



**Annual Report
The Life and Mission of
Croydon Uniting Church
2015**

**presented at the Annual General Meeting
17th April 2016**

**Croydon Uniting Church
Annual Report of the Life and Mission of the Congregation 2015**

Our Guiding Vision

We at Croydon Uniting Church with God's grace and guidance will witness and proclaim the good news of God's love through Jesus Christ to the local and wider community.

We will focus particularly on:

- **Our prayer life, contemplation and discernment**
 - **Pastoral care of the frail and aged**
- **Ministry with children, youth and their families**
- **Actively serving the local and wider community**

This is a report of the life and ministry of Croydon Uniting Church; with these pages a passionate, active, outward-looking and forward-looking community of God's people is represented. 2015 has been a year where much dreaming and looking to the future has been discussed and contemplated, as well as year for celebrating the community that is present now.

Numerically, at the end of the 2015, it consisted of 134 confirmed members, 5 members-in-association, 26 people who are baptised but not confirmed, and 63 adherents, approximately one-third of the total attend worship on any given Sunday.

This report is organised into the following sections: ***Spiritual Matters, Caring for the Congregation, Leading and Planning for the Congregation, Serving the Community, Connections with Other Churches, and Administration, Finance and Property.*** This is broadly the organisation of each meeting of the Church Council, which concentrates our focus firstly on our ministry and formation as a Christian community, our engagement with the wider world in ministry and mission, and the stewardship of our many assets (people, property and finances) which enables us to be people of God in this place at this time. The Church Council holds our vision, and the guiding mission goals formed during 2015, in its thoughts and deliberations at all times.

Spiritual Matters

We continue to thank God for the leadership of Rev. Bronwyn Daniels as our Minister of the Word as she has actively and ably led us throughout 2015. Her report outlines the many tasks and committees that she is involved in, and we are sure there are many more tasks besides those listed! Her busy role includes co-ordinating **Worship, Pastoral Care and our Children, Families and Youth Ministry (CFYM) Committees**, and she has incorporated these reports within the Minister's Report this year. Her full **Minister's Report** can be read on page 13.

Worship is an integral part of our community's life, and Bronwyn ably leads our worship with care, grace and careful discernment. She involves a wide range of people in numerous ways, involving teams and inviting guests to further enhance our worship. We are also thankful for our active lay preachers and lay worship leaders.

We recognise that creative worship takes time and gifts to lead, and we thank all those involved in leading our 10:00 am Sunday morning worship, our Monthly Quiet Church, our monthly Pastoral Care Services and our occasional special services held throughout the year. There are Organists, Choir, Young Singers, Band, Bible Readers, Prayers of the People leaders, and those who assist Bronwyn in leading worship at Aged Care Facilities, as well as the array of “behind the scenes” rosters that enhance our worship experiences – such as those involved in Cleaning, Flowers, Communion Preparation, Stewards, Greeters, Data Projector, Sound, Morning Tea and more. Further information is contained within the **Minister's Report** on page 13.

Our **CFYM (Children, Families and Youth Ministry)** continued in 2015 with our regular events including **KUCA Club** (Kids of the UCA), **YUCC** (Youth of the Uniting Church in Croydon), **Sunday STEPS** (Stories Told, Experienced Practised and Shared), **Music Together** and **FFEET** (Families and Friends Exploring and Eating Together) all continuing throughout the year. An **Easter WOW** (Workshops Outreach Wonder) was again held sharing the Easter story with children from local schools as well as our own congregation.

Playgroup continued to serve the local community over two sessions each week. At the end of 2014 Jodi Mollard had announced her plans to return to study and look for other work, and we welcomed Jacqui Nicholls at the beginning of 2015. We thank her for her enthusiasm and care that she has brought to the role, and are happy to look forward to her continuing leadership in 2016.

Moving into a volunteer role at the beginning of 2015, Carolynne Chandler continued as CFYM Co-ordinator, ably supported by Mary Birch in her vital role as Administrative Support for CFYM. Mary's work includes the co-ordination of the Music Together program, our outreach program run in-conjunction with Connections UnitingCare Agency for young children and their parents.

