



**ST. MARGARET'S UNITING CHURCH,
MOOROOLBARK
ANNUAL REPORT for 2018**



ANNUAL REPORT 2018

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ANNUAL REPORT 2018

Minister: Rev Arnie Wierenga (to October 28th 2018)

Chairperson Congregation: Marj. Hookey

Secretary Congregation: Robert O'Shea

Church Council

Chairperson: Marjorie Hookey

Secretary: Robert O'Shea

Treasurer: Ann Gaudion

Minister: Rev Arnie Wierenga (to October 28th 2018)

Elected Councillors:

Jan Down

Carolyn Dunkley

Ann Gaudion

Graeme Munday

Yvonne Spicer

Karen White

Noel De Voogd

Robert O'Shea

Elected Elders:

Marj. Hookey

Nancy Isherwood

Michael Down

Merle Munday

Robert O'Shea

Yvonne Spicer

Karen White

Life Elder: Ken Davies

Under Church regulations all Elders are members of the Church Council, however, Merle Munday , and Michael Down have chosen not to attend Church Council meetings.

CHURCH COUNCIL

Membership of the Church Council for 2018 numbered 12 with 10 elected members, one life elder and our Minister. Ken Davies, Noel de Voogd, Carolyn Dunkley, Jan Down, Ann Gaudion (Treasurer) Marj Hookey (Chairperson), Nancy Isherwood, Graeme Munday (Property Manager), Robert O'Shea (Secretary), Yvonne Spicer, Karen White, Rev. Arnie Wierenga (Minister). The Council met monthly during 2018.

In October 2017 Rev Arnie was seconded to the position of Yarra Yarra Presbytery Minister - Pastoral Care for a period of five months. He returned to St. Margaret's for the Church Council meeting of February 28th and was welcomed back to preaching on Sunday 4th March .

During Rev. Arnie's absence we had been blessed first with the ministry of Ms Sarah Tomilson who concluded two months with us until January 14th and then in February by the ministry of Rev. Deacon Jenny Preston. These two women endeared themselves to the congregation. For all the weeks in between, Rev. Dr. Barry Brown and Rev. Ron Gordon have faithfully provided supply. Their ministry was acknowledged by council and the congregation with thanks.

The Elders team for 2018 was Ken Davies (Life Elder), Michael Down, Marj Hookey, Nancy Isherwood, Merle Munday, Robert O'Shea Yvonne Spicer and Karen White. Late in 2017 Marilyn O'Shea resigned as an Elder after many years of service. Council acknowledged her service with a letter of appreciation which included thanks for the variety of roles she had filled over many years of service to her Lord and to St. Margaret's. The Elders met on the second Tuesday in the month throughout the year, keeping in contact with the people on their lists through visits, especially hospital visitation, phone calls and chats on Sundays at worship and at casual meetings down the street or over coffee. In September following a meeting of Walmsley Village Hostel and the Nursing Home residents it was announced that these services would close almost immediately, there was a need for pastoral care for the eight St. Margaret's residents (among the 100+) who were affected. It was sad to see this group of friends dispersed far and wide and it has been a challenge since to keep in touch with them. Our ministry in sending either by email or snail mail the weekly church notices, the order of service and a copy of the sermon is greatly appreciated by them as a means of keeping in touch with St. Margaret's. Every Elders meeting members pray through their lists of names so that the entire congregation is named before God. Know that you are all cared for in this way every month.

Early in the year Rebecca McDonald began a period of discernment and has been allocated a mentor by Presbytery. Rebecca's special interest is finding ways to provide for the needs in church of children and young people on the autism spectrum. We pray for Rebecca as she works through this period of discernment.

The Chin evangelical church continue to use our buildings for their three weekly services. We have been most appreciative of the reverse cycle air conditioning units that they provided at the end of 2017. They continue to do most of the church cleaning for us which is a great help. Their relationship with us is a Blessing to both congregations.

The Outer Eastern Cluster met quarterly at St Margaret's. The first planned Cluster event was the Easter Day 1st April sunrise service at Lilydale Lake. The service was attended by almost 30 people and each church conducted a part of the service which concluded at the beach with communion. That Easter morning the sunrise was spectacular. In June the annual service to celebrate the 41st Anniversary of the Uniting Church, was held at Croydon North. It was well attended and a time of fellowship followed, with a generous lunch provided by the combined congregations. The Cluster Barbecue was held at St. Margaret's in September. Sausages and salads followed by slices and fruit made a popular lunch. Almost 90 attended. The speaker was Heather McMinn who spoke about the implementation to date of the NDIS pointing out teething problems and hopes for the future. Money raised totalled over \$400 which was added to by St. Margaret's to total a gift of \$1000 towards Mental Health Ministry in the presbytery.

In May and June Rev. Arnie conducted two evenings of training for the UCA Safe Church program. More than 30 members of the Cluster plus several from churches outside the cluster attended. This training now needs to be updated every three years. Marj Hookey is St. Margaret's Safe Church contact person.

Early in the year contact was made by Peter Williams the Chaplain at Angliss Hospital about the possibility of St. Margaret's being able to resource a leader to conduct a monthly communion service at the Angliss Psychiatric Aged Care Home in Cambridge Road Mooroolbark. This was organised and Rev. Arnie along with Rev. Deacon Katharine Davies and Elder Ken Davies began the services. After initial teething problems Rev. Arnie acknowledged Katharine's natural gifts with working with these special people and withdrew. The services have proceeded smoothly and are greatly appreciated by the residents with some carers attending. Ken provides music playing his clarinet. Thankyou to you both for leading this important ministry.

The 15th Assembly of the Uniting Church was held this year in the Box Hill Town Hall. One of the main agenda items was making a decision re marriage and same gender relationships. Discussion leading to this decision had been going on for almost thirty years. In June Rev. Arnie held a session to prepare the congregation for these Assembly discussions. As an outcome of Assembly two options were available to the church.

Our Assembly President Diedre Palmer, in a pastoral letter to the church said "To honour the diversity of Christian belief among our members, we will hold two equal and distinct statements of belief on marriage. This decision will allow ministers and celebrants in the Uniting Church the freedom to conduct or refuse to conduct same gender marriages.....Church Councils will have the right to determine whether marriage services take place on their premises."

St. Margaret's Church Council prayerfully considered the issue of whether our church premises could be used to hold same gender marriage services over two meetings September/October to allow for all members to contribute to the discussion and the decision making. The proposal "That

Church Council should allow the use of St. Margaret's buildings for same sex marriages" was accepted by agreement. This decision was conveyed to the congregation on November 11th.

