



ANNUAL REPORT 2022

Gungahlin Uniting Church and Community Centre

108 The Valley Ave, Gungahlin ACT

Tel: 02 6242 5001

Email: office@gungahlinuniting.org

Website: <https://www.gungahlinuniting.org/>



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INTRODUCTION

Gungahlin Uniting Church adheres to the Basis of Union of the Uniting Church in Australia.

Our activities reflect our values, which are:

- to share the love of Christ with each other and our community
- being inclusive, accepting and welcoming to all people
- being generous and caring for others
- being informal and friendly
- being open to new ideas
- nurturing spiritual growth
- commitment to community outreach and social justice

Our Churches mission priorities are

- Providing a safe and welcoming place for worship and gathering
- Caring for each other
- Caring for our community
- Growing our church community
- Encouraging lifelong Faith Formation

FROM OUR CHURCH COUNCIL CHAIRPERSONS

Bronwyn Asquith & Jenelle Martin

This year began with the farewell of our third minister - Lay Pastor Darren Wright. After four years at Gungahlin, Darren, Holly and their children, Theo and Isabel, returned to their hometown of Wagga Wagga. This was not an easy time for the congregation - as we work through the close of this ministry and the transition to a new one. We thank God for Darren and Holly, and the fellowship and christian service they offered. We know God will bless them in their new lives, as He continues to work within ours. And we thank God for the blessing of our supply minister Rev. Dr Bruce Stevens, who's wisdom guides us through healing and on to hope.

So, in the spirit of hope - 2022 has been a year for much celebrating at GUC. We have now had 12 months of continuously meeting together as a community of faith, after two years of lockdowns and COVID uncertainty. And in the last few months, we have shared the great joy of being able to extend this fellowship together with a cuppa after church and seeing an increasing number of people able to attend Sunday worship. We feel very blessed.

With this 'return to normal' came a call out for people to come forward and share their gifts and talents with the congregation - and you have responded in large numbers. And we have all felt the blessing of this giving. From the lay leaders that conduct weekly worship services - including those who support them, to our newly formed music team, to those who maintain the church building and manse, have restarted the children's ministry and fellowship groups, through to those who are restoring the pantry garden. We thank God for you all - for your generosity and faithful service.

And of course, there is the Mustard Seed food pantry. The rising 'cost of living' is putting financial pressure on many families in our community and we are seeing an increasing number of people returning to the food pantry for assistance. The ministry of a morning cuppa and a chat has also returned this year, and the service extended to include clothing. We thank God for Alison Tweedie and all the volunteers for their service to the people of Gungahlin.

Our new Pastoral Care model has now been in place for more than 12 months. So many of us have benefited from our congregation members using their gifts of prayer, fellowship and transport to enable us to connect with one another. We have been very blessed to have so many of us with the gift in pastoral care - thank you to everyone who shared this special gift with us.

This year we also appointed a new Safe Church officer. We thank Narelle Dodd for her tireless efforts in developing our Volunteer and Safe Church policy and to ensuring programs such as 'Speak Out' are well advertised within the church. We look forward to implementing this policy fully in 2023.

Finally, this year the church completed a Presbytery Life and Witness Consultation. The first since 2015. This work will contribute to the process of calling a new minister. The findings in the report gives us the opportunity to reflect deeply about who we are as a congregation, where we are heading, and the way we can continue to serve the community. We look forward to continuing this work in 2023.

As 2022 comes to an end, we would like to thank all the members of the Church Council. Bruce Warren (secretary), John McKenzie (treasurer), Elizabeth Phythian, Lynne Butson and Sue Lloyd for their dedication and commitment to the work of the church.

To the congregation, we encourage you to look for opportunities to deepen your faith, be okay with feeling uncomfortable on your faith journey, and strive to connect genuinely with your Lord and Saviour.

As we look forward to 2023 - we recognise it will be an important year for the congregation as we work together to seek a new minister. We continue to ask you to faithfully pray for discernment for all those involved.



FROM OUR SUPPLY MINISTER

Rev. Dr. Bruce Stevens

St Paul, “In our prayers for you, we always give thanks” (Colossians 1:3)

I officially started supply ministry at GUC Monday 7 March, but I made preparations well before that date. After six months my contract was extended and I am committed to the ministry here until the end of January 2023. I deeply appreciate the warm welcome and acceptance at GUC for both me and my wife Ann. It is a privilege to serve in such a vibrant and loving church. Thanks!

I have determined to visit or have coffee/lunch with all members of the church. I believe that this is foundational to an effective pastoral ministry. And I have largely succeeded in that goal (maybe 80% of roll).

I have done a number of funerals (Anopa Dupe, Cecil White, Narelle’s father Noel, Michael Ting, and a memorial service for Suzie Shelton’s father). I have followed up pastorally with the families in grief.

I led some study groups on themes such as Dream Interpretation (evening meetings) and Book of Job (by Zoom). More recently we shifted to a Saturday 90-minute workshop format with dinner at the Golf Club which has proved popular. Recent topics in this format were Psychopathy and the problem of evil and a Genogram to explore family themes.

I helped to design and lead the three-stage conflict process in the church. I have contributed to the parish mission plan, to encourage the process. I have tried to add support, where possible and appropriate, to the steps to calling a minister-in-placement.

A few months ago I became chaplain to both Boys and Girls Brigade, giving devotions and ministering to the children and those who assist the program.

One initiative I enjoyed organizing was the St Francis service with blessings of animals and soft toys. I think this was an effective outreach and engaged children in the church. I have enjoyed doing all age messages (most weeks) and sermons twice a month. Once a month I organize and lead the service of Holy Communion. I am pleased that we are seeing new families in attendance at church. It is gratifying to see a growth in numbers, both with some people returning and others coming for the first time.

