

2018

# ANNUAL REPORT



**WESTGATE BAPTIST COMMUNITY**

**16 HIGH STREET, YARRAVILLE**



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## Pastor

In 2018 we've witnessed significant progress with the initiatives envisioned by our Community in the strategic 'Road Map' for the future direction of Westgate Baptist Community.

In February we welcomed for the first time four tertiary students into the 'Student House' quickly followed by a successful Young Adults Retreat in Lorne. With oversight from the Student House committee, leadership by Jenny Morris and the assistance of mentors and host families, this ministry has gone from strength to strength with the appointment of Katelyn Kemp as the lead tenant for 2019.

In February we were able to participate in the local Yarraville Festival. With two marques and a team of volunteers who offered craft activities for children, information on Church activities whilst highlighting the work of Westgate Refugee Support. Invitations were handed out for our first 'Open Forum' for 2018.

These Open Forums continue to be a valuable way of engaging our community and opening the WBC facilities for socially relevant, informative and engaging topics. Following the success of the 'Sustainable Living' Forum lead by Gavin Mountjoy in late February, we held our second Open Forum in June, lead by the office of the eSafety Commissioner addressing the issue of children's online safety. Both these Forums were well received and provided effective strategies for individuals and households to implement.

A Deacon's Retreat in March enabled us to evaluate our progress to-date on the Communities 'Road Map', pinpoint those areas where we needed additional focus and effort for 2018. One of those areas selected was strengthening our 'Bridging' through community engagement and connection with the most vulnerable.

In July a special Community Meeting extend an invitation to the Rev. Anne Wilkinson-Hayes to join the pastoral team and assist with surveying local Yarraville traders, develop a composting programme while rescuing excess food for a community meal. With broad support from a team of volunteers this venture has gained strong community support as well as being awarded a community grant by the City of Maribyrnong to assist with funding.

Our Playgroup has thrived under the leadership of Rowena Gray and Gail Crisp. With their impending departure from leading of Playgroup, the committee went through the process of seeking a new way forward. The decision made was to conclude Playgroup as a 'ministry' of WBC and become an independent community group called 'Yarraville Playgroups'. This smooth transition was made possible by Rowena's tireless efforts and Alice Davies enthusiastic leadership. Accumulated income from the playgroups was used for the installation of a purpose build kitchenette in the 'rain bow' room. This will prove a great enhancement for all Church and community groups using the facility.

Gail Crisp provides WBC with exceptional Pastoral Care coordination, given invaluable support to the Tuesday Playgroup, been a leader of our SUDS program and coordinated our 'Sundays at WBC'. This overarching roster has ensured a wide and diverse engagement in Sunday worship. Gail and Brian were able to enjoy a well-deserved break later in the year which only served to reinforced just how much they do at WBC. Even on holidays, Brian managed to provide crucial administration of our Webpage and Stay-In-touch from Europe.

In pursuing our 'Welcoming' strategy, Mark Wilkinson-Hayes took the lead and developed a team of 'greeters' who provide a warm welcome to all each Sunday and assist in the assimilation of newcomers to

WBC. Another way of building our community life has been a variety of social opportunities such as the 'Bush Dance and coffee and cake night with a 'pop up Choir' lead by Jude Waldren.

After years of diligent and effective leaderships, Frank Pereira-Jackson (a liaison with the Karen Community, office IT 'fixer' and all-round financial analyst) and Mark Wilkinson-Hayes (Church Secretary and culinary master) concluded their terms of service on the Diaconate. We are deeply grateful for their years of faithful service. At our 2018 AGM we were delighted to welcome Debbie Baker onto the leadership team. Kaye Cameron is an exceptional Chair who diligently keeps our meetings focussed and productive. A special thankyou to David Ozolins our Church Treasure who assiduously maintains the financial affairs of the Community.

Keeping our Church a 'Safe Place' is a huge responsibility that ultimately rests with the Deacons, but is strongly supported by the thorough administrative efforts of Bill Leng. Bill's role is critical in maintaining our compliance and legal obligations in relation to the safety of children and our duty of care in regard to property maintenance and use.

John Morris has oversight of the Small Group ministry and during Lent we met each Thursday night in March for a four-week Bible Study series 'No Wonder They Killed Him'. This was held at the Church Office with enthusiastic discussion, thoughtful reflection and a shared meal.

Ernest Vladica has worked with Bill Leng, Brian Crisp and David Ozolins on property maintenance. The property is leased by Melbourne Philosophy, Wulong Tai Chi and the Westgate Baptist Karen Community Church.