On Sunday 7th of October one of our retired ministers Rev. Franklyn Parrent celebrated the 50th Anniversary of his Ordination. This was acknowledged by Synod when Geoffrey Grinton Presbytery Secretary, presented Franklyn with a Certificate of Recognition and honoured Franklyn's ministry. Franklyn responded recognising also the great support over those 50 years of his wife Marilyn. All their children were present to celebrate the occasion. A special morning tea followed the service.

In Late July Rev. Arnie informed Church Councillors that he and Jennie had accepted a Joint Call to become Presbytery Ministers in the Gippsland Presbytery to begin in early November. Members of the congregation were then informed. The task of concluding a placement and then searching for a new minister for our next placement is a protracted process.

Arnie informed us that the first step was to conduct a Mission Study in the congregation to assess our needs and provide material to prepare the Placement Profile to submit to presbytery. There are currently a number of vacancies in the presbytery and few people available to carry out the Mission Studies. Arnie suggested that if we provided personnel to work with the Yarra Ranges Parish, they could reciprocate for us. This was agreed. Rev. Margaret Blair and Lionel Parrott (Montrose) were appointed by Presbytery to lead our study and Robert O'Shea, Jan Down and myself were appointed to lead the Yarra Ranges study. Our study was set for the 25th of November with Yarra Ranges study to be carried out in January 2019.

The time following Arnie's announcement passed quickly with many ends to be tied up and projects finalised. This included farewells to those Arnie had ministered to in Walmsley Village, Tudor Village and Baradine Aged Care. At the suggestion of Jan Down we began "40 days of prayer" which was developed by Rev. Arnie and Jan to prepare for our vacancy and future ministry,

On Wednesday October 25th a joint service of "Healing and Hope" was held with the Mooroolbark Christian Fellowship as a response to the outcomes of the Royal Commission on Sex Abuse.

On 28th of October we celebrated the final service for our minister of eight years Rev. Arnie. Pastoral care Presbytery Minister for Yarra Yarra, Rev. Liz McMillan was present and at the conclusion of the service conducted the "Cutting of ties service." Then followed speeches and presentations to Arnie - a cheque and signed card from the congregation, plus an "emergency kit for mobile presbytery ministers" and flowers for Jennie. Between them they had been ministers at St. Margaret's for the last 13 years. This was followed by a generous lunch provided by the Congregation.

An article in the July Crosslight described a new idea to provide Social Housing where Uniting Housing would provide a quality portable type home that could be places on vacant land that churches may have, at no cost to the congregations. We explored this possibility for the use of the land above the church manse which could be used for 1 or 2 homes. We suggested that a current

issue of the problem of older single women living in poverty would be a good use for these homes. We received a response which was encouraging but was dependent on the availability of funding to allow more of these attractive homes to be built.

In September we were approached by the Mooroolbark Christian Fellowship who were exploring the possibility of relocating their regular fortnightly community meal "The People's Pantry" to St. Margaret's. St. Margaret's willingly accepted their proposal with a commencement date of January 18th 2019 being agreed upon.

Following morning worship on Sunday 25th November the Mission Study led by Rev. Margaret Blair and Lionel Parrott took place. We were delighted when 43 members of the congregation attended. We were seated at tables of 7 or 8 and had the opportunity to discuss our hopes and dreams for future ministry both with our table group and the total group. Many good ideas were presented. We also completed the ministry priorities sheet from the Placement Profile where we found an encouraging level of agreement. Margaret and Lionel suggested we consider once more fulltime ministry. Church Council later discussed this after reviewing the 5year budget presented by Ann and decided that although this would be a challenge, we should request full time ministry. Following the mission Study Day Robert O'Shea and Marj Hookey together with input from Margaret Blair completed the Placement Profile, Ann Gaudion completed the financial details and the terms of settlement and all documents were presented to a special meeting of Church Council for approval on Monday December 3rd and were then sent to the Pastoral Relations Committee of Presbytery. Robert, Jan and myself together with Lionel Parrott then attended a meeting on Wednesday December 5th when the Presbytery Pastoral Relations committee asked us a number of questions concerning our Placement Profile. At this stage we know it has been approved by presbytery along with the financial statements.

We thank our Lay preachers Dorothy Gordon and Lyn Bromage and retired Ministers who have supported ministry during the year, Rev. Ron Gordon, Rev Dr. Barry Brown, Rev. Franklyn Parrent and Rev. Deacon Katharine Davies.

Special thanks to all those who have served on all the church rosters. Greeters, those who are the Readers, Elders and all who have served communion, those on the morning tea rosters, musicians, those on the Sunday Activities roster, the Powerpoint roster and the sound desk, those who prepare the weekly service mailout, the flower roster and those who clean the chapel. Know that all of you are part of a large team without whom St. Margaret's could just not function.

Thanks too, to a number of individuals who accept major roles, Robert O'Shea as Church Council Secretary. Ann Gaudion as Church Council Treasurer, Graeme Munday, Property Manager, Clive Hamilton retired during the year as Co-ordinator of the Memorial Garden and Noel de Voogd has now accepted the role. We thank Clive for many years of service. Bev. Trollope our office

Secretary, Franklyn Parrent who looks after the website and weekly email ministry, Doug Williams who looks after the RYDA website and manages the RYDA project.

Once more it has been a privilege to serve St. Margaret's as the Chairperson of Church Council, and the congregation. Thank you all for your support as once more there have been unexpected turns in the road during 2018. In the words of the Together in Song Hymn number 687 all of us at St. Margaret's know -

God gives us a future,

Daring us to go,

Into dreams and dangers

On a path unknown.

We will face tomorrow

In the Spirit's power,

We will let God change us,

For new life starts now.

Marjorie Hookey ,

Chairperson, Church Council

6/2/19

PROPERTY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE.

Membership of the Property and Finance Committee for 2018 was Graeme Munday (Property Manager), Ann Gaudion (Treasurer), Graeme Ray, Noel de Voogd, Robert O'Shea, Clive Hamilton, (retired September 2018) Rev. Arnie Wierenga, Carolyn Dunkley ,(attended 1 meeting due to residing part time in Sorrento) and Marj Hookey (Chairperson). The committee met eight times during the year.

Our first and most important task was to complete the high windows project to replace the rotted timber window frames and fascias with aluminium. In 2017 the contractor had unexpectedly walked off the job and unfortunately it was not possible to contact him. We were fortunate in that we had not paid for any work that was not completed. Stevens Glass in Croydon North agreed to complete the project and this was done by the end of March. A further small contract was let to check all the roof tiles and replace several where scaffolding had unavoidably broken them.