Treasurer Financial Report - FY2021-22

John McKenzie

Summary

Introduction

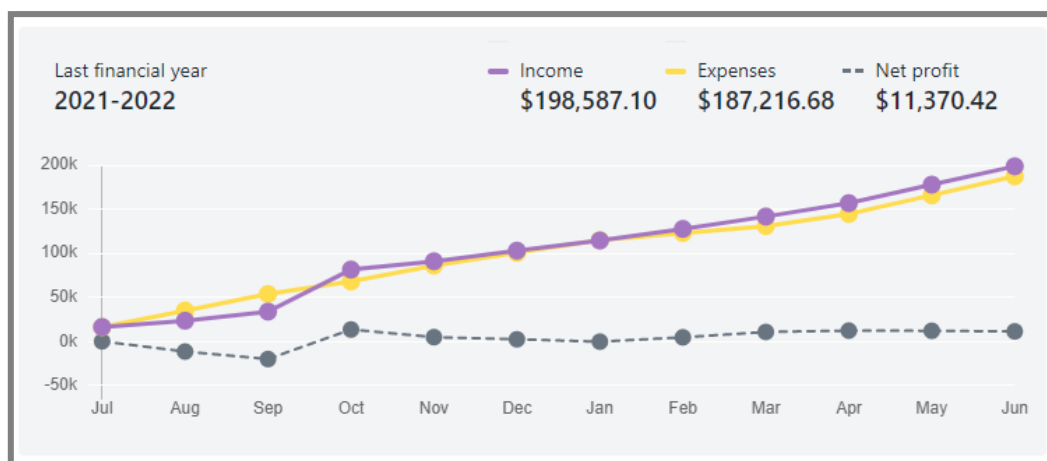
This report has been prepared on the basis of the financial reports for 2021-22 which have not been audited. The book of accounts is required to be audited and certified by two persons who are fit and proper persons to undertake the responsibility¹. There is a potential cost saving if two suitably qualified volunteers can be identified to audit the books, however church council has decided the books will be audited by a certified auditor as in previous years. When the audit is finalised, GUC will be able to utilise the free Synod Payroll Service, reducing the responsibility and significant workload of the GUC Treasurer and other members of the church council.

Net Profit/(Loss)

1. Gungahlin Uniting Church (GUC) had an operating profit of \$20,830.
2. Mustard Seed Food Pantry had a loss of -\$9,460.

This resulted in a net profit of \$11,370 for the financial year.

These figures do not include the other mission activities & groups (E.g., Boys Brigade, Girls Brigade, Playgroup etc.) that are managed by the leaders of the activities.



Budget variation

A number of changes occurred after the 2021-22 budget was approved at the annual congregation meeting on 14 November 2021. As a result of these changes, there was a variance for some items against what was initially approved in the budget. The main changes impacting the budget were:

Increased income:

1. Gungahlin Uniting Church received two ACT Small Business Hardship Scheme grants.
2. A decrease in wages occurred due to the lay ministry of Darren Wright concluding on 16 January 2022.
3. The manse was leased for 9 months from 21 January 2022.

¹ This year, the Synod Chief Financial Officer advised that accounts for small charities (annual revenue under \$500,000) registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) do not require to be audited and certified by an independent auditor.

Loss of income and additional expenses:

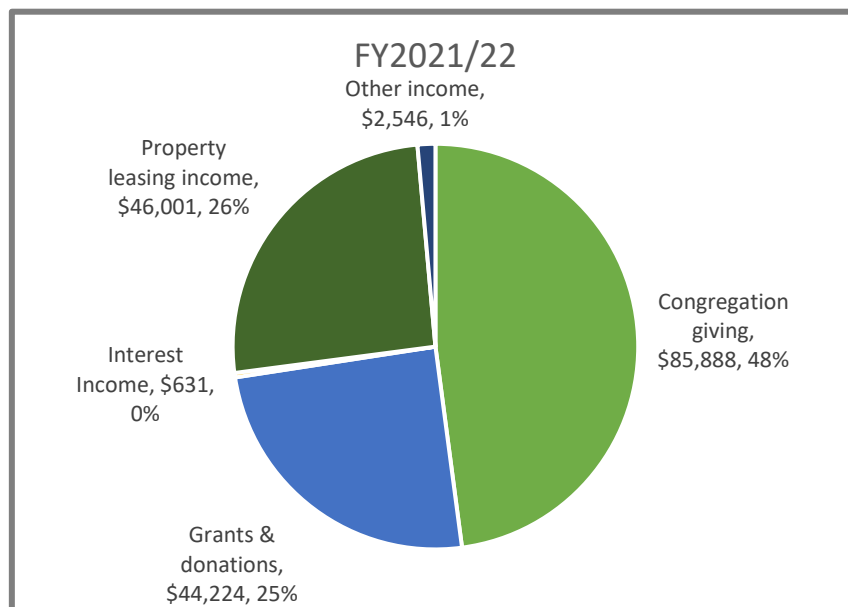
4. ACT COVID-19 restrictions resulted in reduced hall hire.
5. Reduced congregational giving.
6. The Church Life Worker hours were extended from 14.5 hours to 20 hours per week.
7. Rev Dr Bruce Stevens commenced as the supply minister (47.6% Full-time Equivalent).

While a shortfall of \$31,920 was predicted, this was with the assumption that Gungahlin Uniting Church would have a full-time minister for the full financial year. Without a full-time minister, expenditure against wages was reduced and additional income was sourced from the lease of the manse.

Income

In 2021-22 our total income was **\$179,290** (does not include Food Pantry). Main income sources:

1. Congregational offerings (48%).
2. COVID related government grants (25%).
3. Income generated from the rental of the church premises and the manse (26%).



Actual vs Budget

While total income received was above the budget of \$173,183 this was largely due to the ACT Small Business Hardship Scheme grants.

Congregational giving

Congregational offerings are the main source of income for the church and were 7% less than budgeted.

Property income

Property leasing income includes hire of the church facilities and lease of the Manse. Property leasing income was down 20% from budgeted due to a drop in hall hire as a result of COVID-19 restrictions. Without the lease of the Manse, income would have reduced a further \$16,200.

