



ANNUAL REPORT 2023

**Hervey Bay, Burrum Heads
and Howard
Uniting Church**

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Minister

January 2023 – January 2024.

Some of the highlights from the past year

The First of Everything

Over the past year I had the opportunity to experience almost the first of everything, some first do, however, stand out above the rest.

Covid-19 (March 2023)

One would not necessarily put Covid-19 as a highlight. However, it turned out to be a truly blessed time for us. First, we experienced a level of care from the congregation that I have not experienced at any other congregation I had the opportunity to serve in. Members continually blessed us with home cooked meals over this time. Many thanks to all who showed love and care for us. Secondly, since arriving in Hervey Bay we had a struggle to find a GP, members of the congregation recommended their GP's and we ended up with a list of almost 20 GP's to contact and see if they accept new patients. It had to be the 4th or 5th practice we contacted that was willing to accept new patients and now we have a GP in Hervey Bay.

Easter Time

It was adventurous to have two Maundy Thursday Services, one in the afternoon and one in the evening. Both those services were well attended, and we were able to minister to more people by having two services.

10 Days of Prayer (between Ascension Day and Pentecost)

It was a wonderful time spent in prayer. However, it was sad to see so few people attend these prayer meetings.

Training

Even though it remains a struggle to find training opportunities in our local area, I did manage to stay up to date with all the mandatory training and completed as part of my Continuing Education for Ministry Agents (CEM) two subjects (in the fields of Church Management and New Testament Studies) at the South African Theological Seminary, being a correspondence institution it allowed me to complete the training in the comfort of my home office.

Sharing in Funerals

The past year was a year where we, as a congregation, committed so many loved ones into the resurrection life of Jesus. I shared in the following funerals.

Brian Sanderson (February 2023)
Allan Stride (June 2023)
Mavis Hunsley (September 2023)
Joe Davison (January 2024)

Gillian Ayoub (May 2023)
Suzanne Smith (July 2023)
Hugo Nolan (October 2023)

I extend a thank you to Wes and Paddy who shared in many other funerals and offered support to the grieving families.

Baptism

There was one baptism, and I enjoyed the voice of a young child in the congregation, and I can assure you that the baptism of Hudson Ross Lewis (July 2023) will be forever in my memory.

Synod 2023

In October I attended my first Synod meeting. I consider the meeting to be good even though the meeting debated the future of Chaplaincy in the Public Hospital Space.

Mother-in-law, Christmas Carols and Covid.

A truly mixed bag of stuff happened to us during the closing of the year 2023.

Just to give some context.

Around mid-November we received news that the health of Christi-Mari's mother was deteriorating faster than expected. This meant we boarded a plane on Tuesday 14 November 2023 to pay mother-in-law a visit. On Wednesday 22 November we greeted mother-in-law for what turned out to be the last time. We arrived back in Hervey Bay on Friday 24 November 2023. During the time we were away the church got decorated, final arrangements were made for our Christmas Carols weekend on the 25 and 26 November 2023. The Christmas Carols BBQ and Service was probably the best and most beautiful Christmas Carols event I was a part of in many years.

It would have been on the flight between Dubai and Brisbane that we caught Covid-19 again, with Christi-Mari testing positive on 26 November 2023 and I a couple of days later.

On Wednesday 29 November 2023 around 11:30 pm (Hervey Bay Time) mother-in-law passed away. While still recovering from Covid-19, funeral arrangements were made and we left for South Africa on Monday 4 December 2023 to attend and participate in the funeral of Christi-Mari's mom.

During this chaotic time of ups and downs, we truly felt the support and prayers of the local congregation. From helping with making the Christmas Carols events extra special to caring for us while recovering from Covid. Your prayers and messages of support are truly appreciated. Through your words and actions, we truly experienced the love of God. THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!



Regular Ministry Activities

Wednesday Evening Bible Study

During the year we covered many Bible books and certain topics that arose during the year. In the first term we studied the Gospel of Matthew. In term two, we studied Song of Songs and Colossians. In term three, we studied Ecclesiastes. In term four, we covered topics such as Bible Translations, Prayer, and the Work of the Holy Spirit.

In January 2024 we already studied the shortest book in the Old Testament, Obadiah. In term one we will be studying the Gospel of Mark.

Church in Afrikaans

September 2023 saw the first service in Afrikaans, and we had 37 people attending the first service. In October 2023 there were around 30 people attending. Church in Afrikaans fits well with the broader Uniting Church in being a multicultural church. This means we are hosting two cultural groups in our building for services of worship (Koreans and Afrikaners). At the last service in January 2024, we were about 45 people in attendance with around 30 families (representing around 70 people) in our contact register.

TriCare Services

In January 2024 we had our first service at TriCare in Point Vernon, and it was a blessed time.

On a Personal Note

Permanent Residency Visa Granted

On the 31st of January 2024, we received our Permanent Residency Visas. Thank you to all who were praying for us regarding this concern.

Discerning the Future

It is with hope that we look to the future and to the next year.

Ministry at Aged Care Facilities

Towards the end of the reporting year, we had two Church Growth Workshops. At the first workshop, we acknowledged that we are a congregation serving the retired person and that there are many opportunities to grow our congregation. Covid-19 meant a lot of ministry opportunities in the aged care facilities were lost and relationships with the aged care facilities were lost. Over the next year, I will work hard in establishing new relationships with the aged care facilities, especially the aged care facilities owned and managed by the greater Uniting Church (Fraser Shores and Master's Lodge). Hopefully the building of these relationships will not just lead to more ministry opportunities for us but will lead to new people joining our church and attending our activities.

A Church for Families

At the Church Growth Workshops, we also said we want to become a church for families and to be a multi-generational church. In the short term we may not see much happening in this space other than some small additions in the Sunday Service like the inclusion of modern hymns and a the establishing of a space "for the young at heart" in all our services.