We are deeply grateful to Leslie-John Newman and Denise Geraldo De-Lima who volunteer their time every week to assist with the communication and administration of the Community. Special thanks to Jenny Murphy who assists in the posting of activities on our Facebook page.

WBC is committed to working closely with the Westgate Baptist Karen Community Church who share our facilities every Sunday. To strengthening this relationship, the leaders of both communities met twice for a combined meal/discussion together. These have proven extremely helpful in fostering stronger connections and laying the foundation for working closely together in the future.

Our involvement in the wider Baptist Family has included our participation in BUV gatherings, while I have served on the Professional Standards Group and been moderator for the Kingsville Baptist Church as they have searched and subsequently appointed a new pastor.

In 2018, Glenys and I celebrate our 20<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary, every day I give thanks for the constant support, wisdom and encouragement that she graciously offers. I know that I couldn't sustain my level of pastoral leadership without her loving care.

2019 holds the promise of making more progress in the life, worship, witness and practical engagement of WBC in the Yarraville community. It will be exciting to see it unfold.

***Rev Neville Taylor***

Pastor

## Deacons

My prayer in last year's report was that the year ahead would reflect the fulfilment of our desire to serve the community together.

A year on, that prayer feels well and truly answered. With the help of Anne Wilkinson-Hayes (disclosure, I am her proud husband!) we have started a composting scheme in partnership with local cafes and shops. This has allowed us to demonstrate our commitment to the environment in a practical way that has proved to be a great witness to the community.

All being well, the year ahead will see us build on this project by upgrading our kitchen so that we can repurpose food to provide community meals, building further links with our neighbours.

Both of these initiatives are examples of the way that Neville has led us to serve the community within which we live, worship and try to live out our faith, I am sure that there are many more in store!

I left the diaconate at the end of the year and have passed on the Secretary's reins to a very able new Secretary in waiting (subject of course to ratification by the community meeting!)

It feels like a particularly exciting time in the life of Westgate, we're a very special community, and I look forward to being part of whatever is in store for us in 2019!"

Let me know if you have any queries, cheers, Mark

*Mark Wilkinson-Hayes*

On behalf of the Deacons

## Treasurer & Finance

2018 has been another good year for the church with the finances still in a good state at the end of the year.

Our 2018 budget was for a deficit of \$6,038 and we bettered this by \$1,469 to have a deficit of \$4,569 – commendable. Property usage managed to lift our income to just above budget while expenses were at budget.

Looking at our graph of offerings we can see that 2018 was interesting and lower than budgeted with significant oscillations month to month, however the year ended on an incredible high bringing the 12 month average up to \$7,376 pm versus the budgeted \$7,582 pm

Looking at more detail in the Profit and Loss for the complete year of 2018 we see :

### Income:

Investment income	9,024	98 %
Offerings & pledges	88,515	97 %
Property Use	47,974	108 %
Total Income	145,513	101 %

### Expenses:

Personnel Expenses	96,951	100 %
General expense	29,621	98 %
Property expenses	2,868	101 %
Provision for future exp.	17,240	100 %
Local & O/S Mission	3,400	100 %
Total Expense	150,082	100 %

Net Income -4,569 vs budget of -6,038

The Balance sheet for 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018 shows our account balances at:

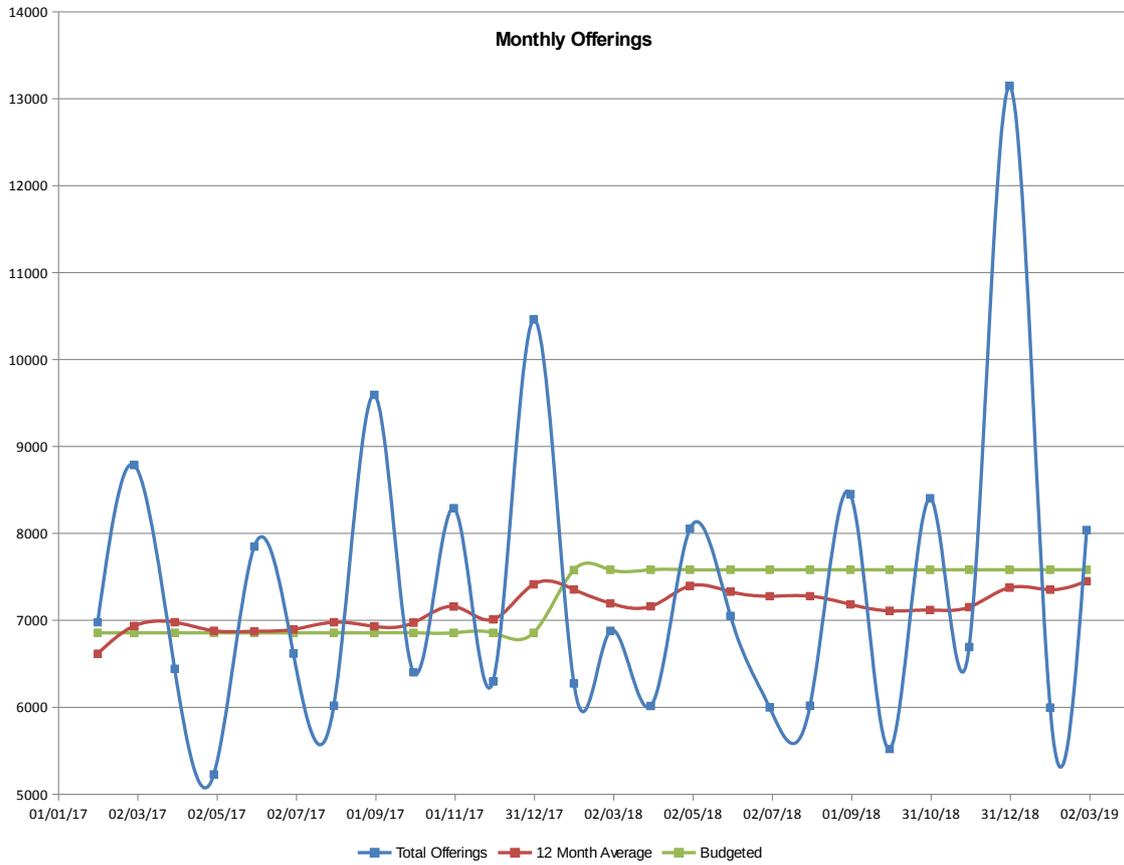
### ASSETS

BUV Property Trust	273,783
Cheque account	36,198
Term deposits at	61,653
Accounts Receivable	536
Fixed Assets	3,000,180
Total Assets	<u>3,392,186</u>

### LIABILITIES

Designated Funds (see page 12)	80,158
Current Liabilities	1,525
Total Liabilities	<u>81,682</u>

TOTAL EQUITY 3,310,503



**Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual**

January through December 2018

	<u>Jan - Dec 18</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>\$ Over Budget</u>	<u>% of Budget</u>
<b>Ordinary Income/Expense</b>				
<b>Income</b>				
<b>Investment Income</b>				
BUV Trust Interest	7,128	7,378	-250	97%
BFS accrued TD Interest	1,723	1,652	71	104%
Interest Income	173	200	-27	87%
<b>Total Investment Income</b>	<u>9,024</u>	<u>9,230</u>	<u>-206</u>	<u>98%</u>
<b>Offerings &amp; Pledges</b>				
Weekly	88,515	90,960	-2,445	97%
<b>Total Offerings &amp; Pledges</b>	<u>88,515</u>	<u>90,960</u>	<u>-2,445</u>	<u>97%</u>
<b>Property Use</b>				
Student Housing Income	23,214	22,464	750	103%
Karen Fellowship	9,500	9,500		100%
Manse Commercial Rental	297			
Hall & Office Use	14,963	12,280	2,683	122%
<b>Total Property Use</b>	<u>47,974</u>	<u>44,244</u>	<u>3,730</u>	<u>108%</u>
<b>Total Income</b>	<u>145,513</u>	<u>144,434</u>	<u>1,079</u>	<u>101%</u>
<b>Expense</b>				
Tax Rounding on BAS	1			
<b>Personnel Expenses</b>				
<b>Pastor Remuneration</b>				
Superannuation	9,672	9,672		100%
Taxable Salaries	40,612	40,608	4	100%
Tax Exempt Remuneration	43,437	43,437	-0	100%
<b>Total Pastor Remuneration</b>	<u>93,721</u>	<u>93,717</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>100%</u>
(LSL Levy)	1,360	1,360	-0	100%
Expense Reimbursements	900	900		100%
Workcover	971	940	31	103%
<b>Total Personnel Expenses</b>	<u>96,951</u>	<u>96,917</u>	<u>34</u>	<u>100%</u>
<b>General Expense</b>				
Cleaning Services	5,000	5,000	-0	100%
(Insurance)	4,516	3,950	566	114%
(Ministry Contribution)	4,604	4,604	0	100%
Cleaning Supplies	885	1,500	-615	59%
<b>Community Events &amp; Hospitality</b>				
Carols & BBQ	604	800	-196	76%
Forums	485	1,000	-515	49%
Yarra Festival	1,343	1,000	343	134%
Welcome Refugee Meals		500	-500	
Morning Tea	243	1,000	-757	24%
<b>Total Community Events &amp; Hos...</b>	<u>2,675</u>	<u>4,300</u>	<u>-1,625</u>	<u>62%</u>
Education - SKC/Youth	773	800	-27	97%
<b>Office &amp; Admin</b>				
Audit		400	-400	
IT Services	173			
Office Supplies	20	500	-480	4%
Photocopier Servicing	491	300	191	164%
Sundry Other Expenses	74	500	-426	15%
<b>Total Office &amp; Admin</b>	<u>757</u>	<u>1,700</u>	<u>-943</u>	<u>45%</u>

**Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual**

January through December 2018

	<u>Jan - Dec 18</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>\$ Over Budget</u>	<u>% of Budget</u>
<b>Utilities</b>				
Council Fire Levy (16 High)	486	350	136	139%
Electricity	2,415	2,000	415	121%
Fire Equipment Service	460	400	60	115%
Gas-Origin	381	396	-15	96%
Post Box	115	127	-12	91%
Telephone	903	960	-57	94%
Water	2,147	2,088	59	103%
<b>Total Utilities</b>	<u>6,907</u>	<u>6,321</u>	<u>586</u>	<u>109%</u>
<b>Worship</b>				
Music Expenses	717	800	-83	90%
Sound Equipment	1,107	500	607	221%
Visiting Speakers	1,200	400	800	300%
Piano Tuning	150	200	-50	75%
Youth Music	330			
<b>Total Worship</b>	<u>3,504</u>	<u>1,900</u>	<u>1,604</u>	<u>184%</u>
<b>Total General Expense</b>	<u>29,621</u>	<u>30,075</u>	<u>-454</u>	<u>98%</u>
<b>Property Expense</b>				
Sundry rental expenses	700	700	-0	100%
RealEstate Fees	18			
Manse Commercial Expense	2,150	2,150	0	100%
<b>Total Property Expense</b>	<u>2,868</u>	<u>2,850</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>101%</u>
<b>Provision for Future Expenses</b>				
(CPI Protection)	9,240	9,230	10	100%
(Office Equipment)	1,000	1,000	-0	100%
(Property Maintenance)	6,000	6,000		100%
(Mance Fittings Refurbishment)	1,000	1,000	-0	100%
<b>Total Provision for Future Expenses</b>	<u>17,240</u>	<u>17,230</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>100%</u>
<b>Support Expense</b>	<u>3,400</u>	<u>3,400</u>		<u>100%</u>
<b>Total Expense</b>	<u>150,082</u>	<u>150,472</u>	<u>-390</u>	<u>100%</u>
<b>Net Ordinary Income</b>	<u>-4,569</u>	<u>-6,038</u>	<u>1,469</u>	<u>76%</u>
<b>Net Income</b>	<u><b>-4,569</b></u>	<u><b>-6,038</b></u>	<u><b>1,469</b></u>	<u><b>76%</b></u>

**Balance Sheet**

As of December 31, 2018

	<u>Dec 31, 18</u>
<b>ASSETS</b>	
<b>Current Assets</b>	
<b>Chequing/Savings</b>	
BFS Cheque Account	36,198
<b>BFS Term Deposits</b>	
BFS Term Deposit 100013449	
BFS Accrued TD 100013449 - Int	584
BFS Term Deposit 100013449 - O...	61,069
<b>Total BFS Term Deposit 100013449</b>	<u>61,653</u>
<b>Total BFS Term Deposits</b>	61,653
<b>BUV Property Trust</b>	
Property TF Capital 2541	208,072
Property TF Interest 2741	65,710
<b>Total BUV Property Trust</b>	<u>273,783</u>
<b>Total Chequing/Savings</b>	371,633
<b>Accounts Receivable</b>	
Accounts Receivable	536
<b>Total Accounts Receivable</b>	536
<b>Other Current Assets</b>	
Student House Funds	19,836
<b>Total Other Current Assets</b>	<u>19,836</u>
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	392,006
<b>Fixed Assets</b>	
Land - at Council Valn (2014)	1,440,000
<b>Buildings - at Valuation (2014)</b>	
Church Building - at Valuation	1,211,000
Manse Building - at Valuation	250,000
<b>Total Buildings - at Valuation (2014)</b>	<u>1,461,000</u>
<b>Furniture &amp; Equip - at Val 2014</b>	
Manse contents - at Valuation	5,900
Church Furniture & Equip - Valn	93,280
<b>Total Furniture &amp; Equip - at Val 2014</b>	<u>99,180</u>
<b>Total Fixed Assets</b>	<u>3,000,180</u>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<u><u>3,392,186</u></u>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>	
<b>Current Liabilities</b>	
<b>Other Current Liabilities</b>	
<b>Accounts Payable &amp; Liabilities</b>	
Hall Bonds	300
Provision for Annual Leave	293
Tax Payable - GST Transactions	-419
PAYG - Income Tax Deductions	1,351
<b>Total Accounts Payable &amp; Liabilities</b>	<u>1,525</u>

