined with the Montville and Palmwoods congregations, on the last Sunday in January, May, August, September and October. The service at the end of January was a commissioning service, at the end of May was followed by the AGM, at the end of August included a visit from Frontier Services and a BBQ to raise funds for their work, and at the end of September was the Spring Harvest Festival.

In February, the Church Council asked the Maleny congregation to choose a small group of leaders who can discuss local issues and discern ways forward for the church. In April, the Maleny Ministry Team was elected by the congregation. The team has met monthly and assisted the minister in planning church activities and encouraging the Maleny church congregation to reach out to each other and our community to share Christ's love.

Other highlights of the year included the initiation of Cuppa Craft fortnightly on Tuesdays, a Tenebrae service on Maundy Thursday, a visit by Wycliffe bible translators, visits by the two Maleny school chaplains, a monster garage sale, Bright and Breezy (where members of the congregation were invited to take part in various activities organised by individual members), the installation of the Red Bench, a Get-To-Know-One-Another evening of dinner and games, trial sausage sizzles at Woolworths to raise funds for Chaplaincy (which will continue into 2022), and culminating in the Christmas Lights Festival (known as LightUP@Christmas). In this event, community groups were asked to provide a solar light display in the church grounds to complement the church's displays and members of the public were invited to walk around the grounds in the evenings of the week before Christmas to view the displays and to partake of a light supper in the hall (a fundraiser for RangeCare).

Stuart Craig



Rev David Ellis and Mrs Janette Ellis from Frontier Services who visited on Sunday 29 August.

PRAYER MINISTRY

Prayer is one of the great blessings of our life of faith – both as we pray for others and as we ourselves receive prayer support in our own time of need. Here are three ways in which this has been practiced in our faith community in the last 12 months ...

1. **Email prayer chain.** There are approximately thirty people who receive this and who have committed to praying about matters raised. There is a weekly update, "Prayer Matters", sent out and as needs arise, an email is sent requesting prayer for more urgent matters. Those who don't use email receive a hard copy of the weekly "Prayer Matters".
2. **Maleny Prayer Group.** The Sunday morning prayer group meets at 9am at the Maleny church before the service. This has been a great blessing and encouragement to the nine regular attendees who together bring our requests to our Loving Heavenly Father who warmly welcomes us.
3. **Personal Prayer.** "When two or three are gathered in my name..." It can be a great blessing to sit with someone and pour out our hearts before God. We have started offering this after the Maleny Sunday morning service where there is someone available each week to pray with anyone with a personal prayer need or who would like to pray about a matter on their heart.

During 2022, we are having a focus on "Prayer Transformed ... From Duty to Delight" with plans in place to communicate the importance and blessing of prayer in the church. There has been a prayer focus during Lent. Pentecost will also have a prayer focus, with a Week of Prayer event commencing on Pentecost Sunday.

Helen Uhlmann

CHRISTIAN MEDITATION

Regular Wednesday gatherings have been maintained during the past year despite several enforced breaks due to Covid restrictions.



The average attendance would be 12 - 15 people with shared leadership (Graham, Douglas & Brian).

Those attending value the quiet, silent meditative time together and the brief, spiritually uplifting messages. Simplicity, Stillness and Silence continue to be our focus.

Following our meditation, the optional coffee fellowship (at Maple 3) is enjoyable.

The 11th birthday celebration at Baroon Pocket Dam was a special time.

If you would like to experience the Meditation time together you are very welcome to join us at 8.30 am on a Wednesday at Maleny Uniting Church.

Brian Richards & Douglas McCubbin

PASTORAL CARE

We seek to care for our church family as we are able, by welcoming people at church, praying, visiting, telephoning, letter writing or offering other help when needed. The care team meets monthly to review how we can better support each other and those in our care. As many of our church family become less able to do what they would like, we will need to offer transport and other services.

The frozen meal bank supplied by generous congregation members is often used and really appreciated by the recipients.

I thank all those who use the gifts God has given them to help all feel loved and appreciated. I see how you befriend others in many generous ways.

Dorothy Tietze

MEN'S GROUP (a.k.a. Band of Brothers)

The standout event for the year was an expedition to St George organised by John Benn. (This upheld our principle that the proponent does the organising.) Then, COVID put a damper on activities, but we managed to have a number of barbecues at various places of interest.



Roger Smith

BOOK CLUB

We have 9 ladies in our group, meeting the first Thursday of the month at one of our homes, where a lovely morning tea is provided by the hostess. Then we discuss our book (chosen from the Maleny Library).

It is a very enjoyable morning and we have become very close as a group,,,,,,always looking forward to the next book.

Marjorie McCubbin

KNOW YOUR BIBLE GROUP

We meet each Friday (covid permitting) at 1.30 in the church to study the Bible.