Over the course of the next year, I will work with our school chaplains and RI teachers in the best way to become a multi-generational church where all can feel welcome and included in our services of worship.

Being a known Church

It is sad that many people are simply not aware of our existence. In the coming year I hope that we can be a more known church in the community. I hope that when people move to Hervey Bay from other areas that they will at least consider visiting us and in the longer term become involved in the life of the church and in the mission that God has for us. To achieve this, I will be working on the following:

- 1) To establish a working relationship with 105.1 Rhema Wide Bay radio station and to promote the church and our activities on the Radio Station.
- 2) To upgrade our website so that our digital spaces are inviting and welcoming.
- 3) To develop a better marketing strategy and marketing material.

I do hope that, when people in the street see me with my “Hervey Bay Uniting Church” polo shirt on, they do not have to ask who and what we are, but that they will know who we are, what we do, but more importantly that they are welcome in our church.

In Conclusion

It was truly a privilege to serve you over the past year. I am forever grateful for the opportunity that this congregation is affording me to live out my calling. I am looking forward **to grow in the love of God, to make disciples and to show His love in all we do** with you in Hervey Bay, Howard, Burrum Heads and beyond.

Blessings

Rev. Willem Smit

Minister of the Word

Church Council Chair

Once again, the year has been a busy one as we journey forward seeking to deepen our faith and live out our mission statement “To grow in the love of God, to make disciples and to show His love in all we do”. To grow spiritually and numerically. Through prayer and forming active and accountable disciples of Jesus, we seek to grow our congregation into effective missional church that will engage with the community and beyond.

This has been very evident in the way the “Oasis” group continues to function and also with “Time for me” mothers’ group. We are also partnering with “Fraser Coast Mens’ Shed” and allowing them to build a shed adjacent to Kev’s Shed for their model railway and associated activity.

Despite the passing of church members during the year, congregational numbers have seen an increase and we need to focus on church membership. Hervey Bay has seen a significant increase in retirees arriving and we need to embrace them. Rev Willem was the key person in developing the new welcome kit and this is key to the Church welcome to new arrivals.

There have been a number of standout activities during the year. Lenten services including Maundy Thursday, Market days, Remembrance Sunday and a spectacular Advent Carols Display were just a few. The donation of food hampers and gift cards to Uniting Care was also a good community outreach. As good as these events were, I am still mindful of gaps in leadership and the key volunteer positions. Having said that, thanks must go to many volunteers who put their names on the rosters, leaders of all the groups and members of Church Council, who give many hours of their time in service of the Lord.

Thanks, must also go to Rev Willem Smit for his positive leadership and chairing the Church Growth meetings. We have seen welcome changes to the Hervey Bay morning worship including a move to modern hymns and responsive readings.

Our focus must now be on the future and the way we communicate the Gospel and connect with the community. It is one thing to feel comfortable in our church environment, it is another to reach out to a world of hurt and unjustness.

In closing I must encourage everyone to dream dreams and find fresh ways to connect with those outside the walls of the church and witness to the love and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Trust in him and through the power of the Holy Spirit great things will happen.

Yours in Christ



(Church Council Chair)



As this will be my last annual reporting on Finance position of our church, I will briefly provide an update on the end of year position for the 2024 Financial Year and the year-to-date position at 31 December 2024 for both Dan Dinna House and Hervey Bay Uniting Church accounts. I will then proceed to provide details of other events that have impacted our financial position, most have been in a positive way. A summary will conclude the report on our way ahead.

Financial Year 2023 – July 2022 to June 2023

DAN DINNA HOUSE

DAN DINNA HOUSE	Actuals	Budget	Variance Actuals to Budget
INCOME	22,780	24,082	-1,302
EXPENSES	25,662	22,763	2,899
Totals	-2,882	1,319	-4,201

At the end of the 2023 Financial Year, there was a deficit of \$2,882 in the actual position which was primarily due to an additional cost of refinishing the hall floors at Dan Dinna House. A budget of \$1,000 was allocated but actual expenditure was \$3,770, \$2,770 more than budget.

However, with the installation of new solar panels at Dan Dinna House by 60s & Better, our Leasee for that complex, following a grant received, savings in electricity charges offset this property maintenance overspend to some degree.

Against the approved budget, there was a total variance of **-\$,4201** which was primarily due to property maintenance costs but added to by some cancellations in hall hire outside lease hour.

HERVEY BAY UNITING CHURCH

Hervey Bay Uniting Church	Actuals	Budget	Variance Actuals to Budget
INCOME	226,257	220,935	5,322
EXPENSES	222,467	219,907	2,560
Totals	3,790	1,028	2,762

At the end of the 2023 Financial Year, there was a surplus in the Actuals position of our church. While there was a savings of \$28,000 as no ministry agent was in place from July to October 2023, expenditure during the financial year resulted in approximately \$24,000 offsetting expenditure.

The reasons for this finance position on 30 June 2023 are:

- With no ministry agent until 1 November, there was a saving of \$28,681.52 against ministry and staff related costs. This savings allowed expenditure of \$2,673 towards JNC related travel and \$9,000 contribution to relocation costs for our new minister.
- While some further savings were achieved, e.g., our monthly Mission and Service Fund which was reduced by Mary Burnett Presbytery by \$300 each month, some income accounts were considerably under what had been planned for. These included:
 - Offerings from our Hervey Bay Congregation which was down by \$15,132.95 on budget plan. Offerings received from Howard and Burrum Heads congregations close to budget.
 - Direct deposits account was also \$4,646 below budget plan. Direct deposit arrangements with banks can sometimes have an end date so it is hoped that less direct deposit monies may be due to this happening with some contributors. I remind all contributors for direct deposit to

check with their banks to, perhaps, change the end date of their deposit arrangement to be 'indefinite'. This ensures that your continued offering to our church through direct deposits will be ongoing. You are also reminded that giving through direct deposit is a convenient way to make your offering on a weekly, fortnightly or monthly or whenever you can basis. You make the arrangement with your bank and then it will appear on the monthly ANZ bank statement for confidential entry into our finance system.