Comparing FY2021-22 to FY2020-21

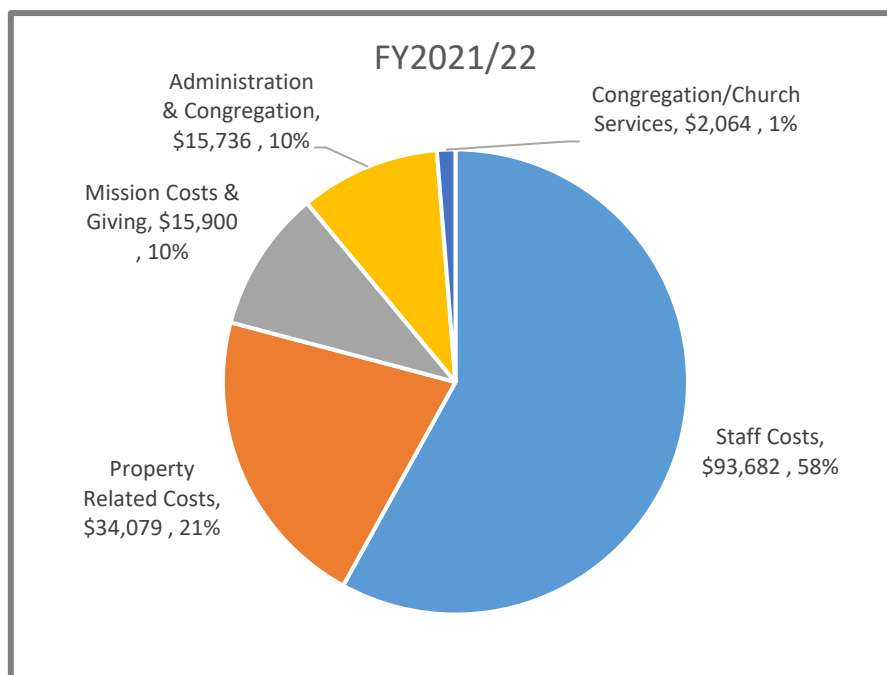
In the past, hall hire has been a major contributor to income. Pre-pandemic, we could expect hall hire to be in the range \$70,000 to \$90,000 per annum. COVID-19 restrictions have had an impact on hall availability and organisations seeking hall hire. Even so, 2021-22 was significantly better than the previous year with hall hire income up by 69%. This is still 67% down from income received in 2018-19 (\$89,775).

Workers' compensation for the year was \$924 rather than the budget of \$3,200 due to not having to cover a lay minister. A slight increase to \$1,041 for 2022-23 is required to cover the increased hours for the Church Life Worker.

Expenses

In 2021-22 total expenses were **\$161,460** (does not include Food Pantry). Main expenses:

1. Staff costs (58%).
2. Property related costs (21%).
3. Administration & Congregation (10%)
4. Mission Costs & Giving (10%)



Actual vs Budget

While expenses incurred were below the budget of \$190,729, this was largely due to the reduction in staff wages. Expenditure on wages was 25% less than the allocated budget of \$125,634.

Mission Costs & Giving

A key financial goal is to contribute at least 10% of our income to the wider work of the church. Each year GUC makes a contribution to support the work of Synod and the Canberra Presbytery. In 2021-22 we contributed \$15,900, consistent with previous years (\$11,925 to Presbytery and \$3,975 to Synod). GUC also supports the operation of the Mustard Seed Food Pantry, a major mission activity of the church, particularly through staffing costs. Costs were apportioned against the Mustard Seed Food Pantry to reflect the level of financial support provided through the congregation. Together, these financial contributions to mission represent around 15% of our total income.

Mustard Seed Food Pantry Income & Expenses are addressed later in this report.

Property expenses

Towards the end of the financial year, a number of expenses were incurred for property repairs & maintenance. Property related expenses are expected to continue into the next financial year due to the age of the property. The majority of assets have now depreciated.

Administration expenses

Administration costs also exceeded the budget due to the purchase of 2 new signs at a cost of \$3,872.

Comparing FY2021-22 to FY2020-21

The major difference in expenses can be contributed to the increase in insurance premiums and property repairs & maintenance.

Insurance expenses

Property insurance payable to NSW/ACT Synod increased by 43% on the previous financial year.

The COVID-19 pandemic has, over the past two years, increased the cost of insurance globally and, in many cases, reduced the availability of insurance. The Church has not been immune to this. Premiums have risen by over 100% for some classes of insurance, with average increases of 30% across all classes of insurance. These challenges have increased the costs of insurance.

Property related expenses

Total property costs, including utilities, repairs & maintenance have increased by 25%. Electricity and gas are up by 31%, with electrical repairs to external lighting well above previous year expenditure.

Assets

What do we own?

Gungahlin Uniting Church has net assets of \$3,362,895.66. The vast majority of this is the church building and manse, land and other capital assets (furniture, sheds, play equipment etc).

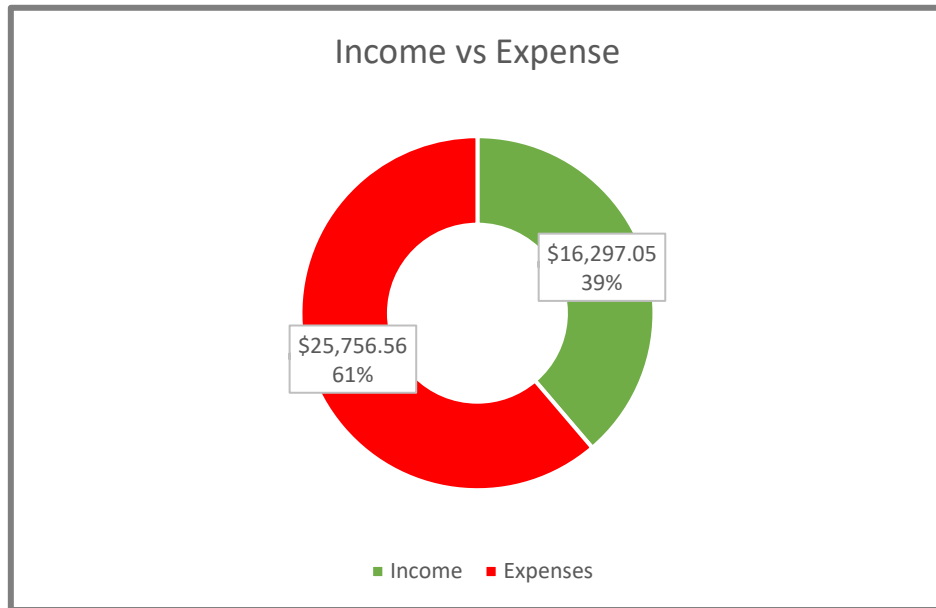
Operating accounts continue to decline as the expenditure over the years is generally greater than the income received. This is largely due to a decline in congregational giving. Investment and operating accounts for 2021-22 equate to \$168,724. This compares to \$172,248 for 2020-21 and \$195,072 for FY2019-20.

What do we owe?

Total liabilities at 30 June 2021 were \$2,900 comprising taxation, superannuation, GST, and accrued leave. GUC has no outstanding loans on property.

Mustard Seed Food Pantry

Please refer to the Mustard Seed Food Pantry entry in the Annual Report for the great work supporting those in need in our community.

