

CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2012 - 2013

Cherry Church has had a very busy last 14 months it has been dominated by the building project. This small congregation has managed with God's grace to perform our spiritual responsibilities in worship, teaching, and carrying God's word to country churches in the Mallee and Riverland as well as the building project. This has been a great step in faith and our faith is honoured by God's great love.

Spiritual activities

Christine Manning our pastor of four and half years completed her training and successfully sought a Synod placement. She is now Minister of the word at the Uniting Churches in the Barossa. We farewelled her and thanked her and Paul for their large inputs into the church. As a result of this a replacement was sought and Randal White was asked and accepted the position as Pastor.

We were greatly blessed by having Randal and his wife Anne and his children to lead us for 12 months. Randal brought us into the 21st Century by digitizing his sermons and using an iPad to present his sermons also they were available electronically. He ran a successful Lenten study. Ran was the public face of our church attending Cherry Chatter meetings, giving the Anzac Day and Community Carols sermonettes. He was also MC at the Carols. Unfortunately for the church Randal has a full time senior position with a Commonwealth Government Department. This required greater input than previously and he could not continue because of the effects on his health and family. Anne has been a thoughtful worship leader and sometimes attended Cherry Chatter meetings for us. Randal suggested and the Congregational Council approved that to make the church more resilient it should have a leadership team. The team consists of a Pastor (when one is available), two Elders who could provide spiritual guidance for the church and the Chair of the Congregational Council.

Sunday school continues and every Sunday there is a lesson prepared if children attend. We have two young families and so when they attend they have a lesson.

One of the strengths of our church is that it is a prayerful church and every Sunday many prayers are offered for those outside and those within the church. We know that prayer is powerful and many blessings have flowed from our prayers.

The Cherry Gardens Garden Club meets monthly in the church as a result of the past President Ralph Stephens a church member bringing it to the church. The current President Ray Wise is supportive of meeting at the church and with numbers between 25- 30 it is a significant event for the community. This is also a significant out reach for our church. They have put up with the camping facilities for supper for about a year and are looking forward to the new meeting room with modern facilities.

Building Project

The process of building our new room has engendered amazing amounts of generosity inside and outside the church. Contractors that gave substantial discounts, some even for free! "Habitat for humanity" a worldwide organization that builds for disadvantaged people and community projects constructed the wooden frame - work in association with "Brush with kindness" a group from Seeds church at Aberfoyle Park. That was a huge input and saving for our project.

The building project team produced a brochure describing the project and our needs. Darryl Dyson made an extraordinary effort of writing to the 300 Uniting churches in South Australia requesting support. The generosity was amazing and funds flowed especially from the country churches and our sister churches, Ironbank, Clarendon, Upper Sturt and Blackwood.

Our building team lead by Jim Richardson supported by Ron Williamson our builder, Jim Ward our architect, Phyllis Williamson finance officer and Darryl Dyson our scribe, have worked tirelessly and are all still are doing so. Our members raised funds by having a garage sale, producing a CD of Christmas carols and an evening of favourite hymns. Uniting Church Synod and Onkaparinga City have provided equipment for the room. The founding families the Jacobs, Middleton's and the Broadbent's have been great supporters in both labour and funds. We are grateful for all of these God given gifts.

Soon the building will be at lock up stage. The cladding is finished and the joinery is in. The Memorial wall part of the Memorial garden is also very close to finished. We now have a beautiful building that will be useful for Cherry Gardens community activities that require a modern intimate well-equipped meeting room.

I believe we have a great responsibility to those have donated so generously and to the Community and Onkaparinga City for their support. Ours is the responsibility to encourage community, founding families, churches and our members to use it.

Subservient to the project is the heritage room. This is currently lead by the experienced Alex Mc Farlane. He is collecting material and it is being classified. We have also attracted funds from the Uniting Church of SA historical group for an A3 laser printer. Onkaparinga City has provided a Flat screen TV suitable for connection to a computer for use in training in e.g. gardening, conservation of materials for the heritage room, bible studies, Sunday school and marriage courses.

Our aim is to get this room up and running after the new meeting room is finished. There is good support for this from the founding families and we will foster their interest so that they will allow us to keep original materials or allow us to copy them.

Founding families

As mentioned previously the founding families have been very supportive of the church and the building project. The Middleton family held a reunion at the church. The church provided afternoon tea in the skeleton of the new building; Ian Hutchinson Leader of the Middleton family association sold his recently finished "Middleton Memoirs" and gave the proceeds to the new building project.

The founding families know that having a viable church will ensure better access to their family headstones and be able to share the building that that their and the state's pioneers worshipped in,

Acknowledgements

My thanks to the whole of the congregation because you all seem to have tasks that make this church work. Some who have even survived my leadership over these past 8 years thank you especially. My treasurer Phyllis Williamson who has faced difficult requests from me from time to time and always came up with the funds, also provided sound advice. Our secretary Dianne Dyson who has coped with meetings called without notice, thank you. Joan Button for her personal pastoral care often the basis of prayer and follow up by the congregation.

For this I am grateful. You are a wonderfully talented congregation so helpful and I feel truly reflect Christ's love.

Alan Dubé
Chair Congregational Council
Cherry Church
13/3/2013