



New Horizons

Newsletter of the

Warwick/Killarney Parish November 2023



Pastoral Ponderings

Dearest Church Family and Friends

It is hard to believe that it is November, and that the busyness of the Christmas season is at hand! It feels like this year has been a whirlwind of emotions of extreme highs and many devastating lows.

As I reflect on my last couple of weeks starting the Exponent Conference on the Gold Coast, then the Synod (gathering of people) on the Sunshine Coast followed by the Presbytery meetings in Toowoomba, I feel like something that has been put into a tumble dryer.

I received much needed refreshing at the Exponent Conference and the inspirational talks by people who love Jesus and who love the church. I attended a few workshops and sessions, but the one that stands out was Alan Hirsh and his talk on Metanoia – repentance (also the title of his latest book). I felt my heart moved and felt a real desire for the need to re-tune and to return to God, personally and individually for all of us, but even more so corporately as community, as a people created by God.

This heart moving experience continued during our Synod. And the theme of Renewal has started and most of the speakers emphasized the importance of a renewing, a re-tuning and a returning towards God. I felt even more convicted after the Norman and Mary Miller Lecture by Dr Stan Grant when he told us that this is a time of reckoning, beyond the simple media headlines, beyond political rhetoric. He emphasised we need language of atonement, accountability, and humility. We need the language of the soul, and of humanity. adding that these words belong to us, the church, and we should not delegate them to politics and business.

During our Presbytery gathering we turned to the lessons offered by nature and the lifecycle of living cells. Perhaps most sobering was the fact that death is not only a natural part of any lifecycle, but it is essential for the body to remain vital. I was reminded of all the practices and things that I fight for and hold on to, even though God is already doing a new thing and is inviting me to participate in.

Yes, I am feeling like I have been in a tumble dryer, but I am hoping to come out a little softer, smelling a little better and able to bring a little more comfort.

Ansie Liebenberg



Notes from the Presbytery of The Downs meeting 3rd – 5th November.

The final Presbytery meeting for 2023 was hosted by St Stephen's Uniting Church, Toowoomba.

Attending from our Parish were Rev Ansie Liebenberg, Ian Darnell & Dianne & David Cahill.

Representatives came from all areas of our large Presbytery.

Friday commenced with fellowship over the evening meal, all catering for the weekend was by the Meals on Wheels team.

Following was a celebration service for the commissioning of Mrs. Jennifer Feldmeier as Bush Chaplain for Cunnamulla, Bourke & Wills Remote Area. Jenny is based in Charleville. It was thrilling to have folk from Charleville attending, along with several members of her family to support Jenny.

Saturday:

- Started with a Bible study based on Psalm 105 and included part of a recorded video by Kate Isles from the recent Synod meeting. It encouraged us to 'Open ourselves up to new life and enable us to die better' – be prepared to cease some programs to enable other programs to flourish.
- Discussion on CPMP (Combined Presbyteries Mission Pool) realizing that some areas are challenged to meet their commitments. This will greatly impact on the wide ministry activities of the Presbytery.
- Reflections from members who attended the recent Synod meeting and the Exponential Conference.
- Report from Cambooya congregation on their decision to close the church there.
- Congratulations to Mrs. Annie Baker on her progress towards ordination.
- Uniting Care Connect 100 encouraging folk to consider the Christmas program 'Adopt a Family'.
- Concern raised regarding the decision by Synod Standing Committee to no longer fund Public Hospital Chaplains from June 2024. This will impact Rev. Jenny Potter among others.
- Easter Madness 2024 will run from 5th – 8th April at Alex Park. The theme is 'Uprising' and is for all students from school years 7-12. Financial assistance is available for those attending.

Sunday:

Those who could shared in the morning worship service.

Our thanks to St. Stephens members for their hospitality.

2024 Presbytery meetings:

- 23rd – 25th February - Allora UC
- 14th – 16th June - Lifeworks UC
- 1st – 3rd November – Warwick/ Killarney UC

There is an open invitation to all members of our Parish to attend all Presbytery meetings as visitors.

Dianne Cahill

Food for Thought...Being Prepared

I have just been preparing the Devotions for Facebook on Sunday's Gospel reading about the wise and foolish maidens who were waiting for the appearance of the Bridegroom who was a long time arriving. Five of them had plenty of oil in their lamps while the other five ran out and missed their entry into the feast. They were not prepared.

Of course, this parable of Jesus was aimed at being prepared to meet Christ at his return, living the life of true discipleship as we wait for this, without ever knowing just when it should happen. But it also points out that you can't suddenly be ready at the very last moment and expect to escape judgment. We've heard this anonymous story many times....but it still packs a punch about how we believe and how we live.