- Donations of \$1,000 was made to our Burnett Network of Churches to support local ministers with travel costs over the vast region and \$2,000 was made to Uniting Care Community in Hervey Bay to support their charitable work with this being funded from Container Exchange program monies received.
- Property Related Costs were overspent but included tree trimming at manse and church, new air-conditioner at manse, removalist costs furniture back to storage with arrival of new minister's furniture, short term furniture hire.

Financial Year 2024 – July 2023 to June 2024

DAN DINNA HOUSE

DAN DINNA HOUSE	Actuals	Budget	Variance Actuals to Budget
INCOME	11,342	12,048	-706
EXPENSES	10,624	11,670	-1,046
Totals	718	378	340

At the half year point of 2024 Financial Year, Dan Dinna House account was close to budget. Expenses were less due to ongoing savings in electricity after installation of new solar panels by 60s and Better group through grant they received. Bank balance at 31 December was \$9,421.75.

HERVEY BAY UNITING CHURCH

Hervey Bay Uniting Church	Actuals	Budget	Variance Actuals to Budget
INCOME	96,374	94,998	1,376
EXPENSES	113,415	105,730	7,685
Totals	-17,041	-10,732	-6,309

At the half year point of the 2024 Financial Year, Hervey Bay Uniting Church account position in actual income and expenses was a \$17,041 deficit. Budget plan was an expected \$10,732 deficit so the difference between actual position and budget was \$6,309.

Income includes the Retiring Offering funds of approximately \$2,130, Christmas bowl of \$835.95 and \$3,500 donations from Adult Fellowship for Special Project. All amounts have or will be expended January/February 2024.

Also included in Income total are the weekly offerings which have minimally increased which may be due to some new members but, more significantly, to some church members on 'catchup' with an offering amount of several hundred dollars as they haven't been able to attend church services regularly and the direct deposit option is not one for them.

Apart from the fixed expenses such as Minister and Office Secretary labour related costs; rates, insurance, electricity, Presbytery payments, we have also had greater expenditure in stationery / printing / photocopying and for catering for the 2 Christmas Carols events and special Give Thanks service. There have been minimal overspends in other expense accounts that contribute to the overspend of \$7,684. Expenditure for Special Projects have been adjusted against the Expenses total. Details of that expenditure is presented further in this report.

Bank balance for Hervey Bay Uniting Church at 31 December was \$63,792.51.

Other financial matters for your information include:

- \$132,500 bequest received with \$100,000 invested UCIS short term investment for 6 mths at 5.15% and balance of \$32,500 held for special projects funding. Details of special projects expenditure is presented below for your information.
- Special Project Funding was made available through the bequest mentioned in the previous point. These funds have been used across our Hervey Bay Uniting Church congregations as below in the 2023 FY and 2024 FY to December 2023:

Project Name	Final Cost
Childrens Playground Shading	2,690
Carpark repairs, replace garden edging & Kev Shed's concrete extension (pending Jan 2024)	10,340
Dishwasher for kitchen	4,770
Cabinetry & electrical work re:dishwasher	1,407
Concreting driveway	6,680
Additional Electrical Manse Shed	2,550
Howard UC restumping	8,403
Progressive Expenditure Total	\$ 36,840
Less donations from Adult Fellowship Market Days	3,500
Less additional monies from bequest	840
Account Allocation	\$32,500

- Mission Development Fund (MDF) balance at 1 July 2022 was \$94,005. Amount of \$18,145 was approved for construction of a new 6m x 6m shed at the manse at 22 Kent Street, Torquay and \$716 for garage door remote-control system. With \$3,083 interest received during the financial year, the balance at 30 June 2023 was \$78,227. A further amount of \$5,770 was approved/expended for external awning near the OASIS room in September 2023

A financial plan for the 2024 financial year has been approved by Mary Burnett Presbytery for new security screens at the church and for improvements/repairs to our carpark with estimates of nearly \$56,000. Approximately \$17,000 will remain which may be transferred to Mary Burnett Presbytery central MDF account at some future time. We will still be able to access these funds through usual application process, but all Mary Burnett Presbytery congregations will be transferred to a single MDF account for our presbytery region.

- Audit of all financial records for the 2023 Financial Year were submitted to our Auditor and were completed in December 2023. A considerable review of accounts was undertaken as part of this audit on advice from the Auditor so that the balance sheet now reflects the current situation with historical data from many years ago now journalled to clear. Favourable report was again received from the Auditor.
- Annual returns for 12 months to June 2023 were submitted to Mary Burnett Presbytery within the specified timeframe despite delays in audit to clear specific accounts.

In Summary:

As I am no longer continuing in the Treasurer role from the end of the 2024 financial year, I have been considering options to ensure our church continues to comply with the financial directions from Synod, Australian Taxation office and general financial legislations.

With no one forthcoming to take on the full Treasurer role, I have been consulting with the BookKeeping Services of our Synod who are able to take on majority of financial management activity for our church. A proposal is being considered by Church Council on 20 January 2024 which will, hopefully, receive consensus to proceed with a plan to merge Dan Dinna House and Hervey Bay MYOB and bank accounts for the conversion to the Xero finance system. This will mean that BookKeeping Services will only need to manage a single financial file and single bank account as having 2 accounts has proven problematic at times.

With consensus from Church Council, there will be considerable work to prepare current financial documentation for audit at 31 March 2024 ready for conversion to new finance system XERO and BookKeeping Services from 1 April 2024. There will then be a 2nd audit 1 April to 30 June 2024 to comply with our current practice of operating under the financial year period.

Expected cost of this arrangement with BookKeeping Services will be covered by cessation of monthly honorarium to Treasurer and savings as billing for MYOB system will also cease.

