



**Annual Report for the Year ending  
31<sup>st</sup> December 2023**

**For the  
Congregation of**

**South Mandurah  
Uniting Church**

**Annual General Meeting  
Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> February 2024**



*Welcome to the Annual Report for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023. Last year was a very successful year for our church and I pray that 2024 will be an even better one. I hope you will attend the AGM on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> February 2024 to show your support and appreciation for all the volunteers who worked very hard on our behalf during the past year.*

**Raelyn Punch**  
**Chair, SMUC Leadership Team**



*Fellowship is an integral part of our church community. A great example was the impromptu celebration of Yoy's birthday at a local café.*

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## **The 2023 SMUC Leadership Team**

**Top Row:** Raelyn Punch (chair) & Pastor Yoy Alberastine  
**Second Row:** (left to right): Sherryl Smith, Andrew Telfer & Jenni Anderson (resigned Oct 2023)

## ❖ CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

2023 was an eventful year for South Mandurah Uniting Church. After many months of planning, deliberations and discussions with UCA Presbytery, our new Pastor joined us. Pastor Yoy Alberastine officially started at the SMUC on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2023. Yoy, along with his lovely wife Anita, have been welcomed to our congregation with friendship, respect and love, which they have returned in equal measure. Yoy and Anita, with their cheerful dispositions and willingness to serve in so many different ways have very quickly become valued members of our congregation.

I'm very pleased that the good relations and cooperation between our church and St Damien's Catholic Church is flourishing. On Easter Good Friday we continued our tradition of joining with them for the "Stations of the Cross" service at the St Damien's School oval. During the service a number of our congregation participated in the readings and carried the wooden cross between the various stations. This was followed by a friendly morning tea. On the first day that Yoy officially attended SMUC in his new role as Pastor, a special event was held at St Damien's. Father Chris invited SMUC to participate in their first community fun day. I set up a display showcasing our church and its activities at the fun day, which was well received. The highlight of the day, which I will never forget, was the wonderfully harmonious duets by Pastor Yoy and Father Chris as they sang together and played their guitars. It was a beautiful expression of friendship and respect between Yoy and Father Chris and our respective churches. More recently representatives from SMUC accepted an invitation to attend the St Damien's outdoor Christmas Event.

Prayer is a powerful force which can make a difference to so many lives. Leading up to Pentecost Sunday, Frances Davy and her team facilitated the Prayer Room for the second year. The Prayer Room

was run for the first time in 2022 and due to popular acclaim we ran it again. The concept of the Prayer Room is to spend some quiet time in prayer with God, either individually or as part of a group, and I am hope it will become a new ‘tradition’ for our church. The Prayer Room is now an annual worldwide event and it is wonderful to think that the SMUC is part of that family.

Frances Davy has continued to be an inspirational leader for the weekly prayer meetings which are held prior to our Sunday services. I am sure Frances would be delighted to welcome you to join with the prayer group prior to the service.

Home groups, in addition to a focus on prayer, provide opportunities for friendship and support from other members of the home group, and guidance from the Word of God. If you are not a member of a home group, I encourage you to consider joining one.

I am pleased to report that the fellowship morning teas have continued. Regularly attended by church members as well as visitors, the ladies have met weekly for morning tea and the gentlemen have met every fortnight. What a wonderful way to share friendships and care for each other.

Our congregational members have continued to generously support various groups through their donations. Amongst these programs are the containers for change, the bread tags for wheel chairs, socks for the Uniting Care West annual appeal and the grocery box. The recognition of community needs and a desire to help the less fortunate has led to the establishment of a new and successful outreach program. Aply led by John and Sue Lawrence, the Help for the Needy Program has expanded rapidly. A number of congregational members are helping to support numerous individuals and families in the Southern Mandurah corridor, particularly at two local caravan parks, with food donations and other assistance as required. There are separate reports in this booklet on the containers for change, the grocery box and the help

for the needy programs. Another program which was an outstanding success in the period leading up to Christmas was the collection of ten large boxes of toys for the children of fathers who were detained in Bunbury Prison. Thank you to everyone who has supported these initiatives.

Each week during the year we had a different speaker rostered to deliver the Sunday message. Our regular speakers, who do a wonderful job, were members of our congregation, and they were supported by a number of visiting speakers. In September the Billabong UC Leadership Team visited us for a special service and lunch. In December Yoy led a service for the Compassionate Friends at our church, with a number of members of our congregation assisting during the service and with the catering.

Christmas is always a magical time and on the Saturday evening before the start of Advent we held our fantastic annual carols evening. Arranged and compered by Ken Lehmann and with the church looking wonderful, having been decorated by Julie Lehmann and Judy Law's home group, the evening was greatly enjoyed by the large crowd (over 120 people) who attended.

