

North Lake Macquarie Uniting Church

Annual Report 2021 – 2022



Uniting Church in Australia
NSW Synod - Hunter Presbytery

ANNUAL REPORT – 2021 / 2022

UNITING CHURCH NORTH LAKE MACQUARIE CONGREGATIONS

It's been a while since our last AGM and like most Churches, NLMUCC has had its share of challenges with Covid restrictions, we are all more than familiar with attendance recording, hand sanitising and mask wearing. Fortunately with diligent adherence to safe practices by you the congregation, we managed to avoid any Covid outbreaks, and restrictions were eased on 5th December 2021, and we could all sing again, Hallelujah! Many weddings and baptisms had to be postponed over Covid lockdowns and mourner numbers at funerals limited.

Another hurdle faced by NLMUCC is the retirement of Reverend Doctor Kenneth Brown, due to ongoing illness, his retirement service being conducted at 'The Willows' on Sunday 20th November. He will be greatly missed by both congregations and no doubt he will carry fond memories of his time here. Our best wishes go out to both he and Catherine in his retirement.

Earlier this year Kenneth underwent his triannual Vitality of Ministry which Church Council were informed was inconclusive, and would again be interviewed after NLMUCC had undergone a 'Consultation on the Life and Witness of a Congregation', correlated from your responses to the survey. As Kenneth had entered upon Sick Leave prior to his retirement, his second interview will not be completed, and we still await the Consultation Report from Presbytery. When this has been done, a Church Profile is to be formulated with a view to forming a Joint Nominating Committee should our congregations financially see a way forward to inviting a new minister on a full or part time basis.

To assist us in this interim phase, Presbytery have organised Reverend Brian Brown to act in supply from 1st January 2023 to 30th June 2023.

Church Council cooperatively with Presbytery are to formulate a Mission Plan after receipt of the 'Life and Witness' Report, expected to be completed in the New Year.

Safe Church requirements have been introduced by Uniting Church Synod including Working With Children Checks, and on-line and face to face courses for Church Council members and Church members holding responsible positions, and, whilst this does not currently impact NLMUCC, those working directly with children.

Both congregations have been busy fundraising and although activities have been curtailed by Covid somewhat, creditable amounts have been raised from within social church groups to external fundraising to assist in God's work.

NLM Congregations are to be congratulated on their generosity in relation to the various appeals conducted – Zimbabwe Christian Church assistance, Moderator's Flood Appeal, SRE (Ben Ward), clothing / blankets / food donations for the homeless, Children's Christmas Gift Boxes to the Pacific Islands, Christmas Bowl and more, your gifts that keep on giving.

Thanks are extended to all those who have continued to maintain the properties, keep the website updated and inspirational, and to everyone who phoned, emailed and walked to ensure members have remained in touch with others. Your work although often not seen, is much valued by the Church Council.

Since our last AGM we have lost more than just a few members of our congregations, and while they are greatly missed, let us thank God for their friendship and love during their time with us. Let us rejoice in God's continued presence amongst us, living His word with hope in our hearts.

Psalms 33: 20 – 22 (King James Version 1611)

Our soul waiteth for the Lord: He is our help and our shield.

For our heart shall rejoice in Him, because we have trusted in His holy name.

Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us, according as we hope in Thee.

Garry Porter

Chairman Church Council.

BOOLAROO CONGREGATION REPORT FOR 2021-2022

This period was a difficult and challenging year for our congregation.

Attendances at our Sunday morning services varied in accordance with restrictions around Covid regulations. The church was closed for some of the time but praise God steadily returned to preCovid attendance levels of around 28 as restrictions were eased.

People's observance of regulations and cleaning procedures helped keep everyone safe.

The congregation greatly appreciated being led in worship by Rev. Dr. Kenneth Brown our minister, and local preachers who willingly gave of their time. Preparation and projection of data during services gained in significance during the period. Sincere thanks to Catherine Brown, Joan Bowe and Phillip Hurley for all their help in this regard. Our horizons were greatly widened through this means.

Thanks also to Catherine Brown for being our treasurer and keeping a very good track of our finances.

It was pleasing when restrictions eased and we were permitted to have morning tea together again. Fellowship over a cuppa is an important aspect of sharing, caring and being able to support and pray for one another. Sue and Jane Lewis often spoilt us with cake they prepared. Sale of containers of such cakes was also helpful in maintaining necessary finances.

We are grateful to those who regularly cleaned the church, assisted in services by doing Bible readings, kept attendance records during Covid and helped with Communion services. Thanks also to Dulcie Hipwell who faithfully did special things to enhance our worship. Special thanks to Ian Kells for caring for the church grounds and property.

Thanks also to Phillip and Jean Hurley who always had a Bible verse or word of cheer for display on our street side notice boards.

All in all, we are grateful to God for God's help and grace in seeing us through such a difficult period for our church and the wider community.

Ian MacKenzie

BOOLAROO CHURCH AID REPORT 2021-2022

Up to eight ladies attended bi-monthly meetings to organise activities and support. Because of Covid, we had only one Garage Sale this year. It was a very successful fund raiser.

One After Church Lunch was held which was well attended.

Several significant donations were made to assist church finances. A stick vacuum cleaner was also purchased.

We enjoyed meeting in each others homes and going out to lunch at a local club after some of our meetings.