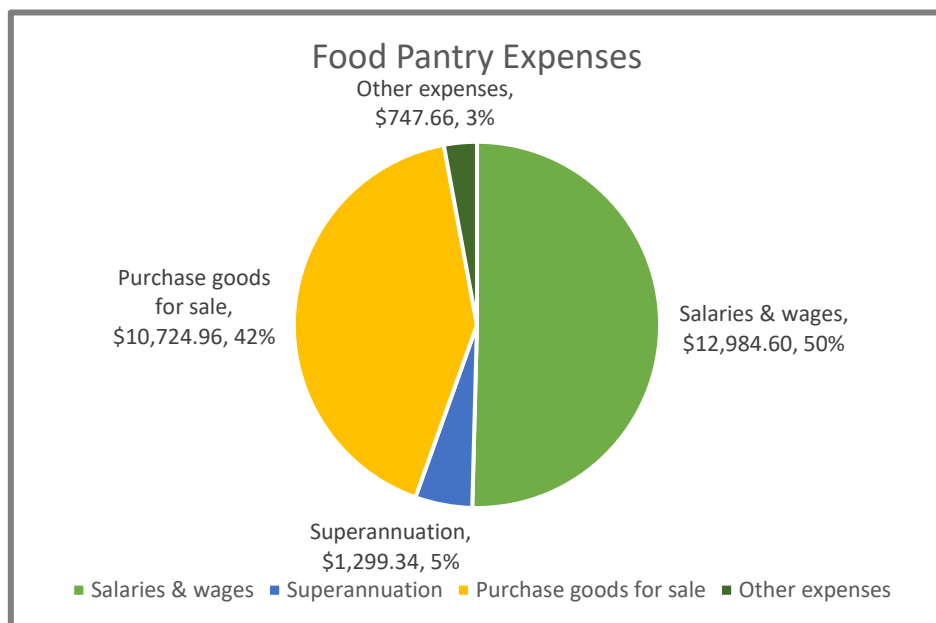


Income

The Mustard Seed Food Pantry received **\$16,297** from providing food to people in need, as part of GUC's broader mission activity. This was a 96% increase on the previous FY that was impacted by COVID-19 restrictions.

Expenses

As expected, with increased opening hours, costs were up from the previous financial year. Staff management costs comprised 50% of the total expenses.



FY2021-22 Profit & Loss

INCOME

Congregational offerings	85,888.04
Government grants & non-UCA donations	44,223.99
Interest Income (UFS)	631.34
Property Leasing Income (Manse & Church)	46,000.68
Other Income (GST recovered)	2,546.00
Total INCOME	179,290.05

EXPENSES

Staff Costs (minister & support staff)	93,681.53
Property Related Costs (utilities, maintenance & repairs)	34,078.76
Mission Costs & Giving (Synod & Presbytery)	15,900.00
Administration & Congregation (Audit fees, stationary etc.)	15,735.82
Congregation/Church Services (Worship & Music)	2,064.01
Total EXPENSES	161,460.12

Operating Profit **17,829.93**

INCOME Generation Activity Inc

Donations - miscellaneous	3,000.00
Total Mustard Seed Food Pantry Income	16,297.05
Income Generation Activity INCOME	19,297.05

Mustard Seed Food Pantry Expenses

Management Employment	14,283.94
Mustard Seed Expenses	11,472.62
Total Mustard Seed Food Pantry EXPENSES	25,756.56

Net Profit **11,370.42**

FY2021-22 Balance Sheet

ASSETS

Current Account non-UFS	27,365.31
Fixed Assets	3,158,113.35
Investments	156,937.68
Debtors	14,870.00
Other Assets	2,709.54
Total ASSETS	3,359,995.88

LIABILITIES

Minister BExp Liability	0.24
Provision Staff Entitlements	-8,281.45
Other Liabilities	5,381.43
Total LIABILITIES	-2,899.78

Net Assets **3,362,895.66**

RETAINED FUNDS

Accumulated Funds	3,362,895.66
Total RETAINED FUNDS	3,362,895.66



FROM OUR CHURCH LIFE WORKER

Alison Tweedie - Administration & Encouragement

Once again, I would like to thank the Gungahlin Uniting Church congregation for the opportunity to work within our community in this capacity. Thanks to all who encourage and support me in my role, I am grateful to be entrusted with this role.

Church Life Worker- Administration & Encouragement is a diverse role with three main areas.

- 1) Church Administration
- 2) Bookings & Building Manager
- 3) Oversight of the Mustard Seed Food Pantry

In the area of Church Administration my role is to prepare the *Bulletin* each week, prepare church rosters, create name tags for newcomers, keep our congregational database up to date, prepare and produce the *Church Contact Directory* and collate the annual *Volunteer Forms*. I also attend to emails and enquiries, order supplies for the kitchen, bathrooms and office and many other day-to-day tasks as well as more seasonal tasks throughout the year. I am often the face that welcomes and greets people who drop by our building throughout the week with a range of enquiries and needs, from the simple to the more complex.

As Bookings & Building Manager I liaise with our current tenants and organise any new or one-off events that happen in our facility. In this role I liaise with our church cleaner and with the Church Property Group on maintenance issues.

My role as Mustard Seed Food Pantry Co-ordinator involves preparing and managing the rosters, orientating and training new volunteers and enabling and encouraging our team. Each week I place a food order with Foodbank, update our customer database and make Membership Cards for new customers. Throughout the year I attend Foodbank Forums, speak with community groups about the work of the pantry, liaise with our donors and supporters and each Friday I send out an email updating our team on the happenings from the past week.

My days of work are spread over Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, totaling 20 hours per week.

MINISTRY REPORTS

Worship Team

Margaret Reeson - Convenor

This has been a year of stops and starts. The sequences of pauses due to COVID lockdowns and compulsory isolation continued into the new year. One sad result was that even the final service for Darren Wright on 16 January was held on zoom instead of face to face, although we did manage to have a farewell lunch for the Wright family.

We began the past year with a slightly larger Worship Team. Caroline Wallace needed to step aside for a time following the death of her son, Pauline Loughhead moved to Queensland and Ranjini Rebera departed for heaven. Four of us - Chris Dodd, Patsy Coleman, Jessica Marchant and I - have met regularly but miss our companions.

