



**Annual Report
The Life and Mission of
Croydon Uniting Church
2014**

**presented at the Annual General Meeting
22nd March 2015**

Croydon Uniting Church

Annual Report of the Life and Mission of the Congregation 2014

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. These opening summary pages, completed by the individual reports, reveal an active, enthusiastic, passionate and outward-looking group of God's people. Numerically, at the end of the 2014, it consisted of 149 confirmed members, 3 members-in-association, 30 people who are baptised but not confirmed, and 25 adherents, approximately one-third of whom 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 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 2014. Her report outlines the many and varied tasks she is involved in, and we are sure there are many more not listed! Her full **Minster's Report** can be read on page 11.

Brownyn leads our worship with care, discernment and grace, involving a wide range of people and inviting teams from within the congregation as well as visiting guests to further enhance our worship in various ways. 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, as well as our Organists, Choir, Young Singers, Band, Bible Readers, Prayers of the People leaders 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. Thanks also to those who assist Bronwyn when she leads worship at aged-care facilities in our local community. Further information is contained in the **Worship Committee** Report on page 13.

Our CFYM (Children, Families and Youth Ministry) began with the highlight of young people and adult volunteers attending NCYC'14 (National Christian Youth Convention) in Paramatta in January, and we were pleased to have them share their experiences through leading worship and participating throughout the year. CFYM work continued with *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 held sharing the Easter story with children from local schools as well as our own congregation.

Playgroup continued to serve the local community and Church Council was pleased to receive a well thought out proposal from the CFYM Committee and Jodi Mollard (our playgroup co-ordinator) to consider a second playgroup session. This trial proved very successful and is planned to continue in 2015. Jodi announced towards the end of 2014 her plans to return to study and look for other work, and we thank her for her dedication, care and wonderful leadership and wish her well in the future. CFYM Committee commenced the process of finding a new co-ordinator to lead this important outreach program into 2015.

Carolyn Chandler announced that she would end working in her paid role as CFYM Co-ordinator, after 10 years. She will continue into 2015 as volunteer co-ordinator, ably supported by the CFYM Committee. Church Council has prepared a minute of appreciation for her considerable work in leading this area of our ministry over the last decade and more. We also thank Mary Birch for her dedicated work, as she continues in her vital role as Administrative Support for CFYM, particularly her 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 in the **CFYM Committee** Report on page 14.

Caring for our Congregation

Our congregation takes seriously the importance of caring for those in and without its midst. A team of dedicated Pastoral Carers and Church Councillors/Elders try to keep regular contact with all our Church family through phone calls, visits and delivering our quarterly Church Newsletter. We have recognised the increasing challenge of maintaining contact with those who have moved into permanent or temporary care, as well as supporting those involved in our outreach programs such as *Playgroup*. To all those involved we give our thanks. The **Pastoral Care Committee** oversees this vital component of our congregation and their report can be read on page 15.

During 2014 we have further developed our response to the Safe Church Initiative of the Uniting Church and we formally adopted some processes related to this – which further enhance our “A Safe Place for Children” policies adopted a number of years ago. A brief **Safe Church** report is included on page 16.

Our life together as a congregation continues to be enhanced by the active life of the Evening Fellowship and the continuing care of our history by the History Group. Evening Fellowship continues to not only provide an opportunity for fellowship and life together, they also raise funds for many causes – over \$3 500 during 2014. Reports from the **Evening Fellowship**, **History Group** and the **History Group Church Archivist** provide

further information on these important parts of our Church Community. These can be found beginning on pages 17.

The **Memorial Garden Committee** continues to diligently 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 21.

Leading and Planning for our Congregation

The **Church Council** has undergone quite a bit of change over 2014 as it wrestled with the challenges of leadership and further developing our strategy for guiding and leading our congregation into the future (building on the extensive work done in 2013 on developing our guiding vision). These challenges included: moving to the Consensus Model of decision making (the preferred model for all the councils of the church (Assembly, Synod, Presbytery and Congregation), a change which we are still learning, but which we hope will allow us to hear differing voices more fully and to help us to discern God's will in our decision making processes in a new way; we moved to monthly meetings involving both business and conversation – with worship and pastoral care at the centre of what we do together; and leadership changes throughout the year occurred as both Charles Popple (Church Council Secretary) and Kay Yen (Church Council Chairperson) stepped down from their roles. They had carefully and diligently been in these leadership roles for some time, and we thanked them for their faithful service and are pleased as they continue in the role of Church Councillor/Elder. Carolyne Chandler agreed to be interim Church Council Chairperson and Peter Mitchell interim Church Council Secretary, and we thank them for agreeing to take on these roles. In December, Rohan Pryor was elected Chairperson and Carolyne and Paul Chandler were elected Co-Secretaries. As a result the position of Treasurer is vacant with Paul Chandler and Valerie Wilson continuing to undertake this work until a replacement is found. We thank all these people for their gifts and dedication in these various leadership roles.