The next major project was the repainting of the exterior of the church. Unfortunately, just as the painter was about to begin, the late autumn rains commenced and it was decided to delay work until the spring. The work was completed in September and we were very impressed by the quality of the work of contractor Andre de Simone and his team. Some timber had to be replaced on the fascias as it was rotted out and "Wide Open Constructions" completed this work. They also agreed to replace the two rotted panels of Stramit in the small hall ceiling and timber found rotted on the kitchen verandah. (work completed February 2019)

With the major projects of renovating the manse, repairing the high windows and painting the church externally completed during 2017 and 2018 it is not anticipated that there will be further large projects in the next few years. Funds have been earmarked to renovate the manse kitchen should our next minister choose to live in the manse.

In May, the developer who had purchased 18 Charles St. requested we pay 50% (\$821.59) of the cost of building a paling fence between the rear of their property and the church; this is located at the rear of the Memorial Garden. A double storey unit complex has somewhat spoiled the beauty of this tranquil spot and will require some planting on our side to restore it once more. The old property had beautiful trees and gardens which we were able to enjoy.

Ann Gaudion proposed that we obtain two credit cards with the Bendigo Bank to simplify purchases. Ann and myself hold these cards and the system is working well. Ann has presented full financial reports to both the Property and Finance Committee and to Church Council throughout the year. The vast majority of Invoices and donations are now paid by Electronic Funds Transfer. Full Financial reports for 2018 appear elsewhere in this report but I would like to take the opportunity of thanking Ann for her work as Treasurer during the year.

Roger Dunkley CPA continues as our Auditor and we thank Roger for donating his time and skill to completing this task for us.

A number of minor yet important projects have been completed during the year. Yellow safety strips have been fixed to the edges of the external steps in accordance with OHS requirements. Thanks to Graeme for doing this work. Projects include keeping the sound system and the data projector maintained and with the departure of Rev. Arne a number of computer tasks were necessary. Thanks Alan, Franklyn, Arnie and Rex for your work in this regard. We record to our thanks to Arnie for his participation in the Property and Finance Committee and for using his practical skills to assist St. Margaret's.

Rex Phillips suggested to the committee that he could print off the annual church offering envelopes on his computer, which he did most successfully saving St. Margaret's \$900. Many thanks Rex. This was quite a task with every envelope being a different date and every set a different number.

We hired the firm Portervac to clean all the guttering and down pipes. Once done by Dad's Army, OHS requirements and advancing age has now made it necessary to outsource this task. The firm photographed the "before" and "after" of this job and also cleaned the solar panels which had not been done since they were erected in 2013. We were most satisfied with the result. The annual inspection of the manse for termites also took place with no live termites being discovered.

Graham Ray has painstakingly attended to a vast number of smaller tasks throughout the year including filling in cracks in the concrete paths, repairing cupboard doors and seats, placing a panic bolt on the kitchen door to keep it open and replacing a tap in the ladies toilet.

Due to health difficulties Clive Hamilton found it necessary to retire from the Property & Finance Committee in September. He had been a member for many years. Clive had great skills in tiling and concreting both of which he had plenty of opportunity to use at St. Margaret's over the years. He was also the Co-ordinator of the Memorial Garden for some years. A letter recording his service was written to Clive on behalf of the committee and the Church Council thanking him for his long and faithful service.

Noel de Voogd agreed to replace Clive as Co-Ordinator of the Memorial Garden which we appreciate. Recently the Engraver who supplies the brass plates for the Memorial Garden has raised the costs of the plaques for the first time in many years. Church Council agreed to the recommendation for price increases of the services available. This will not apply to those who have prepaid these services. Noel also organised the annual Testing and Tagging of all electrical appliances, both those belonging to St. Margaret's and to all hall tenants, in keeping with OHS requirements.

We were delighted when Lis Currie, the organiser of Nourish Network who use the buildings on Friday mornings during term times, asked if we would accept a donation of 10 Flip Top tables. In consultation with Lisa the design of tables was approved. They are easy for any person to use

having wheels and brakes. The flip top feature is simple to use and all the heavy work of setting up tables for functions has disappeared. Each table will seat 8 persons. We really appreciate this general gift. Thankyou Lisa.

The Property and Finance Committee also thank members of Dad's Army for the enormous amount of work they do each fortnight keeping the gardens, paths, gutters, car park, memorial garden, playground and lawns neat and tidy. Know that your efforts are greatly appreciated. The Dad's Army report appears elsewhere in the Annual report.

My personal thanks to all who have served on the Property and Finance Committee this year . In reading this report you will appreciate what an active group this has been during 2018.

Marj Hookey, Chairperson.

THE LINK

The Link has now completed twenty- four years of Publication. It relies on a few faithful regular contributors - Barry Brown, Julie Robinson, Doug Williams, Robert O'Shea, Rex Phillips and Rev. Arnie Wierenga. who has contributed the Ministers Message during the eight years of his ministry with us. I prepare the "About People" segment and have always relied on the assistance of Yvonne Spicer in gathering the news from the congregation. Many other folk contribute from time to time as they are able. Often this is to write about a special occasion at St. Margaret's, a wonderful holiday within Australia or overseas or of some special experience in their lives. Your work is equally valued as it wouldn't be a church magazine without the congregation providing the majority of the articles. We remember too, the faithful participation of Rev. Ravanel Weinman who for many years contributed to every edition. Ravanel died on 31st October, but leaves a legacy of articles in the Link, very often his original poetry.

We produced quarterly magazines in 2018 and have relied on Rev. Arnie for some years to do the layout in preparing the magazine for publication. Arnie took on this role when no one else would put up their hand. Many thanks Arnie for putting aside those twelve hours or so each quarter to do this important task. I was delighted when Doug Williams responded to a request to once more take on the layout job & the December issue was his first. Our photocopier does the complete printing task and Marilyn and Robert O'Shea name and sort the copies ready for delivery. Lastly, thanks to those who deliver those magazines not collected on the day of distribution.

2019 will be our 25th year of Publication – please think about writing an article of some kind to contribute to that milestone! Thank you all, our readers of The Link for 2018.

Marj Hookey - Editor.

ST. MARGARET'S FETE AND BOOK SALE SATURDAY 10TH NOV. 2018

This year the fete was very different. Gone were all the stalls selling preloved goods. The only survivor was the Book Stall. The books had been neatly sorted and stacked by Robert O'Shea and the stall was managed on the day by Graeme Leaver, Graham Ray and Anne-Marie Leaver. Graeme said they made "a great team."