The arrival of Rev Dr Bruce Stevens as our Supply Minister has been greatly appreciated. He has contributed with wisdom and grace to our services of worship. His role has been part-time, however, so Worship Team has needed to find people from our congregation, as well as a few guest preachers, to take responsibility for leading and preaching on a regular basis. This has proved to be a real gift for our congregation. So far in 2022 eighteen of our own congregation have prepared and led a service or have preached for us. What a very gifted community of faith we have! Each one has prepared faithfully and guided our worship and reflection on the Scriptures in ways that have challenged and blessed us.

Thank you to each one of you.



To support the gathered worship on Sunday, we are very grateful for the ministry of the musicians and the IT team, particularly Chris Martin, who provide support with preparation of all the elements of music and technical components of the service.

Hours of work go into all these preparations each week.



After the many months when it was not possible to meet face to face, it has been important to begin to rebuild our worshipping community. For Advent 2021 we followed the 'Close to Home' resources from the Sanctified Art Creative team, led by Darren Wright.

A 'Blue Christmas' service for those who find Christmas difficult seemed particularly appropriate this time.

We have shared a number of significant special services through the year. The Closure of Ministry service for Darren Wright was prepared by Chris Dodd in January, Boys Brigade and Girls Brigade service in February led by Bruce and Liz Warren, Food Pantry service led by Alison Tweedie in March, Ash Wednesday service led by Margaret Reeson in March, Maundy Thursday service led by Jessica Marchant and Jemimah Hamilton, Good Friday service of dramatic reading led by Worship Team, Easter Day service led by Bruce Stevens with special effects (lots of balloons) by Worship Team, Pentecost led by Chris Dodd with aerial support from young adults. We welcomed Irene Lund representing Frontier Services for a special service led by Patsy Coleman and appreciated guest preachers Glen Powell and John Williams.



A new innovation has been to invite a couple of individuals or families to introduce themselves to the congregation during worship on the first Sunday of the month. This has been well received. We were glad to learn that our practice of hearing Scripture read in the first language of one of members each Sunday has been reported as one of the most appreciated features of our weekly worship.

Worship Team has encouraged Chris Dodd to attend the Sacraments course this year in order to provide one of our number who is accredited to celebrate Holy Communion and he hopes to do that in October. In the coming year the work of the Worship Team will be led by Chris Dodd.

Playgroup

Cassandra Nokham - Coordinator



Playgroup started back in February 2022 when school started.

The playgroup we combined with last year finished as their leader was going back to work and their toys were taken to the Playgroup Association.

We were a little hesitant due to Covid, but we had our plan in place and off we went.

The year started off well with 13 families and each week we grew, some families dropped off along the way. Like last year, Playgroup changed in that we kept it simple with free play both inside and outside. (In the past we have packed up and had stories and singing and an organised craft activity). We now have a craft activity organised by one of the mums, who also likes to make the Playdough too. Children are welcome to participate if they like. We also have a story time and singing time towards the end of Playgroup before we pack up. All toys are cleaned at the end of the session.

Once again there was no morning tea rosters and no tea or coffee made by our lovely 'grandparent' helpers that we have had in the past.

At the end of term 2 we went on an outing to the indoor play centre in Mitchell. We had enough money to pay for the children and adults. This year we have not charged the usual \$10 as we have not had to buy any expensive resources and many of our children were quite young and we didn't need to offer a lot of costly craft activities.

We were also given a donation of money from the playgroup that finished up with us.

Although Covid did affect us a little (with myself having to cancel some weeks and some of our families with it), 2022 has been a great year for Playgroup. We've had babies born and a wedding. Once again it has been wonderful to see the friendships that have come out of Playgroup - both children and parents. Playgroup continues to be a great community service and is a place where people are welcomed and included in line with GUC's values.

Oasis

Liz Warren

Oasis restarted towards the end of Term 1 this year. After asking for volunteers, and not having anyone come forward, I took it on, initially until the middle of the year.

We started off with six children and spent the last few weeks of Term 1 getting to know each other and settling into the multipurpose room.

By the start of Term 2 we were regularly having 8 children attend, and we started having parents come too, to be an extra adult in the room. Year 6 children also came to be helpers, and to keep them engaged in coming to church. We mostly used lesson plans from *Faith Box*, produced by *Faith 4 Families* from New Zealand. This material is designed for use by families but is easily adapted for use in other settings.

By the end of Term 3, the children had settled into Oasis and Sung was attending each week.

We looked at Easter, being a part of God's family, the Fruits of the Spirit, Abraham, and Creation. Children were also coming straight to the multipurpose room as they arrived at church to help set up and find out what they would be doing. One of the older children would ask if they could help the children with the activities we did.

The children were looking forward to attending Oasis in Term 4 and were asking who would be taking it. At that time I didn't know that no one had come forward to run Oasis for the last couple of months of the year. Being a part of Oasis is an incredible privilege. I have watched the children get to know each other, grow in confidence, and start to become a cohesive group. I've also had the honour of getting to know the children, something I haven't had much of a chance to do over the last few years and seeing them as an important part of God's church, and little people wanting to learn more about God.

Billabong

Elizabeth Phythian & Sue Llyod

At the end of July,
the Tweens/Young Teens group started meeting.

There are 6 young people in our congregation that fall into this age category (currently years 5 to 7). The group meets every 2 weeks, on morning tea Sundays.



The group decided to continue with the traditional name of 'Billabong'. When asked what the group would like to have a focus on/become involved with, the idea of 'outside stuff' and/or gardening was raised. Therefore, the group has been allocated a garden bed in the Food Garden to look after - weeding, planting, & maintenance. At the time of writing this report, the group had planted peas and beans seeds, and strawberry plants (with thanks to Mark Phythian for his guidance and assistance). Tomato plants will be added to the garden bed when the weather is finer.

Biblical links with our activities are included in each of our gatherings, providing a mix of practical activities, social interaction and bible-based teachings. The other idea some of the young people expressed interest in is involvement in the Sunday services. Opportunities for this to happen, via a supported and encouraging approach, will be explored in term 4 and onwards.

Girls' Brigade

Liz Warren - Captain



Earlier in the year I was invited to Belconnen Westminster Presbyterian Girls' Brigade to talk about my experiences of Girls' Brigade. I was asked why I go to Girls' Brigade and why I started going. Like many other families, I started going to Brigade before I started school. My mum was a Girls' Brigade leader and former Girls' Brigade girl. My nanna was a Girls' Brigade "captain" and my grandfather the Girls' Brigade and Boys' Brigade Chaplain. I really didn't have a choice to start, but I chose to be a part of Brigade until I was 17. I later became a leader at North Belconnen Baptist Church's Girls' Brigade for a few years. Both my daughters attended Girls' Brigade, and Carrie has now become a leader and Queen's Award candidate.

