



life group

kids church



young families

cafe

fuse youth



welcome team

worship

young adults



communion team

tech team

seniors ministry



playgroup

# Annual Report 2023

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# Minutes of Annual General Meeting held on Sunday, 7th May 2023 at 12noon

Our constitution requires a quorum of 50 partners – a total of 120 partners attended. As required by the constitution, the partners in attendance are listed here:

Xhemil Ahmet	Tanya Fletcher	Rosemary McDonald	Jacqueline Schreurs
Graham Alley	Denis Giroto	Brett Medlin	Rob Schreurs
Karen Alley	Martin Goldup	Tracy Medlin	Andrew Sidebottom
Jenny Austin	Mark Gould	Charina Money	Marry-Anne Sidebottom
Natalie Barron	Wesley Grainger	Leola Moore-Coulson	Roger Simons
Robyn Beeby	Sylvia Gray	Tim Moore-Coulson	Christine Smith
Alan Bosch	Chris Grech	Astrid Morris	Genevieve Smith
Braam Botha	Alexander Groza	Greg Morris	Jordan Smith
Sonja Botha	Patricia Groza	Michael Nelson	Ray Smith
Richad Bradbury	Chali Guruswamy	Anna Nguyen	Zackary Smith
Geoff Brooke	Rajiv Guruswamy	Nigel Nguyen	Lyn Stephens
Brendon Cameron	Daniel Hamilton	Murray Nicholls	Neil Stephens
Bronwyn Cameron	Melanie Hamilton	Sue Nicholls	Betty Strevens
Courtney Cameron	Elizabeth Harrison	Caleb Noonan	Paula Summerfield
Graeme Cann	Annie Hermans	Matt Noonan	Gabrielle Sutton
Julia Cann	Mark Hermans	Ruth Noonan	John Sutton
Terri Clay	Denise Holdsworth	Anita Nyilas	Paul Thomas
Chris Cracknell	Julian Hughes	Anne Ormiston	Melissa Trotter
Casey Currie	Lorraine Hughes	Matt Ormiston	Steven Tucker
Pam Davis	Brett Hutchinson	Alma Paul	Cornelia van der Berg
Robert Davis	Elise Hutchinson	Kellie Pender	Barry Van Es
Glennie Eades	Glenda Hutchinson	Debbie Ratten	Geneva Van Es
Norm Edney	James Izvekov	Stephen Ratten	Nardi van Rhyn
Dawn Edwards	Melinda Izvekov	Brigitta Rayment	Arlo van Rhyn
Ian Edwards	Tony Izvekov	Ken Rayment	Monya Van Staden
Sean Fitzpatrick	Stewart James	Bronwyn Rodgers	Lorraine Vere
Cameron Fletcher	Michelle Jankovic	David Rodgers	Ryan Walker
Jonathan Fletcher	Peter Jankovic	Joy Rogers	Greg Waterhouse
Karen Fletcher	Nick Kapranov	Michael Rojas	Judy Waterhouse
Stephen Fletcher	John Lynch	Catherine Runge-Hill	Jan Watt

## 1. Welcome

Glenda Hutchinson, as Chair of the Board, opened the meeting with prayer at 12:35pm. She welcomed the new Partners who were attending their first AGM and advised that only Partners can vote, and gave instructions about voting which will take place later in the meeting.

## 2. Apologies

Glenda Hutchinson acknowledged apologies already received and call for further apologies. All apologies received are listed below:

Paul Borkowski	Janey Coutet	Maria James	Leonie Simons
Sally Borkowski	Emily Eades	Katherine Lynch	Chew Hoon Soh
Monica Bosch	Sharon Edwards	Karen McKenzie	Warwick Trotter
Allan Buckingham	Nicole Goldup	Mikayla Nicholas	Heather Wilson
Christine Buckingham	Michelle Gould	Mitchell Nicholas	Rob Wilson
Glenda Chapman	Ann-Marie Hermans	David Piper	
Raymond Chapman	Emily Izvekov	Helen Piper	



### 3. Acceptance of 2022 Minutes

Glenda Hutchinson advised that an amendment to the minutes of the 2021 AGM. The wording "This is a contingent liability because we have also been given the opportunity to present a case for why we should be exempt and that is under consideration at the moment" was replaced with "This is a contingent liability but is not shown on our balance sheet because we are not clear what the liability will be. We've been given the opportunity to present a case for why we should be exempt from an historical perspective and that is under consideration at the moment."

Glenda called for the minutes to be accepted which includes the above change.

**Moved the acceptance of the 2022 Annual General Meeting Minutes with the amendment mentioned above.**

Moved by: Kellie Pender

Seconded by: Andrew Sidebottom

Accepted

### 4. Reports Presented

Arlo Van Rhyn referred to the Constitution and our purpose. He then mentioned some of the good things mentioned in the 2022 Annual Report:

- In the Elders Report, we were reminded of the success of our online services birthed through the Covid season, and celebrated Monya commencing with us and Brett Hutchinson for his time and expertise as Treasurer.
- Senior Pastor Braam Botha's report reminded us that as a Church we will always be one that takes the Gospel into our community as God's way to bring about the life and community transformation that we all seek.
- Partnership, we saw 56 new partners come on board.
- Arlo mentioned in reference to a recurring question, that as a Church we don't count the number of people taking communion. It's not recorded internally or externally to CCVT, so that's why that isn't mentioned in the report.
- Creative Arts Report highlighted how we as a congregation saw an increase in the spirituality and worship expression.
- Communication Report provided the following stats - 70,000 page views of our website; Facebook page has almost 1,500 followers; Instagram 500 followers and YouTube 783 subscribers.
- Coffee Ministry serves over 250 hot drinks each Sunday.
- Next Steps program was introduced not only for meeting other people but also connecting with what it is that we as a Church are doing.
- Life Groups, it's another success and Arlo thanked those who assist as Life Group Hosts.
- Church Planting at Clyde.