The decision was taken early in the year to have a "lower key" fete. We focussed on food, plants, children's clothing and gifts and the competition. To add a bit more interest Colleen from "Made Locally" (Colleen has a craft type gift shop in the Ringwood Nth Shopping centre) came along with a wide range of gifts to sell. Colleen also took all the children's knitwear remaining and will try to sell it on our behalf. Alison Brown set up a small stall selling attractive novelty hair clips and head bands – Alison said she had her financially best day ever at a fete. We allowed the Walmsley Village Auxiliary to sell their trading table items as there will be no home for them when the rebuilding program begins. Bill from the village looked after the stall but business was slow.

Thanks to the group who set up and looked after the Children's clothing and gift stall. There were some left overs from last year's fete plus some new stock. Thanks to Yvonne, Carolyn and Jenny who did the selling and Jean Curnow and Denise Greenhalgh who had been busy knitting, etc.

Joyce Dodge was pleased that plant sales were brisk and the team who assisted - Joyce Booth and Judy and Noel de Voogd were pleased with their effort. Thanks to folk who provided the plants. A good rain during the week had made it ideal weather to do some planting. Also located outside were the BBQ and drinks. Organiser Stephen White was assisted by Ewan McRobert. They needed to purchase more sausages and onions during the morning so business was brisk. Janet Cundall ran the drink stall. Thanks Janet.

We also appreciated the augmented Band who provided great toe tapping music during the morning - thanks to Ken and Katharine Davies, Jean Lardner, Doug Williams and versatile visitor Henry. The sound System was kindly organised for us by Jim Davies .Many thanks Jim!

As usual Merle presented a stall full of delicious jams, jellies, sauces etc. Graeme was a great assistant particularly with the preparation & sales. Merle's daughter Meg made the popular Worcestershire sauce that "Sold out" and Jean Lardner provided the Tomato Relish. Well done Merle and helpers.

Thankyou to the folk who helped me stock the Cake stall. Jean Curnow, Nancy Isherwood, Joyce Dodge, Pat Hamilton and Merle Munday. I was able to make 50 Christmas cakes this year and was grateful for the support of members of the Mooroolbark Probus Club who bought 25 of them. Members and friends of St. Margaret's purchased the others and I thank them for their support. Thanks to my helpers, Nancy, Pat and friend Yvonne who do most of the serving on Fete day.

Bev. Trollope and daughter Vicky sold the Competition tickets. Carolyn Dunkley had prepared three clothes baskets full of the gifts generously provided by the congregation, many thanks to those who contributed. Carolyn, the baskets looked fantastic and resulted in lots of folk keen to win one. The first prize was won by June Bennie. We didn't know the other delighted visitors who won the other two baskets.

The café had a "Cast of thousands" and had a busy morning. Thanks to chief organiser Karen White ably assisted by Faye Norris, Jean Curnow, Judy Bass, June Bennie, Denise Greenhalgh, Betty McRobert and Nicole and Ella McCurdy. Ella won the "youngest helper award" and was a great worker helping her mum

with the washing up. Apologies to anyone whose name is missing! Thanks to everyone who generously provided funds enabling the café and the BBQ food to be purchased.

Lastly thanks to everyone who participated in the extra tasks necessary. To Arnie who provided the copy for the large notice boards willingly donated by Max Brown Real Estate. Arnie also provided the colourful design for the flyers that Express Card Printing of Boronia generously donated through Mark Phillips. Thanks also to Rex who organised Mark and who printed cake labels and price tickets. Lastly to Treasurer Ann Gaudion for all her work with the finances. A big thankyou to the great team of helpers who helped set up the furniture and stock on Friday and Saturday morning and who helped pack up and put away on Saturday afternoon and finally we must not forget the support of our local community who faithfully visit, meet up with friends and provide great customer support.

Church Council distributed the financial results of our efforts including funding our participation in the Kids Hope program at Kilsyth Primary school, the Religious Instruction programs at two local schools led by Joyce Dodge and Lentara Asylum Seeker Support program. The net result on the day was \$5608.75.

At our last Church Council meeting in 2018 I let members know that I would be unable to continue as organiser of the Fete. However, I am happy to continue to organise and bake for the Cake Stall which raises the largest amount for the fete. Early in 2019 we will establish a committee with a Convenor to look at how we can organise the fete and other fund raising in 2019. We need the money raised and folk seem keen to continue. If you have any practical ideas for other forms of fund raising please let us know.

Marj Hookey, Convenor

MUSIC IN THE CHURCH

Once again the Singing Group (choir) sang on Sundays in the lead up to Easter and at the Easter Services and in a similar pattern for Christmas. Thanks to pianist Jean, sopranos Marge, Denise, Pat, Betty, Nancy and Julie; altos Faye, Katharine and Janet; and men Robin, Ian, Robert and Ken. It is a very enjoyable time together, and I hope we will do something similar for this year.

On other Sundays during the year the band of violin, clarinet and drums with organ and piano supports the singing during worship. Music is an integral part of our worship and we are grateful to all involved in helping to make music at St Margarets.

Ken Davies

UNITING CHURCH ADULT FELLOWSHIP

The highlight for 2018 was as the host group for the Yarra Yarra Presbytery May Gathering. Members of groups from across the Presbytery gathered at St Margaret's for a day of fellowship. Our Speakers, Rev Arnie Wierenga, Mr Nguan T Lian, Rev Robert Gallacher OAM and Mr Doug Williams entertained, educated and inspired us with a variety of presentations. Many thanks to all the members of the UCAF and the others from congregation who helped us in many ways.

It has been delightful the way every member has responded and participated in the "do it yourself" afternoons which included our Winter Stories which were later published in the Link!

Thanks to Katharine for her care of the many tasks of the secretary, to Ken for looking after our finances, to Lois on the organ, to Wendy with her delightful cards and her pastoral care and to Helen and Nancy for watching over the afternoon tea and the Trading Table. Special thanks to Jean who has assisted on numerous occasions with numerous tasks.

It has been a privilege to serve as the St Margaret's UCAF Leader for 2018 and I pray that God will continue to bless this fellowship for many years to come.

Dorothy Gordon

SUNDAY ACTIVITIES

Whenever a child is baptised at St Margaret's the congregation makes a commitment to provide for the Christian growth of all the children who belong. Each Sunday a lesson and activities based on part of the lectionary of the day is provided for the children who attend. As part of one lesson Ella and George were challenged to raise funds for TEAR projects. The total amount they collected was \$130. The teaching team for the past year has been Merle Munday and Joyce Dodge.