Like all youth ministries, Girls' Brigade is a challenging but rewarding group to be involved with. Some girls come because their parents were involved in Girls' or Boys' Brigades. Some girls come because they want their girls to attend a Christian group while girls come because their parents like the ethics and acceptance of our groups but aren't interested in attending a church. Whatever their reason for coming, we make sure all girls are welcomed and are made to feel part of the group by girls and leaders. Most of the time, the girls stay for at least a year or more. Some girls stay for many years and move into a leadership role. We currently have 33 girls, 5 leaders, and one young leader. While we lost some girls last year due to interstate moves and other commitments, we have had 10 new girls join us this year.

We spent Term 1 doing outside activities while the weather was good and COVID was more of an issue. Terms 2 and 3 saw us return to our regular activities, supported by Bruce Stevens in Term 3 with devotions for the younger girls, and also by Lily, a Silver Duke of Edinburgh candidate who did a six-month service with us, but stayed for the entire year. Term 4 will be finishing off some work - the Seniors are testing recipes for a

cookbook they're putting together. Some of our girls were invited to attend a Pioneer Pin presentation by Mrs Hurley at Government House. The Pioneer Pin is the highest national award that can be earned in Girls' Brigade.

Without our leaders there would be no Girls' Brigade. Many thanks to Lorelle, Fiona, Barbara, Carrie, Jordanna, Lily, Shirley, who covers us in prayer and Bruce.

Watching the girls grow and mature in themselves, their skills, their beliefs, their faith, is an honour and a privilege, as being a part of their lives, and by extension, their families' lives. We love and support them in whatever way they need, showing Jesus' love.

Boys' Brigade

Bruce Warren - Captain



Late last year I contacted Rob Bolton, an old Boys' Brigade colleague in England, I met Rob several years ago when he visited us in Canberra. I wanted to ask some advice about the UK experience in running a Boys' Brigade group in a global pandemic and how they operated after lockdown. His advice surprised me. He said that in the UK their numbers rebounded quickly after returning from lockdown, I had expected a decrease with parents wary about sending their boys along. More on this later.

In December 2021 two of our Senior boys, Billy Cook and Tyler, formally received their Queen's Badge from the Governor General David Hurley at Government House. The Governor General and his wife were very generous with their time and several of our group enjoyed a couple of hours of their company. The Queen's Badge is the highest award achievable at Boys' Brigade. Billy and Tyler are only our second and third recipients.



December also brought some unexpected news. Wayne Ross, who was leading our Junior Section received an RAAF posting to Queensland, with two weeks' notice. Darren Wright, who was serving as our Chaplain, left GUC in January. Chris Tinning, our treasurer, wouldn't be able to attend BB due to work commitments. Cameron was battling cancer.

Our leadership numbers had just taken a big hit. Good thing I was expecting lower numbers in 2022.

Alas Rob Bolton's advice was spot on. Out of nowhere we suddenly had a lot of new boys joining us. I was expecting to be top heavy with Seniors. Now we had a sudden influx of Juniors. Many of them from Korean families. For the first term of 2022 we concentrated on outside activities. This was to mitigate the impact of the Covid Omicron wave. We did outside games, devotions outside, canoeing, bike rides, a deferred Awards night and chalk chases and Easter Egg hunts. We finally got to run a two-day canoe training course for our Leaders and Senior Boys.



Covid continued to have an impact with Boys' Brigade ACT deciding to postpone a planned coast camp and mountain biking camp.

We have 37 boys on the roll with average attendance on Brigade nights around 25. We have noticed increased absences at Boys' Brigade over the year both with boys and leaders with Covid impacting many of our Brigade families.

In May we welcomed Boys' Brigade Australia President Chee Ngui to Canberra with a burnt BBQ breakfast followed by a hike up Mount Ainslie. Chee unfortunately brought unexpected and sad news; my mate Rob Bolton had passed away suddenly in the UK. Rest in Peace Rob.

During winter Boys' Brigade concentrated on indoor activities with the Seniors doing work towards Citizenship and Boys' Brigade Knowledge awards. The Juniors and Anchors were focused on physical and educational activities. Matthew Bielenberg attended the Queensland Boys' Brigade Leadership course. We have had combined activities and Parades with Girls' Brigade. We recently conducted First Aid Training for Boys' Brigade leaders and Seniors. We now have 12 leaders and Senior boys with First Aid qualifications.

Leadership numbers are our biggest concern at Boys' Brigade. We have no shortage of boys willing to come along. Our leadership numbers have also dropped with Mark Phythian finishing up in the middle of the year and Tyler Cooper leaving shortly after being posted to Newcastle with the RAAF. For the first time in the history of our Boys' Brigade group I have had to put a hold on new boys joining us. I am grateful for Bruce Stevens joining us as our Chaplain and Johan and Lindsay helping on a regular basis. I am also grateful to parents who have offered to help with supervision when leaders are unavailable. I am grateful to our leaders, Thomas, Chris, Cameron, Wayne, Mark, Alistair, Billy, Tyler, Max, Phil, and Darren for their efforts with Boys' Brigade in the last year. Without their commitment and energy Boys' Brigade at GUC would not happen. I am thankful for supportive parents who bring their boys to Brigade. I am also thankful to the church for their support. I am most thankful to the boys who regularly turn up to be part of a special group.

COMMUNITY AND MISSION

Mustard Seed Food Pantry

Alison Tweedie



In June 2022 we recognised nine years since the Mustard Seed Uniting Food Pantry first opened its doors and we continue to remember and are thankful to all who were involved in the establishment phase and who set a solid foundation for what was to come. We continue to open between 11am-1pm and 6pm-7pm on Thursdays to provide low-cost nutritional food to people who need a helping hand.

These past twelve months have been more consistent than the previous two years. The two Covid lockdowns dramatically re-set our operations and customer base. Total membership stands at 885 people, of course not everyone still comes. Some use our service for a short time and people come and go for various reasons. However, we do still have several customers from the early days who continue to shop with us. Some of these customers we have now known for 9 years. It really is a privilege to share in people's lives in this way.

This past year (November 2021- October 2022) we had 55 new customers join.

Each Thursday we serve around 45 people, and have a regular customer base of around 100 people.