On Christmas Eve we held a very special service with over 80 people in attendance. It was a truly magical Christmas Eve service, led by Ps Yoy. This was a change from our traditional Christmas Day morning service and was very well received.

In 2023 SMUC had a new website set up by UCAWA: <https://southmandurah.ucawa.au> and there is an associated new Gmail account for our church attached to the website: [sthmandurahuniting@gmail.com](mailto:sthmandurahuniting@gmail.com) A lot of work has gone into establishing the website and I encourage you to log in on a regular basis for news about our church. Check under the "get involved" tag for the latest news, the events calendar, and the newsletter and library (the Enablers' list is in the library). The website is designed to be a dynamic part of our church, not a set and forget, as our

society moves into a more social media/digitally based era. Please “check in” to the website every week to see any updates. If you are unable to attend a service the Message is generally “posted” by Monday evening for viewing. If you love social media and would like the opportunity to showcase your talents, why not take on the running of the website and the new SMUC Facebook page?

It was with great sadness that I accepted Jenni Anderson’s resignation last October when she announced that for personal reasons she was unable to continue attending our church. Jenni didn’t wish to have a thank you morning tea but you are welcome to email or call her. Jenni’s departure meant the Leadership Team was reduced to 3 elected members and our Pastor; and an increased workload for each of us.

I would like to give a very special thank you to my fellow Leadership Team members - Andrew Telfer for his wise advice and Sherryl Smith for her willing help with so many projects. It is also a pleasure to thank Ps. Yoy Alberastine, Rev. Mike Fawcett, Piet Speyers, and Frances Davy for their ministry work, and Andrew Gibson for his help and support during the year.

One of my worries when thanking our many church volunteers is that I might forget someone. Rather than attempting to name everyone individually, I would like to thank all the people who have volunteered to help in so many different roles during the past year at our church. Thank you to the worship team, the musicians and the sound desk operators, our enablers and the people who step in to do the less glamorous but essential “behind the scenes” work such as maintenance, cleaning and kitchen duties. Let us not forget our dedicated Sunday school teachers who provide a wide variety of programs for our children. Without everyone’s willing help we would not have a church. I feel it is really important that we acknowledge the efforts of our volunteers, so early last year we held two “Sunset Suppers” at our home to which we invited all the church members who had volunteered in one or more capacities



during 2022 for a barbeque dinner. The event was so successful that we will hold another one this year and I hope this becomes an annual event.

There are two other people I would like to acknowledge for their service to our community. David Jessup, our long serving Treasurer who has conscientiously overseen the SMUC finances has announced his retirement. 2023 will be his last annual report and budget. David has done an outstanding job for our church and will be greatly missed. I also greatly appreciate him offering to help the incoming Treasurer to familiarise themselves with the software.

The other person who I want to thank personally is my husband Peter. He diligently compiles and sends out the Messenger every week, and does the quarterly enablers list, our annual contact book and the AGM report.

My final thank you is to the congregation as a whole. If you did not turn up to Sunday morning services we would not have a congregation and all the careful planning of the worship leader, speakers, music team and sound team would be to nought if there was no-one in attendance.

The change of year from 2023 to 2024 has brought a number of changes to the church and to me personally. This will be my last Chair's report as it is with much sadness that I officially announce I am stepping down from the Chair's position and from the Leadership Team. I have accepted a promotion as the manager of a very large office in Midland and I expect we will eventually be moving to the area, but at the moment my home remains in Halls Head. It has been an honour and a privilege to serve the South Mandurah UC community. I won't say it has always been easy but with time, patience and much prayer, we have worked through the challenges together to find the best solutions.

During my tenure as Chair I have aimed to keep many of our traditions alive while looking to keep our church relevant in the

twenty first century. I have encouraged our congregational and Leadership Team members to come up with new ideas and innovations; many of which have been implemented and which I hope will lead to new traditions to promote the growth and long term security of our church. I am confident that the incoming Leadership Team will continue to serve and encourage everyone at the SMUC in their continuing spiritual journeys.

One morning as I was driving to work I heard an interesting item on the radio. They discussed how some churches become so bogged down in their doctrines and theology, and trying to be the “perfect church”, that the simple and powerful message of love gets “lost in translation”. Jesus wanted us to love the people that we see every day. It is what is in our hearts and actions; what we carry within us and share with one another. With this in mind I would like to remind you of the quote from the 2022 annual report:

*“A church is not a building but a community where people are sharing their lives and supporting each other through fellowship, caring, friendship and a shared faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

This is one of the most important things to remember. Even though SMUC’s membership may change, with new people joining and others moving on; life continues. SMUC is a wonderful community of Christian people who care for and support each other daily and I pray that this continues for many years to come.

