

St Luke's Uniting Church Highton

Annual Report of the year 2021



Our Vision

"To be a community that grows Christians, knows Jesus and makes him known to others. We follow Christ, and create a safe place to share and grow together, drawing closer to God."

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Church Council Report for 2022 Annual General Meeting

25 Mar 2022

Dear Sisters & Brothers in Christ

The times continue to be challenging but I'm encouraged by the words of St Paul in Romans 8:26-28:

"Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

We know that in all things God works for good, for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. "

During 2021, we found ourselves truly relying on God's Spirit to guide our actions. The second year of significant uncertainty and changing rules that often kept us apart were fatiguing.

Continuity through change



Church Council continued to meet monthly online during this last year, as did its subcommittees. So we sought ways to ensure worship continued to be offered each week, and shared in our worship on several occasions with our sister congregations. We even had a wonderful opportunity to come together for a Pentecost worship celebration as a Presbytery at Western Heights.

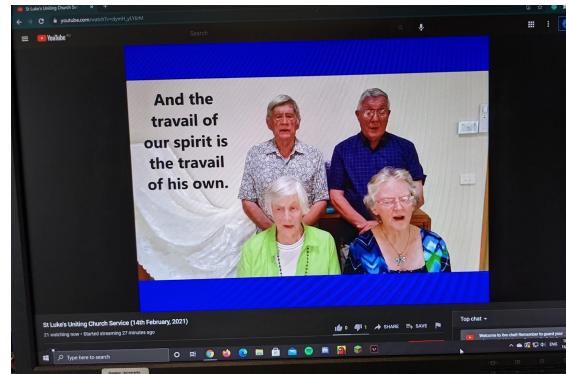
We worked together to meet the different requirements based on vaccination status set by the

Government, while upholding our commitment to be a place of sanctuary and care for all God's people. These hospitality complexities were coordinated by a range of people with many helping. Having come back to a less than ideal way of sharing Holy Communion here in Queensland (based on Covid rules), I give thanks for the effort of the team at St Lukes – it makes such a difference.

Having started the year face to face, with recorded online worship when required, we transitioned through the year to hybrid presentation – enabling people to join us in person or on line at the same time. A big thanks to Christopher McAvaney and the Youtube streaming team, supported by our committed volunteers on sound and the powerpoint.



Our first “hybrid” service at the delayed annual meeting in 2021



Faithful choir members pre-recorded hymns to use for worship

We must also acknowledge the continued creative skills of Robyn Hodge and Mike Currie in bringing the notices weekly and preparing recorded worship when needed, and Jenny Patchett and team for our organ and choir music.

We have also continued to connect with and support our culturally diverse extended community, with Shaghék continuing her great ministry with many dedicated supporters, as well as the needs of all ages through the Messy Church ministry. Excitingly many have discovered the opportunity to just provide a listening ear and space for God’s Spirit to speak to people as part of our semiregular Craft, Collectables and Furniture sales, linked increasingly to other outreach groups who join us on site to share some of their creative fare.

Searching for God’s lead

Throughout this uncertainty, a dedicated team from the Congregation and beyond came together to continue to Dream Big – through the Salt & Light Project. The group gained inspiration and insight, and God added to their number those who saw possibilities that may otherwise have been missed. The final Design Brief that was presented to the Congregation in August 2021 encouraged many with a vision and possibilities that were outward looking, and built on the four pillars of Sanctuary, Food and Hospitality, Education and Access for All. With the help of our Deakin University Architects, a potential plan for the site at Barrabool and Scenic Roads, showed how it too could be more versatile offering a place for connection and growth within the Highton and Wandana Heights communities. You can find all the details on our St Lukes website.

Paul and Church Council have continued work to bring some of those visions to life and I encourage you to be part of that in the months and years ahead.