I have discussed this change to financial activities with my valued supporters, Louise Crittenden, Christine Foster and Lorraine Pryor who will continue to generate sales invoices, prepare and submit documents and monies from weekly offerings or other donations and general processes for payments to suppliers. Under the new arrangement, there will no longer be a Treasurer in the sense of how that role has always been, as the role of the Treasurer under the new practices will be to oversee some financial activity and work with BookKeeping Services as needed. And I will be available to ensure that this transition flows smoothly into the new financial year.

I take this opportunity to again thank my Finance Team for their support and commitment to helping in Financial Management of our church during my time as Treasurer – Christine Foster as Banking Officer, Lorraine Pryor as backup Treasurer and Louise Crittenden for managing invoicing and finalising outgoing payments.

In closing this annual report, I thank our Congregations for their on-going generosity in giving and pray that will continue and increase in 2023/2024 so that we may remain as the Hervey Bay Uniting Church, open to our people and to welcome others in our worship of our Lord.

With God's Blessings

Gail Grimsey

Church Treasurer - Hervey Bay Uniting Church

Property Report

Considerable property improvements have been achieved throughout the year.

A new 6 x 6 shed was constructed at the manse property and this will allow storage which was lacking previously. A new air conditioning unit was fitted in the manse lounge room and no further repairs are required. MDF funds were used for the shed and HBUC paid for the electrical installation. At the same time the electrician fitted a new switchboard.

Howard

Re-stumping of the Howard Church and new front stairs to replace the old timber ones was completed.

Dan Dinna House

Dan Dinna house has been painted internally, new fans installed in the hall section and the annual resurfacing of the timber floor completed.

Hervey Bay

A commercial grade dishwasher was installed in the HBUC kitchen with electrical work to install a 15 amp circuit and replace two power outlets.

An awning was built along the side of the church where Oasis meets to help keep out rain. This was paid for by MDF funds.

Regular checks and maintenance of Fire Safety items, Air Conditioning and electrical systems has been carried out.

Extensive repairs to the front driveway were completed with Blue Care contributing half of the costs.

All our properties are currently in a good state of repair.

Yours in Christ



(Property Officer)

Hervey Bay Uniting Church Service to Give Thanks

On Sunday, 19 November 2023, the congregation of Hervey Bay Uniting Church took the time to 'Give Thanks to God' in the Sunday Worship Service. With Reverend Willem urgently travelling to South Africa, Lay Preacher and Chair of the Church Council, John Grimsey, led Worship.

Songs of praise and words from the scripture throughout the Service, contributed to a time where we gave thanks to God for the blessings that He has bestowed on us during this year, to give thanks to the many volunteers in our congregation who are involved in activities from operational level to the making of a cuppa after Sunday Service and to give thanks to God for those whose life we had the privilege to share in.

It has become tradition to have a Prayer Tree set-up as part of our Hervey Bay Uniting Church Advent display with anyone being able to write a name on a card that is attached to a bauble which they can then hang on our Prayer Tree. This year, this was started with the hanging of special gold baubles on the tree with the names of those who passed on during the last year. John Grimsey read the names and our Pastoral Care Co-ordinator, Coral Deeth, hung the bauble on the tree. It was a very moving time as we did remember those who are no longer with us on this earth.



'A Time to Give' to Those Doing It Tough in Partnership with Uniting Care, Hervey Bay

Looking at ways to help those struggling with life at this time of year, Hervey Bay Uniting Church has partnered with Uniting Care Community of Hervey Bay to make up food hampers to be delivered before Christmas.

We have been carrying out this giving program for about 5 years with an average of 25 shopping bags collected each year with 2023 appeal being just as generous with addition of another 13 shopping bags donated by our Howard Uniting Church congregation.

Representatives from Uniting Care Hervey Bay collected the bags on 21st November 2023 with John Grimsey helping Jane Kelly from Uniting Care try and pack them all into her small car. And early feedback from Jane is that they managed to make up 15 hampers for families in their care and another 5 for individuals.

Stories in past years have been very inspiring and are a great reason to continue this great activity.

Submitted by *Gail Grimsey*



*John and Jane with bags
'spilling out' of her car boot*



Some of the hampers made up at UnitingCare from our generous giving

Pastoral Care

It has been most gratifying to know that every day someone in our congregation is expressing and sharing the love of Jesus to folk in the congregation and perhaps also out there in the community – a listening ear, a caring smile, a practical act of kindness, a word of encouragement and hope from the Scriptures, a spoken prayer or a prayer from the heart. This is extremely encouraging. The love and compassion of Jesus in action.

Because of various situations and circumstances some who have worn the official 'tag' of Pastoral Carer have had to withdraw from the list of Pastoral Carers. Achieving a goal expressed early in the year unfortunately has not been possible.

It saddens me when I hear that someone has felt very alone and burdened and dispirited and there seemed to be no one there for them. It's not always easy, I know, but I do encourage you to reach out, to make contact, even if it is just for a listening ear. You are a special person.

Early in the year, Rev Willem led a very helpful session which clarified some pastoral issues and also highlighted and recognized the very significant role that Leaders of Groups play in pastorally caring for members in the group for which he or she is responsible.

As we look forward to 2024, a new year of service in the name of Jesus, I encourage you to consider taking on the role of Pastoral Carer (I look forward to hearing from you). If you are not in a position to take on that role, I encourage you to continue to be a 'carer in the name of Jesus'.



Be encouraged and strengthened by these words of Mother Teresa, 'We can do no great things, only small things with great love.'

Grace and peace.

Coral Deeth

Pastoral Care Coordinator

HBUC Adult Fellowship 2023 Annual Report



The Adult Fellowship meets on the third Friday of each month at 9am at the church starting with a morning tea and followed with a devotion. We have an average of 15 members attending every meeting. On our first meeting this year, we invited Louise Crittenden to open the meeting with a Dedication Prayer.