Arlo, on behalf of the Elders, thanked Pastor Braam Botha; all the Pastors; Ministry Staff and the Administration Staff.

Arlo called for questions related to the 2022 Annual Report. There were no further questions raised.

Arlo then called for the acceptance of the 2022 Annual Report.

**Moved the acceptance of the 2022 Annual Reports**

Moved by: Christine Smith

Seconded by: Graeme Cann

Accepted

### 5. Voting for Eldership Nominations

Bronwyn Cameron advised of the two Eldership nominations - Arlo van Rhyn (renominated) and Bronwyn Rodgers (new) - unanimously endorsed by the Elders.

Bronwyn explained the voting process and that the results of this vote will be announced later in the meeting. Voting took place and the slips were collected and given to the scrutineers for counting.



## 6. Treasurer's Report

Brett Hutchinson thanked Melinda Izvekova who manages the day-to-day bookkeeping. Brett referred to the Treasurer's Report, the Financial Reports, the Board's acceptance, and Auditor's Report located on pages 39-51 of the Annual Report. Brett advised that once accepted the financial statements are lodged with the ACNC (Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission) as part of our legal requirements.

Brett then provided a brief summary of the reports for 2022, as follows:

- We budgeted for a loss of \$137,000 as there were some significant investments in our ministries planned. We had a very healthy bank balance so that didn't represent a financial issue, we had money in the bank to be able to do that.
- Our total giving income was forecast to increase by 4.9%.
- The actual result was instead of \$137,000 loss, we had a \$374,000 profit or surplus. The main reason for that was that our income was up 2.5% on budget and expenses were below budget.
- Tithes and Offerings averaged just over \$98,000 a month, that was a record high, and we received gifts of \$247,000.
- Someone has asked a question, and I will get back to that in a minute about the gifting.
- In terms of Food Pantry, we have quite a few people who give regularly to that. The total contributions were up 25% on the previous fiscal year, but still \$4,000 under budget.
- The bottom line is that we are in a very healthy financial position. We finished the year with about \$900,000 in the bank.
- Some general comments on our balance sheet, if you've looked at that, we have no long-term borrowings, so there are no liabilities on our balance sheet other than just month to month credit card liability.

At the last AGM I made you aware of a situation we had with the State Revenue Office and land tax in relation to the land at the back of the Church that we don't currently have any facilities on. And the situation twelve months on, is we still have no answer. We had an opportunity to provide an update to the State Revenue Office, which we did and here we are another 12 months later, and they still haven't worked through what they are doing. So, we still don't know where we stand.

I mentioned that amendment to the minutes of the AGM from last year that the contingent liability for the land tax is not represented on our balance sheet. As each year goes by it is growing and the worst possible case position, is that we are probably looking at \$460,000 liability if we don't get anything positive in our favour. It is something again that as a Church we need to pray about that to see God's favour there.

Question: There was a question relating to my statement that there were gifts of \$247K, as the simplified profit and loss statement shown on the screen showed gifts as \$242K.

Answer: We had a total of \$247,000 in gifts. The simplified summary spreadsheet doesn't show all the details and the missing \$5,000 will be in another income line. In all other respects the bottom-line income is correct and that aligns with the actual financial statements. You can see the details for gifts in the Notes to the statutory financial statements.

Brett finished by stating that some of the major ministry expenses were deferred to 2023, so that will have an impact on the 2023 year. Our current 2023 tithing income is on budget, and we've had some very generous gifts also. Brett then called for questions.

Question: Michael Nelson asked a question in relation to what ministry expenses were deferred from FY22.

Answer: There were some projects to do with Creative Arts such as lighting upgrades and some audio visual type equipment. There was also some budgeted expenditure for painting.

Bronwyn Cameron thanked Brett Hutchinson and then called for the acceptance of the Treasurer's Report.

### **Moved the acceptance of the Treasurer's Report**

Moved by: Greg Waterhouse

Seconded by: Lyn Stephens

Accepted

## 7. Auditor's Appointment

Bronwyn Cameron then called for someone move to that Rucker Financial do our auditing for the 2023 financial year.

### **Moved the reappointment of Rucker Financial as Auditors for 2023**

Moved by: Geneva Van Es      Seconded by: Cameron Fletcher      Accepted

## 8. Vision

Braam Botha thanked the Board of Elders and acknowledge that they are firstly partners, and secondly, they are elected by you to form a Board that will make decisions to take us further forward.

Braam shared that way before there was a Berwick Church of Christ, God had a dream for mankind and that dream was that we as His, the crown of his creation, would live in unbroken fellowship with him and be his presence in this place called earth. Now that got broken with a fall of man and then God created a mechanism to make all things new so his original purpose for mankind can be redeemed. We phrase it "to be a movement representing Jesus Christ, transforming lives and communities through the power of the Gospel." As a partner you own this vision with us and your soul should be vested into this mission because this is what God is busy doing through us as a Church.