May the Grace and Peace of the Lord always be carried in your hearts.

**Raelyn Punch**

## ❖ **MINISTRY REPORT**

### **Word and Worship**

The ministry of the South Mandurah Uniting Church continues faithfully.

Piet Speyers and Francis Davy have continued to provide a sterling contribution to the congregation in their worship leadership and preaching. Additionally we acknowledge Ken Lehmann, Jenni Anderson, Cynthia Clive and Andrew Telfer who lead worship services; we appreciate your ministry. Judy Law's and Frances Davy's home groups also led services, the latter using a video of Dr David Jeremiah; and the worship leaders on New Year's Eve were Raelyn Punch and Kerry Lawson.

We have also been blessed with visiting speakers including Rev. Andrew Williams (General Secretary WA Synod), Steve Hall from Adult and Teen Challenge, Toni McAlinden - sharing about his ministry with prisoners, Doug Burtenshaw, Gordon Smith, Cheryl Lim from Tear fund; David Liaw from OMF and Neil Masters from School Chaplaincy.

Our sermon series covered the Word of God, its authority, reliability and inspiration. We continue to record each week's service which is then posted on You-tube and face book and our website.

### **Works and Witness**

The two coffee morning fellowship groups continue to provide forums for caring and sharing, and everybody is encouraged to remember that these groups provide good opportunities for inviting friends along to join in. This is a great way to share with others and show how our faith impacts our life.

Two important ministry areas are pastoral care and prayer ministry. Most of this ministry is done by members of the congregation, especially in the home groups. The leaders with Yoy are developing a more coordinated team approach to ensure that as many people as possible are receiving pastoral support and contributing to the "prayer and care" of each other.

Yoy has availed himself every 1st and 2nd Saturday for pastoral and ministry time.



A prayer time is held each week at 9 am before the Sunday service. This is an opportunity for any or all members of the congregation to pray together.

### **Community Presence**

South Mandurah UC has an ongoing relationship with St Damien's Catholic Church participating in their Community Day and Stations of the Cross.

Pastor Yoy continues to be involved in Southern Corridor/Peel region Pastor's and Church's Prayer and worship gatherings.

### **Community Involvement Events**

On Sunday December 10<sup>th</sup> SMUC Hosted a Candlelight memorial service with compassionate friends Mandurah. It was an Ecumenical service led by Pastor Yoy.

**Rev. Mike Fawcett & Pastor Yoy Alberastine**



### **❖ TREASURER'S REPORT**

For confidentiality reasons the Treasurer's report has been removed from the website version of the Annual Report.

Members of the congregation may apply for a copy of the Annual Report from the Leadership Team of SMUC.

### **❖ ANNUAL GIVING PROGRAM**

In line with recent years we have continued to support various charities with a minimum of ten percent of the church's income being committed our Annual Giving Program. With so many worthwhile charities requiring support, the Leadership Team takes into account the standing and profile of the various groups to

ensure that the money is distributed wisely, with an emphasis on groups within the Peel region.

During 2023 the SMUC supported the following organisations:

Adult and Teen Challenge  
Compassionate Friends  
Food bank - Mandurah  
Global Hand Charity  
Kimberley Flood Appeal  
Mandurah Street Chaplains  
Peel Community Kitchen  
Tear Australia  
UCA Mission and Service  
YouthCARE

Thank you to everyone who contributed to our annual giving program, whether through your giving during services or by directly supporting the various fund raisers which were run during the year.

**Raelyn Punch**



## ❖ **CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

2023 was a very quiet year for the Sunday School, which is also known as KUCA (Kids of the Uniting Church Australia) or simply as Kids' Church.

Compared to previous years, we have had less young people attending on a regular basis. However, we were blessed to have Grace, Estelle, Coralie, Jonathan and Alek as our regular attendees this year. Grace joined us for 12 months while living with the WA side of her family and we were all very sad when she returned to Queensland just after Christmas. We also saw Ashlyn for a short while; and during the school holidays a number of children attended Kids' Church when they came to visit grandparents. Despite the lowest average number of children attending for many years we had a wonderful group of dedicated ladies who volunteered their time to assist in Sunday school each week. A huge thank you to Julie

Lehmann, Judy Smith, Jan Fawcett, Kerry Lawson and to Anita Lee for all the wonderful work that they have done in creating fun and interesting sessions for the children over the past 12 months.

**Raelyn Punch**



## ❖ **SMALL GROUPS**

### **Home Groups**

Home groups have an important role to play in our church leading to increased spiritual growth and promoting friendships, care and general support for one other. In 2023 there were only two home groups; both of which met weekly. These groups have grown and are doing extremely well.