We have been blessed and encouraged by the help and support of the whole church during our Market Day as our fund raising held on (3) three different dates this year. The money we raised and the contributions / offerings of members was donated to twelve (12) different organizations locally and within Australia and to HBUC totalling \$7,623.60. We thank the Lord for HIS goodness and the faithfulness and commitment of all members of the Adult Fellowship.

The Adult Fellowship, with the initiative of our president Glenys Keen, was able to pack 127 shoeboxes for the Samaritan's Purse, and this was made possible because of the help and generous donations of money and in kind by members and friends. I will not detail all our activities for it has always been reported yearly in our church annual report.

Name of Organisation	Date	Amount
Bible Society		\$ 200.00
Act for Peace		\$ 200.00
Drug Arm		\$ 200.00
WeCare 2		\$ 200.00
SU QLD School Ministry Fund		\$ 200.00
YWAM Medical Ships		\$ 300.00
CBM Christian Blind Mission	Market Day – May 13	\$ 200.00
Frontier Services		\$ 300.00
HBUC	Market Day – July \$2000 & Oct \$1500	\$3500.00
WeCare 2 – gifts for clients		\$ 200.00
UnitingWorld	Market Day May 13	\$2013.60
Fellowship of the Least Coin		\$ 110.00
TOTAL		\$7623.60

We invite ladies to join us and attend our meetings, you might have great/new ideas to give and share to the fellowship. 📖 **In everything that we do we give all the praises and glory to our Almighty God our Lord and Saviour.**

Francie Cadman

Secretary Adult Fellowship

Monday Prayer Group Report

In 2023 The Prayer Group began quite strong and very worthwhile with six regular members but during the year with the unfortunate death of one member and the need for another member to be called interstate to help care for family, the Monday Prayer Group (in the seminar room) has been put aside until we are able to meet again, or some new members are led to join such a group. We would meet at 8.30am each Monday for half an hour and we would cover the congregation and the minister with prayer and pray many intercessory prayers as were needed from either the congregation, our community and the world scene.

I believe that this activity was very necessary within the life of the church and hope and pray that this group may begin again in the near future.

If you would be interested in joining the Monday Morning Prayer Group, please contact me.

Rev Wes Furness

Coordinator



KYB Bible Study Group

KYB (Know Your Bible) studies are part of an Australian Christian Women Communicating International. These bible study materials are used frequently by women all over Australia and now in other countries around the world. The studies are available in **large print**, by correspondence, and audio format.

The studies are designed to assist members through their personal bible study and group sharing to know God's word and its message for today. It is also a valuable time of sharing and uplifting each other through prayer and fellowship. Ladies from all denominations are welcome. Our group consists of ladies from our church plus some from the Lutheran church and Presbyterian church & Baptist church.

Each Tuesday afternoon, we have a KYB group of about 12 to 14 ladies who meet in our church seminar room commencing at 2pm and usually goes for approx. 1.5hrs to 2 hours (depending on how much sharing occurs or if we are celebrating a birthday). We are all at different stages and levels of our spiritual walk and learn from each other.

Four new studies are covered each year (following school terms). In 2023 we enjoyed learning more about some chapters of Revelation, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, Christ in the Old Testament & The book of Ruth (which was every encouraging and helpful). If you are interested in joining us, please contact Lynn Furness on 0427 809 224.

There is another bible study group in our church called M & M's who also use KYB materials and meet weekly in the homes of different ladies & usually cover 2 to 3 studies per year. To contact their leader, contact Lynne Alexander ph. 0439 212 743. We pray that the Holy Spirit will lead us all to grow in our spiritual walk and knowledge of God's Word so that we can be more effective disciples of the Lord.

Lynne Furness
Coordinator



Wednesday Morning Bible Study

9am-10:15am Leader: Rev Wes Furness. Another very good year of study was shared in and enjoyed. We are only a small group, but we find this time together very stimulating and most helpful for our Spiritual growth. This last year we studied these topics — The book of Ephesians, The Cross, The Resurrection, and Meeting God. Each of these studies were received very well, with many positive comments coming from each member. Each member felt that their understanding was growing and their faith was being made stronger through this time together. This meeting is a good time for Christian fellowship and pastoral care to happen, so if you have this time available, why not come and share with us, we would love to see you and welcome you into our group.

Rev Wes Furness
Coordinator

Wow (Women of Worship)



Our Women of Worship group meets every Tuesday morning at 9.30 at church, except during school holidays, however we are always available for a cuppa somewhere together.

We are a real support for each other. A few of us are still meeting on the esplanade on a Saturday morning for a cuppa and a chat.

During this year, we have studied Andy Wood's sermons from Saddleback Church and enjoyed the way he explains the bible. The series Better Relationship with God, Better Mindsets, Better Habits and vision helped us to 'do life with others' and helped us to listen to what is God saying and know that

God speaks through: the Word of God, the Spirit of God, and the people of God.

We have served morning tea following the Sunday morning service with assistance of other helpers as well as catering and serving for funeral/memorial services.

We have assisted at various events the church has been involved in, including Maundy, Easter, decorating the church at Christmas time and for the Carols services.

Every week we contribute a few dollars and at the end of the year we are able to support the Hamlin Fistula Foundation in Ethiopia.



We have sourced and wrapped and packed gifts for the Chaplains to help needy children, supplying 120 gifts for the state schools in Hervey Bay.

We are eagerly anticipating the return to our Ladies Saturday Afternoon Teas, where we invite a guest speaker and are able to bless the organisation, she represents with a donation from the participants entrance

donation. The first afternoon tea for this year will be held in the church hall on Saturday 24th February at 2pm and will continue the last Saturday every 2nd month.

Julie Noble and Thora Nolan

Oasis

Our Group is functioning well with members meeting on Fridays for a relaxed few hours. Lots of chatting, talking, laughing, sharing information and enjoying the fellowship of one another.