Dulcie Hipwell.
Chairperson

Care and Share 2022

This year has been a quiet, and sad year, as two of our friends from C&S have passed away, also a couple no longer come due to going into care and not able to come anymore.

Erica handed over the running of the group to me this year, as she says, she's not getting any younger.

Erica started the group back in 2010, so it's interesting to see how long I will be able to keep our now smaller group together, there's always room for any new friends to join us! With God's will and loving support hopefully we will go for another 10 years.

Our last get-together this year is on Tuesday 6th December when we shall be going to Lena's Café for a Christmas / year end get-together.

We wish you all a very Happy Christmas, and look forward to seeing you all next year. We shall meet in 2023 on the first Tuesday of the month, our first meeting being on the 7th February.

Jill Gibson

UNITING CHURCH NORTH LAKE MACQUARIE MULTI-CENTRE CONGREGATION
“With Love to the World” weekly Men’s Bible Study 10-11am at The Willows

This interactive group is continuing its committed study, prayer, discussion, learning, and sharing of faith experiences into its fifth enjoyable year.

Due to COVID restrictions we stopped our Wednesday meetings for several months. However, we missed our mid-week gatherings and decided to try Zoom in August 2021. It was a learning curve and there were hiccups, but the internet was a blessing. It was good to see each other between Sundays, and without masks muffling our voices.

After Geoff’s death in 2019 there were five members, and we were pleased to return to six last year. In September 2022 we resumed in-person meetings and are using the Hall instead of the church as before. Unfortunately, due to ongoing illness we are five again, and we miss our friend....

The Uniting Church daily Bible-reading guide is a worthwhile and challenging basis for our study of the Gospel for the approaching Sunday. The up-to-date Commentaries, relevant questions, the sentence-prayers, even our doubts, are important parts of growing our faith – and we give thanks to God.

Rev. Gwen Graham

HAND OF FRIENDSHIP – ANNUAL REPORT PRESENTED 21ST JULY, 2022

This report is actually not an annual report, but a report covering activities the Hand of Friendship has been able to hold during the difficult period of Covid-19 and the related Lockdowns.

2020 was a year with very little happening. Then in 2021, we managed to have programs in only February and August. With great relief we seem to be getting back to normal this year, managing to have programs each month since March. One special day was our 25th anniversary in May.

We could not manage without our behind-the-scenes stalwarts. Bill and Rhelma never let us down, making sure the room is set up each month, even when Bill has to then rush off to a singing performance. We always appreciate the hot soup in winter, and the home-made bickies from time to time.

Delma and others are always willing to help Rhelma in the kitchen, and Dawn and Jean keep our attendance records and collect our monthly fees, which I am happy to bank, and to keep our financial records up-to-date. Carole makes sure the minutes of each meeting are recorded. After a few years in the role of President, Margaret O'Malley is retiring from that job. I thoroughly enjoy the planning of our programs. On behalf of all our members, thank you to everyone who looks after all these aspects for our group.

We have been presented with great devotions at each meeting, and we are very grateful to our lay preachers for continuing to support us in this way.

Our numbers are getting a bit lower, but that doesn't stop us from enjoying one another's company. Thank you to each and every member, for continuing to be part of our group, for coming along to solve the mystery of some of the program descriptions, participating in what's been presented each month, and supporting one another with such great friendship and fellowship.

Women On 4th Monday The Willows

Like many activities Covid Lockdown impacted the Women's Evening Fellowship Group during the past 3 years, and although a couple of meetings were held in 2021, *the time out* provided an opportunity for discussion about how it could function in the future to meet the needs of women in an everchanging world.

As a result, women of 4th Monday (WOFM) began and now meets at 1.30pm at The Willows. It continues to be a group for all women interested in having a time to share with others, exploring different viewpoints and providing support to each other as we endeavour to grow in faith and knowledge over "a cuppa. "

To date 3 meetings have been held and have included women from both inside and outside the church community, with an attendance between 15-18. We have looked at the philosophy of Eddie Jaku, (a Holocaust survivor) as outlined in his book *The Happiest Man on Earth*, shared ideas on Perception and Reality in relation to Church Life and Community surveys and heard the Rev Jan Deaves, a retired Anglican Priest share her faith journey.

From a small donation each month we hope to contribute to the cost of church morning Teas and the ongoing support of a Compassion Child. As we move into the coming year we also hope we will continue to explore ideas and grow our own faith in this informal and friendly way.

Boolaroo Property Report 1st July 2021 – 30th June 2022

Many thanks to Ian Kells for the care of our lawn, flower beds, and maintenance, even during the four months when the Church was closed, the flower beds, lawn and general maintenance still did not suffer.

Our thanks to Anne and Ian, Dulcie, Sue and Jane for their meticulous cleaning of the Church with specified covid rules.

Bi-Annual Fire Safety Inspection of the Extinguishers/Fire Blanket was done in December.

Even with Covid, and our ageing population, Dulcie has worked her magic and Church Aid have given \$2000 in this period to support the Church. So many grateful thanks to Dulcie and her supporters.

Hall hire has suffered with the physical culture group unable to meet

Also a special thankyou to Ian Mackenzie for his constant vigil in the smooth running of the Boolaroo Church.

Mary Drewett
Property Committee