The two home groups are close to, if not exceeding, capacity and there is a need for more home groups to be established. The reasons include increasing the opportunity for people to participate by holding the meetings at different times, that smaller groups increases the opportunity for one on one conversations, to avoid overcrowding people's homes, and to reduce the workload on the leaders of the existing home groups. The Leadership Team are very keen to see two or more new home groups established in 2024. If you are interested in starting a new group or would like to attend one of the existing groups, please speak to any member of the leadership team.





## **Prayer Group**

The prayer group has continued to meet on Sunday mornings prior to the service at 9-00 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Aply led by Frances Davy, the prayer group is open and welcoming to anybody who wishes to participate.

## **Coffee Fellowship**

The ladies' and gentlemen's fellowship coffee mornings have proven to be very popular, with increasing numbers attending. The ladies meet weekly at the Seven Trees Coffee cafe in Erskine. The gentlemen met fortnightly at "A Taste of Italy" café in the Farmer Jacks Halls Head Shopping Centre and it was not uncommon to have ten to twelve men in attendance. The coffee mornings are open to everyone and give attendees the opportunity for companionship and stimulating conversation over delicious coffee and pastries.

## **Community Groups**

During 2023 two community groups were meeting at the church on a regular basis. These were the Tuesday craft group (see separate report) who meet every week to enjoy each other's company whilst working on various projects, and the Falcon Lions Club who meet monthly.

## **Going Forward Into 2024**

There is great potential for more small groups to be established, and their purpose is only limited by our imagination. The groups need not have a theological basis nor be restricted to our congregation. Examples of groups could include a book club, a bridge group, a wine appreciation group, a gardening group, a men's shed or perhaps a touring or camping group. They could meet as often, or as infrequently as the members decided, and only need a small number of enthusiastic members to get started. If you have an idea for a group, why not invite others to join and make it happen?

**Raelyn & Peter Punch**



## ❖ FELLOWSHIP

South Mandurah didn't have a social function coordinator last year but thanks to the contribution of many willing volunteers we had a number of outstanding functions during the year.

The highlight of the year was our Advent concert, ably organised by Ken Lehmann, who also acted as the master of ceremonies on the evening. The church had been decorated by Julie Lehmann and the ladies from Julie Law's home group, and it looked wonderful. Over 120 people attended the concert, many of whom were guests invited by members of the congregation, but it appears the concert is becoming well known amongst the local community and it was great to see them in attendance too. One of the highlights of the evening was the presentation to Tony McAlinden of all the presents which had been gathered for the children whose fathers were in the Bunbury Prison. Tony was overwhelmed with the generosity shown by our congregation. Not only was the concert wonderful, but so was the supper. Thank you to everyone who contributed, whether as musicians, operating the sound desk, bringing a plate to share, donating presents for the children, helping to set up and tidy up afterwards, serving food, inviting guests or simply by joining in. Congratulations to the Leadership Team, Ken and Julie Lehmann, Yoy and Anita Alberastine, and to everyone who made the evening such an outstanding success. Wouldn't it be wonderful to have attendances of that magnitude every Sunday? Please remember to invite people to join us for worship or to the other events which we hold during the year.

Shortly after the Advent concert, we had a Christmas Eve service, which was led by Yoy Alberastine. It too was extremely well attended, and the supper afterwards was greatly appreciated. Thank you to Yoy and to everyone who helped make the evening so successful.

Every Sunday we have the opportunity to socialise after the service. This is a great time to have a chat with members of our congregation, including those who we may not socialise with at other times, and to make any visitors welcome whilst enjoying a

delicious morning tea. Thank you to all those who are on the morning tea roster and to those who help clean up afterwards.

The two Home Groups continue to thrive, and are a very successful way to get to know and support other members of our congregation. There is definitely a need for additional Home Groups, so if you are interested in helping to establish a new group please speak to any member of the Leadership Team.

The coffee fellowship mornings continue to be well attended, with the ladies meeting weekly at Seven Trees Café in Falcon and the gentlemen meet to solve the world's problems every fortnight at the Taste of Italy Café in Halls Head. Everyone is welcome, irrespective of whether they attend our church. If you would like to attend but don't have transport please contact Yoy Alberastine or Peter Punch for assistance.

Other events during the year included a fellowship lunch after last year's AGM, a pancake breakfast before a service in lieu of Shrove Tuesday, and at Easter we joined with St Damien's to celebrate the Stations of the Cross. Thank you to Raelyn for her delicious homemade Easter buns.

Your incoming leadership team will start to organise events in the coming months, with the details published in the Messenger. We look forward to your support for these events and hope you will continue to bring your friends and families.