Further information is contained within the **Minister's Report** on page 13.

Caring for our Congregation

Pastoral Care is also an integral part of our community, and our congregation places great importance on caring for those in and without its midst. A dedicated team of Pastoral Carers support the Church Council and its Elders to live out this responsibility, and to keep regular contact with all our Church family through phone calls, visits and delivering our quarterly Church Newsletter and important updates throughout the year. To all those involved we give our thanks. The **Pastoral Care Committee** oversees this vital component of our congregation and their report is included within the Minister's Report on page 13.

During 2015 we have continued to develop our response to the important **Safe Church** Initiative of the Uniting Church and we have continued to spend time at Church Council fully understanding the intricacies of this area of responsibility and the processes involved and requiring implementation. David Higham undertook to lead us through this, and this process will continue in 2016 as the wider Uniting Church further refines its processes and procedures as regulation and wider community expectations have impact in this area. Church Council also commenced work with regards to

expanding our Emergency Procedures to reflect a wider range of potential issues and Synod Guidelines, and a Defibrillator was purchased to complement our First Aid equipment.

Our congregational life is further enhanced by the activities of the Evening Fellowship and the continuing care of our history by the History Group. Reports from the **Evening Fellowship** and **History Group** provide further information on these important parts of our Church Community. These can be found beginning on pages 16 and 17.

The **Memorial Garden Committee** continues exercise responsibility with diligence and care for this part of our Church Property and its important place in the hearts of particular members of our congregation. A full report from the Committee is included on page 18.

Leading and Planning for our Congregation

2015 has been a busy year for our **Church Council**. The year began with assisting to organise the Rental of Manse (as Bronwyn and Daniel moved into their own home) and all the associated business (such as relocating of phone/internet services).

In November, Church Council was delighted to approve and celebrate in the baptism and/or confirmation of 7 young people. We also welcomed 3 adults through recognition (of confirmed membership) and membership-in-association. The baptism of Andrew Lorimer, Jonathon McDowell and Joseph McDowell and the reaffirmation of baptism (called Confirmation) of David Chandler, Jonathan Chandler, Andrew Lorimer, Jonathon McDowell, Joseph McDowell, Caitlin Reid and Mesu Seviua was a wonderful celebration for those involved and for our congregation.

A significant component of all Church Council work this year has been around planning for our future as a Uniting Church community in Croydon. Ably led by our **Church Council Executive** (Rohan Pryor, Bronwyn Daniels, Carlyne Chandler and Paul Chandler) and **Strategy Group** we have sought to guide the congregation in the next stage of planning for our life for now and into the next five to ten years and beyond. We have spent time discerning, dreaming, worrying, thinking, talking and suggesting possible processes and steps to help us all think about strategy, membership, leadership, ministry and assets (including property, income and reserves). This has included Strategy Information sessions for the Congregation; meetings with representatives of Presbytery and Synod; using Appreciative Inquiry – to consider what we love and value about CUC; dreaming about property redesign; completing different paperwork to commence the formal property and assets review process; working with Synod to appointment consultants to guide us in this process and the forming of the **Project Control Group**. Rohan Pryor, Paul Chandler, Kerry Shearer and Charles Popple were appointed by the Church Council as representatives to this group, which also includes the consultants and Synod and Presbytery Representatives. The PCG guide and lead us through the next stages, beginning with a Feasibility Study (looking at Property, Finances and Mission) to be prepared by the middle of 2016.

Due to the increasing workload begun and anticipated for many of these key leaders in November it was decided to appoint Carlyne Chandler as acting Church Council Chairperson (when required) and request volunteer minute secretaries – or to seek a

minute secretary from outside the Church Council. We continue to seek a Treasurer and thank Paul Chandler and Valerie Wilson for continuing to undertake this work until a replacement is found.

In the second half of the year we farewelled David Higham from Church Council as he and Val moved to Berwick – and acknowledged with thanks his willingness to continue to be involved in both lay preaching and guiding us through the formal Safe Church process beyond his time at Croydon.