**Balance Sheet**

As of December 31, 2018

	<u>Dec 31, 18</u>
<b>Designated Funds</b>	
Kitchen Redevelopment	14,209
Property and Ministry Dev. Fund	21,000
Staff Education Fund	1,854
Property Maintenance Fund	12,144
Mance Fittings Refurbishment	1,000
Property Refurbishment Fund	0
Project	8,212
Playgroup-new	10,003
Refugee Women's Group	300
Office Equipment Fund	6,435
Ministry Contribution Accrual	1,241
LSL Levy Accrual	646
Local Relief Fund	1,171
Insurance Accrual	1,643
Grant-Ministry Seeding	300
<b>Total Designated Funds</b>	<u>80,158</u>
<b>Total Other Current Liabilities</b>	<u>81,682</u>
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<u>81,682</u>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<u><u>81,682</u></u>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<u><u>3,310,503</u></u>
<b>EQUITY</b>	
Opening Bal Equity	231,839
Assets Revaluation Reserve	3,000,180
Retained Earnings	83,054
Net Income	-4,569
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>	<u><u>3,310,503</u></u>

## Administration

### Administration Report

Westgate's administration office continued to be staffed by volunteers:

Leslie John – on Monday and Thursday mornings,

Denise – Friday producing the Messenger.

During 2018, we continued doing the same tasks -Leslie John answers the phone, orders stationery when required, does the hall bookings and other tasks.

He has also taken over some of the duties formerly undertaken by Margaret Wishart such as maintaining & updating aspects of the Westgate database, assisting with the production of the bi-annual Westgate directory, checking working with children cards on the web site & updating National Police check list and the annual in house production of offering envelopes. He also continues to try to beat the computer in chess matches, so far without any success.

Denise continues to prepare, print and distribute the Messenger each Friday – and what an excellent job she does of it as well.

We continue to assist the pastor and diaconate as we move forward as a Community.

*Denise & Leslie John [L-J]*

Administration Team

## Composting & Food Rescue

Our 3 month Pilot for the Composting component is over, and we have held an evaluation meeting, as proposed.

The consensus from this meeting was that this has already been a worthwhile initiative – highlighting the profile of the church in the local village in a really positive way. Café owners and shop keepers really want to do the right thing by the planet, but up until now, no-one has been helping them. We are now providing a way for some key players in our community to be less wasteful and be truer to their own values. In addition, those of us who regularly collect have developed good relationships with many of the shop keepers and their staff. We sent them all Christmas cards from the church; some put posters up for our Carol service; Anton (Naked Egg) has helped us with kitchen planning; they really appreciate us! We are developing window stickers so that participating shops can say they are part of recycling their organic waste.

The Maribyrnong Leader featured our project which gave us some good publicity and recently we have had an enquiry from a local resident asking if she can drop her home compost off with us. I believe that this is a healthy development again broadening our contact with the community.

Practically, collection and processing is fairly straightforward and we have a team of about 12-13 who are rostered for helping out, and there are others who supply hay and paper etc. This includes a man who doesn't yet come to church, and there is opportunity to gradually absorb other volunteers from beyond the church community. We are no longer collecting the Goje cups which hugely cuts down on labour and time. and we have agreed that we will gradually increase the number of outlets we collect from.

We now have our full complement of 10 aerobins and 4 other collection bins. There are unlikely to be any more significant costs other than small bins for the new cafes we approach, and some marketing, so the bulk of the Maribyrnong grant can go towards kitchen equipment, for the next phase of the project.

In April we will begin bagging and selling our premium compost!