An atheist was walking through the woods admiring all the "accidents" that evolution had created. "What magnificent trees! What powerful rivers! What beautiful animals!" he said. Suddenly, he heard a rustling in the bushes behind him. Turning to look, he saw a seven-foot grizzly bear charging towards him. He ran as fast as he could up the path.

He looked over his shoulder and saw the bear was closing in on him. He was so scared that tears were burning in his eyes. His heart was pounding. He tried to run faster, but he tripped and fell to the ground. He rolled over to pick himself up, but the bear was over him, his right paw raised ready to strike him. "O my God!" cried the atheist.

Time stopped. The bear froze. The forest was silent. Even the bear stopped moving. A bright light shone on the man and a voice came out of the sky. "You deny my existence for all these years, teach others that I don't exist, even credit creation to a cosmic accident. So, now, do you expect me to help you out of this predicament. Am I to count you now as a believer?"

The atheist looked directly into the light and said, "I would feel like a hypocrite to become a Christian after all these years...but perhaps you could make the bear a Christian?" "Very well," said the voice. The light went out. The river ran. The sounds of the forest resumed. Then the bear dropped its right paw, brought both paws together, bowed its head and spoke, "For this food which I am about to receive, I am truly thankful!"

Now that's food for thought!.....Shalom, Jean

Christmas Downunder

For many years, a dedicated group of people from many of the Christian churches in the Warwick district have run a program called 'Christmas Downunder' in the Rose City shopping centre which aimed to spread the true Christmas message to all families in a very fun and non-threatening way. Since the Covid problem it has been much smaller but still with the same message.

Sadly, the now small coordinating team have made the decision to no longer run the program for a variety of reasons.

However, the Management of the Shopping centre have agreed to allow us to display the beautiful Nativity Scene under the Coles entrance so at least there will be some evidence of a Christian presence throughout the Christmas season.

We believe that if it is to continue then God will raise up the right people again.

Dianne Cahill (for the CDU team)

Minutes of Warwick Congregational Meeting Sunday 24 September 2023

Opening Prayer: Rev Ansie Liebenberg opened the meeting with prayer at 11.00am.

Attendance: 37 **Apologies:** 7

Minutes of the Previous Meeting: 20 November 2022 were moved as true and correct.

1. Protea Place:

Ian Darnell reported that PP was now finished bar a few loose ends. The Toowoomba PP group are operating it 2 days a week and we can't enter the building without PP people being present. A question from the floor asked who was responsible for maintaining the garden but Ian was unable to answer. Rev Ansie thanked those who had worked so hard and given so much of themselves to the Project.

2. Organ Update:

David Cahill advised that the component from England had arrived safely although freight is now much more expensive. The workings are a lot more decorative than what we can see and most of the work is taking place in his work shed at home. David is grateful for the help of Ray Browne one morning a week. Future aims: re-install some big components before Christmas, advertise old organ to be gone by November, completion date 30 Nov 2024, the centenary date of the 1st recital.

3. Church Café: Paul Ryan reported that the café was doing well. Church members are working regularly with other members of the public assisting. The Financial Report showing that takings are very healthy, Many non-church goers are coming especially from the Courthouse. Rev May told the meeting that although the original dream was to have the café in the garden it was much more practical in the church area with the garden group helping out with serving and cooking.

Church Council Report: Marg Wells - Secretary

Church Council is now 3yrs into a 5yr journey from the AGM which endorsed that the Church's way forward was to prioritize Discipleship and Fit for Purpose. Our church groups incl Alpha, Grief & Loss, Church Café, marriage courses and ministry groups are designed to invite others to start or strengthen their discipleship journey. Our amazing Young Women's Group meet weekly and encouraged the Intergenerational Worship Services with plans at present for it to be held every Sunday for 8 weeks. Marg encouraged the whole congregation to support Ansie in this venture.

Our participation in Jumpers & Jazz for 2024 was confirmed with a Jazzy Breakfast, Church Café every day, and a theme for the Church planned. Rev May stressed the real need for a Co-ordinator to run it. Marg explained that the budget is done 12 months ahead and unexpected costs take a toll. With our Fit for Purpose priorities, it will improve our chances of a grant to build affordable housing if we finish the year with a balanced budget.

Treasurer's Report: Jenny Lane

Jenny explained that we were looking at a minimal surplus this year with finances affected by the loss of \$900 a month from the Lighthouse. Protea Place is operating on a nominal lease at present, and we are holding on until 2024 when rent from Protea Place will increase. There is a projected \$10K hole in the Budget. Many fund-raising ideas are being put forward but with most church leaders involved with the Fit for Purpose priority there was a drastic shortage of manpower to do fund-raising. She asked for volunteers to step up to organise fund raising ventures and help ease the load on our church leaders.