**Peter Punch**



## **OUTREACH & MISSION**

### **Cash For Cans**

Once again the Containers for Change Scheme has been wonderfully supported by the congregation. Each year gets more

successful than the previous one! In 2021, when this began, we raised \$347, then in 2022 it was \$500, and in 2023 we raised \$673.

This means in 3 years we've been able to donate nearly \$1500 to local charities. The funds for 2023 were donated to Mandurah Street Chaplains who work with the homeless; a very worthy cause.

Many thanks to all who have contributed containers during the past year, and a special thank you to Frances Davy who is always willing to step in and help out when we go on holiday.

**Averil & Cliff Clark**



## **The Grocery Box**

For much of 2023 food donations which were received from our congregation continued to be taken to the Mandurah Uniting Church, where they were combined with donations from their church, and distributed to families and individuals who needed support.

In September the Leadership Team decided to transfer the food received as donations at our church to the Help for the Needy outreach program. They were then distributed to individuals and families in need by John Lawrence and his team.

Thank you to everyone for your continuing donations of non-perishable foods. The food donation box is still in our church foyer. Your generous donations of a wide variety of foods have been greatly appreciated by those who have received them, and I hope you will continue to support this program.

**Sherryl Smith**

## **Help for the Needy Program**

In May 2023 a small group of members of the church met and decided they wanted to help those less fortunate than themselves. That meeting resulted in the development of the 'help for the needy'

program. Currently the program assists individuals and families in the local area and many permanent residents of two caravan parks within our region who are 'doing it tough'.

Being aware of the amount of bread products that are discarded at the end of each working day by bakeries, approaches were made to a number of food outlets in the Dawesville, Falcon and Halls Head areas. Jack's Bakery in Halls Head was one of the early program supporters; providing bread and other bakery products twice a week until the business closed in mid-December. The Miami Woolworths Supermarket also generously agreed to provide bread, groceries and non-disposable products twice weekly and more recently Baker's Delight in Halls Head Central Shopping Centre has agreed to support the program.

In addition to businesses supporting the program a number of congregational members have donated money, clothing and household items to help those in need. At the moment, with the assistance of the managers from two local caravan parks who distribute the donations to those in need, the group is supporting nearly 100 residents in those parks.

One of the more satisfying achievements during the year was to help a lady who had been living in her car for many months to find rented accommodation in Dawesville. I would like to thank Barbara Smith for all her efforts to help this lady.

I would like to thank all the members of our church who have helped us with donations of non-perishable food items, clothing and money to get this outreach program up and running, and then keep it going. I would like to particularly thank Barbara and Brian Smith, Keith Johnson, Ken Lehmann, Jan Robinson and my wife Sue, who continue to do all the running around each week. The gratitude extended to us, and our congregation, has been wonderful. It was exemplified by the large Christmas card which had been signed by many recipients of the service we provide and was presented to the congregation at our Christmas carols evening.

**John Lawrence**

## ❖ CRAFT GROUP

2023 was a year of relaxing Tuesday mornings with various crafts on the go whilst enjoying yummy morning teas and non-stop chats.

The annual 'Pink Ribbon' morning tea was, once again, a great success. We raised over \$2,300, which was donated to Cancer WA for cancer research. Thanks to all who attended and made it such a happy and successful day.

In addition to our craft days, there were many other activities including bus trips, restaurant lunches, movie outings, special 'theme' days and more.

For much of the year several regular craft attendees took on knitting and putting together 'care bears'. These are a small knitted and stuffed bear which School Chaplains give to distressed students to help calm the youngsters who are suffering some form of personal trauma at school or at home. These bears are much loved, and are valued by the Chaplains and children alike. We were pleased to be able to support this program. Most of the bears go to the two Chaplains operating at the two local primary schools, but some go further afield.

Our group welcomes anyone, irrespective of whether they are church members or members of the public, who might like to come along and join us on Tuesdays from 9.00 a.m. to midday.

**Sue Lawrence**



## ❖ PROPERTY REPORT

The Church maintenance group continued to maintain our church building in good condition. Work which was undertaken included:

- 1) The leaking skylight over the sound desk was fixed.
- 2) The water supply back flow valve passed its annual check in December.
- 3) The fire extinguishers were compliance checked during the year.
- 4) All the Exit signs replaced due to age.
- 5) The power pole on the property was replaced following advice from Synergy.
- 6) An inspection organised by the Uniting Church head office reaffirmed there is no asbestos in the building.
- 7) New paving, using second hand pavers, was laid at the front of the church building; and
- 8) Miscellaneous minor maintenance items were done around the church including repairing a toilet cistern, replacing tap washers in the kitchen and repairing the porch balustrades.