Journeying on

I have been honoured to share in these many ministries and see the heart and commitment of so many in our community to be God's hands and feet in our world. 2022 has again begun with uncertainty and anxiety, not just here at home but also internationally with aggression on a scale we haven't seen in many decades. Now more than ever, we need to be everything God calls us to be in our community. I've promised Church Council that I'll continue to be available to join in and assist where I can – something we've learnt is quite possible with modern Zoom technology! Wherever we are this year we should be confident to say:

"We follow Christ, and create a safe place to share and grow together, drawing closer to God."

Blessings, Lloyd.

Outgoing Church Council Chairperson.



Report of the Minister in Placement 2022.

It hardly needs stating that our life as a community of faith has been greatly impacted by the world pandemic and its consequences. A pandemic which has now lasted some two and a half years.

It is becoming difficult to remember what it was like pre-COVID.

And we are not out of the woods yet, even though there has been a reduction in restrictions in part because of high levels of vaccination within the population.

As I look back over 2021, it seems like we have been on a rollercoaster ride.

There were easing of restrictions around Easter and then a tightening of restrictions in the middle of the year with the coming of the Delta variant. On one occasion a lockdown was put in place on a Saturday with notice being given only a few hours before it took effect.

This made planning for worship and special events difficult. One family who had sought to have their two children baptised, but because of changes to restrictions had to put this on hold on more than one occasion.

Worship continued during the year with a variety of formats including edited pre-recorded services, streaming of services from the church with or without a congregation, and in person worship.

The congregation purchased the technology during the year to enable streaming of services and this continued for some worship services and special events even after the lockdown was lifted.

We developed an approach to serving the Lord's Supper which was COVID safe, with the elements being brought to members of the congregation "in the pews."

Many activities were very much limited such as Messy Church. There was a sense at times that we were "treading water" not moving much but staying afloat.

Somehow or other the monthly mid-week service only needed to be cancelled on a few occasions.

Some of the meetings related to the Congregation continued throughout the year but on "Zoom" and this has been seen to have benefits that are ongoing: allowing people to share in planning and decision making without needing to leave home (or indeed being a part of a meeting when "out of town"). A weekly Zoom prayer gathering continued throughout the year and has restarted in 2022.

I took part in an online seminar during which research gathered from pastors of the United Methodist Church in the USA was shared. The presenters spoke about the difficulties created for pastoral care because that critical element of pastoral care that is "being there for people" was not possible during lockdowns. This has certainly been our experience at St Luke's and as I write visitation within hospitals is still limited but was close to impossible for most of 2021.

I have been encouraged though to hear how the community has supported each other through this time. The telephone is a wonderful invention!

People generally tried the best they could to abide by the requirements of the COVID-19 restrictions and that was certainly also true for the Congregation. At times, though, rapid change of requirements could be confusing: Do we check in or don't we? Do we need to be vaccinated to attend worship or not? Do we need to be masked in the building or not?



While nearly all congregational members were (and are) vaccinated, the congregation did trial offering a worship service at which because of small numbers it was not necessary to declare ones vaccination status. As it happened no one attended.

I share some of this as much as for historical record as for any other purpose.

But the good news is that the congregation has remained resilient during this time and people have been keen to gather when it has been safe to do so.

Perhaps the most significant highlight for the year for the congregation in terms of its future sense of mission and life was the “Salt and Light” visioning process facilitated by Dr. Srebrenka Kunek, an Anglican lay pioneer minister. Somehow the forums that enabled this process to go ahead were able to be held in gaps in the restrictions. No doubt more will be written about this in other places in this report, but crucially the process encouraged us to explore how we might continue to offer a vibrant ministry within our local context. (See the attached picture of the key themes that emerged.) The process also challenged us to think about how the built environment of the St Luke’s site could be more attractive and porous.



The ministry with refugee/newcomer families somehow managed to continue apace and Shaghek Qassabyan's ministry was greatly valued.

There has been much sadness during the year with the deaths of beloved members and some members experiencing declining health.



It was also with some sadness that we farewelled the Walker family towards the end of the year. Lloyd and Michelle made a significant contribution to the life of the St Luke's and indeed the life of the Geelong community as a whole: Michelle through her leadership in areas related to the environment including being a key driver in the birthing of the repair café; Lloyd through his outstanding contributions to worship, music, technology, thinking missionally, and the chairing of the Church Council.