During the year 8 ladies have studied the books of Daniel, Colossians and Philemon, Genesis (story of Joseph) and Mark. As we read, our minds were opened to new thoughts, knowledge, and understanding of God and his plans for us and the whole world.

Covid did disrupt our meetings, but we were still able to do the questions at home and share when we met. The studies are so thought stimulating and well written we would encourage ladies to join with us as we explore more of God's word each week.

We are celebrating 50 years of KYB this year and it is good to think of how many ladies have studied God's word in that time. What a precious gift to share across Australia and now some other countries have their own translation of the studies.

Dorothy Tietze



LADIES' FRIENDSHIP GROUP 2021 – early 2022

There have been surprisingly few interruptions to our planned year of activities so we are very happy to report that a group of from 16 to 25 ladies has enjoyed monthly get togethers.

Throughout the year we

- shared favourite books for children
- became more aware of the complexities of autism
- had a demonstration regarding practical First Aid
- enjoyed board games and learned about the Camino Walk
- heard from a Primary School guidance officer
- shared stories and hosted a Pink Cuppa
- swapped stories about treasures
- and celebrated Pre Christmas time at a member's home.

We have supported missions by knitting beanies for little Indian girls and have operated a well received ministry with frozen meals.

An invitation is extended to any newcomers to join on the third Thursday of each month.

2022 has seen 3 months of diverse agendas as we have swapped recipes, learned about the Mary Burnett Presbytery and visited the Reflection Gallery at Montville UC.

Nancy Baker



PRIMARY SCHOOL MENTORING

Several people from the Maleny church were involved in mentoring children at the Maleny Primary School in 2021 through a program co-ordinated by School Chaplain Becky Francis. Unfortunately, it was an inconsistent year, with Covid shutdowns and Mentors being excluded from the school property for periods of time. Despite this, warm relationships were forged between the Mentors and their Mentees. Sessions are set to recommence in term two of 2022, when Mentors will again be allowed onto school grounds. By all accounts, Mentees are very excited about this and Mentors are looking forward to the coming year, sharing special times together and being a consistent, safe, reliable and loving friend for their child.

Helen Uhlmann

CONGREGATION CONNECT GROUPS

Connect groups are small groups of people who meet to have discussion with a Christian focus. Connect groups were originally formed in 2018, based on existing informal study groups and have since evolved to their current form. Social interaction and friendship is established within these groups as people share with one another, and build each other up in their walk with Jesus. They also provide a way for members to look after one another. The groups do not have a defined leader, although it may be natural for one member to informally take on that role.

Some groups meet regularly, weekly or fortnightly, while others meet only for specific studies. However, during 2021, COVID interfered with many schedules and some groups suspended meeting.

Currently, there are four groups meeting, with a total of 28 members. Each group chooses the studies that it undertakes. In 2021, congregation members created an online study on "Prayer" which was designed for individual or group use. In 2022, another online study on "The 7 Sayings of Jesus on the Cross" was prepared for Lent and again used individually or in group discussions.

Congregation members who would like to join or drop in to an existing group or be part of a new one should contact Jan or Stuart Craig.

Stuart Craig

CUPPA CRAFT

We are still meeting on the first and third Tuesdays of the month at the Church at 9.30 until 11.30am. Some of us are working on our UFO's (Unfinished Objects) and others are starting their winter projects. Welcome to our newest member who is working on a lovely fair isle jumper. Hope to see you there soon.

Lorraine Howe

BOOK CLUB No. 2

Our happy team of Book Club No 2 meets once monthly for a couple of hours. We take our own books and swap them with each other. We also give a short review of the books we have read and the books we have finished with are donated.

Happy reading,

Lorraine Howe

CONTAINERS FOR CASH

Some time back, Bruce Johnson came to the front of the church and asked the congregation if we could save our bottles and cans to raise money for the church. This was not a big ask as we have a thirsty neighbourhood! I found myself raiding bins of a night time before garbage collection day, setting off a lot of dog alarms and angry shouts!

So far I think I have collected about 12 fertilizer bags of bottles and cans. It has been a lot of fun, and in the first quarter this year we have already raised \$106.

Our best collection nights were when Liena would come out to our darts night competition. A lot of fun was had. Stan and Marnie even contributed!

Garry Martin

SAUSAGE SIZZLE

A project instigated by Liena has been a monthly sausage sizzle to support School Chaplaincy at Maleny and Conondale schools. The event is currently held on the first Friday of the month at Woolworths, Maleny. Chaplains at each school are paid by Scripture Union, but the Chaplains are always seeking funds for projects and other support for the students. These sausage sizzles provide the Chaplains with additional funds to allow them to buy the things needed for particular projects or students.