During 2014 Church Council re-energised its **Strategy Committee** to guide us in the next stage of planning for our life as a congregation for now and into the next five to ten years and beyond. This group has begun discerning, dreaming, worrying, thinking, talking and suggesting possible processes and steps to help us all think about strategy, membership, leadership, ministry, assets (including property, income and reserves).

During 2014, the Church Council faced the challenge of a request from the Property Management Committee to undertake underpinning work on the hall, which would have substantially exceeded their allocated budget. This became a trigger for attending to, with new energy, the strategic issues mentioned above. After much careful deliberation, it was decided to defer a decision about these works until mid-2015, not making significant changes to the monies available for ministry or property until such time as information is available through a strategic review. This is reflected in the 2015 budget.

We thank the Strategy Committee 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

Helping Hand continues to be a significant part of our outreach and mission as we serve those in need in the local Croydon Community. We thank Connections for the space we use to run this vital program, as well as our considerable thanks to the volunteers who staff Helping Hand on a regular basis. Led ably by our Helping Hand Co-ordinator Lisa Martin, this team of volunteers now contains many from the wider community who appreciate and wish to support this vital work in the community. Challenges this year have included working to secure funding into the future 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 22.

Social Justice continues to be a strong focus of concern for our congregation, and we thank the Social Justice Committee for their important role in ensuring this is an area of our attention. Asylum Seeker Support is part of this, and we thank all the work undertaken in both these areas. A report from the **Social Justice Committee** on page 26 provides further information.

We continue to be active and committed supporters of Chaplaincy with donations from a small number of members covering our church's considerable donation of \$9 600 towards supporting Chaplains at both Croydon Primary School and Melba College (the merger of Croydon and Maroondah Secondary Schools), and support from many in the congregation at other fundraising events throughout the year. This work is ably supported through the long-continued dedication and effort 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 the committed and diligent support of this important work in the community. The full **Chaplaincy** report can be read on page 27.

Croydon Parish Players (CPP) is another outreach area sponsored by our congregation. For over 50 years this Community Theatre Group has operated within the life of our congregation, and during 2014 produced the musical *Jesus Christ Superstar* and the play *Breath of Spring*. During 2014 they donated funds to Helping Hand and other worthy causes, as they do every year, with over \$50 000 donated over the last 10 years. The most recent **Croydon Parish Players** Annual Report is available from the Church Office.

A significant initiative during 2014 was the **Pews for Fiji**. A dream of one of our church members, Seni Sevuia, to assist her parents' home congregation in Fiji to have pews and other church furniture was realised through donations from two UCA congregations who were moving and amalgamating. Through the donation of money from various congregational members, Evening Fellowship, Croydon Rotary and other sources (totalling over \$5 500) we were able to support and facilitate the costs of transporting the very large and full shipping container that stood in our car-park for a short time. We have been delighted to see photos and video from Fiji of the container arriving and two of our members, Stephen and Martina Honey, were able to visit the church when in Fiji.

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. Bronwyn, supported by members of the Church Council attend regular Presbytery meetings, and Presbytery have begun to work alongside us in our Strategy Process.

An active member of the **Outer Eastern Cluster of UCA Churches** we shared in combined worship on the UCA Anniversary and on Easter Day (Dawn Worship). We are pleased to share in the excitement of Croydon North and Lilydale congregations as they step into new phases in their lives with property changes during 2014. We keep the other Cluster congregations (Montrose and Mooroolbark) also in our prayers as we journey together as UCA Congregations in the Outer East.

We are also members of the **Maroondah Fellowship of Churches** and we thank those who regularly participate in this on our behalf. A report detailing the Fellowship's work is on page 28.

Croydon Uniting Church continues to be a host to the **Chin Christian Fellowship, Melbourne**, a Baptist community which meets in our buildings, and thinks of this site as 'home'. A Memorandum of Understanding between the two church communities was re-affirmed in 2014, and the Executives continue to meet regularly. We are grateful for the contribution of the CCCM to grounds and cleaning rosters and their enthusiastic participation at working bees, as well as for their financial donation. We are pleased to be able 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

We continue to be supported in our work by Peter Mitchell in the role of **Office Secretary**. His careful preparation of regular and occasional documents, diligent management of bookings for church building use and many more tasks assisted Bronwyn and Carolyne in our ministry team and all parts of the church's diverse and busy life.

A group of 13 highly committed people form the Property Management Committee. They have been typically active during 2014, repairing fences, organising working bees, organising shed clearances, and all the many tasks, small and large, which are associated with our property. As a congregation, we are 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. A report of the work of the **Property Management Committee** is on page 29.