Joyce Dodge

DADS ARMY REPORT

Membership: -

Robin Butler, Ken Davies, Noel de Voogd, John Dineen, Geoff Greenhalgh Clive Hamilton, Graeme Munday, Alan Norris, Robert O'Shea, Franklyn Parrent, Rex Phillips, Graham Ray, Ian Robinson, Geoff Streader, Rev. Arnie Wierenga and Doug Williams.

Our main tasks this year have been general maintenance of the grounds which makes it a place to belong – we do have comments from the general public to say how lovely it is kept. We have also cleaned up the spare block the other side of the manse of all unwanted plants and blackberries, which will make it easier to maintain.

The completion of the installation of the high windows project by Stevens Glass was a great success and they were very professional in their attitude the whole task. We also saw the completion of external painting of the Church buildings – I must say they did an excellent job including painting Cross.

This year we welcomed Doug Williams to the group, and he has helped enormously in the garden areas also assisting John Dineen in the garden and I thank him for taking John home a few times for me.

A new fence has been erected in the memorial garden where new units are being built in Charles St. The contractors who were clearing the block also took away some of our rubbish at no cost (they were most obliging to us).

Thank you to Graham Ray & Noel de Voogd for running the show while Merle & I were away twice this year. All the chaps seem to have jobs they love to do and just get on with them and help one another when required. John Dineen did an excellent job in repotting all the plants for the Fete this year. Thanks John.

I have probably forgotten someone, but I really appreciate everything that each one does in their own way - I can tell you that your efforts are very much appreciated by the entire church congregation.

Thank you to Merle, Judy & Marj for the enjoyable lunch that they produced for us.

Blessings to all,

Graeme Munday

SOCIALJUSTICE

How best to respond to the many needs of people in our community and further afield? Our prayer can be informed by specific needs, we can advocate and look for change by contacting through letter, postcard or visit those who make decisions about issues of injustice which concern us. In addition we can fundraise for life-changing causes. At St Margaret's we have tried to do all of the above.

Pancake Day is a fundraiser for Uniting. This social activity included the eating of sausages and pancakes, and raised \$286.40. The second event of the year is usually Celebrate Mooroolbark at the end of March when we make contact with the wider community. The suggested theme was STEM subjects. We prepared challenging puzzles and other activities for children. Unfortunately the day was a washout so we had limited contact with folk.

St Margaret's was able to support the Asylum Seeker programme of Lentara by promoting and participating in two fund raising activities. A car load of goods was donated for a special sale at the Waverly Lions Op Shop. This raised \$1,567. Then the Free Spirit choir from Glen Waverly sang at Croydon Uniting Church. That raised \$1,775. Both these events were organised by the Outer Eastern Asylum Seeker Support Network which we receive regular reports from.

On the Social Justice Board there is a copy of the Aboriginal Uluru Statement from the Heart.

Members of the Social Justice group wrote letters to Federal M.P's on three specific topics- the reduction in Australia's foreign aid giving, Australia's non-participation in the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and the use of contract workers to answer phones at Centrelink. In addition, congregation members were able to use the guidelines on the Social Justice board to write letters on many other matters of concern. Postcards on several issues eg alcohol advertising, children on Nauru and the Adani mine were available for folk to sign.

Stephen White spoke to the congregation about Fair Trade and the Trade Winds tea and coffee which he has for sale each month.

For the past few years we have had an Alternative Christmas Market at the beginning of December when the Dandenong Ranges Orchestra came to put on a concert. The concert date last year was not until later so no Market was held. However, more than \$500 was raised through Uniting Christmas cards, \$971 for TEAR Australia and more also for RYDA in Uganda.

A local matter taken up by Social Justice was the difficulty for pedestrians and cyclists of crossing Manchester Road at the Five Ways.

Joyce Dodge

MUSIC TOGETHER

This year went well. We had nine families on our roll. There are sixteen children. Only four families came regularly. (Nine children). Others come as often as they can. Third term is the least attended because of sickness and carers taking holidays. Attendance was much better in fourth term. It is a very happy group who are starting to play well together as they get older and carers get on well together and chat about a lot of things.

Thanks to Dad's Army for keeping the grounds in good condition – outside in the garden is a favourite place for everybody on a fine day, and the hall is great for a cooler day. Thanks to Lucy, our therapist, for the work she does, and to Nancy, Denise and Ann for all they do every week in the kitchen and in chatting to everyone, getting the toys out and putting them away.

The families are all enjoying their sessions. We finished the year in a short church service. Janet Cundall told the children a story about the difference between Birthday cards Christmas (Jesus' birthday) cards and about the Christmas story. Thank you, Janet! We all sang Carols and we thanked everyone for being there all year. There were books and candy canes given to each child and a presentation to Lucy. Music Together is a special group, very friendly and enjoyable. We already have two new families enrolled for 2019. Thanks be to God for the blessings he gives us.

Yvonne Spicer

LIBRARY

Perhaps you have never noticed the books and videos on the shelves or on the wall near the steps leading up to the Chapel. Why not spend a moment having a quick look at some of them. There is an enormous variety of material on a wide range of topics for adults and for children. Local writers have donated copies of their work and these are on the shelves too.

At present children's books get the most use and they seem to enjoy them. Repairing and replacing damaged children's books and keeping the shelves tidy is the only work needed with the library.

Have a look at the Library TODAY. Choose a book or video, write the details in the borrowing book, including the date borrowed and take it home to enjoy. When you've read the book or watching the video bring it to church, put it back on the shelves and mark it off in the book with the return date.

Marilyn O'Shea

FAMILY GATHERING

Jenny Preston was providing Supply at St Margaret's while Arnie was absent acting as Presbytery Minister and she happily agreed to be our special guest at the February Family Gathering. For many years Jenny and John Preston have visited Zimbabwe working to establish schools to provide education in villages. Their whole family is involved in the Foundation set up to carry out this work. They provided a fascinating illustrated talk enjoyed by all present.

In March Julie Robinson, supported by Ian, spoke on Jesus' earthly family using quotations and passages from the Bible to trace the history and prophecies around Jesus life.

Once again we called upon Marj Hookey for our April gathering. Her expert knowledge about our wildlife came to the fore in a fascinating illustrated talk on "Zoos Victoria 200 Endangered Species Project" .An amazing wide range of animals from frogs to wallabies are involved and all present enjoyed learning about this vital work.