A significant number of donations are received at each event, because people are interested in supporting the Chaplains, even though they don't want a sausage at the time. As a result, proceeds are usually in the low \$200s for each event.

There is a reliable core of helpers for these events, and thanks go to them for their assistance. Aprons have been specially made by Dorothy, to display the reason for the sausage sizzles, and these help promote the Chaplaincy to the general public.

As for all sausage sizzles held at Woolworths, we are grateful to them for the supply of table, barbecue, and gas. We have also learned that they are prepared to make a contribution to our events, after we send them a letter seeking support. This has the potential to reduce overheads, and it is also noteworthy that Liena pays for the stock for each of our events - thank you!!

In the first quarter of this year, we have raised \$845.



Ron Heitmann

MALENY NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE

In October 2020 I was elected to the Management Committee of the Maleny Neighbourhood Centre as a representative of the Maleny Uniting Church. Your Neighbourhood Centre works with people in our Maleny community and beyond, to assist them in times of need. Some people come looking for emergency relief by way of a food hamper and/or vouchers to purchase food from I.G.A. and Woolworths. There is also assistance available to pay something towards their Telstra account [excluding games and movies] if that is required.

Our Ladies Friendship Group has supported the M.N.C. over many years with supply of non-perishable food items and personal hygiene products such as shampoo and toothpaste etc. The M.N.C. really appreciate this consistent and reliable support. We can't really operate without the generosity of organisations / businesses / or individual people, THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR KINDNESS AND LOVE SHOWN OVER MANY YEARS.

On many occasions people are looking for accommodation. Rental properties are becoming very scarce in the Maleny area and rents are high. We work with other agencies on the Sunshine Coast to try and assist these people. Unfortunately, our Women's House, that the M.N.C. managed, had to close at the beginning of 2022. The house was a haven for many women over the years but the needs and requirements of women looking for this sort of accommodation changed considerably around the end of 2020 through to its closure in January 2022. This was a decision that was not taken lightly, but unfortunately there seemed to be no alternative. A local couple owned the house, it was a very generous gift to the women who lived there during the time of its operation.

There is also the opportunity for homeless people to come to the M.N.C. to have a shower and wash their clothes. In the last couple of months the organisation, Orange Sky, has been parking their van outside the centre on Wednesday mornings to also assist people with these everyday tasks.

Assistance with the use of a computer to enable communication with government agencies such as Centrelink or Medicare is also provided.

Each Thursday the M.N.C. hosts a Community Lunch – a three course meal for a donation of \$7.00 or a little more, if you feel you can afford it. Many lonely people, or those who are finding it hard to make ends meet, come to lunch. If anyone is unable to pay, then that's no problem, just so long as people come and get a good meal and feel welcome.

There are many other services offered by the M.N.C. but perhaps a description of these may have to wait for another report next year.

Thank You each one for giving me the opportunity to be your representative at the Maleny Neighbourhood Centre.

Merilyn Milton



MONTVILLE ANNUAL REPORTS



MONTVILLE UNITING CHURCH

A year has flown by since we last had an AGM and many things have happened in the 12 months. The good folk at Montville have continued to faithfully worship each Sunday and seek to build community as we share in worship and a cuppa after worship and look to care for one another. God is always good and we celebrate the wonder of all God does in our lives.

We were deeply saddened by the death of Rev Ron Potter in early July last year. Ron was the chair of our Ministry Task Group and encouraged us all to remain faithful to God. Some years ago Ron started the Reflection Gallery. It is a wonderful ministry to the community. People regularly leave messages in the visitor's book that talk of how their lives are touched by God's presence as they look at the paintings in the church. Prayers written by members of the public on slips of paper are hung on a prayer shawl and then added to our prayers of intercession. We are thankful that Barbara Willcocks and Ruth Potter have continued to keep the gallery functioning. Members of the congregation open and close the church each day.

A red garden seat was made during the year and it will be dedicated in May to remind people of the issues surrounding domestic violence. The garden and lawns are faithfully maintained by a couple of members of the congregation.

Members of the congregation buy food that is donated to The Shack in Nambour to support their work in caring for the homeless in Nambour.

We provide support to the RE teacher at the Montville school twice a year at Easter and Christmas by providing craft activities and helping the students doing the craft work. This is a rewarding experience and appreciated by the students and the RE teacher.

During Advent we put a special display of banners in the church along with decorated Christmas trees. We also have a manger scene that was placed in the foyer. The grounds were also decorated with shepherds and wise men etc. This year our theme was "Love came down at Christmas." We also provided a morning tea and carol singing for clients of Range Care just prior to Christmas. A good time was had by all.

Some of us have enjoyed joining with the Anglican folk for Bible Study during Advent and Lent. The Range Church has been using our church now for a year for worship and prayer meeting. It is good to be building relationships with other Christians in Montville.