Most weeks we receive phone enquiries about the food pantry from people seeking assistance as many are finding the cost of living reaching and exceeding their limits. Over the course of this year, we gave away 40 plus emergency hampers which is slightly up on previous years. Emergency hampers are given to people on Thursday's and throughout the week who find themselves in an emergency or crisis situation. We provide tailor-made emergency hampers to cater for differing needs.

It never ceases to amaze me how word gets around and people who are in need seem to find our little pantry.

The Food Pantry Management Committee has continued to provide leadership and oversight to the work of the pantry. The committee consists of Elizabeth Phythian (Chair), Ngaire Hosking, Sue Lloyd and Alison Tweedie.

When we re-opened in November last year, we implemented a new pricing system. It was clear our previous pricing system was no longer viable in covering costs. Our new pricing system is now based on cost recovery. This has meant we are able to offer a greater

range of products knowing we will cover costs. The average spend has increased as customers are now able to find even more of their needs met here. Many of our customers have expressed how grateful they are in being able to stretch their dollar even further.

We have a committed and dedicated team of 20 volunteers who spend time each Wednesday and Thursday assisting and serving. Each volunteer seems to enjoy the experience and adds their mark on what we do. All our volunteers have a spirit of generosity to make our pantry an enjoyable and helpful service to the people who seek assistance and support. Our volunteers engage in bubbly, light-hearted conversations through to the more serious and heavy-laden conversations with people who came by each week. Our generosity is on display in more ways than just our food offerings. There are always good connections and conversations, information is provided and practical assistance given to those we encounter. We all sense that even though we only see people for a short period of time and can only assist in a small way we are making a difference to those with whom we journey.

We continue to source most of our food from Foodbank NSW/ACT based in Sydney.

Most Wednesday's we receive pallets of food delivered by Roadmaster.

We also receive an abundance of fruit, vegetables and bread through our Ozharvest and Canberra City Care (CCC) Second Bite deliveries which pick up from local supermarkets. It takes a team of four- Ngaire, Tam, Sue and Alison-a number of hours to receive and sort the produce. As the workload increases there have been small adjustments and continual improvements made to how our Wednesday team operate. The range and amount vary from week to week but most weeks our customers receive a good amount of free fresh produce. We welcome and are grateful for these deliveries. We also acknowledge the close working relationship we have with these providers, especially Canberra City Care (CCC) for sharing their resources. CCC and their partners often supply pastries for use in the Café on Thursday- much appreciated and enjoyed by our customers.

The Crace Organic Community Garden continues to deliver vegetables weekly on a Thursday morning.

Our own church community continues to provide donations through the *Giving Basket*, which is part of our weekly Sunday offering. The Mustard Seed is indeed blessed to have the backing and support of the Gungahlin Uniting Church and its congregation. This has enabled us to provide food free of charge, clothes, blankets and gift vouchers to people who have been doing it extra tough. Without this support and flexibility the Gungahlin Uniting Church affords us we would not be able to assist in the way we have. Thank you to the GUC community for gifts of money, food, time, prayer and clean egg cartons.

The pantry has also received donations from many different community groups in this past twelve months. At Christmas last year we received a monetary donation from the Yass Uniting Church. This allowed us to purchase supermarket Gift Cards as a Christmas gift to our customers.

The generosity from the greater Gungahlin community never ceases to amaze too.

A few months ago, a man contacted the church office wanting to know when he could drop off a few food items. He had seen our sign on The Valley Avenue over the past few years as he drove by each day, so one Wednesday afternoon he came by with his food donation. He was quite taken with the name 'Mustard Seed' and we talked about the work of the pantry with him. Within 24 hours he had made a large deposit into our food pantry account and in a follow up email he said- "keep up the great work". This was a wonderful gift and a vote of confidence in what we are doing.

At the end of June, after more than 2 ½ years in hiatus, we re-opened the food pantry Café. Each week people are welcomed into the church foyer and provided warmth, conversation and something to eat and drink.

One of these people was a mother with a young adult daughter. They had come for the first time and were seeking an emergency hamper. While a hamper was being prepared they were invited to take a rest in the Café. Margaret made herself available to have a conversation with them and served hot soup and drinks. They later expressed how heartened they were by the welcome they had received.

It will take a little while for the Café to build up and re-establish itself as the 'heart' of the Mustard Seed Pantry. While we would like to "capture" what the Café used to be, times have changed and people have come and gone, but no doubt a new community of people will start to draw together over time. The Café has been a welcoming place for people to come and rest, especially for those living in their cars.

Most weeks we see people and hear stories that remind us that what we are doing each Thursday makes a difference. It is always lovely to hear the difference we make in the lives of those we meet each week. We always need to be on the look-out for signs of life and ways to connect.

Over the course of the year our volunteers have been speaking with five customers who have all found themselves homeless. Most are connected to other services who are working alongside them to provide the help and support they need. At Mustard Seed we are aware of their desperate situations and are trying to accommodate their extra needs too. We can't wave a magic wand and fix all these problems; however we are present to

these people, providing a comforting and listening ear and gently guiding and encouraging each one.

From time to time, we do receive updates of good news. Three out of the five people we were journeying with this past year have found suitable accommodation.

We received some lovely news via a phone call one Wednesday from one of our customers. This lady had just walked out of a meeting where she was told she had secured housing. Her immediate thought was to call us as we had been closely following her on this journey towards finding suitable housing. This is such a relief and we are very happy for her. We were able to put a few extra items together for her as a housewarming gift so she can start to fill her kitchen pantry.

It is a privilege to co-ordinate the Mustard Seed Pantry and be on-site every Thursday to spend time with volunteers, visitors and donors; and though I get to see a larger picture than most, even I don't see the complete picture. It takes many willing people to support and contribute to making the pantry a wonderful community. Thank you to everyone who participated in the life of the pantry this year.



Vegetable Garden Group

Mark Phythian

We have had five Saturday get togethers now and have planted out almost all the garden beds, with one now ready to be planted out and another left fallow at the moment. It has been great to see who turns up each month and with Spring arriving so have the weeds! We have three regulars from the wider community that have garden beds and have had eleven people from the church community come along one or more times. Billabong now have a garden bed and have started planting that out with strawberries, beans and peas. Anyone is welcome to come along, so if you are free on one of our Saturday get togethers (happens the first Saturday of each month), please come along! I would also like to thank everyone who has generously contributed to the garden.