Leadership responsibilities though this strategy and review period have placed great demand on key leaders and we acknowledge and thank the Church Council Executive, Strategy Group, Project Control Group and Elders/Church Councillors for their continuing commitment to leadership at Croydon Uniting, and for their willingness to share their gifts and time in these various roles.

We again thank the Church Council, Strategy Committee and Project Control Group for guiding us in through this strategic review, and hold them in our prayers as they continue to grapple with, and guide the Church Council as it in turn grapples with, the challenges that lie before us – many shared by the wider church - as we seek to identify what church will look like and be in the 21st Century.

Serving the Community

A significant part of our outreach and mission continues to be Helping Hand, serving those in need in the local Croydon community. We continue to thank Connections for the use of the space we use to run this important and vital program, and we thank the many volunteers (both from within the church community, and from beyond – including past Helping Hand clients) who staff Helping Hand, as well as those who assist with tasks such as the Bread collection. We farewelled Lisa Martin as co-ordinator in the first part of the year as changes in her other work arrangements impacted on her life. We had the opportunity to thank her during a special focussed worship, and we then welcomed Dianne Bull who commenced as Co-ordinator during May.

Once again, the challenge for the Helping Hand Support Committee continued to be securing funding to continue this work through funding the co-ordinator position, and we thank the Helping Hand Support Committee for their continuing work in this regard. Reports from both the **Helping Hand Support Committee** and our **Helping Hand Co-ordinator** paint a more detailed picture of this important outreach project beginning on page 19.

A key area of concern for the Croydon Uniting community is Social Justice, and we thank once again the Social Justice Committee for their important role in ensuring this is an area of our attention, and for identifying ways we can respond. Asylum Seeker Support is also part of this, and we thank all the work undertaken in both these areas. A report from the **Social Justice Committee** on page 27 provides further information.

The Presbytery Mental Health Ministry Project was again in our thoughts as Evening Fellowship and the Congregation both contributed \$500 (\$1 000 in total) to its continuing work.

An outreach sponsored by our congregation is Croydon Parish Players (CPP). For over 50 years this Community Theatre Group has operated within the life of our congregation, and during 2015 they produced the musical *My Fair Lady* and the play *Almost, Maine*. During 2016 they once again donated funds to Helping Hand and other worthy causes, a key part of their outreach to the wider community. During 2015, the Church Council Executive met with the CPP key committee members and one of the things discussed was further strengthening our relationship –one way this has occurred was a clear connection to Croydon Uniting in their printed programs during the year. The most recent **Croydon Parish Players** Annual Report is available from the Church Office.

Chaplaincy at the local schools, Croydon Primary and Melba College, continued to be actively supported with donations from a small number of members covering our church's considerable donation of approaching \$8 000 towards supporting the Chaplains at both schools and many in the congregation supported other fundraising events throughout the year. We appreciate the long-continued dedication, effort and diligent support of Bruce and Carole Turner on the local Chaplaincy committee (who manage both funding and support for the two chaplains) and we again thank them for this important work in the community.

We also recognise the role of our Lay Preachers, Organists and others in supporting worship at places beyond our congregation, including Walmsley Retirement Village and other congregations further afield.

Connections with Other Churches

As a congregation in the **Yarra Yarra Presbytery**, the Presbytery continues its work as a council of the UCA with responsibility for a large regional area. Supported by members of the Church Council, Bronwyn regularly attends Presbytery meetings, and Presbytery representatives have worked alongside us in our Strategy Process throughout the year.

As a member of the **Outer Eastern Cluster of UCA Churches** we again shared in combined worship on the UCA Anniversary and on Easter Day (Dawn Worship). We continue to hold the other cluster congregations (Croydon North, Lilydale, Montrose and Mooroolbark) as we all grapple with what the future looks like for our individual congregations and as a cluster of UCA congregations in the Outer East.

As members of the **Maroondah Fellowship of Churches**, we hosted a meeting during the year and we thank those who regularly participate in this on our behalf.