While none of us are getting any younger we seek to faithfully be a Christian presence in Montville and surrounding areas and are grateful for the gifts God has given each of us and the opportunity to serve. We thank Leina for her leadership in our endeavours.

George Woodward



PALMWOODS ANNUAL REPORTS



PALMWOODS COMMUNITY PASTOR REPORT

As the town of Palmwoods continues to expand rapidly, the needs and opportunities to connect with new people in the community also grow, while still needing to support those who have loyally served here over the years.

Running the bookshop in town has allowed me to meet many of the new people and to connect with them on a deeper level. I have been asked to conduct funerals, blessings and speak at events which provide the privilege of helping people to know God's presence at significant times in their lives. Giving the message at the dawn Anzac Day Service is a privilege and an opportunity to speak about sacrificial love and the message of peace that Jesus personifies.

I have been leading the Worship on the 1st Sunday of the month and helping Liena with service preparation on the 3rd Sunday. The 2nd and 4th Sundays at Reflection in the Garden allow me to use creative ways to present God's message through the endless inspiration provided by nature and a constant source of inspiring children's books.

Like most churches we have had the difficulties that arise with an aging membership, sadly the passing on of some and others having health and mobility issues. The challenges through the presence of Covid have added to the issues of isolation and less face to face connection.

I appreciate the way our branch of the congregation has been adaptable to the changing needs of the church and community. It is important for us to be open to God's promise to do something new among us while still being constant in love.

Kay Nixon

PALMWOODS UNITING CHURCH

Palmwoods worship centre has had steady numbers at our 10am services held on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month. Our 3rd Sunday Service is a Combined Service led by Rev Liena and shared with our Tongan members who also have a Youth Service once a month and a Bible Study Group. We delight in the diversity of our group. The age of our members and attenders (though not always able to attend) now ranges from 1 to 101 years!

Our gathering for 'Reflection in the Garden' on the 2nd and 4th Sundays has a regular core group and a range of visitors who come when they can. Many of these are not church-goers or at least lapsed. It provides a safe space for exploring the divine through the symbols of creation.

The Community Garden continues to provide a safe space for connecting with many people and having significant conversations. We look forward to the dedication of the Red Bench in the garden to raise awareness of Domestic Violence and show our care for those struggling.

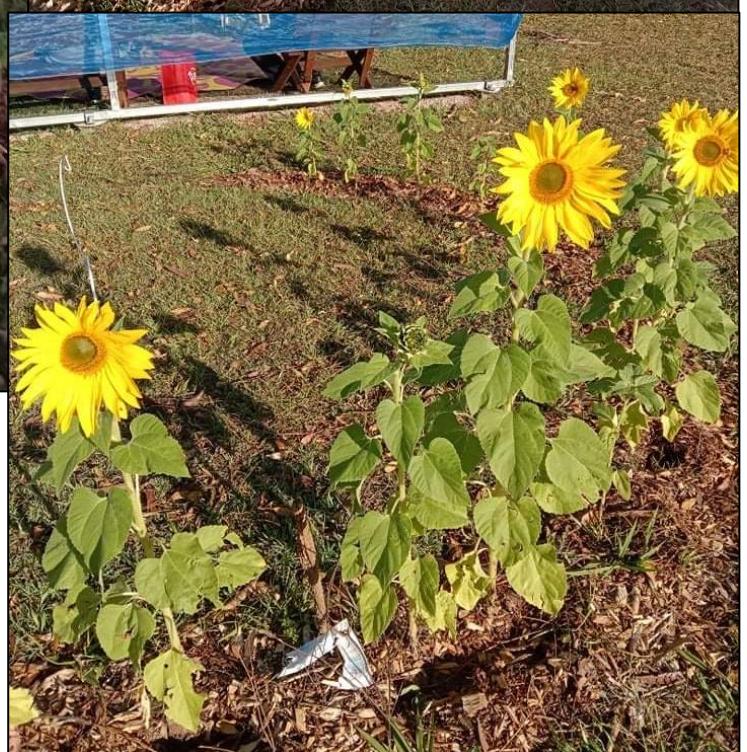
We have a new chaplain at the local school and continue to support their presence which has been established over the years.

The hall has been in regular use 5 days a week which provides some income and allows further connection with the community.

We particularly enjoyed the visit from the band 'Landscape' performing at the Community Garden and the Christmas Carols event which saw a large number attending and a great opportunity to share our faith through the joy of the Christmas message.

We appreciate all those who have helped to maintain the work and property of the church. As Palmwoods community grows we hope to continue to reach out to our community in a way that is relevant and inspiring bringing hope and light to lives through Jesus love.

Kay Nixon



... from little things big things grow ...

FOR YOUR NOTES