The Corrective Services group has continued to do routine gardening and yard maintenance around the building. The workers are people who are working off their community service commitments, at no cost to the church. Thank you to Brad and his team for the work they do.

### **Jobs for 2024**

- Possibly repainting the kitchen.

**Andrew Gibson & Keith Johnston**  
**Maintenance coordinators**







# **SMUC AGM MINUTES 19 FEBRUARY 2023**

## **Welcome by Chairperson:**

The Chair, Raelyn Punch, welcomed everyone to the meeting, which commenced at 10-45 am.

## **Devotion:**

Andrew Gibson spoke on 1 Thessalonians 5:12-28, with an emphasis on the following points:

- The church does not belong to us but to God; and
- The Leadership teams and ministers need to be like coaches and lead from the back encouraging the members to use their gifts to grow their ministries and thereby expand the church.

**Opening Prayer:** Piet Speyers.

## **Attendees:**

Raelyn and Peter Punch, Andrew & Jan Gibson, Kerry Lawson, Piet and Robyn Speyers, Sherryl Smith, Lynsay and Jenny Dunning, Frances Davy, Desney Gordon, Kerry McCrie, John and Sue Lawrence, Keith Johnston, Kingsley Palmer, Jaren Picking, Peter Hyde, Brian and Barbara Smith, Catherine Salisbury, Judy Law, Alison Yule, Rev. Mike Fawcett, Grace Richards, Rosie Sharpe, Jenni Anderson, David and Cynthia Clive, Ken and Julie Lehmann, David Jessup.

## **Apologies:**

Jan Fawcett, Robin and Judy Goulder, Rhonda Jessup, Andrew Telfer, Peter Salisbury, and Andrew, Linda and Jaimee Thompson.

**A quorum was present**

## **Minutes of the 2022 AGM:**

- **Matters Arising:**
  - Item 4 from General Business regarding mid-week communion. If due to ill health or other commitments people are unable to attend communion services Rev. Mike Fawcett is happy to continue visiting people at home for communion.
- **Discussion:**
  - No points of discussion were raised.
- **Acceptance of minutes:**
  - Piet Speyers moved and Sherryl Smith seconded that the minutes for the 2022 AGM as circulated in the 2023 Annual Report Booklet be accepted. **Carried.**

## Annual Reports 2023:

Raelyn Punch spoke on the 2023 Annual Report Booklet. The Booklet had been emailed to all members of the congregation and printed copies were available prior to this AGM.

- **Discussion:**

Rev. Mike Fawcett noted he had unintentionally omitted to include Stella Hardy's dedication service in his report and appreciated that Peter Punch had added the information.

- **Acceptance of reports:**

Robyn Speyers moved and Jenni Anderson seconded that all reports other than the Treasurer's Report be accepted. **Carried.**

### Treasurer's Report:

David Jessup spoke to his Treasurer's Report and made the following observations:

- The income for 2022 was very similar to 2021.
- There were 2 new sources of income:
  - The "cash for cans" which he felt was a good initiative, generated approximately \$500; and
  - The Lions Club which also generated approximately \$500.
- Auditor – the auditor has retired. David checked with the UCA and auditors are not required if the church's income does not exceed \$100,000. The income for SMUC has been approximately \$50,000 annually for the past 6 years.
- Operating expenses – most expenses were less than budget except for the property due to the break-ins and fence damage – most of those expenses had been recovered from insurance claims.
- The Budget
  - No allowance has been made for an audit fee or church cleaning.
  - Insurance premiums are one of the largest expenses. Up 17% this year on top of a 34% increase last year.
  - \$25,000 has been allowed for the employment of a 0.4 FTE pastor from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023.
  - The credit for electricity from the state government will be used up by the end of the year and SMUC will have to start paying for power usage.
  - An allowance has been made for possible repairs to the roof and replacement of the photocopier.
  - The visiting speakers allowance has been increased by UCAWA from \$110 to \$165, plus travel allowance where applicable.

- **Discussion:**
  - Mike Fawcett asked how did we arrive at \$3300 for visiting speakers as he thought that, based on the number of speakers we had last year, the figure should be closer to \$5,000.
  - The Chair, Raelyn Punch, responded saying that a number of speakers didn't want to be paid. The Leadership Team (LT) offers 3 choices to speakers:
    - An honorarium of \$165 (or part there of as requested); or
    - The option of the money being paid to the speakers choice of charity subject to the charity being registered and having an ABN; or
    - Not requiring payment which was effectively donating the money back to SMUC.
  - David Jessup noted 20 speakers at \$165 per person equals \$3,300. Andrew Gibson said he tried to organise a minimum of 1 guest speaker/month.
  - Barbara Smith said that some speakers may be uncomfortable asking for the money for themselves.
  - The Chair then said that further discussion would be held over to General Business.
  