Now in our previous season, a lot of conversation was directed towards the word "movement", and it is important to understand that Jesus never came to start an institution. We use an institution called Berwick Church of Christ to fulfill Christ's vision of a movement. Every movement always starts with a man or a woman, in our case, it started with a man. What's that man's name? Jesus Christ. He started this movement and then he sent people on a mission.

We replicated ourselves over generations in different expressions, but the danger is we stop being a movement and we become a machine. We should never become so mechanical, that we forget that the purpose for our being is to follow the man who sent us on a mission and that's why we're a movement. Never forget that there are millions of Aussies still to be saved and may we become a movement that takes the Gospel everywhere in every place in every way.

If you are here to protect an institution, here's the challenge, it's within a few seasons after something has become a machine, it becomes a monument. You know that more people visit some of our cathedrals in this city as tourists than as worshipers. Buildings become monuments, and once it's a monument it becomes a mausoleum. That's a graveyard. We represent Jesus Christ, and that is so important to understand because we live in world where everybody can almost represent anything of faith except Christianity. It's the news that you and God can have an intimate relationship and you can live an inspired life that makes sense for all eternity not just here on earth. Your role as a partner is to take up this vision. We're running Alpha, Search to Find, equipping training to help you become well-honed in how you share the Gospel. As a partner you're here for a season but may our vision change generations to come.

Question from Michael Nelson: Do we have any plans for the vacant land?

Answer: Braam advised that there are processes in place to start to look at what we will build there. It's still in the defining stage.

## 9. Announcement of Voting Results

Roger Simons announced that there was overwhelming absolute majority support for both Arlo van Rhyn and for Bronwyn Rodgers.

Roger then invited Brett Medlin to the front and acknowledge and thanked Brett for his involvement in ministry for 28 years, and his 18 consecutive years as an Elder. Roger announced that Brett is taking a break from eldership but will continue to serve in ministry.

## 10. Conclusion of Meeting

Roger Simons officially closed the meeting in prayer.

CLOSED: 1:39pm.



*Our Values as a Church are to be God Honouring, Christ Centred, Spirit Empowered, Bible Based, Kingdom Focused and Loving of all People. We put these values into practice by being His Presence in every place.*

*Ephesians 1:22-23: "And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way."*

As Elders we are under Christ's authority, and we aim to honour and serve him with all of our hearts, souls, and minds. Being His Presence in every place including the Board room.

As the newest member to the board, I have had the enormous privilege to serve alongside this incredible team of people who love the Lord deeply and love and serve his church passionately with wholehearted dedication. It has certainly been eye opening to me to see the breadth and depth of issues that we need to prayerfully deal with at each meeting. Some of these issues include financial decision making, pastoral care, policy renewals and changes, future planning and church planting strategy and various other issues. I have certainly gained a new understanding and appreciation of the commitment and sacrifice required for this role. I cannot encourage you enough and petition you as a church congregation to please be praying for your Elders as we continue this role and responsibility of governance and leadership of BCOC.

A large amount of time, discussion and decision making has been involved, working through all the Land tax issues from the State Revenue Office (SRO). Glenda in particular has taken on the majority of this responsibility for which we are all incredibly grateful for and indebted. We are certainly praying for a favourable outcome and relief from this unexpected and unfair tax encumbrance. Please continue to pray with us for the reversal of this decision and the reinstatement of our land tax exemption.

With such an incredible growth in numbers at our Sunday morning services, we as a board made the decision to increase staff hours to help steward and manage this growth in a healthy way. We also had the trial of dual services late last year. Their success and effectiveness culminated in the decision to start double services in 2024, which we believe will facilitate further growth, reach, and impact into our community.

As a result of our growth, our carparking spaces have been stretched to their limit. As Elders we made the unanimous decision to extend the car park which was quickly and brilliantly done by Davcrete to which we are most grateful. It is already being heavily used each Sunday which has been fantastic. This is all part of our hope and desire to increase 'our table' to those in our community and sharing with them the good news about the Kingdom of God.

A real highlight of the year was the Church plant in Clyde led by Ken and his incredible team of volunteers. It has been very exciting and encouraging to hear of the testimonies of what God is doing in the area as a result.

As an Eldership we are burdened with many difficult decisions to wrestle with. These take a lot of time, emotional energy, and humility in coming to a unified decision. One of the great things we do socially, is regularly meet as a team along with our spouses which helps build connection, love, respect, and unity. These mealtimes are invaluable as we grow deeper together and encourage each other in our walk with the Lord and each other.



Similarly to any ministry, the Elders are just like the body of Christ each with different giftings but all working together as one. We really appreciate, celebrate, and need our different God-given gifts and abilities as we serve the church in this capacity.

*James 5:14: "Is anyone among you sick? Let him call the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord".*

We have had the incredible privilege to pray for a number of our congregation with significant health issues. We encourage anyone in the congregation who is struggling with significant illness to contact us if they would like us to pray for them.