These are tough times in the broader community. I heard a spokesperson for a local community foundation speak recently of three areas of need with the population of Geelong: support for those experiencing mental ill-health, support for those experiencing significant social disconnection made worse by the pandemic, and support for the increasing number of people who are facing homelessness because of the lack of affordable housing.

As the body of Christ, as the Church, we are blessed with a priceless treasure which is the gospel of hope and healing, we cannot solve all these issues, but we do have something to offer. We do have a part to play both as individuals and as a church community. Every prayer, every act of kindness, every gift makes a difference.

As Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount we are called to flavour the world in our living as salt does a dish of food, and we are to shine the light of the gospel through our living so that people may see something of the life of God.
(Matthew 5:13-15).

Grace and peace,
Paul Stephens,
Minister in Placement.



Statistics

Baptisms	0
Confirmations	0
Weddings	0
Funerals in register	8 - 7 conducted by Paul Stephens, most people with connections to St Luke's.



Combined Choir at Pentecost



Our one in-person Messy Church in 2021

Pastoral Connections Annual Report July - March 2022

The past 8 months have been difficult with the new Covid wave dashing our hopes of reopening and resuming regular events in 2022 at St Luke's.

Your Connections Team have still tried to connect and encourage the Congregation here at St Luke's in various ways: Coffee and Chat at Brioche continues to be well attended this year (2pm on 4th Wed/month); the weekly Prayer Time (8am Wed on Zoom) and monthly Prayer Link are supported by faithful pray-ers and those grateful to be prayed for; knitted shawls continue to be offered to those facing hardship or loss; and of course many phone calls, nursing home visits (when allowed), and caring chats continue to be appreciated by St Luke's folk.



First morning tea after the lifting of restrictions

We are aware that several St Luke's small groups have ceased operation or are still finding their way. Maybe this hiatus is an opportunity to explore unused gifts, to refresh and grow our faith together and to reconnect with others in different ways? Remember to take this time to monitor your own self-care and inner health too.

As always, our team is on the lookout for fresh means to foster our links to each other here at St Luke's and to support those in need of comfort.

New helpers or suggestions welcomed! Contact your team members below:

Barbara Murphy, Pam Seller, Joy Hicks, Judy Clarke, Shaghek Qassabyan, Carole Findlay, Val Grills and Rev Paul Stephens

MISSION OUTREACH TEAM ANNUAL REPORT TO ST LUKE'S UNITING CHURCH FOR THE YEAR 2021



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Mission Outreach, as 'thought about' recently, covers a large area of our Church activities. In 2021, although still somewhat limited by Covid, a great deal was achieved. We had our first formal meeting in May.

Environment Group and Repair Café

Highlights from the year 2021 for the Environment Action Group and Repair Café include:

- 2 independent filmmakers documenting the Repair Café and other Community groups. The documentary will be released to various media organisations
- Connected with Geelong Sustainability in their Circular Economy Challenge
- Continued with tree planting to offset carbon emissions and habitat for wildlife
- Took part in Clean Up Australia (Ian Lawrence)
- Updated the recycling guide to include Geelong Businesses – launching May 14 2022
- Continued support of the School's Community Volunteer program at Repair Café

Claire Ziegler



Filmmakers Jessica and Adelae



Ian at Clean Up Australia Day



Men's Shed

- Membership around 35 with 3 new members after a loss of 4.
- Meeting twice weekly
- Provide companionship, escape from loneliness,
- Opportunity to undertake new craft activities and gardening.
- Financially self-supporting from sales of restored items and Bunnings BBQ
- A gardening project was commenced with a number of raised beds being constructed.
- Equipment renewal program continues with 3 major purchases to replace old and outdated models
- New logo introduced enabling easier reading especially for those who are colour blind
- Members can just sit around chat, play cards etc if they are not interested in, or cannot partake in, activities offered
- Provided a newcomer, Raad, with funds to do the electrical test and tag qualification

Geoff Boehm



Collectibles

Initiated in Feb'21 with the desire to raise much needed funds to support our Mission Outreach - our monthly sales (open third weekend each month – Fri afternoon and Saturday morning) during the year raised a total of: \$12,218.00

You may ask 'how did we raise this money?'. The simple answer is through people's generosity as they declutter and downsize their possessions. A simple phone call telling the story of our Refugee support and our associated needs receives a generous response from within St Luke's and our local Community.