In May Rev Dr Barry Brown told us how David Suchet became a Christian after reading Mark's Gospel in one sitting. In the early church the Bible was read aloud and Barry suggested it is meant to be read aloud and has greater impact when heard rather than when read. David Suchet recorded a reading of the Gospel in St Paul's Cathedral and we enjoyed listening to a section of his recording.

In May it was the celebration of the UCA Anniversary with lunch at Croydon North so and, with the onset of Winter it was decided not to hold Family Gatherings in July and August.

In September we travelled to Holland and on to Spain with Doug and Ina looking out particularly for gum trees along the way. A fascinating and interesting collection of photos and experiences presented in Doug's inimitable style and enjoyed by all present.

September turned out to be our last gathering for the year as in October the congregation gathered over lunch to farewell Arnie. No meeting in November also as again we had lunch together during the Mission Study, a vital part of the process in preparing to call a minister.

Fewer gatherings than usual in 2018 but the wide variety of speakers and interesting subjects, with good food and great fellowship each time we met ensured a successful year of Family Gathering.

Robert O'Shea

BOOK CHAT

There are many hundreds of titles held in the Otira Library available to borrow yet, after more than 20 years of Book Chat at St Margaret's, we have little trouble in selecting five new titles for discussion during the year and catering for our different interests. 2018 was no exception.

"Walking on Bones" by local poets John Cranmer and Denham Grierson is a collection of shorter poems "...exploring how the Spirit may be discerned in ordinary things (and), reflecting our experience." All members found some poems they liked but others seemed more obscure.

"An Ordinary Bloke" by Jill Manton tells the amazing life story of Eugene Lincoln Napoleon Veith a Victorian who realised his dream of using profits from his business to support Christian missions and achieve social justice. It also tells the story of his deep experience of God and his life of Christian service. Lots of discussion as we all enjoyed reading of his amazing and inspiring life.

"Pastrix" by Nadia Bolz-Weber proved very challenging as some readers had difficulty with her use of swearing and the description of some aspects of her early life. Raised in a strict fundamentalist Christian household Nadia broke free determined to live a life rejecting the values and beliefs she had been taught. Drunk and homeless, living with the downs and out. she joined AA. After meeting her husband she finds faith working of the founding pastor of the "House for All Sinners and Saints" in Colorado with a mission to the down and out s of society within the evangelical Lutheran Church
Google her name on your computer and be amazed !

"Beyond Belief" by Hugh McKay is based on his interviews of Australians about their beliefs and attitudes to religion and the church.. He examines the reasons for the decline in church attendance, the changes in and different understandings of what we mean when we say "God" and challenges what many would see as basic Christian beliefs. A good read and plenty to discuss.

"God with Us" by Rowan Williams, former Archbishop of Canterbury, is a brief meditation on the cross as sign, sacrifice and victory and on the meaning of the resurrection to the disciples and to us today.

Books for this year (5 titles from this list depending on availability)

"Reclaiming an Ancient Heritage" by Gwen Masters ..looking at Celtic Christianity.

"Why Weren't We Told by Henry Reynolds..search for the truth about settlement in Australia

"The Tears of Strangers" by Stan Grant..coming to terms with his identity and aboriginality

"The World From Islam" by George Negus..demystifying prejudice and beliefs setting us apart

"Search for Understanding" by Durham Smith..is there a problem with traditional theology?

Marilyn O'Shea

GIVING IS LIVING

Giving IS living and living involves giving. We are truly alive when we give - our time, our friendship, help and support someone, use our skills, and in so many other ways. Locked up alone in a shell of our own creation is not living. Christ is the supreme example of giving both in his life and through his death and resurrection.

Giving is a feature of our life here at St Margaret's. Members give in many different ways, of their time, and of their talents. Writing down a list of the different ways in which folk help of the multitude of tasks carried out willingly but often unnoticed would be a task I am not going to attempt fearing that something or someone would be left off.

Giving is often a practical activity. For many years we have brought along food items for Wesley in Ringwood and Helping Hand in Croydon. These items are given to people who, for different reasons are finding life tough. Our support is greatly appreciated as Agencies face ever increasing requests for help from people in need.

Every week during worship we make our offering. St Margaret's, in common with each of us, needs to income and must budget, plan for anticipated needs and spend wisely. And in common with most of its members costs seem to be ever increasing.

This year for the first time since 2013 we did not meet, let alone exceed, the Budget target for Planned Giving. In fact we were \$7,313 below target. More concerning is that Planned Giving in 2018 fell by more than \$5,000 from the previous year and is at or around the same level as given in 2014. We appear to have lost the gains we made in giving over the past 4 years. Some of the decline can be attributed to death, transfer and changed circumstances for givers leading to reduced giving..

I am thankful that the majority of folk give regularly and make up in the following week if they are absent. We must also be grateful for the many who give \$50 or an even greater amount every week and to those who have increased their giving this year.. But we face a challenge for costs have increased enormously since 2014 and will keep on increasing and a continuing decline in Planned Giving would be particularly troubling as we continue with full time ministry.

The challenge is to each of us. To those who have envelopes to give the amount they have chosen evry week and to all givers to ask themselves the question "When did I last increase my giving?" If people felt able to give an extra amount on the first Sunday of every month this too would be of great help.

A sincere thankyou to all members who give so faithfully and in so many different ways to support and sustain ministry and mission at St Margaret's.

Robert O'Shea

Planned Giving Elder .

ST MARGARETS INDOOR BOWLING CLUB

2018 will go down as a year to remember. When the year started on February 6th, with 11 of the 17 members present, all of us had felt the need for new members. The Montrose and District Probus Club was looking for some new activities for its members and circulated a questionnaire. One activity listed was indoor bowls and, as a result, we welcomed 7 new members in May. Our bowling nights were more directed towards helping and encouraging our new bowlers. Our Club now has 23 members.

There were 39 bowling days for the year with the average monthly attendance shown in the following table.

YEAR	FEB.	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	YEAR
2017	13.8	12.0	8.3	10.6	8.0	8.0	10,4	6.7	7.3	9.9	9.7
2018	9.5	9.0	10.2	13.6	16.2	13.2	9.5	11.3	9.4	11.7	12.4

There is still room for a few more members. With 3 mats and with teams of 4 we can have 24 players. More than 24 would have to share in a team position. This sharing has been done several times and some of our less robust members have willingly volunteered. There is no obligation for members to attend all bowling nights. Bad weather conditions can stop some from attending. Family matters and holidays will take precedence over bowling.