Other suggestions for the Deacons/Church to consider:

- Making the student house front garden more of a talking point – using our compost to produce abundant veggies?
- Having a sign made that says local compost is available for sale on Sundays between 11.45 and 12.30
- Involve Pilgrim Uniting in doing a sister scheme with some of our Seddon cafes, either with us, or on their own property.

Phase 2 of the project is dependent upon the kitchen re-design and development and once we have a firm proposal and clear time-lines we can begin to develop a timed process of fitting the kitchen, equipping the hall area, training volunteers and sourcing more food.

*Anne Wilkinson-Hayes*

Composting & Food Rescue Report

## Mainly Music

Having been accepted by Mainly Music we are continuing to complete their requirements before being given the 'green light' to commence this ministry. This is required before we can promote the commencement of the program. At this stage, the team consists of: Jenny Morris, Enes Bowen, Emma Armstrong, Nancy and Bill Leng, Leslie John Newman and Neville Taylor but would welcome additional team members. The Karen leadership have been approached as to whether there may be someone from their congregation who would like to join the team.

If all goes well, we are planning for our first session to be held on the first Thursday of 2<sup>nd</sup> Term, 2019. The session is anticipated to run as follows:

- 9.30 to 10am - Music Program
- 10am - Morning Tea for children
- Following morning tea - free play for kids while carers enjoy a coffee finishing at 11.30am.

This program will provide an additional connection with local families as they enjoy the program utilising the Mainly Music values with intentional building of relationships between the Church Community and participants.

*Jenny Morris*

## Muso's

We continue to be greatly blessed with gifted musicians and singers who lead us in worship week by week. The musicians have been allocated to a band by the week of the month. We are again delighted to have the Karen Youth Band who lead on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> weeks of the month.

The list of musicians / band members include:

Thomas Daddow (piano)	Flavia Hai (piano, keyboard, vocal)
Charlotte Cameron (piano, keyboard, vocal)	Kay Vladica (cello)
Erin Heycox (violin)	Liam Taylor (sax)
Lachlan Heycox (guitar)	Tim Hai (bass-guitar)
James Murphy (trumpet)	Josh Flack (clarinet)
Joseph Hai (drums)	Jennifer Zalme (vocals)
Stuart Crisp (drums)	Rowena Gray (piano)
Glenys Taylor (vocal)	Alex Vladica (sax)

With additional musicians: Jenny Morris (piano), Nic Morgan (drums), Luke Bowen (trombone), Arminda Vladica (sax) and Katelyn Kemp (piano).

### *Jenny Morris*

Music Roster Coordinator

## Pastoral Care

For a number of years Gail Crisp has coordinated Pastoral Care within WBC. Gail has given countless hours to the support, practical care and encouragement of our community. Whatever the circumstances she has thoughtfully discerned the best way to lovingly support a wide variety of individuals and needs. Gail has that capacity to keep the finger 'on the pulse' and know how best to utilise the practical and pastoral resources of our community while developing a strong net of pastoral care. Gail's quiet and efficient manner, wise practice and faithful service continues to be a sustained blessing in the life WBC.

In 2018 we were privileged to host a thanksgiving service for the life and ministry of the Rev. Alan Wright. Alan was a beloved and unique individual with a heart for seeking God, a passion for pursuing the call of Jesus and a deep love of his family. We were also able to farewell Beryl Warren and provide the family with support in hosting the funeral.

All requests regarding pastoral care are treated confidentially. If you become aware of a pastoral care need for yourself or for another person/situation that you would like our community to take some care of, you can contact Neville directly or email [pastors@westgatebaptist.org.au](mailto:pastors@westgatebaptist.org.au)

### *Neville Taylor*

Pastoral Care

# Playgroup

Term 3 & 4 2017

Playgroup continues to thrive and buzz on a Tuesday morning with 13 Mums and 20 children filling the rainbow room. We are frequently reminded that Playgroup remains the highlight of the children's weeks and our weekly meet up continues to be a much needed weekly debrief for our parents! Parenting ups and downs are shared and problem solved with gusto some weeks!

Alice continues to put much time and thought into our weekly crafts. She has encouraged more tactile and experience - based activities which the children have enjoyed very much. We have learned to cut with scissors and made finger painting pictures with messy goo. We've also enjoyed a lovely morning at the dinosaur park - we met at the church before testing our herding skills with getting 10 children on bikes and scooters safely across roads and along the bike path! We shared morning tea, played in the park, sang some songs and blew bubbles.

We continue to gather around our "rainbow ring" every week at group time to commence our singing and story time together. Singing and dancing to songs on a CD is loved by all as well as using finger puppets for some favourite songs.