- **Acceptance of Treasurer's Report:**
  - Moved Peter Hyde and seconded Jan Gibson that the Treasurer's Report be accepted. **Carried**
  - Moved by David Jessup and seconded by the Andrew Gibson that a letter be sent to UCAWA advising of the acceptance of the Treasurer's Report. (**Note:** this is in lieu of an auditor's report). **Carried.**

## **Leadership Election:**

- **Nominees:**

The Chair invited Jenni Anderson, who was the only nominee, to make a short presentation to the congregation. Jenni told the congregation she had been raised in a Christian family who loved music, especially classical hymns. She had served in leadership roles in churches in Darwin, Kununurra and Scarborough before moving to Falcon, and loved the warm welcome she had received from the SMUC congregation.
- **Scrutineers:**

The Chair moved that Kerry Lawson and Piet Speyers be appointed as scrutineers. **Carried.**

- **Ballot:**

A secret ballot was conducted in compliance withUCAWA regulations. Jenni Anderson was elected unanimously. Raelyn Punch welcomed her to the Leadership Team with general applause from the congregation.

**Presbytery/ Synod Representative Appointment:**

- The Chair advised the meeting that John Lawrence had been the SMUC representative for the past 12 months and thanked him for his service. The position was declared vacant.
- John was asked to describe the role. He said that Presbytery meets 4 times yearly and as the representative he attended the meetings on behalf of SMUC. John had not attended a Synod meeting but he enjoys the Presbytery meetings and was happy to continue but he cannot attend the March 2023 meeting.
- Rev. Mike Fawcett noted the church can have a reserve to attend meetings. Synod meets in September for 2 days.
- Nominations were called for the Presbytery/Synod Representative. John Lawrence was the only nominee and appointed by acclamation.

**General Business:**

**The Chair addressed the congregation:**

1) **Acknowledgements:**

The Chair acknowledged the contribution from the 3 members of the Leadership Team (LT) who were retiring, Andrew Gibson, Kerry Lawson and Piet Speyers. She thanked them for their dedicated service to the LT and the SMUC congregation. Raelyn said all three have done an “awesome job” and that while they were stepping down they were not stepping away as they were continuing to work as volunteers for SMUC. Raelyn also thanked the LTs’ spouses for supporting their partners in the work they do for SMUC.

2) **The New Leadership Team:**

The incoming LT members are Raelyn Punch, Andrew Telfer, Sherryl Smith and Jenny Anderson. Raelyn commented that this was the smallest LT for many years, and as discussed in the opening comments by Andrew Gibson, the LT are not going to be able to do all the work and will be encouraging participation by congregational members for some projects:

- Kerry Lawson will continue her role as social coordinator until she goes on holiday, at which time someone else will need to volunteer for this role;
- David Jessup has volunteered to continue as Treasurer;

- Andrew Gibson and Piet Speyers will continue to organise the speakers' roster;
- Frances Davy is SMUC's new "Prayer Champion"; and
- The Congregation have the most important role. Without the congregation there wouldn't be a church. Everyone is involved in some way.

Raelyn said SMUC has started a journey to be a vibrant church. "Let us continue on that journey."

### 3) Minister Update:

As previously advised, in December 2022 the Presbytery Relations Committee (PRC) approved the appointment by SMUC of a 0.4 FTE Pastor (equivalent to 15 hours (2 days) a week). The advertisement for the application closes tomorrow (20<sup>th</sup> February 2022) and one application has been received.

- **Discussion:**

- Rev. Mike Fawcett said that only receiving one application was not reflection on the congregation. Rather it was the reality of very few people being available for the role. He also said there must be a very clear job description and clear expectation of what will be done as most of the conflicts between ministers and congregations are due to unclear or unrealistic expectations.
- Jan Gibson asked how it will work with only 15 hours per week. Raelyn said the work days and other details would have to be negotiated with the Pastor, but that the LT had spent a considerable amount of time working on a job description.

Raelyn advised the meeting that the interview with the applicant will be held on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2023. The interview committee will comprise Raelyn Punch, Andrew Telfer, 1 or 2 congregational members and Rev Ivan Clark, who is the PRC Chair. A series of questions have been formulated based on "God's focus on this church". Anyone wishing to submit questions for consideration should email them to Raelyn by Monday night, 20<sup>th</sup> February 2023. She apologised for the short notice, but said the timetable was based on the availability of Rev Ivan Clark. A decision on the appointment will not be made Thursday evening, and Raelyn will report back to the congregation either next Sunday (26<sup>th</sup> February) or the following Sunday.