As a Board we would like to especially thank Braam, our Senior Pastor, for his diligent and wise leadership, and all of our incredible Pastors for their efforts and dedication to serving God and his people at BCOC. We really appreciate all of the hard work of our admin staff who are just incredible and work tirelessly. The combined effort of all of our staff has been incredible, especially in helping to steward our significant growth this year.

We are also so grateful for the increase in volunteers and for all the ministry leaders and life group leaders. Our active life groups are the heartbeat of our movement. Thank you to everyone for your contribution to the life of BCOC and your active parts in being God's Presence in every place.

We praise God for all he is doing in and through us as a Church and we have great faith that he will continue to do amazing things through us, growing his kingdom within our local community.

In appreciation to you all for your love and support.



Glenda Hutchinson  
Chairperson



Braam Botha  
Senior Pastor



Michael Rojasles  
Executive Pastor



Bronwyn Cameron



Bronwyn Rodgers



Matt Ormiston



Arlo van Rhyn



Roger Simons

# Senior Pastor's Report

*Braam Botha*



*Let us celebrate what He has done through us during 2023. We have every reason to believe the best is yet to come! As you read through this report...create a few moments and thankfully worship Him for what He has done through us!*

## The 2023 experience

We started the year with a stable foundation for the first time since I commenced in the role of Senior Pastor. On the 1st of April 2023 my family and I have celebrated our 5-year anniversary with BCOC, and we would like to thank all the members, volunteers, partners, staff, and board for inviting us into this vibrant and growing church. Our church family had been through a lot of changes over the past five of years:

- 2019 Leadership Transition
- 2020 Covid-19 Pandemic and lockdowns
- 2021 Covid-19 continuation of Pandemic and lockdowns
- 2022 Rediscovering church in a post-pandemic reality
- 2023 Finding traction towards our potential as part of the body of Christ.

In the light of the recent history, we look back at 2023 with the utmost gratitude to everyone who made it such a great year for BCOC!

## Purpose and Vision

Understanding why we exist as church is of utmost importance. As history shows us it is so easy for a church to become an end in itself. Developing the conviction that we are in this world for more than just being a religious organisation will secure our purpose to:

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*"Be His Presence In Every Place."*

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As I see many unbelieving (and sometimes even people professing to believe) struggle with the organised church's deviation from her purpose I can understand how the reactive response may be to sway the pendulum right across to the other end of the spectrum and pursue a disorganised church. Both extremes has its own set of risks. The key is to see the church as an organism – and not just an organisation – that balances the need for stable structure with the need to steward the life and growth inherent to the gospel. If we do this well it is inevitable that BCOC will become:

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*"A movement representing Jesus Christ, transforming lives and communities through the power of the gospel."*

---

I once heard a well renowned church influencer (John C. Maxwell) that in order for people to grasp the vision of a church, they have to be exposed to it at least seven times every thirty days...so I celebrate the progress we were able to make on this matter! Everything we do at BCOC should constantly be aligned with our purpose and vision. It is what pre-empt what we say "yes" to, and what we say "no" to. In my opinion, nowhere is the purpose for our existence better expressed than in Paul's address to the church in Ephesus:

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*"And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way."*  
*Ephesians 1:22-23 (NIV)*

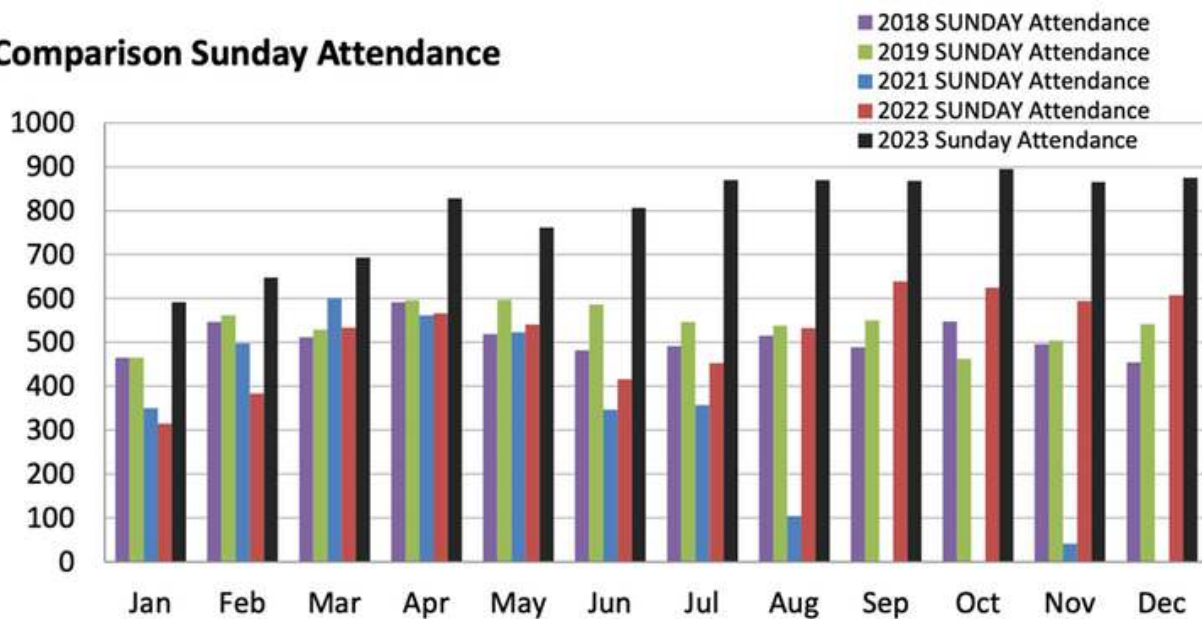
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## Resurgence in attendance