At the end of term 3 we farewelled Margaret Wishart as she retires. Margaret has been a valued member of our Playgroup admin team since we began in May 2011. She has been the silent, behind the scenes 'fairy' of playgroup! All the little things that she did that, though often unnoticed, were what helped to make playgroup run so smoothly each and every week. Alice helped the children to make a very special card with each parent's and child's fingerprint and heart felt wishes. Margaret's cheery presence is already greatly missed. We wish her all the very best in her retirement.

We are looking forward to our Christmas Party on Sunday 10th December with William Daddow once again appearing as Santa. We will share a meal and much fun together with a jumping castle, face painting and many more exciting things. We will also be continuing our tradition of sharing Christmas gifts with the Burmese playgroup.

Looking ahead to 2018 - Rowena will continue as coordinator for her final year as Natalie will start school in 2019! Gail will also continue as main support until late in 2017. Alice is happy to continue to plan our craft activities.

We will sadly have to say farewell to a few members at the end of this year due to the inevitable transition to kinder however all others are looking forward to another exciting year ahead.

I would like to whole - heartedly thank the team behind me as without them playgroup simply would not be the wonderful weekly hub that it is. Much thanks must go to Gail Crisp who, every week, gives of her time on a Monday afternoon to set up our room, who graciously continues to set things up then pack up and clean up for some time after we've all left! Her support for me as a coordinator is immensely appreciated. If only everyone could have a Gail Crisp!

Many thanks also to Alice for her time and energy with craft activities and to our committee of mums who help with decisions and general planning.

**Rowena Gray**

Playgroup Coordinator

## Property

### Maintenance

We are grateful for the outstanding commitment and hard work done by Chris Woolston in the maintenance of the front garden. Once again Christmas saw a brilliant display of sunflowers raised in the Woolston nursery. Chris has also helped clear out and reorganise the storage shed. While Bill Leng proactively ensures our property meets all the safe standards, building compliance, occupational health and safety. Bill has also overseen a thorough clean out of the storage rooms at the back of the baptistry.

### Improvements

A protection strip was added to the south and eastern walls of the church to guard against plaster damage by chairs. Both walls were repainted by Bill. The community meeting approved the installation of a kitchen to service groups meeting in the 'rainbow room'. The Kitchenette will also assist us in the morning tea clean up while the main kitchen is renovated in 2019.

### Hall Use

The church facilities are used by external groups on Monday - Friday evenings and Friday & Saturday mornings throughout the year. These include Yarraville Playgroups, Wulong Kung Fu and the Melbourne Scholl of Philosophy.

### The Property Group

## Student House Ministry

The Student House Ministry was a positive experience for students and community alike with lots of learnings along the way. We were delighted to welcome Philip Humphrey, Katelyn Kemp, Karishma Solomonz and Dean Brodel as our inaugural student residents. Due to personal circumstances Dean moved on mid year and we were delighted to welcome Alexandra Munoz to the house in October. We are delighted to have the following students as residents of 'the House' for 2019: Katelyn Kemp stays on as Lead Tenant, with Alexandra continuing on with Daniel Cowan and Nadia Ericksson being welcome additions to the house.

A great weekend at Lorne was enjoyed by 'House residents' and Young Adults of the Church Community with the opportunity to get to know each other and explore the challenges of Christian community together. Thankyou to Katelyn for facilitating these times of reflection.

Thankyou to those of the Church Community who have undertaken the role of Mentor and Host Family to our students. We are in the process of exploring with the students where they would like to be involved in local ministry...SUDS welcome Katelyn and Nadia to the team! The Student House Ministry has been a blessing to both the students and the Church Community.

*Jenny Morris*

Student House Ministry

## Sunday Night Small Group

The Sunday night group continued to meet throughout 2018 fortnightly, rotating venues among four homes, meeting for 2 hours from 6-630pm to 8-830pm during school terms.

The group comprised of Kay and Ernest Vladica, Gail and Brian Crisp, Maree and Wally Hunt, Ellie, Josh, Josie and Henry Flack, David Ozolins, and Jennifer Zalme and intermittent participation from some of the young adults of the families.

Everyone contributed to the meal on a rostered basis. We typically enjoyed soup, bread and dessert followed by a time of sharing and fellowship, a prepared short reflection and a closing prayer. Ernest led the group roster coordination.