The finance of the church has been carefully monitored by the Church Council. A deficit of 7% of reserves was anticipated for the calendar year of 2014, but due to prudent spending, a surplus was returned. Mainly due to deaths and transfers, offerings were 3% down. Income from the rental of property was over 12% above expectations, but one of the more substantial renters is not continuing into 2015. This situation has led Church Council to be careful about financial planning for the years ahead. **Statements of Income and Expenditure** are found on page 30.

The generosity of the congregation cannot be underestimated (refer to page 30): over \$2600 collected for the Christmas Bowl, over \$4500 for Asylum Seekers and nearly \$3000 for Helping Hand. Indeed, nearly \$11,000 for various appeals collected, which is 8% above offering, or \$62 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 November, there was a focus on stewardship for the year ahead, thanks especially to Paul Chandler, David Higham and Rohan Pryor. From this, we are pleased that income through offering for 2015 is anticipated to be similar to what has been during 2014, which represents an *increase* in real terms. 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 have been heard of, facilitating giving to the congregation and numerous other worthy causes and projects, far in excess of the dollar value of the facilitating gift, and we are aware of on-going projects and ideas which will be presented during the course of 2015.

In Memory

In recognising the achievements and events of 2014 we also remember the lives of those people that unfortunately passed away in the last 12 months.

We remember Betty Faulkner, Beryl Oke and Joyce McLeod. 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 continues to be a diverse, vibrant and active congregation. It demonstrates through its varied and busy life and mission a strong sense of call to be God's people in this place, to live out Christ's mission in care and concern for not only those in the church community but beyond. It demonstrates commitment to fellowship, spiritual discernment and formation, worship and working for the community.

It has always sought to discern God's will in how it lives, and this is no less apparent than it's clear focus throughout 2013 and 2014 to clearly define its core vision and develop its mission for now and the future.

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, and we recognise that we too are grappling with these issues. As we continue to wrestle with these challenges of strategy, membership, leadership, ministry, assets (including property, income and reserves) we aim to open ourselves to look with new eyes and to listen to God's call to continue to be as we have (in those churches that form our history and are now Croydon Uniting Church) and hope that we will be into the future - *Making a Difference* - living as a faithful and called people – to live as Christ's agents in this time and place.

Carolynne and Paul Chandler
Co-Secretaries Church Council

CHURCH COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP 2014

all Church Council members are Elders

Adele Allen
Meron Allen
Mary Birch
Carolyne Chandler (*Interim Chairperson July -December*)
Paul Chandler (*Covenor of Finance Committee*)
David Collett
Paul Cordeux
Bronwyn Daniels (*ex officio – Minister of the Word*)
Jill Davison
David Higham
Chris Hill
Stephen Honey
Don Marsham
Peter Mitchell (*Interim Secretary July -December*)
Charles Popple (*Secretary January- June*)
Rohan Pryor (*Chairperson appointed in December*)
Bruce Turner
Barney Wilson
Valerie Wilson
Kay Yen (*Chairperson January- June*)

CHURCH COUNCIL AREAS OF OVERSIGHT 2014

Bold are Church Councillors

Congregational Office Holders

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

Church Council Executive

Bronwyn DANIELS (Minister)
Kay Yen (Chair - Church Council) **and then Carolyne CHANDLER** (Interim Chair - Church Council)
Charles POPPLE (Secretary - Church Council) **and then Peter MITCHELL** (Interim Secretary - Church Council)
Paul CHANDLER (Convenor - Finance Committee)

Church Council Employees

Carolyne CHANDLER (CFYM Co-ordinator 4 hrs per week) ENDING AT END OF 2014
Mary BIRCH (CFYM Admin Assistant – casual max. 4 hrs per week)
Peter MITCHELL (Office Secretary – 12 hrs per week)
Jodi MOLLARD (Playgroup Co-ordinator – 4hrs per week)
Lisa MARTIN (Helping Hand Co-ordinator – 1 day per week) FUNDED BY OUTSIDE DONATIONS

Strategy Committee

Bronwyn DANIELS (Minister)
Carolyne CHANDLER (Convenor and Interim Chairperson – Church Council)
Charles POPPLE
David HIGHAM
Paul CHANDLER (Convenor – Finance Committee)
Peter MITCHELL (Interim Secretary – Church Council)
Rohan PRYOR
Russell DAVISON (Chairperson – Congregation)