One area that most definitely got filled with His body during 2023 was our auditorium! We have seen our attendance grow by around 40%. The new attendees came from five basic sources:

- Biological growth (a lot of babies seems to be one of Covid's positive outcomes).
- Migration growth (we see a continued growth of migrant numbers in our city).
- Relocation growth (more and more people settle in the outskirts of Melbourne due to the housing crisis).
- Transfer growth (some churches have not survived/recovered from the pandemic and parishioners are looking for new places to worship).
- Salvation growth (we baptised a record number of new Christ Followers during the year- 43).

## Comparison Sunday Attendance



## Partnership Refresher

Our valued partners (those who take ownership of BCOC formally through partnering) were taken through a refresher at one of our Partner's Gatherings in order to ensure that the different generations of Partnership Tenures (some more than 50 years right through to the latest Partners) are all on "the same page" in terms of the rights, responsibilities and requirements of partners. As a partner your contribution to this ministry is highly valued.

## Multiple Service Trials

As the need for people to attend our Worship Services increased we ran into social congestion – a phenomenon where people develop a sense of discomfort with the personal space they require as opposed by its availability – and went on a venture to trial the duplication of our Sunday morning services. Several Discussion Forums led to an executable plan being drawn up for this and we needed to test its sustainability. The two trials (In October and December) presented way less challenges than expected and we embarked on the journey of addressing the most prevalent challenges as seen in the trials:

- The protection of the nature of our services.
- The raising of required volunteers.
- The logistical impact of two services on our facilities.



## **Governance Matters (Gov Comm)**

The continued growth developed the need to have a more sophisticated set of policies as we see:

- More people from diverse cultures and value systems attend our events.
- The accountability towards government in terms of safety is intensified.
- Volunteers need protection and guidance in terms of their involvement.
- Reputational risk for us as an organisation increases as we reach out into our community.
- The legislative landscape in which churches operate evolve.

Under the leadership of our Governance Committee we were able to create and update our policies to keep up with this demand. Countless hours were invested and I personally want to thank GovCom for their diligent work!

I would also like to express my gratitude to the Board of BCOC for their selfless dedication to our ministry. Your leadership and dedication is what makes this church such a flourishing environment. A special thanks to Matt Ormiston who will conclude his role as a member of the board after six very fruitful years. We look forward to see what Christ has in store for him as he discerns his next season in Ministry.

## **Missional Focus**

Making the purpose and vision of BCOC tangible and executable as ministry requires that we bring constant alignment. Our daily and weekly operations need some form of a clarifying call to ensure we are busy with the right business! We have a beautifully crafted statement that summarizes how we go about this:

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*We raise and equip followers of Christ who love people, serve their city and grow faith communities.*

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## **Quarterly Sunday Services Emphasis**

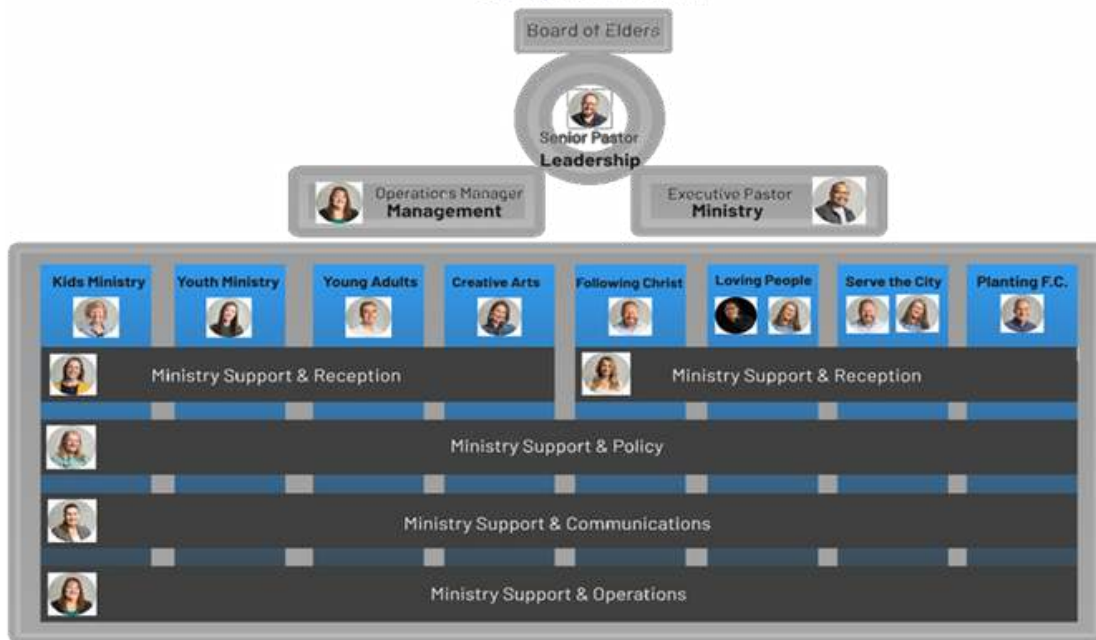
Our dominant expression in fulfilling our mission as a church is our Sunday services. It is in the light of this that we take a missional pillar each term and focus the content of our services (from car park to coffee) towards these:

- First term – raising and equipping Christ Followers.
- Second term – loving people like Christ does.
- Third term – serving our city as Christ's representatives.
- Fourth term – growing and planting Christ-centered faith communities.