- **Discussion:**

- Cynthia Clive commented that we mustn't fall into the trap of "beggars can't be choosers." The appointed person must be in sync with the congregation and very clear where the church is going.

4) **Thank you:** Raelyn asked that a formal vote of thanks be recorded for all SMUC's volunteers. Without the volunteers the church could not run. She said our cleaner is now a volunteer and is providing a free once monthly clean of the church. Raelyn asked everyone to be more careful of cleaning up to help maintain the general tidiness of the church.

5) **Other Items:**

- i. **Falcon Lions Club:** The Falcon Lions Club loves the building and meets every first and third Tuesday of the month. There may be other groups interested in hiring the room.
- ii. **Fellowship Room – hire:** The Fellowship room is available for hire as a one off and possibly an ongoing basis, depending on whether the activity is a “good fit” for our church. Anyone who is interested should speak to Raelyn.
- iii. **Presentation:** Kerry Lawson accepted a certificate of appreciation from the Red Cross on behalf of the congregation.
- iv. **National Church Survey:** A copy of the results will be left in the church for anyone to read but must not be removed from the building.
- v. **The Building:** Raelyn noted that the building was built in the 1980's and had been very well maintained under the oversight of a succession of congregation members including John Lawrence, Andrew Gibson and now Keith Johnston. She asked the congregation to report any maintenance issues to Keith or a member of the LT. Raelyn said that insurance company underwriters are now mostly internationally based and premiums are affected by both domestic and international events. Given the substantial recent increases in our insurance premiums, we need to keep future premium increases as low as possible by ensuring the premises are maintained at a suitable standard.

**Matters discussed with the congregation:**

1) **Speaker payments:**

The chair reintroduced this topic for further discussion. She said the program was working extremely well and is well accepted by the speakers. To date SMUC was the only church that she was aware of offering the 3 options of paying the speaker, (paying to a nominated charity, or the speaker declining payment), but that other churches were also considering adopting our program.

- Robyn Speyers thought that speaker payments should be made automatically to the speakers.
- Andrew Gibson said, if the congregation wished, the use of the program could be put to a vote.

- Peter Punch said a vote couldn't be held today because the congregation had insufficient information upon which to base their vote, and it was unnecessary to hold a vote. He said the letter to the speakers was well written, appeared to be well received and it is clearly up to the speakers to decide whether or not to accept payment.
- Raelyn Punch said that for transparency she will arrange for a copy of the letter to the speakers to be circulated to the congregation.
- Rev. Mike Fawcett said that if the speaker accepted payment the money is taxable but if the money is sent directly to a charity by the church it is not taxable. He noted that SMUC doesn't pay visitors from UCA and he thinks the program is excellent.

**Action:** Circulate speakers' letter.

## 2) Focus for 2023:

Raelyn acknowledged that prayer is very important for the congregation and said the focus for 2023 will be on prayer. This included participation in the prayer room, the appointment of Frances Davy as "prayer champion", the re-invigoration of the prayer chain, the continuation of pre-service prayer meetings, promoting the establishment of new home groups and the appointment of a Pastor.

## 3) SMUC Giving Program:

- John Lawrence thought that the contribution to local youth was inadequate. He would like to see increased payments to YouthCare and retiring offerings for YouthCare twice yearly.
- Raelyn said the focus for the giving program was to local organisations and that in 2022 over 10% of the church's income had gone to giving programs. She noted that the donation to the Red Cross had gone to the Mandurah branch and the money had to be used locally.
- Kerry Lawson explained that if people go to a charity for money or support they must tick various boxes and if they don't tick the correct boxes there is no support. However the Red Cross doesn't have that limitation and can provide support to anyone in need.
- Jan Gibson asked if SMUC must pay UCA. Raelyn said SMUC is obligated to make the mission and service payment to UCA. As we don't have a minister the UCA asked for \$5000 which is more than the congregations who have a minister have to pay. She said the LT have declined to pay the extra and are paying \$3000 annually.
- John Lawrence said these payments have been contentious and at a Presbytery meeting he asked for the leadership teams of the churches to be sent an explanation on what the mission and service payments are used for.

**4) Thank you**

Peter Punch moved a motion of thanks to the Leadership Team in recognition for their dedication and hard work. **Carried by acclamation.**

**Closing prayer:** Rev. Mike Fawcett

**The Meeting Closed at 12-05 pm.**







*Our Vision: "United in Christ we reach out to build loving relationships that deepen faith and enrich lives."*

**The report for the South Mandurah Uniting Church  
2024 Annual General Meeting  
was compiled and edited by Dr Peter Punch at  
the request of the Leadership Team of SMUC.  
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**South Mandurah Uniting Church thanks  
Mr Andrew Hastie MP  
and his staff at the Mandurah electoral office  
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