CROYDON UNITING CHURCH

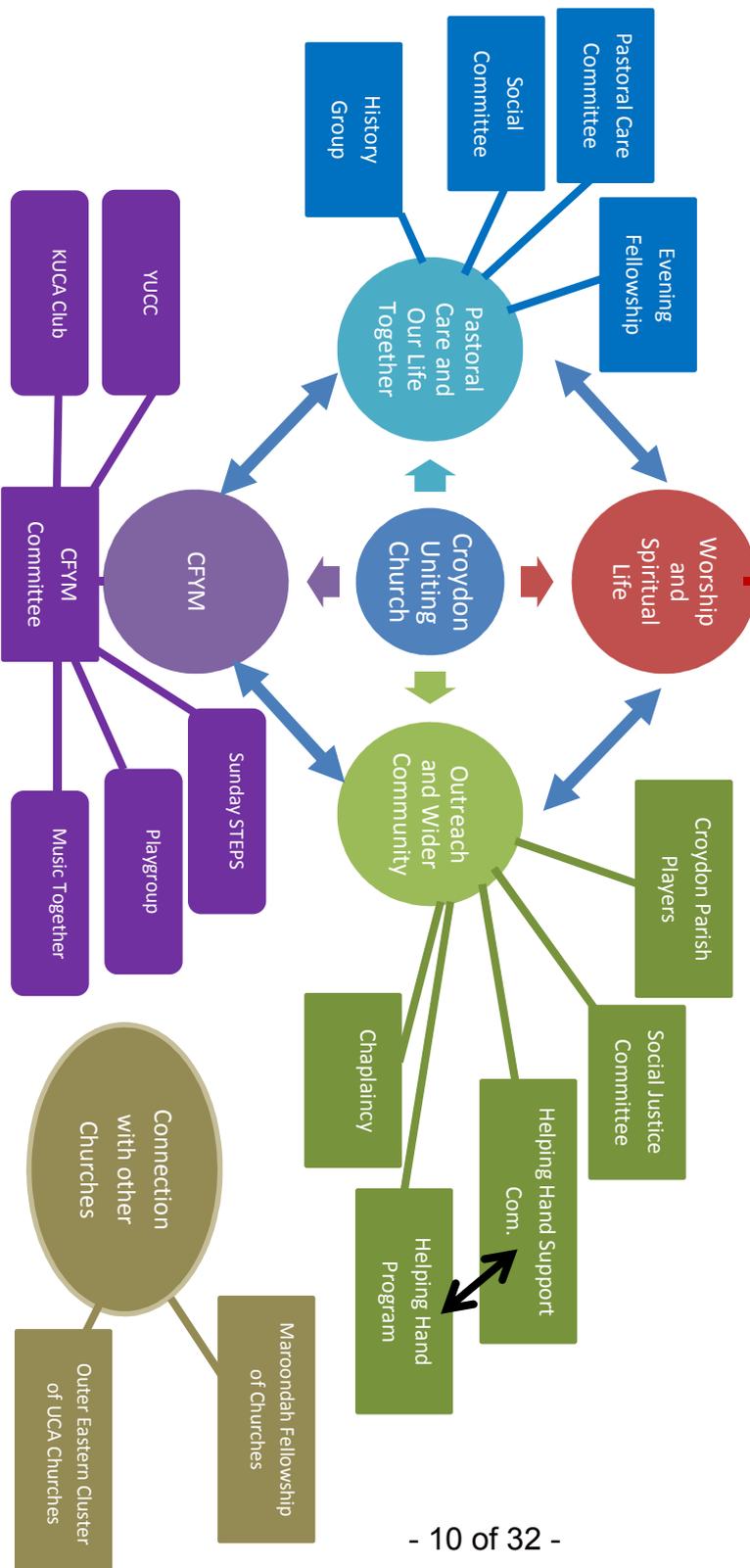
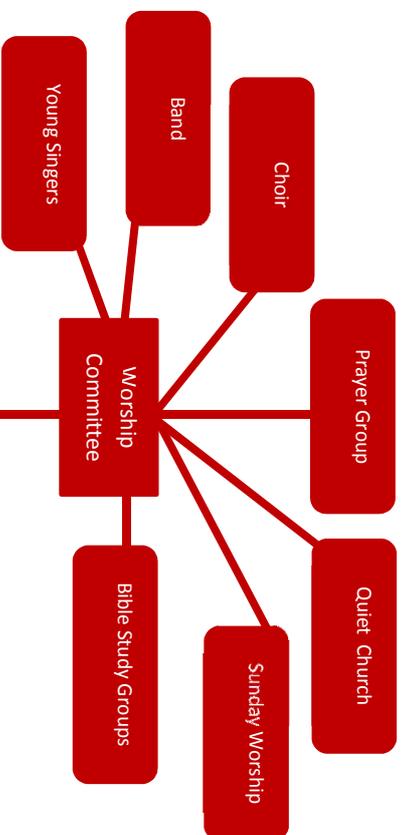
What we look like....

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.



Led and Supported by