Our sermon series support these focus areas and are sprangled with singular messages whenever we feel led to convey a message prompted by the Holy Spirit.

## **Staff Alignment With Our Mission**

We have also engaged on the need to structure our staff roles to support the mission of our church. There were pastors assigned to champion each of these missional pillars as well as our generational ministries (Kids, Teens, Young Adults and Seniors). It was great to see the dedication and fruitfulness of the ministry leaders as they found their new roles and responsibilities.



### Member Alignment With Mission (Next Steps)

Our "Next Steps" process which serves as an orientation journey for new members have also gained further momentum and we celebrate 146 people going through this process. This helps us galvanize our unique redemptive role in the hearts and minds of those who recently (and some not so recently) joined us.



### Missional Involvement (4 M's and Short-Term Projects)

We have been fortunate to expand the influence of our four ministries that reach out beyond the boundaries of our ministry:

- Boys Brigade
- Food Pantry
- Living Springs Counselling Centre
- Playgroup

More to be communicated in their segments later in this report.

Let us celebrate what He has done through us during 2023. We have every reason to believe the best is yet to come! As you read through this report...create a few moments and thankfully worship Him for what He has done through us!

*Purpose*  
Being His presence in every place

*Vision*  
To be a movement representing Jesus Christ,  
transforming lives and communities through the power of the gospel.

*Mission*  
We raise and equip followers of Christ who love people,  
serve their city and grow faith communities

# Creative Arts

*Monya Van Staden*



*"Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labor in vain." These words from Psalm 127:1 have served as a guiding light for our Creative Arts team throughout the year 2023.*

As we gather for our Annual General Meeting, we reflect upon the profound truth encapsulated in this scripture. I can testify to the faithfulness of God, who has graciously overseen our endeavours and blessed our efforts beyond measure. In every aspect of our work and service, I can only acknowledge that it is the Lord who has been the true architect, orchestrating our successes and sustaining us through challenges. As we look back on the past year with hearts overflowing with gratitude, we are reminded of the importance of surrendering our plans and endeavours to His divine will.

## Special Acknowledgements

It is with gratitude and deep appreciation that I extend my heartfelt acknowledgment to the entire Creative Arts team. Your unwavering commitment, tireless efforts, and selfless sacrifices have been the cornerstone of our collective success over the past year. Each member of our team, whether in the space of worship, tech arts, or any other capacity, has played a vital role in bringing creativity, inspiration, and spiritual enrichment to our community. Your dedication, passion for serving others, and willingness to go above and beyond have not gone unnoticed. Together, we have celebrated victories, and forged deeper connections within our church family. Your hard work and dedication have truly made a difference, and I am immensely grateful for all that you do.

## A Few Names Worth Mentioning

Krishan Mahesan, Ben Morris and Stephen Fletcher exemplify the true spirit of service and dedication as volunteers within our church community. Despite their status as a volunteers, these three men consistently go above and beyond to serve the church in their personal capacity. Whether it's through lending a helping hand during events, offering expertise where needed, or simply being a source of encouragement and support to those around them their commitment to serving others is truly remarkable. Their selfless attitude and willingness to step up to the plate embody the core values of our church, and we are incredibly grateful for their invaluable contributions.

Our worship team leaders - Nick Cameron, Abby Coates, Megan Rojas, Alex Groza, Elise Hutchinson, Chris Gretch, Stephen Mudie and Tarryn Reddan have demonstrated exemplary commitment and dedication to our Worship team, continually growing in their gifting and role as both musicians and worship leaders. Through their passion for music and heartfelt devotion to leading others in worship, they have become invaluable assets to our team. Their willingness to invest time and effort into honing his skills, coupled with a genuine desire to serve others, has not gone unnoticed. I am immensely grateful for their contributions and look forward to witnessing the continued growth and impact of their ministry within our community.





*A special story worth mentioning is that of Shahan Perera. His journey with our worship team is a testament to his unwavering commitment and resilient character. Though his initial audition for the bass position did not result in success, Shahan's response was nothing short of inspiring. Rather than being discouraged, he took the setback as an opportunity for growth. Determined to improve his skills, Shahan dedicated himself to practice, learning, and honing his craft. Six months later, he returned for a second rehearsal, and his transformation was nothing short of remarkable. Shahan's perseverance, coupled with his passion for music and service, allowed him to succeed wonderfully in his audition. His journey exemplifies the power of determination and the profound impact of commitment, inspiring us all to strive for excellence and never give up on what God is calling us into.*

Each and every member, whether their contributions were mentioned individually or not, has played an integral role in our collective achievements and successes throughout the past year. Thank you for your invaluable contributions, and may God continue to bless and guide us in the year ahead.