In August we celebrated our first anniversary of Oasis with a morning tea get together where we were entertained by Edith Beveridge (AKA Bev) who shared

er wisdom, humour and her personal life philosophy of loving and being kind to one another.



Many of our group are back travelling after covid so always new stories of beautiful places to visit both here and overseas.

We continue to have wonderful donations from our Uniting Church Community. Recently we replaced some of our original furniture with a smaller lounge and a very comfy chair. We also had a large amount of craft materials donated. Our group sorted what we can use and passed on items to other clubs and op shops.

Sewl Sisters

We also have a group of Sewl Sisters who meet at Oasis on Wednesdays. It targets serious sewers and quilters but is very much a support/Fellowship group as most members are caring for family members. Sewing, sharing of ideas, patterns and completing items, etc. is a common bond for all present. This group is lead by Beverley and supported by the Sewl Sisters.

Future

Our goals for 2024 is to continue building on our strengths and further our outreach into the community. We plan to continue welcoming members and encourage people to just drop in for coffee and get to know our community. There is room to expand into different activities and on different days if we can get people willing to lead groups. We are working on offering a couple of simple workshops, details later.

Moment of appreciation

We are grateful for the awning of the windows which has made our room more comfortable to work in.

It is a pleasure to be part of our Oasis group and I am grateful for the support we receive from our Church leaders and our congregation.

Gwyneth Wells



Church Family Luncheon

Once again, we have shared together on the first Saturday of each month with our Church Family Luncheon. It has been another very happy and successful time of Christian fellowship, pastoral care and experiencing the love of Our Lord, Jesus Christ.

I like to think that this activity is continuing the way the early Church met continually for worship and to share meals together. I believe it is important to continue to build this closeness within our membership.

Our numbers have grown this year up to around forty each month and I give thanks and praise to God for His goodness toward us. Even so, there is still plenty of room for any others who would like to come and join in with us.

We try to have a special speaker at least every second month and these are always delivered by various interesting people from the Hervey Bay community.

You will never leave hungry, we have a great cook and other members who supply yummy sweets, so why not come and enjoy the food and the fellowship with other members of your Christian family.

Without mentioning names, I say thank you to all those who have helped to make this time so successful. Every group needs the workers to make the group function and I am so thankful to all those willing hands who make this group happen so well. We look forward to what God has in store for us in this new year, we know that he will continue to bless us as we continue to serve him.

Rev Wes Furness

Coordinator

We Care 2 Uniting Church Wednesday Breakfast Van

Since taking over the Co-Ordinator's position from Lynn Furness in January 2023 I have found this position rewarding and an absolute delight to have the opportunity to work with a wonderful volunteer team prepared to start their day before 5am to give their time and love to those in need.

Many of the needy come each week. It is easy to recognise the hardship and loneliness they endure and it is our mission to welcome God's guests as family. With this approach it is lovely to see them relax and lighten up as they feel the warmth of God's love and compassion around them

We have to expect that some have had difficult lives from a young age. Abuse flares from time to time, a result of enduring and confusing hardships, whether from family or the community. We are all God's guests and we all need prayers to help guide us, especially when serving them and listening to them. We

cannot stop their abusive manner, but we can listen quietly and let the abuse go by. At times one small but positive encouragement can change their whole day. I encourage our volunteers to always view these situations from the perspective of the traumatised person rather than feeling traumatised ourselves.

Lyn Furness provided a 'Procedure' for the van ladies and another for the men (cooking/driving). When We Care 2 advises new changes procedures are automatically amended to reflect the change.... note procedures have changed 10 times over the past year. Two months ago, the van was stolen and soon after the ute, so previous arrangements went 'out the window' and alternate urgent measures had to be put in place. Our drivers now arrive at Apex Park at 5.30am in preparation for a 6am start and finish at 8am. Previously we refilled the van at WC2 which proved messy as items were never in the same place twice and WC2 personnel kept changing. My aim for 2024 was to have We Care 2 take full responsibility for van refilling and just one procedure for both ladies & men.....this has already happened.

I can't express my gratitude enough to those who have supported the Wednesday breakfast program over the past year: the Uniting Church, Rachael and Andrew at the Torbay Retirement Village and their in-house Village Resident's Committee (VRC), the angel who regularly donates clothing and household items collected from the Howard community, the WOW girls, UC Admin Manager Louise, who is always there when I yell for help, and the Filipino Community members who donated 3 washing baskets full of food and Christmas goodies, enough for breakfasts on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. The Filipino Group informed me their donation is worth over \$650!! People are truly kind and caring! How blessed we are. Lastly, I must thank those unsung heroes who stop at the breakfast park with donations saying just thought someone somewhere may be in need of..... and away they go! God bless them.

Throughout the year our volunteers (and God's guests) have not been without personal challengers. While their difficulties may vary, our prayers have been constant in supporting those in need of God's wisdom and compassion. Our mainstay, John Deitsch, will be absent for seven months together with his wife, Elaine as they support their daughter Sarah and husband, Aubrey, as grandson, Ziggy, battles many medical issues. He will have to undergo 6 months of chemotherapy. Please continue to pray regularly for his family.