Another innovation is our Baptism Story Books.

Six have been prepared or presented to date.



Minister's Report: Rev Ansie Liebenberg
Ansie thanked Marg Wells for once more taking on the role of Church Council Secretary. Noting we are blessed with amazing and gifted people in our church

who went beyond the call of duty and were running ministries at their own expense. She honoured those church people who gave their time, treasure and talent so generously and willingly and encouraged all to trust God with their giving; lamenting that finances were so challenging every year and felt the weight of the pressure we put on a few of our people. Reporting Warwick is the strongest church in the Presbytery and prayed we find a way to exist for another 150 yrs. We have worked hard at Discipleship, where affordable housing and a drop-in centre for women were our aims. One of these Protea Place has been achieved. To address the Fit for Purpose priority she wished to honour Ian Darnell, Jenny Lane and Sue Campbell who have worked many long hours to pursue the dream of building 10 units behind the old manse and 4 units at Killarney to provide both necessary affordable housing and future sustainability for the church. This required attending many government workshops and working long hours to prepare submissions for government grants. She informed the meeting that 270 applications had been submitted but only 71 had been shortlisted, including 2 of ours and emphasised that to do further submissions they would have to attend another seven workshops.

General Business:

- 1. Hospitality Groups.* Four groups, numbers dwindling, putting extra pressure on each group with a need for volunteers. Suggestion for bought biscuits on the 5th Sundays. Meeting agreed.
- 2. Church Cleaner.* New cleaner employed for \$40 hr x 3 hrs. Short over \$50 wk. on Budget. Ansie asked for contributions to cleaner's cost.

Congregational Concerns:

- 1. Church Library.* Jean Reid established the library with a donation of religious books from a lady who died. Jean promised to make it more appealing and asked for suggestions for what Christian books were of interested. Christian fiction was a popular choice. Ansie sorted her office library and invited those looking for personal devotions to visit it.
 - 2. Church Property.* A Reminder to ensure that first aid equipment and the defibrillator are always accessible and not blocked by hall furniture.
 - 3. Lighting at Front of Church.* Chairman Terry advised security light would be installed in front of church in near future for night functions and safety and security purposes.
 - 4. Fund raising for Defibrillator.* Paul Ryan from "Who Cares Catering" informed meeting of a fund-raising dinner to be held October 21 to purchase a defibrillator for church. Cost with cabinet \$2100. Parish dinner – Hawaiian Theme. "Who Cares" to cater. \$30 head. Pre-dinner drinks and nibbles in courtyard before. Live music with Sue Campbell and Phil Vellacott. Lucky door prizes and best dressed awards. Some work needed still on advertising.
 - 5. Emergency Lockdown.* Emergency Lockdown Procedure was then carried out at 11. 52 am.
- Next meeting:** at a date to be advised.

Meet Meredith Heard and her Long Term Faithful Service as Christ's Disciple

Many of you will only know her as one of the older members of our congregation who sits in one of the comfortable chairs. You see Meredith's role in the work of the congregation was cut short with a sudden serious diagnosis of cancer and its long term treatment. She found that it cemented her faith in the hereafter as she moved through doubt and confusion into acceptance as she worked her way through loneliness and depression and a chronic sadness.

But, let me take you back to the Meredith who filled so many roles in the life of the church before cancer. She was born in South Australia and attended Sunday School from an early age, singing those old songs, "Here the pennies dropping" and "Jesus bids us shine." Her fledgling faith was watered by the Sunday School teachers who shared their faith with her as an older primary student.

From 1958 until 1962, she lived in Horsham in Victoria, and it was here that she was confirmed and began teaching Sunday School until she attended The Melbourne Kindergarten Teachers College during which she attended the Presbyterian Church and learnt to play the organ. From here she married Neville and began her life on a sheep farm at Telangatuk near Horsham, raising a family of two daughters and one son. Here began the life of service that blossomed into so many avenues. Again, teaching Sunday School, joining as a member and taking office in the PWMU, was an elder and pianist for church services.

The family moved to Warwick in 1981 and her involvement in the workings of our Parish just took off in so many directions. As Uniting was well under way in most places, she was astounded to discover that Warwick had two congregations each one working almost as they had as Presbyterian and Methodist congregations. As we learnt her background, it wasn't long before we had her very involved in the life of the church. She admits that she had plenty of energy and enthusiasm to throw herself into many avenues of service. She believes that the Warwick UCA helped her relocation far from family down south as we became her replacement family.