## **2023 AT A GLANCE...**

### **Monthly Vision Nights**

At the beginning of 2023, we introduced our monthly "Vision Nights". These gatherings provide a space where we can come together as whole team, not only to foster community and fellowship but also to spend some time together in devotion and growth. As musicians and creatives, these nights offer invaluable opportunities to hone our skills, share insights, and cultivate our craft in an atmosphere of mutual encouragement and support. Moreover, these gatherings serve as moments to align our hearts with the vision and mission of Berwick Church of Christ, to make sure we carry the heart of the church in our role as volunteers and leaders.

### **Team Expansion**

Our team has grown significantly, with approximately 50 volunteers now serving in the Tech and Worship departments combined. This growth reflects the increasing commitment and involvement of individuals within our community, as well as the expanding opportunities for service and ministry.

### **Special Victories During 2023**

Throughout the year, we have celebrated numerous special victories as a team. Highlights include our participation in the 2023 CCVT Summit, where we had the opportunity to serve the bigger church community and leadership. Additionally, our Christmas Carols services on the 3rd of December 2023 were particularly memorable, drawing our community together in joyous celebration.

### **What to Expect in 2024**

As we eagerly anticipate the year ahead in 2024, there is much to look forward to within our Creative Arts team. One highlight will be our inaugural weekend team break-away in April, providing a unique opportunity for us to come together and deepen our understanding of Worship and the significant role we play in facilitating it within our community. Additionally, we can expect a series of special events throughout the year, including celebrations for Mother's Day, Father's Day, and the much-anticipated Christmas Carols 2024, scheduled to take place on Sunday, December 8th. These events not only offer occasions for joyous celebration and reflection but also serve as opportunities for us to further unite as a team and continue to serve our church family with passion and dedication.

### **Gratitude and Expectation**

As we reflect on the past year, we are humbled and grateful for the wonderful grace by which God has been growing and sustaining us. We acknowledge that our achievements are made possible only through His provision, grace and guidance. With expectant hearts, we look forward to the year ahead, trusting in God's faithfulness and eagerly anticipating the great things He will continue to do in and through us.

In conclusion, I again want to extend my heartfelt thanks to each member of the Creative Arts Team, as well as to our broader community of our church and volunteers. Your dedication, creativity, and passion are what helps us grow and I am immensely grateful for your contributions.

# Ministry Support Team

Melinda Izvekov



*There were no changes to the Ministry Support staff in 2023. We have an incredible well-balanced hard-working team that I couldn't be prouder of. Each one of them excels in all that they do in their day-to-day roles supporting the pastors and volunteers.*

It is a privilege to present the Administration and Property report once again.

Did you know that Berwick Church of Christ sits on 12 acres? This means we have a large property with lots to manage with maintenance and repairs and of course tending to the ever-growing grass and gardens. There are multiple regular checks and services that we have that need to be coordinated and budgeted for. Our air conditioners across all the rooms are serviced 4 times a year and in 2023 the air-conditioning in the main office needed to be replaced. We have fire services checks, and our compliance management processes are checked monthly. There are regular emergency light audits and replacements if needed as well as tree pruning, gutter cleaning and the back paddock slashing that all takes place over and above the regular cleaning and general maintenance. We had a second tree health report done and the affected trees trimmed as a result. New line marking and speed humps were done in the carpark, A new safety system was installed on the roof to give safer access. The lights in the car park were given an upgrade and the bollards replaced. It's great to see so many people after the services taking advantage of the new bench setting on the west side of the building near the carpark with a new pathway to match this has created a great picnic space.

Inside we painted the back of the stage black and renovated the old creative arts office and turned it into a green room and preparation space for the worship and tech team. Room 6 in the family life centre had a projector and amplifier upgrade and probably the biggest and most visual changes around the grounds would be the new additional carparking spaces and gates that were completed just before Christmas.

We were able to accommodate the schools for their end of year presentation nights with a couple of new schools added to the very busy couple of weeks leading up to Christmas. We have several not-for-profit groups that come and use the different spaces though out the year for their own planning and PD days as well as several funerals held during the week over the course of the year which is another way that the church is of service to the community.

Unfortunately, late last year we had a significant break in to the back sheds area and so there was a large and detailed insurance claim. As a result of that we increased the security in the sheds and added more cameras and a whole system upgrade. Everything that was stolen has now been replaced.

There were no changes to the Ministry Support staff in 2023. We have an incredible well-balanced hard-working team that I couldn't be prouder of. Each one of them excels in all that they do in their day-to-day roles supporting the pastors and volunteers. There is never a dull moment in the church office, and we work within our strengths to ensure our service to our church remains excellent. We have a detailed booking system for rooms and resources, we support the ministries in the form of general admin, catering, telephone and database support as well as logistics and planning. I want to commend once again each one of our incredible team for their willingness to serve and support not just the other staff but the broader ministry leaders and their teams who serve so faithfully.



**Karen Fletcher**

If you are unsure who knows everything about everything – it is Karen, she has been on staff the longest by far and has the most incredible servant heart of anyone I have ever met. Karen is incredibly skilled and focused and her attention to detail is impeccable. Karen is our Compliance Administrator and does the incredible work creating policy and procedures ensuring we are compliant in all areas. If you are volunteering or want to volunteer Karen is the one who will take you through from your first enquiry to serving on the team and ensure all the paperwork required is complete. If you think about the church our size and the volunteers that we have that is no small feat.