Purchases on behalf of We Care 2 Breakfasts - Year 2023			
Date	We Care 2 Wed Breakfast Van	Purchase	Top Up
Items Purchased - Receipts Available			
25-Jan-23	Garbage Bags	\$3.50	
8-Feb-23	Heinz Spaghetti Tomato 300gm x 5 tins \$2.99 ea	\$14.96	
8-Feb-23	Top Up (John Deitsch)		\$50.00
27-Mar-23	Pk25 Disposable Razors Twin Blade Mens x 2	\$5.98	
5-Apr-23	A-Freeze Coolant for needy person	\$18.00	
12-Apr-23	Toothbrushes x 10 for Xmas Hampers	\$10.00	
20-Apr-23	Top Up (John Deitsch)		\$15.00
22-May-23	Pk25 Disposable Razors Twin Blade Mens x 2	\$3.30	
7-Jun-23	Ctn of 24 Nescafe Blend 43 coffee tin size 90g	\$24.00	
13-Jun-23	Ctn of 24 SPC Spaghetti tins size 420g	\$26.40	
14-Jun-23	Top Up (John Deitsch)		\$20.00
14-Jun-23	Top Up (Jill Fowlie)		\$50.00
7-Aug-23	Assorted chips for Xmas sample bags x 50	\$22.50	
26-Oct-23	Top Up (Uniting Church Adult Fellowship)		\$200.00
		\$128.64	\$335.00

Volunteer Team:-

Laurette



Rina



Grace



Lourdes



Dahlia



Beryl



Michelle



Jill



Barbara



John (on leave)



Henk



David



Keith



Trevor



Jill Fowlie

Co-Ordinator We Care 2 Wednesday Breakfast Van

Time for Me Playgroup



On reflection while sitting down to write this Report, I was reminded just how much God was an integral huge part of this group. From its very conception to the naming of the group, to specific selection of helpers, to commencement and to the selected families that attended. It's been quite a journey with so many opportunities, revelations and blessings.

Our amazing Father has delivered a wonderful playgroup team. Lorelle and Marie, your faithfulness, loyalty, commitment is unwavering and, as Co-

ordinator, I truly love and appreciate you both.

I also would like to acknowledge Coral, Wes, John, Gail and Louise. The support and help throughout the year has not gone unnoticed, thank you.

Time for Me at one stage had 6 different families and 10 children in attendance. As a team we all felt very privileged to be part of these precious families lives. We were able to grow close and share relatable faith stories with each of them.

There was a shared genuine openness that led to a real feeling of family. Praise God!

We also witnessed real growth, confidence and new developments in each of the children attending through craft and play. Such Joy!

The Lord also led me to set up two very significant helpful tables.

The Forever Growing Table and the Once Upon A Time, Table.

- One for children's clothing whereby mums could take or add too it no cost involved.
- The other a table full of treasure books that children could take home at the end of each session. Both were received positively.

I do believe God's intention for Playgroup this year was to keep it small and personal. I do feel seeds were planted that these particular families needed our outreach. We need to continue this outreach as it's so important.

God has been shut out all around the world in Government, in Education, in Councils, in families and more importantly in people's hearts.

Recent world events dictate its more important than ever we actively spread the love of God and our living saviour Jesus Christ. The Bible is not a fairy tale its life's very essence.

This is what the driving force behind Time For Me is all about.

We all look forward to what our amazing God has in store for us at Playgroup in 2024.

The thing about small things is that they can grow. Just look at the mustard seed!

Thankyou my Brothers and Sisters in Christ.



Arlene Van Ede

Co Ordinator

Library

A lot of work has happened in the library over the last 12 months. Judy Baker with the help of Rev. Allan Smith have sorted through the many books that were in there. Many double up books or ones that were so old, discoloured and brittle were moved on. This has made finding books that you are interested in easier to access.

Our library is for everyone to use and you are welcome to explore the shelves during office hours or on Sunday mornings.

We thank everyone who has contributed to the library over the years, but we have limited to space so if you have books to donate, please don't be offended if we have to move them on due to double ups and older editions.

The books that we have are for sharing the word of God and if you find something inspiring, please pass them onto others. God's word can be shared in many ways and the book you share may be the key to opening up someone's heart.

The greatest gift we can give is to share the love of God.



Christian Meditation

The World Community for Christian Meditation (WCCM) meets Tuesdays, 8.20-9.20 am, for silent prayer at St John's Anglican Church, Doolong Road.

Christian Meditation is ecumenical and the Hervey Bay community has an average weekly attendance of 10.

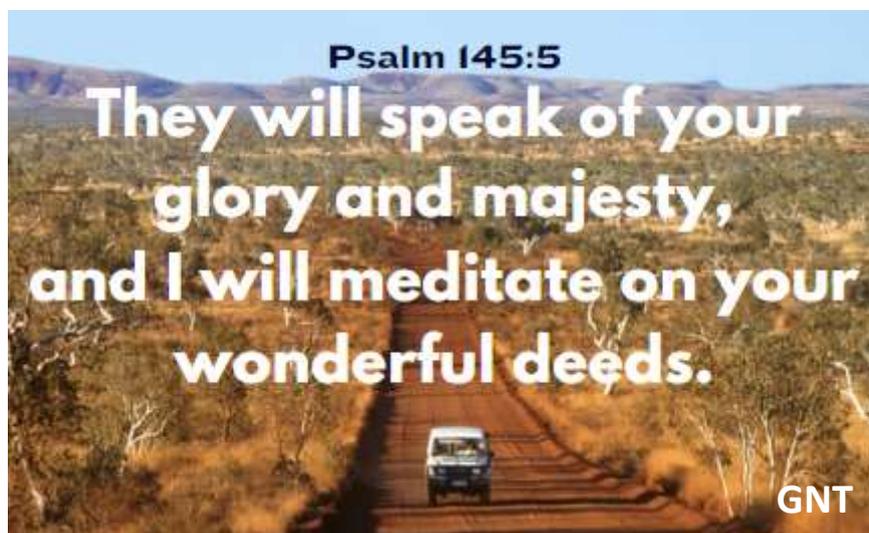
Bi-monthly online coordinator meetings keep the group up to date with Queensland, national and worldwide information about Christian Meditation: retreats and seminars, newsletters, meditation during Advent and Lent and resources available.

A Quiet Day, The Path to Peace, Peace that the World Cannot Give was held on March 11, 2023, at Fraser Coast Anglican College. Kathryn Houston presented a program of reflection, meditation and discussion with 25 attending.