The social side of the Club ensures that we can all chat away to our hearts content, but this does not seem to bother the more serious bowlers.. The end of year function was a casual games night with 18 members and 3 guests in attendance. Eight games were set up and everyone played each game. Denise was the competition champion. After the games, willing hands set up the tables and chairs for our celebratory supper. It was a self catering affair and the variety and quantity of eats made a splendid display. June's decorated Christmas Cake was the centrepiece.

The Team nominated at the February 2018 AGM was: President - Ed Giraud:
Vice President - Geoff Greenhalgh and Secretary/Treasurer - Denise Greenhalgh.

I again acknowledge the work of the Committee and the members during the year. The support and care of all members maintains the Club's marvellous atmosphere which makes my job very easy. The Bowling Club is a happy group of people enjoying mild exercise, all in harmony, and caring for each other. On a Tuesday evening, where could you possibly get a better environment for socialising and moderate exercise for only \$2 a time? Come and Join us!

Edmund Giraud

RUBAGA YOUTH DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION (RYDA)

I am beginning this year's report from the end rather than the start. An email arrived from Geoffrey as I was preparing the report. It contained this sentence: "This morning I visited the DIT to check on the result was pleasing to hear that RYDA students performance was 98% passed with Distinction and 2% with credits, In the country we were second." (DIT is the Directorate of Industrial Training.)

This is why we have supported Rubaga Youth Development Association for more than two decades. Their motto is "All people have a potential to develop within an enabling environment." Clearly the staff have provided that environment through 2018 and the orphaned and vulnerable 12-18 year olds, who don't pay a cent for their education, accommodation, living expenses or anything else, have responded with their best.

Our part in this transformation of lives is small, but it is consistent and it is appreciated at RYDA. Some of the key events of 2018 have been:

- In January we transferred \$3238.69 to RYDA which included \$1920 from Christmas Gift Certificates at the end of the previous year. The funds were used to do final work on the McLean Family dormitory, final work on the construction of a new toilet block near the canteen and to begin construction of a toilet/shower block for the new dormitory.
- Principal Suzan has continued to promote to other schools and organisations the Wise Choices for Life program which we sponsored her to learn a couple of years ago.
- Some male students were able to take up residence in the new dormitory by March.
- In April \$1523.05 was transferred to help push along the toilet/shower project.
- In May I was invited to give a presentation about RYDA to the annual UCAF gathering. Are there groups, clubs, organisations you or your family are involved with who might be looking for a speaker?
- In June Director Geoffrey was involved in a road accident which left him with serious burns to his upper body. This began a period of health difficulties for him which included more than one stay in hospital, the return of malaria and diagnosis of diabetes. With a man down for much of the third quarter staff stepped up and took on additional responsibilities to keep the organisation running, despite difficulties such as water being cut off, food shortage and salary payments not being met.
- A Capella choir Singularity performed two concerts for RYDA in June, one at St. Margaret's and one at St. John's, Cowes. These raised \$1708. This amount was added to other gifts since April and at the end June \$2458.50 was transferred to RYDA.
- A total of 200 students sat for a range of final exams.
- Principal Suzan took maternity leave at the end of November and has since given birth to a healthy baby boy. She is expected back at work some time in March.
- In December The Rock, magazine of St. John's, Cowes, and Crosslight both published articles about RYDA.

The RYDA web site at www.blackdouglas.com.au/ryda/2018news.htm provides more information, including photos and the personal stories of several students.

It has not been an easy year and unfortunately the new toilet/shower block is a lingering problem. It has moved on, but it is still not finished. It is constructed, but not roofed. The septic system has been installed below ground but is not operating. New urinals and seats have been purchased but are not installed because the roof is open. Running water is available but not yet connected. Never the less we thank God for everything that has been achieved and know that achievements will continue. St. Margaret's people, your willingness to be involved is a blessing.

Doug Williams;

ST MARGARET'S CONGREGATION

Membership: 88 Confirmed members: 34 Baptised members; 16 adherents and 11 members in association

(Figures taken from the Profile)

Average Attendance at Worship: 57 Range: 39 to 110* (110 was a baptism)

Highest attendance at a regular Sunday service was 77. The baptism service Sundays are included in calculating the average attendance. (4 Baptisms 110 , 104, 90, 74 attended)

During 2018 we celebrated with joy the Baptism of

Zing Hlei Par Lian	March
Eva Josephine Knezek	March
Noah Manuel Da Silva Orlando	March
Nicolai Joseph Da Silva Orlando	March
Elizabeth Nicole Joy	July
Lincoln Jagger Sholakis	November
Raphael Phillip Astbury	December

We remember with sadness the death of

Alison Streader	May
Heather Collins	July
Ravanel Weinman	November
Lorraine Dineen	December

STATEMENT READ TO THE ST. MARGARET'S CONGREGATION ON 11/11/18 .

Following the decisions of the 15th Assembly in July this year re Same Sex Marriage two major decisions needed to be made. Members of the clergy needed to make a decision about whether they were prepared to marry same sex couples and Church Councils needed to make a decision as to whether or not marriages between Same Sex couples could take place on Church Property for which they were responsible.

St. Margaret's Church Council commenced discussions on this question at our September meeting. It was important as we moved into a vacancy that we could give advice on this issue as part of the Congregational profile. We spent some time sharing ideas and experiences. Biblical references were discussed. Changes in cultural practices within our lifetimes were discussed and they are many. For example, significant changes on attitudes to divorce, to the fact that the majority of couples co-habit now prior to marriage, to the almost forbidden situations in families when we were growing up when a catholic and a protestant couple wished to marry. We looked at marriage statistics at St. Margaret's in the last 11 years when only 10 weddings are recorded in our register but only 5 in that period were actually held in our buildings and these all had a link of some kind to our congregation. As three members were absent at this Council meeting it was agreed that we should continue the discussions the following month when they would be present.

At the October Council Rev. Arnie reminded us that marriage had already been defined by the State and our challenge was to work out how to respond as a Christian community. He suggested we could be open and accepting because that is what Jesus would be; he noted that we were being challenged to overcome previous understandings about such matters and that these beliefs may go against what we believed when we were growing up. Being a Christian is about being relational, welcoming and compassionate. Again, members were all given the opportunity to express their beliefs and experiences. It is important to note that at no time was a voice raised in anger and all members listened and were respectful to what others were saying.

As Chairperson at this stage I tested the feeling of the Council with the proposal "*That Church Council should allow the use of St. Margaret's buildings for same sex marriages.*"

Using our consensus model of displaying cards, several members displayed cards to show they were not in favour of the proposal. Further discussion followed, then I as Chairperson explained to members that this was a difficult question to try to come to consensus as either people agreed or they didn't and there was no opportunity to adjust the proposal. I then moved to the next step in consensus decision making under the Manual for Meetings 6.6(E) procedure, with the following proposal "*Who does not support the proposal as your first option but is prepared to accept it ?*"

At this point when cards were displayed agreement was reached.