We have also had a lot of 2018 with people missing on adventures overseas: The Vladica's for July & August and the Crisps from Sept. The group welcomed Jennifer in the second half of 2018 and welcomed Samuel Flack in 2019 (just!). Another important milestone we observe as a group is Josie beginning Primary school in 2019, and we with Josh and Ellie wonder about the passing of the years. It seems like yesterday she was the new baby on the block! Group for all of us is a place of support, care and sharing. This year we have supported many of our members through some difficult times: health issues, issues of grief and loss, and just life! Prayerful support of each other is also an important part of our time together – and our time away from each other when we continue to hold each other in prayer.

We continue to pray that as a small group we will grow is our sense of community together, ways to support each other better, and to know growth in our life with, and in God, both personally and corporately.

*Gail Crisp & Ernest Vladica*

On behalf of Sunday Night Group

## Westgate Refugee Support Group (WRS)

The plight of asylum seekers and refugees rarely leaves the headlines in Australia, however change for the better in policy and practice over 2018 here and overseas has been completely absent.

In Malaysia, where WRS has been supporting refugees since 2014, the situation has deteriorated. The majority of refugees we work with are from the Chin ethnic group. We also work with some Kachin, Karen, Shan, Mon, Arakan, Rohingya and Karenni refugees. During 2018 the United Nations Human Rights Commission (The Refugee Agency) made the declaration that Chin State is now safe, and citizens who were previously given refugee status in India, Thailand and Malaysia will have this status withdrawn and need to return to Myanmar by the end of December 2019. If they remain in Malaysia for example without UNHCR protection they are much more likely to end up in detention centres with little hope of repatriation.

This news was greeted with alarm by the refugees and the support agencies. There is evidence that Chin state is not safe for all to return with active fighting against the military in the southern areas. Some Chin in Malaysia have chosen to move to more remote locations to work, with lower chance of immigration raids, but also less opportunity for children to attend refugee schools or health services.

The Chin leadership in churches and support agencies is divided on the best way forward with some encouraging people to return, while others continue to mount a public campaign to change the UNHCR policy. The Myanmar government refuses to discuss the refugee issues so the Chin have an acute fear of repatriation.

So, in the face of this uncertainty what has WRS been doing? Over the last twelve months we have formed two partnerships which strengthen our networks in Malaysia and Myanmar. We have been communicating with Anne and Bruce Borquist, American Baptist missionaries who are very knowledgeable and active in South East Asian refugee issues. They have helped us network with others who are doing similar work and in time we hope to cooperate further. We have also initiated teacher training with the Coalition of Burma Ethnic (COBEM) which is a support agency for a wide range of ethnic groups from Myanmar, including groups who are continuing to receive UNHCR protection.

Since 2014 we have been working with the refugee agencies and teachers on the need for Child protection policies and education around the risks to refugee children. The refugees have had reports of children at risk of sexual abuse, but fortunately they knew what to do and how to proceed in a country where if they went to the police to report a crime they would most likely be arrested.

And now a few statistics. In January 2019 we conducted our 5<sup>th</sup> group tour for Westgaters and friends to experience life as a refugee in Kuala Lumpur. A total of 32 people have visited, with some returning multiple times.

Fundraising this year was given a boost with an afternoon tea at Anne Paltridge's house, a Sausage Sizzle run by Liam Taylor and friends at Christian Brothers College and a 'Go Fund Me' page set up by Marion Ellery. With approximately \$16,000 donated to the refugee schools and agencies each year we need to maintain our creative efforts in fundraising.

Thanks to everyone who has supported our fundraising or been to KL to encourage the refugees in person. Thanks also to our treasurer John Morris!

***Kaye Cameron & Laurie Krepp***

On behalf of all those involved in WRS

## **Worship group**

I am grateful for the thoughtful work of the 'Worship Group' which meets monthly to creatively coordinate our Sunday worship services. Jenny Morris has played a key role in facilitating the musicians, singers and the planning of intergenerational services. We are blessed to have a wide range of worship leaders, gifted preachers, PA & data projector operators and creative florists. Coupled with this are the teams who generously serve our morning tea each week.

The Worship Group comprises Jenny Morris, Angela Daddow, Gail Crisp and Neville Taylor. We usually meet at the Morris' home at 6 pm for a light meal and finish by 8.30 pm. We are deeply appreciative of the many gifted worship leaders and musicians who lead us each week. It is truly a team effort.

The focus for those leading and speaking is generally to follow the weekly lectionary readings and leaders have made good use of the resource 'Fusion' which is lectionary based to source readings, prayer ideas and other worship material. We have continued to subscribe to this material into 2019.

***Neville Taylor***

on behalf of the Worship Group