Gifts of bedding, crockery, cutlery, cookware are placed into our Chapel Room waiting for use by needy Refugee families. Other Gifts of 'Collectible' items are placed on display in our Chapel in readiness for our monthly sale days. The proceeds are then used to support our newcomer families.

Midyear we floated a 'Community Market' idea which operated on the open Saturdays. Stall holders operated amongst many excited shoppers. Friendly people/customers continue to return for a chat and/or a collectible bargain.

We are grateful for the use of an Eftpos machine, on loan from Geelong Lions - Thank you Geelong Lions. As we dream towards a wider community involvement, we continue to thank a small team of workers who 'staff' our open days, and of course a huge thank you to the men at St Luke's Men's Shed who continue to design and meet our needs as we create new settings on which to mount our saleable items.

Rae Anderson – Collectibles Co-Ordinator Mobile: 0413 888 884

Bread Delivery

Monday nights has seen the bread delivery ministry continue.

Newcomers collect their bread from the Church and what is left over is delivered to Uniting at Grovedale the next morning

Jean Daw, Shaghek Qassabyan, & Greg Cox

Humans in Geelong (HUG) – a celebration of what the ‘humans’ of Geelong do

A first for St Luke’s. We had a stall displaying what we as a Church provide for newcomers to our shores. This event was at the Geelong Racecourse on Sunday 5th December 2021

Many of our St Luke’s people provided their precious time on the day ‘spruiking’ the good news of our activities. Please put it on your calendar to attend next year or maybe even this year 2022



Pentecost Across Geelong

A colourful and informative display was shared as part of the combined Pentecost service (including many of the Uniting Churches in the Geelong region) at Western Heights Uniting Church.

This display informed our ‘sisters and brothers’ in Christ of what St Luke’s is doing in and around our community as a light ‘on the hill’.



Community Ministry Worker

Regarding my role as a community ministry worker, I tried to keep the families from a refugee background connected to each other and to the church.

During the pandemic and the lockdowns, I kept calling the families asking about how the church could support them. I tried to visit some of the families and support them by offering friendship, time, care and advice.

Through the Mission Outreach ministry team we were able to support one family with meals.

We have done many gatherings on zoom – keeping in touch was so important during the pandemic. Being able to see each other as well as talking was good for everyone. Sharing in fellowship after the online Sunday service and Wednesday's morning prayer were also helpful.

On Monday afternoons I have been involved in the bread delivery program providing bread for more than six families.

Also, I started a playgroup for Arabic speaking mothers from refugee backgrounds. This provided the ladies with a safe space to come together, share their stories, concerns, discuss things they needed to do and try to support them in whatever way I could.

I supported many individual Refugees to start their volunteer work in the Uniting op shops. This gave them the opportunity to have an Australian work experience, learn more about the work environment, mix with local people and improve their English language.

I assist refugees with interpreting for them when they collect furniture and household goods from the church.

I engaged in many activities and groups in the church: Mission Outreach ministry team, the Environment group, and the Pastoral Connections ministry team.

I have attended and actively participated in many events that St. Luke's is involved such as Reconciliation Day and Humans in Geelong at the racecourse.

I worked and planned with the team organising the Collectibles and Garage Sale.

Shaghek Qassabyan



Material Aid

Material Aid – support of Refugees, Asylum Seekers and People in Need by St Luke's

St Luke's Mission Outreach Ministry Team in conjunction with St Luke's Men's Shed was able to continue a significant ministry in 2021 despite the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic and the resulting reduction in the activity of the Men's Shed.