The proposal was therefore accepted by agreement.

That is – "*That Church Council should allow the use of St. Margaret's buildings for same sex marriages.*"

Marjorie Hookey.

Chairperson.

St. Margaret's Church Council

11/11/18

Rev. Arnie Wierenga . Farewell speech. 28/10/18

Arnie you were inducted as our minister in September 2010 and so began your journey with the people of St. Margaret's. The prayers we have listened to in this service and the photos we have looked at are but a small part of your ministry among us. When you arrived we were involved in a program of financially supporting ministry in the Karyrie Parish in the southern mallee which commenced when Jennie was our minister. We shared many experiences with them over the years, more importantly we gave them more than \$50,000 the entire result of our Annual Country Fair for seven years which enabled them to support full time ministry through the Millennium drought.

We also took a big leap in faith when we commenced to share our buildings with the Chin Evangelical Church in 2012. This experience took some getting used to – maybe we were a bit like three year olds learning to share their toys, there was a bit of resentment and blaming when things went wrong. Through it all you remained calm and supportive. Now the relationship has matured and the contribution of the Chin Community is significant, not only financially but their generous offer to do the church and hall cleaning has been of enormous help to us. We have seen them settle into Australian life and move from a position of dependency on social security to being in full time work in a wide variety of employment.

Arnie you brought with you significant technical skills from your previous work life and from your hobbies. Your efforts in fixing all things electronic, your practical skills and your enjoyment in being when possible, part of Dad's Army has been greatly appreciated by them. Your good humour under sustained banter and your ability to return as good as you got has brightened many a prolonged morning tea.

We have seen a number of photos of you training and then running in the Mebourne Marathon. You completed half marathons in 2011 and 2013 and a full marathon, all 42.2 kilometres in 2014. You trained for months for these events. All up the sponsorship raised more than \$15,000 for the Rubaga Youth Development Association in Uganda and more specifically for the replacement of RYDA's large grass thatched community hall which had been flattened in February 2010 by heavy rains. We were honoured when the beautiful new replacement hall was named St. Margaret Hall. Doug never could get RYDA to cope with the apostrophe S on the end of Margaret! We saw in the photos, the Director of RYDA Geoffrey Kyeyune and his son Solomon who visited St Margaret's in April 2011.

I would now like to read you part of a message which arrived during the week from Geoffrey in his inimitable style -

“From me this memorable letter to you personally and on behalf of the Rubaga Youth Development Association, Board, Staff and the entire community we serve, both at the centre and in the districts where we work with vulnerable children. The history will remain on record both at St. Margaret Uniting Church and RYDA for your overwhelming support, especially of the rebuilding of RYDA St Margaret Hall and several other projects. The full involvement of the church leaders and congregation members for the last 8 years has not only cemented our partnership but moulded our future directions. The compassionate love and will of all those who participate in fund raising even a single dollar to facilitate the RYDA activities is noted.”

Geoffrey goes on to mention the wonderful support also of previous ministers going back over 20 years. He concludes with the following *“I have no doubt that in your new engagement you will even make RYDA known to a bigger audience. I want to extend our sincere appreciation to you and to the St. Margaret Uniting Church for the work you have done for us during your tenure. We wish you all the best in your new engagement.”* Geoffrey Steven Kyeyune

Shortly before you arrived, the Blue Cross Baradine Aged Care home was opened and management asked if it was possible to have a minister visit and conduct regular monthly services. We started with about 5 residents attending the monthly communion service and when we met early in October for the last service you would be celebrating, there were 19 residents present. You built a warm and friendly pastoral relationship with the residents and have been a great support to their Activities Leader Kiersten who asked for your assistance in times of pastoral need.

As well as the monthly service at Baradine you continued the long standing services at Walmsley Village. These were put on hold in September when the final one was held until the rebuilding program is completed in several years time. The residents who were forced at short notice to relocate were grateful for your pastoral care at that time and several have made a special effort to be here today.

Again, at the beginning of this year another monthly service was commenced at the Angliss Aged care facility in Cambridge Road. You readily agreed to begin these services. They require a special kind of ministry and Rev. Deacon Katharine Davies with her training as a social worker is able to relate well to the special needs of residents and along with Ken is now leading these services.

For you Arnie, life has had its ups and downs while you have been with us. Throughout your difficulties the congregation have held you in their prayers and have supported you through your marriage breakdown and later with the joy of a new relationship with Jennie. It was with great joy that many of the congregation joined you both to attend the celebration of your marriage in Healesville on the 31st of July in 2016. More recently there were the sad times when your mother died in January this year. Again, we offered love and support as you travelled several times to be with your family in Tasmania.

At the beginning of 2017 we began a new phase in your ministry when at your request and with presbytery approval you moved to .75 time. This was a big change for us as detailed planning was involved to provide supply for one week per month. We are greatly indebted to our retired clergy who provided wonderful support and shouldered a great deal of this additional work, but it also provided opportunities for a number of us to participate in assisting in various parts of services and helped us develop skills we may never have considered possible.

In September 2017 came another significant event. You were asked to take up a temporary position in Yarra Yarra Presbytery when the presbytery minister responsible for Pastoral Care became ill and needed a significant period of leave. You left us for 5 months and although we were well cared for in your absence it was with joy that we welcomed you back to St. Margaret's. Little were we to know that your experience as Presbytery Minister was fitting you for your next Call to ministry.

And so it was that on a Monday morning in early August the phone rang and you gave the unexpected news that you and Jennie had accepted a Call to be joint Presbytery Ministers in Gippsland. For you both this is a wonderful opportunity to minister together, something you both really wanted to do. It seems to have been a frantic last three months. You in stepping into the unknown, preparing to move to the home in Cape Patterson while trying to tidy up all the loose ends here. For us it means too, that we have the long and complicated task of moving through those twenty steps which we hope will lead us to our next minister.

As we say goodbye not only to you but to Jennie, for between you, you have been our ministers and our friends for thirteen years. We will miss you greatly and we pray that your future ministry will be a blessing to all those you meet along the way, in the steep hills of South Gippsland, the beaches of the coast near Lakes Entrance, the high country round Omeo and the fast growing outer suburbs beyond Dandenong.

Go with our Blessing for your lives and your ministry together.

*Marj Hookey
Chairperson,
St. Margaret's Congregation*