We continue to host the **Chin Christian Fellowship, Melbourne** (CCCM), a Baptist community which meets in our buildings, and thinks of this site as 'home'. As is our practice, the Memorandum of Understanding between the two church communities was re-affirmed in 2015, and the Executives continue to meet regularly. CCCM enthusiastically contribute to grounds and cleaning rosters, support working bees as well as contribute a financial donation. As they worked through leadership changes throughout 2015, we were and are pleased to be able to continue to offer a 'home' and our support to them, as they focus their own energy on supporting their people as they settle in Australia as refugees.

Administration, Finance and Property

Once again we are supported in our work by Peter Mitchell in the role of **Office Secretary**. His tasks in 2015 included selected and organising a new photocopier and a new office computer. These pieces of equipment support his diligent management of bookings for church building use, the preparation of the many documents that require regular and occasional preparation and assisting Bronwyn, along with the many other tasks that arise in our church's daily life.

A report of the work of the **Property Management Committee** is on page 29. We thank the committed members of the Property Management Committee as we recognise the different circumstances they have worked under during our strategic and property review process during 2015 as they have continued to actively care for our property. We are continually grateful for those who undertake roles on cleaning and grounds rosters and for our employed cleaners, Seni and Suka Seviua. The work of all these people leads to a property which is presented as well cared for.

The finance of the church has been carefully monitored by the Church Council. At the 2015 Annual General Meeting a very significant detail was signalled. With a diminished property spend until the Feasibility Study is concluded and other prudent spending, the result by the end of the year was break-even. Even so, offerings were 8% down compared to 2014, due to death and transfers. This highlights the need for the Feasibility Study. The property was also less used than in 2014, with rent down by nearly 40% compared with 2014. **Statements of Income and Expenditure** are found on page 30.

Graham and Maggie McKern will take over in 2016 as **Stewardship** Co-ordinators with a Stewardship Program to take place in early 2016.

The generosity of the congregation cannot be underestimated (refer to page 32): we endorsed a Retiring Offering and donation to support those affected by floods in Myanmar (supporting our Chin friends in their donations), and over \$2600 was collected for the Christmas Bowl, over \$7200 for Asylum Seekers and nearly \$5500 for Helping Hand. Indeed, over \$15,600 for various appeals collected, which is 13% above offering, or nearly \$100 for every adult (and in addition to this, there are the substantial gifts to the wider community from Evening Fellowship and Croydon Parish Players).

In 2014, a generous donation made it possible to have a 'reverse offering' of \$20 per person for those who attended on that Sunday. A wide range of good works and innovative uses were reported, facilitating giving to the congregation and numerous other worthy causes and projects, far in excess of the dollar value of the facilitating gift. In addition over \$1500 was returned to Croydon Uniting Church as gifts, which was approaching the value of the initial gift - a gift which truly multiplied.

In Memory

In recognising the achievements and events of 2015 we also remember the lives of those people that unfortunately passed away in the last 12 months.

We remember Lois Gardner, Jeanette Griffiths, Margaret Crawl, Don Chafer, Edna Hagley, Joyce Aitcheson, Marie Wood and Beryl Orr. We give thanks for their lives

shared with us, and have ongoing memories of the times that they spent in our Church community, and pay tribute to them for the many and varied contributions that they each made to the life of this church and beyond.

In Conclusion

Croydon Uniting Church consistently demonstrates its commitment to fellowship, spiritual discernment and formation, worship and working for the community through its diverse, vibrant and active community. Its varied and busy life and mission live out its strong sense of call to be God's people in this place, to show Christ's mission in care and concern for not only those in the church community but beyond.

We sit at a point in time when most churches are considering what they may look like, be and live as followers of Christ in a changed and changing world. The Feasibility Study to be tabled in 2016 will mean that the Annual Report at this time next year will be one that looks back on a watershed moment. As we continue to wrestle with these challenges of strategy, membership, leadership, ministry, assets we aim to open ourselves to look with new eyes and to listen to God's call to continue to a people *Making a Difference* - living as a faithful and called people in this time and place.

