

- **Engagement in Presbytery**

It may not be for everyone, but I have found the experience of being an active member of the Canberra Region Presbytery an enriching experience. There are some wonderful colleagues in this Presbytery and even though it is geographically far-flung I always feel that touching base with the Presbytery beyond the areas covered by the two congregations to be very helpful. From the perspective of some years of experience I can honestly say that this Presbytery is one we should all be proud of and I would encourage people to get involved in and engage with.

LOWLIGHTS

- **Death of Mother & other family issues**

Without doubt, the sudden death of my dear mother just before Christmas last year was a terrible lowlight for both me and my sons. I have no doubt that it drained much of my emotional reserves and I am sure that I have not been completely on-song these past months. I am grateful for the support I received, but there were/are times when I simply wanted to go away and hide. Time has allowed this to pass but not without its ongoing difficulties.

- **Pearl's Place**

Whilst I said that this social café was a highlight, the awful (& often nasty) response of some within the community was quite frankly a shock and a surprise. I am disappointed that we were not able to host this new venture as I believe it would have added some credibility and profile to our Church within the community.

- **Travel**

Obviously the travel that is involved in the conduct of my "split ministry" is in many ways a lowlight for me to do the kilometres that are involved, I feel that the countryside also gives me a great deal of pleasure and plenty of time to think. I remain content to continue this arrangement as it is both challenging and enriching, in spite of the obvious loneliness and potential dangers involved. The great thing about mobile telephones these days is that even when I am on the road I am still contactable and able to respond to concerns and issues of the members of both congregations.

This will, I am sure, involve a shift in the way people perceive my "availability" but this is simply how/what it is for the moment (& as it will increasingly be in the future for the Church in the country, I suspect).

Availability of time for pastoral and strategic engagement

The comment above about Travel does mean that I do not have the time I would like to be more available and engaged with this congregation and Cooma in leading the people of God in new ways of thinking and acting as the Church in response to the challenges of the community in which we live. Again, at times I wish it were otherwise but it is what it is and I believe we all just need to find ways to make it work.

Lack of personal-life

Of course, the travel and the demands of two congregations who want more of my time and to which I wish to give more time, does mean that the thing that goes missing is a "personal life" for myself. I really don't know how this can be resolved and it is not up to the members of the congregation to do anything about this (other than to simply be aware of it). This is something that I must confront and find ways to resolve the inherent challenges of this particular lowlight.

TO BE CARRIED FORWARD

There remain a few matters that I have raised in previous Reports. I really don't know if any of them still have enough oxygen for them to "burst into flames", however I still think they are 'good ideas' which might yet find their right time to happen. They are:

- **Wandarrah Lodge**

This remains a "good idea" but just too expensive – or at least it is difficult to see how we might acquire the necessary funding to make this happen. But the property remains unsold still and I believe it is worth keeping it on the radar for the time being. It is difficult (given my time constraints) to find enough time to seriously put together some solid ideas and to follow possible funding possibilities. Oh well – I'll keep mentioning it!

- **Mindful Walking tours**

I am aware that both the Secretary and the Treasurer have been away this week on just such a walk and I wonder whether this idea could still have some possibilities with some time put into dreaming and planning early in 2016. I believe it would be a superb form of ministry/spirituality for members of this Church community to explore and invite others to share with us..

Sapphire Singles

This is also an idea that could/should be pursued as it might well serve a "need" within the community here in Merimbula. Loneliness remains an issue within our society to which the Church might well bring something valuable.

- **Study groups**

I would hope to encourage one or two "home-based" study groups to begin sometime in the New Year. There are plenty of very good materials available that would be useful and interesting and such groups would add to the "fellowship" experienced within this church community.

- **Education**

As a "Resource Minister" I will be planning to begin a couple of 'lay education' courses in 2016. I firmly believe that the time is right for such courses to be made available to people who might be interested in studying theology, biblical studies and Church history and practice.

- **Elders**

Our Elders do a terrific job at present, however as a group I believe they need to meet together to provide prayerful spiritual oversight to the members. The role of Elder is an important one and it is time (I believe) to look at the role together and find ways to explore new ways of providing leadership to the gathered community of the faithful here.

- **Training for Worship & Leadership**

As mentioned above (under the heading Education) I would like to provide the possibility for interested people to receive further training in Worship & Preaching. It would be good to see at least two more people qualified as "Lay Presiders" and for those who are prepared to preach and lead worship to have the already outstanding skills that are demonstrated by them enhanced with further training.

- **Congregational Retreat**

Is there any interest in holding a Retreat? WHEN & where?

- **Focus on Spirituality**

I have become increasingly aware of the importance of Christians developing and sharing a common "spirituality" We all have some form of spirituality, but I suspect we don't often talk about it and at times we may not really be aware of what it is that adds to our "spiritual life". I would suggest that in 2016 we create some opportunities to discuss and develop a focus on this important area of our faith, so that we feel more at home in our own faith and understanding of our life as Christians.

- **What might the next few years look like?**

It would be good for us to consider precisely questions such as this. What will this church look like in the next 3-5 years? Will we be the same or similar to the way we are today? What 2 or 3 things would we like to see changed? Do we want change at all - or more of the same? What dreams, hopes & expectations do we have for this congregation? Of course these are BIG questions – but what harm could it do to seriously ask them and think about them?