What follows from here is a huge list of positions, novel ideas, amazing efforts and going the second mile. She taught the youngest class of Sunday School for 20 years, taught RI in Primary schools, was an elder, Secretary and Chairman of Parish Council (both 4 year stints), both a Presbytery and Synod representative, was an office bearer of the Women's Fellowship, the WEF and then the Adult Fellowship and a pivotal part of their November Do's, was a member of the Friendship Group and the Visioning Committee, a member of many Bible Study Groups, both home groups and in-depth year long ones and instigator and leader of many children's groups.

Now, if that doesn't make you tired, let's go further. She and Barbara Austin made all those costumes we use from time to time. They were made for our Outdoor Christmas Pageants and continue to be used for many other reasons. She concocted a KUCA costume (Kids of the Uniting Church of Australia) which became the focus of our Sunday School float for the Rodeo Procession. She and I went off to a Story Telling the Bible seminar, attended many Pastoral Care courses, and then we staged two Sunday School Musicals. Throughout all this we relied on her to play the piano and the organ for many large and small reasons.

And then, of course, there were all those rosters...flowers, meals on wheels, morning tea, on one of the four worship committees, fetes, winter smorgasbords, craft and so much more. I could go on and on! Like so many of us, she remembers going home from many night meetings talking to God, "Why me? Again?"

But, let Meredith have the last words! While there were many things that afforded her the chance to serve in the Parish, she maintains that her knowledge and her faith grew through Worship Planning meetings, Bible Study groups both small and large and through the personal contact with fellow Christians who were honest enough to share their own struggles and failures and also share the joys and awe that make up our pilgrim journey.

Her final words: "In the life of the church and its people, my mission was to make a difference, to give and to receive and my support in all this was and is Neville."

interviewed by Jean Reid.

CHURCH COUNCIL CHATTER NOVEMBER NEW HORIZONS

Lighthouse news: Christmas is coming up and the Lighthouse will be using Williams Hall to store items and pack these hampers on 18, 19th and 20th December. May Morris is organising their Christmas breakup on 15th December, to be in Williams Hall this year because of increased numbers. We wish them well at this busy time of the year when need becomes so fraught for families. The Lighthouse also gives us vouchers in the office for their clients to collect.

Christmas Services (at the moment)

Christmas Eve falls on Sunday this year, with Christmas Day on the Monday.

Christmas Eve, Sunday 24th December:

8:30am Killarney

9:30am Warwick

7:00pm Freestone (to be confirmed)

Christmas Day, Monday 25th December:

7:00 am Warwick

8:30am Killarney

Note there will be no Carol Service or Carols in the Chapel.

However, the Town Carol Service will feature carols. 10th December.

Killarney Congregation

The Church Council Property Task Team has taken onboard the renovations requested by Killarney. We wish them all the best as they work with the Property Task Team to achieve the desired changes to the front of the Church with unwanted/unneeded items removed by the end of 2023 allowing work to proceed 2024.

Killarney Music Ministry: Julia Beck has formed a new music ministry, meeting each Wednesday 3-4:30pm in the Killarney Uniting Church

Marg Wells

MARKET NEWS

Update and Plans for 2024

2023 Update

Our 3 markets provided just over \$23,000 towards the operation of our church community.

Thank you to everyone involved, in particular our stall operators, the entertainers, ARK and of course our 'set up/ and 'pack up' crews.

2024 Plans

Our committee met recently to organize our 3 events for next year.

2024 Markets Dates are:-

- March 09 with Trash n Treasure, all plants and some books
- August 17 featuring books and native plants.
- October 12 with produce, craft, collectibles, all plants and more!!!

Watch out for new market ideas and surprises at other times during the year. Each market will also feature food stalls, an expanded café area and entertainment items. Our furry friends from ARK will also be there.

Please contact **Scott Young (0429 969 432) Or David Angell (0400 433 910)** for further information about our 2024 market.

Thank you to everyone from your Market Day team.

THE COURTYARD ORCHIDS.

These are some of the many plants which are growing in the Church courtyard.

They are named *Thelychiton taberi* (Pale king orchid) a rare plant native to this area.

In recent years, competing with other plants, they have been watered by hand from a watering can, but are vulnerable to damage and I fear we may lose them – but we can live together with care - and continue watering them, preferably with tank water.



Please do not prune or break the stems, as these provide nutrients for next year's flowers, and any damage is an entry point for fatal fungal diseases. Do not poke or introduce objects into the pots as this can introduce fungus or other fatal diseases. There is plenty of water harvested into the tanks at the back of the Church. The system is designed to collect at least 60 inches of rainwater from the roof of the Church and Hall.

Hopefully, with care, we can continue to enjoy these beautiful plants with their many flowers, for a long time. Darell Fletcher