Carolynne and Paul Chandler
Co-Secretaries, Church Council

Croydon Uniting Church Vision and Mission Goals

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Our Guiding Vision:

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We will focus particularly on:

- *Our prayer life, contemplation and discernment*
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- *Ministry with children, youth and their families*
- *Actively serving the local and wider community*

Mission Goals – January 2015

1. Congregation / faith community needs: *nurturing discipleship for mission*

- a. Worship (flexible worship & fellowship spaces with accessible facilities - including toilets)
- b. Pastoral care (including frail and aged, and social networks)
- c. Faith development (including children, youth & their families)
- d. Careful consideration of the Memorial Garden

2. Financial sustainability: *for the next 10+ years*

- a. Pay for ministry team (minister & other missional staffing needs)
- b. Accommodation for minister (manse/funding)
- c. Financial costs including insurance, building services (power & gas), property maintenance
- d. Support of wider Uniting Church commitments (faith development, education & resourcing, social justice, international mission, etc.)
- e. Adapt & streamline property needs and use

3. Build local community partnerships: *sharing God's love in Croydon*

- a. Church play groups
- b. Helping Hand (location possibilities, financial support)
- c. Local school chaplaincy

4. Support wider community: *sharing God's love for the world*

- a. Asylum seeker support
- b. Social justice advocacy & action

5. Potential new areas of mission focus: *sharing God's love in fresh words and deeds*

- a. Faith formation in the 21st century
- b. New initiatives in Aged care outreach/pastoral care/support

6. Building partnerships: *host relationships & tenants*

- a. Croydon Parish Players
- b. Chin Christian Church Melbourne
- c. Music Together program
- d. Other regular users

CHURCH COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP 2015

all Church Council members are Elders

Adele Allen
 Meron Allen
 Mary Birch
 Carolyne Chandler (*Co-Secretary*)
 Paul Chandler (*Co-Secretary and Convenor of Finance Committee*)
 David Collett
 Bronwyn Daniels (*ex officio – Minister of the Word*)
 Jill Davison
 David Higham
 Chris Hill
 Stephen Honey
 Don Marsham
 Peter Mitchell
 Charles Popple
 Rohan Pryor (*Chairperson*)
 Bruce Turner
 Barney Wilson
 Valerie Wilson
 Kay Yen
 Concluded term at 2015 AGM: Paul Cordeux

CHURCH COUNCIL AREAS OF OVERSIGHT 2015

Bold are Church Councillors

Congregational Office Holders

Russell DAVISON (*Chairperson – Congregation*)
Valerie WILSON (*Secretary – Congregation*)

Church Council Executive

Bronwyn DANIELS (*Minister*)
Rohan Pryor (*Chair - Church Council*)
Carolyne CHANDLER (*Co-secretary - Church Council*)
Paul CHANDLER (*Co-secretary - Church Council and Convenor - Finance Committee*)

Church Council Employees

Mary BIRCH (*CFYM Admin Assistant – casual max. 4 hrs per week*)
Peter MITCHELL (*Office Secretary – 12 hrs per week*)
 Jacqui NICHOLLS (*Playgroup Co-ordinator – 6 hrs per week*)
 Lisa MARTIN (*till May*) then Dianne BULL (*from May on*) (*Helping Hand Co-ordinator – 1 day per week*)
 FUNDED BY OUTSIDE DONATIONS

Strategy Committee

Bronwyn DANIELS (*Minister*)
Carolyne CHANDLER (*Convenor and Co-Secretary – Church Council*)
Charles POPPLE
David HIGHAM
Kerry SHEARER
Paul CHANDLER (*Co-Secretary – Church Council and Convenor – Finance Committee*)
Rohan PRYOR (*Chairperson – Church Council*)
 Russell DAVISON (*Chairperson – Congregation*)

Project Control Group

Charles POPPLE
Kerry SHEARER
Paul CHANDLER (*Co-Secretary – Church Council and Convenor – Finance Committee*)
Rohan PRYOR (*Chairperson – Church Council*)