PASTORAL CARE AND SMALL GROUPS

Pastoral Care

Shirley Williams, Jenelle Martin, Elizabeth Phythian

In the GUCC community, Pastoral Care emerges in real and spontaneous ways that aims to build a community culture of respect and care for one another. Pastoral Care is not a stage-managed formal task but an expression of our conviction of who we are in God, and to help people to live life in all its fullness according to the example of Jesus, exchanging hospitality, responding compassionately to one another and providing opportunities for people to experience belonging to the GUC community of faith.

While the GUC Pastoral Care structure continues to evolve and expand, our various teams and individuals work to ensure and claim the opportunity to rebuild our church community in ways that will facilitate a culture of trust and growth. A key principle lying at the heart of this approach to Pastoral Care is the creation of a culture of care beyond Sunday morning's service. The Pastoral Care is in place to support a culture of care and to attend to particular tasks and any gaps that may emerge.

Pastoral Care "pops up" all over the place when people are awake to one another and are empowered to extend a helping hand of friendship, utilise and share their skills, and encourage others to belong.

There are opportunities for each member of the congregation to participate and be valued in caring for one another, so that in connecting with others, relationships are made, nurtured and valued.

Pastoral Care is not solely the formal responsibility of the ordained minister but can be the vocation of each member. GUC provides various opportunities for church members to connect and be part of our community of faith in informal ways, which includes the various gatherings, groups, outreach programmes and tasks that enable the success of our community.

At the end of 2021, Church Council undertook a review of the Pastoral Care structure at Gungahlin Uniting Church. Jenelle Martin, Elizabeth Phythian, and Shirley Williams agreed to spearhead the review.

Initially, we came up with what we perceived to be the philosophy for Pastoral Care at GUC:

Pastoral Care at Gungahlin Uniting Church encompasses the spiritual, physical, social, emotional and mental support for members. Through providing a network of care, we ensure that the expressed needs of individuals and families are attended to by a team of people.

From this, we set about re-establishing Home Groups (formally known as Family Groups) with the overall purpose being to meet the spiritual, social and community needs of the congregation. The congregation was asked, through a survey, if they wanted to be in a Home Group, and in December 2021 six Home Groups were formed consisting of 54 family units. Groups have continued to meet throughout 2022 and Home Group leaders meet twice a year for support and guidance. Newcomers to GUC are actively asked if they'd like to join a Home Group, and those who have taken up this opportunity have appreciated the connections.

In addition to Home Groups, a Care Team was set up and members of the congregation elected to be part of different teams. These teams include:

- Assisting with transport
- Visiting people in hospital
- Visiting people in their homes
- Being part of a prayer chain
- Phoning people
- Providing occasional meals.

Although these groups have not been widely called upon, members of the congregation have accessed support throughout the year.

This pastoral care structure has been well supported by the GUC congregation and was recognised by the Life and Witness team during their consultation in 2022.

Spice Kids

Jean Terbeth

Spice Kids (a meal gathering for adults) has had two lunches so far this year with the easing of Covid restrictions. Both were well attended and very enjoyable. The first was at Ginger & Spice (from which the group takes its name) and the second at the East Lakes Club. Spice Kids generally meet on the 5th Sunday of the month.

Pub Group

Pub group is a social gathering where we share a meal at a local pub. We meet every second Wednesday.

Tea and Talk

Elizabeth Phythian

T&T is an opportunity for catching up with, and getting to know, other GUC community members over a cuppa. This group meets on the first Friday of the month at the Gungahlin Lakes Club coffee shop.

The invitation to attend T&T is extended to all who attend GUC - anyone is welcome to join us! Reminder emails are sent to those who attend the group, and details of upcoming T&T's are included in the weekly bulletin.

Fortunately, we did not have any lockdowns in 2022 (yay!) to prevent us from coming together in person. However with COVID still very much present in the community, our attendance numbers were affected with people unable to attend due to isolating, avoiding group situations, etc. We averaged around 15 attendees each month between February and September, but regardless of numbers each gathering was a warm opportunity to grow friendships, provide support, learn more about each other and share a laugh or a tear.

PROPERTY, MAINTENANCE AND BOOKINGS

Property Team

Mark Butson & Alison Tweedie

The Property Team deals with matters relating to property management and maintenance of the building and grounds of the GUCCC facility and the manse.



The Property Team consists of:

Mark Butson, Mark Phythian and Alison Tweedie

The Property Team is responsible for:

- Removal of green waste - Mark Phythian has made multiple trips to the Green Waste Recycling Centre disposing of the accumulation of garden waste from around the GUCCC property
- Managing fire protection and alarm systems
- Managing annual inspection of roof anchors - in 2022 the ladder roof support near the water tanks was re-located to allow better access
- Managing repairs - there are on-going issues with GUCCC roof-leaks, faulty external lights and faulty hot-water systems in the kitchen.

Mark Butson and Mark Phythian have attended to many maintenance and repair jobs around the GUC building, spending time on practical fixes as well as administrative tasks such as engaging service providers. It's easy to overlook these small but important jobs that keep our facility safe and well maintained.

Throughout 2022 Riyadh has continued his work in maintaining the church property gardens and often does additional cleaning in and around the building. Thank you, Riyadh, for your dedication and often unrecognised weekly work.

Bookings, Building Hire and Cleaning

Alison Tweedie

Throughout 2022 GUC has had two regular tenants hire the building- Navitas and Girl Guides. We have good relationships with our tenants, and they are very happy with the high standard that our facility offers.

As well as these groups, there are several other regular users of the building including Boys' Brigade, Playgroup, Mustard Seed Café, Gamblers Anonymous and the mental health group- GROW.

We continue to host special one-off events for our church members, including birthday parties, weddings and funerals. We also continue to host workshops and events run by Presbytery when needed.

It can be challenging at times keeping the building clean, in good order and ready for each use. There are many people who come and go through our doors each week. There is equipment that requires on-going maintenance and attention. Some of these include servicing the instant hot water dispensers, dishwasher, microwaves, bathroom hand dryers and air conditioner units. Other providers that attend our site regularly are our fire maintenance company, our waste removal provider, sanitary bins provider and other services that go along with the maintenance and legal obligations of owning a building. We also engage the services of a security company to monitor the alarm security system and regularly call upon our painter, plumber and electrician.

We continue to engage a professional cleaning company to keep our building clean. At present cleaning is done twice a week.

Kelly Dodd continues in her role as *Accounts Manager*. Kelly is responsible for paying our many invoices and keeping on top of all things financial and works alongside the church Treasurer.