So as we move into 2016, may we be acutely aware of **God with Us**. May God help guide us and help us to be the people and the Church-community that god knows we can be!

Rev. David



Council Clips:

Treasurer Jeff informs us of the satisfactory financial position of the Church. The rental of the office to "Ability Links" and the OP Shop funds have contributed in a major way to the current healthy status. We are invited to use the "Giving Direct" system in our congregational offering as it provides a stable and predictable income source. Please speak with Jeff Haynes for information on this system.

Thanks were also extended to Tony Olinsky for his work as Hall Coordinator and publishing the Pew Slip each week.

Thanks too to Lyn Dawson as Preaching Roster Coordinator and Royce Lovett as Maintenance Coordinator. Lyn reported that Rev John Blair will be taking some services Jan – March including Easter Sunday

Finally, thanks go to our outgoing Committee member as Corinne vacates the seat of Chairperson to Colin Manley., Paul Dawson agrees to hold the fort as secretary and Jeff Haynes continues to offer his services as Treasurer.



Community Visitors Report

With the help of Jeff Haynes the CVS has been restructured with UnitingCare Merimbula having its own ABN, constitution and Board. Thanks go to those serving on the new Committee for their suggestions and work in providing ideas and support and ensuring compliance with the relevant guidelines.

There are now 7 new volunteers, enabling us to provide friendship to 40 aged residents. A Christmas lunch at the Pambula-Merimbula Golf Club will be held in appreciation for the tireless work of the volunteers and Committee members on 13/12/15.

Interested in becoming a Pastoral Carer at Pambula Hospital? Please contact Shirley McClellan 64959231 or Cathie Haynes 54953989



Imlay House

Service times are every 2nd and 3rd Saturdays. Anyone is welcome to attend. Shirley continues to provide Communion and spiritual support to those in Imlay House. Pauline and Rosemary provide the music which is always appreciated by the residents, Christine is sorely missed but her husband Jeff is often on the scene, reading and helping with communion. A lovely afternoon tea follows the service.



Op Shop News

Corinne (Coordinator)

The op-shop is doing extremely well and continues to donate to community and International projects both small and large, from \$500 to Nepal, \$700 to the Syrian refugee appeal, \$500 to Tulgeen, \$300 to Pearl's Place and even electric blankets for our tiny natives being cared for at Wires.

A Christmas lunch has been organised at Tura Beach Country Club for the 42 members of staff as a special thank you for the time and care they give to the op shop and its customers. The op shop will be closed from 4.30 Dec 22nd to January 4th. We have many beautiful Xmas trees and lovely decorations for sale at the moment, so if you are needing anything in that line, do check us out.

A new shed will be built early next year on the space above the Church. It will house furniture and electrical goods for the op shop so we will have more room to breathe.

From Editor Susie: As an op shop volunteer, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Corinne on behalf of us all for the clear administration and good nature Corinne demonstrates even when tricky issues arise!

Time for a smile: Beat the Christmas rush, come to church this Sunday!

Tonight's sermon: 'What is hell?' Come early and listen to our carol practice.

Where is the first tennis match mentioned in the Bible?
When Joseph served in Pharaoh's court.

Dear God,
Thank you for the baby brother, but what I prayed for was a puppy.



Merimbula Mutterings

Congratulations to Paul Dawson who has agreed to join our group of Elders. We will keep you in our prayers, Paul.

We will all miss Morag as she leaves us for bluer mountains. Not only have we to thank you, Morag, for your Elder duties but also beautiful organ accompaniment, CVS volunteering, catering, friendship and a lot of laughter over the years. Our loss will be the Blue Mountain's gain. There will be a farewell lunch after Church on 10th January. For those wishing to contribute to her gift, please contact Susie 64953483 or Corinne 64959033 before the 3rd of January.

Kerrie Yelds sends her appreciation to all those who sent cards, food and heartfelt wishes while she was in Canberra hospital. Please keep Kerrie in your prayers as her health has been deteriorating over the past months.

Rev David is holding his eagerly anticipated "Oxford Talk" after a lunch get-together February 14th – Valentine's Day! Wyndham members would be most welcome on this day. All bring a plate of finger food and David will regale us with his exploits in Oxford and best of all- no charge!

Three of our church ladies have been in the news. Joan Lovett and Iris Ballard under the team management of Rae Stove were in the successful bowls team winning the NSW State Championship. Congratulations Ladies!



Wyndham Warblings

Lyn Scrymgeour

Ecumenical Christmas Service. The combined churches of Wyndham will be holding an ecumenical Christmas Service on **Sunday 20 November** at 6.00pm. We would love to see you all there. A plate to share after the service would be appreciated.

The Clan Grant Reunion. A wonderful time was had by all involved in the Clan Grant Reunion. It is whispered that there may be another happening in two years' time.

Farewell to Marge Donohue. On Tuesday 24 November the Uniting Church was the venue for a Service of Celebration for the life of Marge Donohue. Marge was a friend to many in our community. Our love and support are extended to her family. She will be greatly missed.

Carols by Candlelight and a Christmas Visit to Albert Moore Gardens. Our Wyndham Hymn Singers will once again be singing at the Carols by Candlelight program which our local Bushfire Brigade are organising. We have also been invited back to Albert Moore Gardens to sing Christmas Carols and *Amazing Grace*.

Christmas Blessings to all from Wyndham