CROYDON UNITING CHURCH

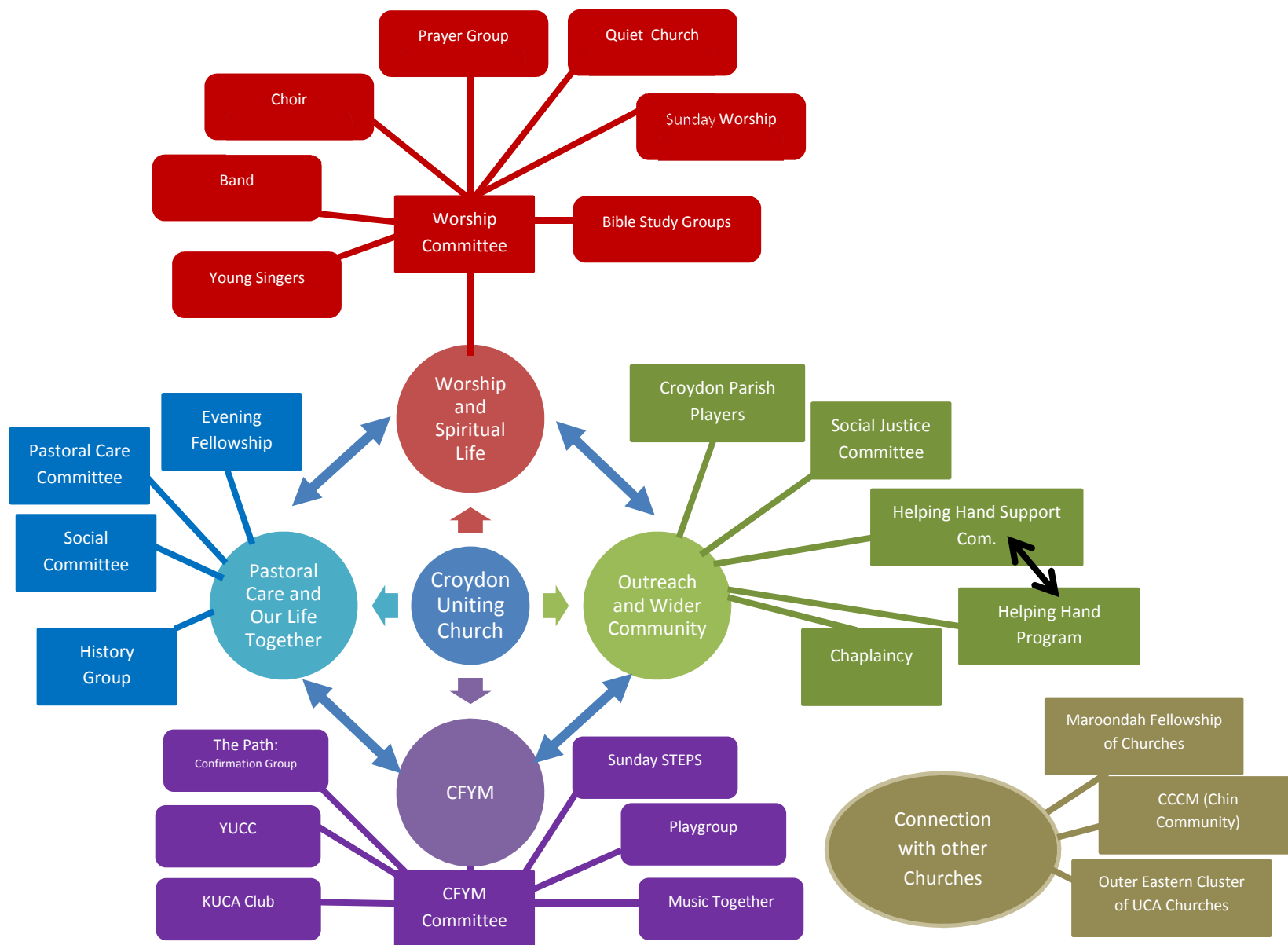
What we look like....

Circles are “areas” of our Church’s Life

Rectangles are Church Council Committees or Groups with “Structure”

Rounded Corner Rectangles are Groups or Key Activities

The STONES at the bottom are the Councils or Groups which lead or support our life as a faith community.



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