Over 100 families from 24 ethnic backgrounds were provided with furniture and/or household items as well as several van loads of surplus items which were provided to Uniting Barwon for distribution to their clients.

Other community groups, such as the Salvation Army, Barwon Child, Youth & Family, St Paul's Lutheran Church and Airey's Inlet Community Garden also received material assistance.

A stronger relationship has been developed with Uniting Barwon.

We have continued to work closely with St Paul's Lutheran Community Mission Worker.

St Luke's Community Ministry Worker, Shaghek Qassabyan's work in connecting with newcomers, as well as providing translating services, has greatly facilitated the support, that we as a congregation, have been able to provide to newcomer families.

Our work is now widely known in the community with some offers of donations of furniture and household items being received from as far afield as Ballarat.

A pleasing feature has been the volunteering of people outside the church in collecting and distributing furniture.

We look forward to continuing the ministry in 2022 without the restrictions of the pandemic

Ken Anderson.



Membership

Current Membership Roll

Confirmed Members	122
Members in Association	6
Baptised	11
Adherents	91

Changes to rolls

Remove - deceased	Dawn Ives Alex Reid Frances Crawford Hedley Smith Beth Allen
Receive by baptism	None
Received by confirmation	None
Add to Roll - Member	None
Add to Roll - Member in Association	None
Receive by transfer	Steven Singline Isabel Greenall
Return to Roll	None
Remove by request	None
Remove under 2 year rule	None

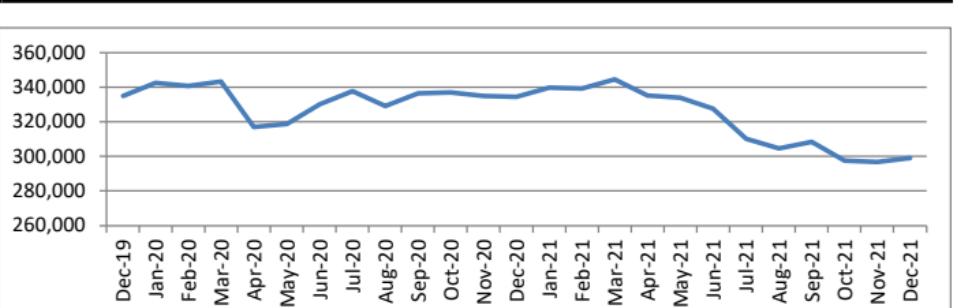
Memorial Garden

Added to those whose remains rest in our memorial garden in 2021 and early 2022 were Una Trigg, a beloved former member of the St Luke's congregation, survived by husband Wesley Trigg, Max Hunt, a stalwart and deeply valued member, survived by his loving wife Barbara. When you take a moment to sit in the sunny courtyard, give thanks for the lives of those who loved and served this church and our community so well.

Financial Statements

Statement of Receipts and Payments**St Luke Uniting Church Highton****12 Months Ending 31/12/2021****UNAUDITED**