Maranatha

Sylvia Wright

Christian Meditation Coordinator Hervey Bay



Howard Uniting Church



The Howard Uniting church is continuing to welcome new people and our regular members are always there supporting our church on all matters. Their dedication and love for God is inspiring as some are travelling from Hervey Bay every week. Bless them Lord. Our weekly attendance is approximately 18 to 27 & offerings are always above average.

Repairs and improvements

Our church has had numerous repairs, maintenance & improvements over the past 12 months. The following is what we have achieved for the year:

- New sign board was placed on cnr Watkins St & Coal St.
- New chairs bought for hall & vestry.
- Paper & soap dispensers fitted to both toilets & kitchen.
- Mounted Zip water heater was installed in kitchen (we removed old urn that had to be lifted from table to sink with boiling water)
- New PVC table covers in hall & vestry.
- New cordless vacuum cleaner for church.
- 4 Stumps on church hall were replaced.
- Direction signs for parking put up on front gate and carpark entrance.
- Front steps to church were replaced due to rotting timber.

We are now in the process of having upholstered seating for our church pews and remove the scattered cushions which are outdated and worn. The cost for the seating has been donated by church members as they welcome a fresh change. We thank Lindy & Del who devoted several days clearing around the perimeter of the carpark which was very overgrown and blocking vision for cars on this intersection.

The congregation has adapted to the overhead display and sound system each week, this has helped improve church services with vision & videos of events relating to the Sermon & for all members to be able to hear the message via the microphones & speakers on the wall.

We thank all who have assisted, supported and offered help when needed for our church to continue to do the work of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Burrum Heads Community Church



Sunday Services

Our regular Sunday services have been maintained with clergy and lay persons from each of denominations blessing us with their input. Each one has opened our hearts and minds to ways of doing Christianity in a modern

world and engaging with the local community. During the year members of our own congregation have also taken services. We particularly thank Norma Doyle for her willingness to take services. Thanks go to those who prepare PowerPoints to facilitate the smooth running of services.

Jillian Thompson, having completed the necessary study and training, has presided at her first communion service. Uniting Church services have been enhanced by Christi's musical talents.

Mission

In addition to regular worship, our mission to engage with the wider community has seen continued success through:

- **Food is Free** initiative which is an outlet outside the church for gardeners to share their surplus fresh fruit and veg with others in the community.
- **mission giving** of the offertory from combined services.
- **Children's activity** at the annual Community Christmas Party.
- **Mother's Day** Devonshire morning tea served in the hall.
- **Facebook** social media page to share information about church activities with an average reach of 900 people for posts. An enquiry resulted in a child baptism.

Activities

Major activities during the year were Christmas Carols, Tombola and the Memorial Garden. Carols was a little earlier in December and was well attended. Grant support was again received from Fraser Coast Regional Council and Hervey Bay City Musicians, as an enhanced group supplied the music. Many of the locals attended and the audience was larger than previous years.

Our Tombola was a great success both financially and in attendance. Thanks go to the dedicated team who spend six months preparing for this activity.

Our Memorial Wall will hopefully progress with the creation of our dove sculpture that is to be the centrepiece. The first orders of plaques have been submitted ready to affix once the doves are in place.

Our Food is Free table has been looking a little bare but hopefully the next season of growth will see surpluses again being provided and shared.

Regular two monthly meetings have kept the church members informed and provided a platform for their input.

Maintenance

An aging wooden building needs constant attention and our grounds need to be kept neat as an outward sign of God's creation. With the help of many at working bees and regular cleaning and mowing, we have maintained the property and ensured that all fire and electrical safety checks are conducting annually.

Finance

In accordance with standard practice, our accounts have been kept and presented for external audit. Accounts have been audited as at 30th June 2023.

Income for the year was \$11,069 with \$6,142 from donations and Tombola. Other funds were received from hiring of the hall and recycling containers.

Expenses totalled \$7,925 which included rates, cleaning and mowing, fundraising costs, insurance and maintenance.

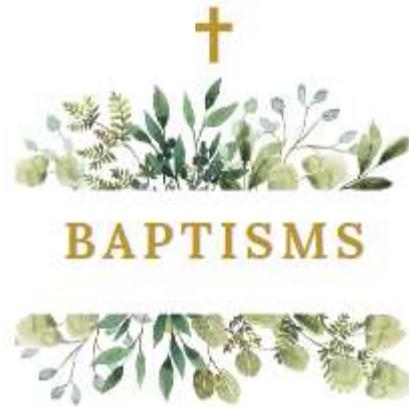
Our profit of \$3,144 was added to our retained surplus to provide a bank balance of \$21,280- which will be used for future maintenance and planned projects.

Romans 12

4. We have many parts in the one body, and all these parts have different functions.
5. In the same way, though we are many, we are one body in union with Christ, and we are all joined to each other as different parts of one body.
6. So we are to use our different gifts in accordance with the grace that God has given us.

Chris Thompson

Chairperson



Hudson Ross Lewis



Brian Stanley Sanderson
Karl Walker
Gillian Ann Ayoub
Peggy Constance
Allan Stride
Mavis Hunsley
Hugh(Hugo) Joseph Byles Nolan

Average weekly attendance

Year		9:00am	9:00am		9:30am	9:30am
		Adults	Children		Adults	Children
2021		104			Nil	
2022	Jan-Jun	91	2	Jul-Dec	91	2
2023					95	3
Good Friday						
2021		77				
2022		76	2			
2023		82	3			

Church Parish Membership

Confirmed Members	178
Baptised Members	16
Adherents	48
Members in Association	12
People from other Denominations	10
People with unknow status	87
Total people on pastoral roll end 2023	351

Our mission:

*To Grow in the love of God, to make disciples and to show
His love in all that we do.*

Our Vision

*To grow Spiritually and numerically.
Through prayer and forming active
and accountable disciples of Jesus.
We seek to grow our Congregation into
an effective missional church
that will engage with the community.*



Hervey Bay
Uniting Church