	Actual	Budget	Variance
Receipts			
Offerings			
- Systematic Payments	85,106	94,300	(9,194)
- Open Platre	14,060	15,000	(940)
Donations			
- General Purpose	31,508	(300)	31,808
- Messy Church	165	-	165
- Uniting Church appeals	3,785	-	3,785
- other income	1,271	11,500	(10,229)
Legacies / Bequests	17,814	-	17,814
Interests	1,920	4,000	(2,080)
Rent and property Income			
- Manses	31,304	23,075	8,229
- Church	628	17,470	(16,842)
Govt Grants (inc Job Keeper)	18,627	11,970	6,657
GST Refund	1,570	750	820
GST included in receipts and payables	(4,305)	-	(4,305)
Total Receipts	203,452	177,765	25,687
check			
Paments			
Ministry			
Stipends	(155,147)	(154,940)	(207)
Car Allowance	-	-	-
Supply ministers	(700)	(1,500)	800
Parish Fixed Charges	-	-	-
Workcover insurance	(2,685)	-	(2,685)
	(158,532)	(156,440)	(2,092)
Christian Education			
Sunday School	-	-	-
Messy Church	(313)	-	(313)
Mens Shed	7,877	7,000	877
	7,564	7,000	564
Property Services and Maintenance			
Cleaning Material	(2,991)	(3,000)	9
Property Services	(1,672)	(9,400)	7,728
Property Insurance, rents	(17,193)	(9,900)	(7,293)
Property Maintenance	(32,419)	(4,000)	(28,419)
Interest and loan charges	-	-	-
Loan repayments	-	-	-
	(54,275)	(26,300)	(27,975)
Communication, Fundraising			
Choir, Music, Library	(2,760)	-	(2,760)
Office expenses/Printing	(6,408)	(10,250)	3,842
Telephone Postage	(964)	(1,825)	861
Fundraising expenses	-	-	-
	(10,131)	(12,075)	1,944
Mission and Service			
Donations	(20,873)	(20,900)	27
Equipment	-	-	-
Miscellaneous	(470)	-	(470)
GST included in payments and receivable	(21,343)	(20,900)	(443)
	(740)	-	(740)
Total payments	(811)	(6,485)	5,674
	-	-	-
	(1,551)	(6,485)	4,934
check	(238,269)	(215,200)	(23,069)
Surplus (Deficit)	(34,817)	(37,435)	2,618
Opening Bank Balance	341,781		
Closing bank balance	299,139		-
Mens shed cash included in total	27,922		
Total cash excluding Mens Shed	271,217		
Total Cash Balance			



Statement of Receipts and Payments
St Luke Uniting Church

	Actual 2021	Budget 2021	Draft budget 2022
Receipts			
Offerings			
- Systematic Payments	85,106	94,300	85,106
- Open Plate	14,060	15,000	22,496
Donations			
- General Purpose	31,508	(300)	31,508
- Messy Church	165	-	
- Uniting Church appeals	3,785	-	
- other income	1,271	11,500	
Legacies / Bequests	17,814	-	
Interests	1,920	4,000	1,200
Rent and property Income			
- Manses	31,304	23,075	34,443
- Church	628	17,470	5,000
Govt Grants (inc Job Keeper)	18,627	11,970	
Mens Shed income		-	
GST Refund	1,570	750	1,500
GST included in receipts and payables	(4,305)	-	
Total Receipts	203,452	177,765	181,253
Payments			
Ministry			
Stipends and lay staff costs	(155,147)	(154,940)	(161,250)
Supply ministers	(700)	(1,500)	(3,000)
Parish Fixed Charges			
Workcover insurance	(2,685)	-	(2,685)
	(158,532)	(156,440)	(166,935)
Christian Education			
Sunday School			
Young peoples and families ministry	(313)	-	(5,000)
Mens Shed	7,877	7,000	-
	7,564	7,000	(5,000)
Property Services and Maintenance			
Cleaning Material	(2,991)	(3,000)	(3,000)
Property Services	(1,672)	(9,400)	(4,000)
Property Insurance, rates light and power	(17,193)	(9,900)	(17,000)
Property Maintenance	(32,419)	(4,000)	(16,500)
Interest and loan charges			
Loan repayments	-	-	
	(54,275)	(26,300)	(40,500)
Communication, Fundraising			
Choir, Music, Library	(2,760)	-	(2,800)
Office expenses/Printing	(6,408)	(10,250)	(6,000)
Telephone Postage	(964)	(1,825)	(1,000)
Fundraising expenses			
	(10,131)	(12,075)	(9,800)
	(20,873)	(20,900)	(20,900)
Mission and Service			
Donations	(470)	-	
	(21,343)	(20,900)	(20,900)
Equipment	(500)	-	(500)
Miscellaneous	(571)	(6,485)	(500)
GST included in payments and receivable		-	
	(1,071)	(6,485)	(1,000)
Total payments	(237,788)	(215,200)	(244,135)
Surplus (Deficit)	(34,336)	(37,435)	(62,882)
Opening Bank Balance	341,781		299,139
Closing bank balance	299,139		236,257