**Alex Cuss and Jaclyn Szabo**

Alex and Jac are responsible for the reception area and taking care of the administration and ministry support needs in all the areas that the pastors need assistance from food pantry to playgroup. Alex and Jaclyn also assist with organising catering for different events and processing of new partnership forms and certificates, baptisms, and course co-ordination.



Jaclyn and Alex work incredibly well together, they are mum to 7 little ones between them and it's wonderful to see them supporting each other in that space also. Jaclyn has the most caring and gentle spirit and Alex is thoughtful and fun and she never forgets to order the various staff birthday cakes. We are blessed to have them both in our front office reception and also behind the scenes supporting myself and the other staff.



**Michelle Jankovic**

Michelle is our design expert and social media master. Michelle is a quiet achiever; she has her desk near the window where she gets to keep an eye on the garden and the birds water bath. Michelle is responsible for all the social media and marketing of not just BCOC church but now Clyde church also. Michelle assists the different ministries with brochures and flyers as well as everything that you see on the walls and in the communique and in our promotion of courses and events. Michelle has an incredible heart to serve she is detailed and organised and everything is scheduled so that no one misses out on getting quality, timely service. I have 2 plants in my office courtesy of Michelle who doesn't even mind that she has to tell me when it is time to water them!



**Melinda Izvekov**

I am responsible for Managing the administration team and all things 'Operational.' That includes all the finances, processing the income and expenses, payroll and other employment obligations and managing the budget. Facility Management and logistics, including the bookings, keys and security, maintenance and repairs as well as overseeing the cleaning and caretaking.

I would like to say a big Thank You to Stephen Fletcher who continues to serve us so faithfully as our Cleaner and Grounds Maintenance contractor and works hard at maintaining all our facilities on a weekly basis, Stephen is always willing to help with moving chairs, set up and pack up of some rooms and assisting me in co-ordinating some of the big and small maintenance jobs, Stephen has a big heart and nothing is too much trouble, he is always looking at ways to improve not just his functioning but also how best to take care of our incredible asset.

Thanks also to John Lynch and Jeremy Spink who help maintain some of the gardens, as well as some smaller maintenance jobs. Your time and commitment to the church does not go unnoticed. We appreciate you.





# Communication Director *Michelle Jankovic*



*I manage BCOC's communication streams, which include the website, calendar of events, social media, Communique, digital, and print. I also love indoor plants and watching the birds in the birdbath outside my window.*



## Website

[www.berwickchurch.org.au](http://www.berwickchurch.org.au)

The website is BCOC's main information portal, which supports our ministries. I run the website by adding calendar events, courses, sermons, ministry information, volunteering details, policies, and more. BCOC website had some high traffic in 2023. There were 54,334 page views!



## Events/Courses

BCOC run many events and courses, such as our Sunday Service, Kids Church, Friendship Group, Partners Gatherings, Alpha, GTM and Next Steps Lunch. I create a promotional campaign for each, which can consist of artwork/video/text and promoted through our communication streams.



## Social Media

BCOC has three main social media platforms. We live-stream our Sunday service through YouTube and Facebook, and events, courses, and announcements are posted on Facebook and Instagram. YouTube has 985 subscribers, Facebook has 1.6K followers, and Instagram has 506 followers.



## Communique

The Senior Pastor Communique is sent out weekly via email. It is a vital communication tool that informs our readers of Senior Pastor Braam Botha's message, updates, highlights, and upcoming events. Don't miss out and sign up!  
[www.berwickchurch.org.au/blog](http://www.berwickchurch.org.au/blog)



## Digital

I produce digital artwork and short video content for the following communication streams. Social media, live streams, our website, emails, presentations, slides, calendar events, Communique, and Google promotions.



## Print

I create print artwork that supports the communication of our digital campaigns. This includes internal and external signs, banners, flags, Seniors Ministry newsletters and programs, posters, flyers, and postcards.





# Associate Pastor's Report *Michael Rojas*



*We dream of lives and communities being transformed by the power of the Gospel. We live the dream through following Christ, loving people, serving the city, and growing & planting faith communities.*

2023 had been a great year especially when you look at it from the perspective of our dream...

*We dream of lives and communities being transformed by the power of the Gospel.*

*We live the dream through following Christ, loving people, serving the city, and growing & planting faith communities.*

*By living the dream, we will be His presence in every place.*

It is because of this dream that in 2023, we...

1. Welcomed and connected with at least 421 new people (345 the year before).
2. Baptised 43 people which is the highest number of baptisms in the history of Berwick (22 the year before).
3. Had 437 people in 46 Life Groups. We had 330 and 30 respectively the year before.
4. Had 146, 127, and 118 people attended Steps 1, 2 and 3 respectively of the Next Steps Lunches.
5. Blessed 176 families through the Food Pantry and 34 families through Bringing Christmas to Life.
6. Blessed 354 children with Operation Christmas Child boxes.
7. Pastorally cared for many families and individuals (e.g., celebrate newborns, care meals, care calls and visits, etc.).
8. and many more!

None of these would have been possible without your generous help. What a privilege it is to serve you and with you! Thank you to all the amazing partners, teams, leaders, volunteers, staff, and the Board all of whom work tirelessly and faithfully. I am so proud of all of you.

Thank you for being His presence in every place!



# Food Pantry

*Michelle Gould*



*The pantry team realised long ago that although our resources are limited we are always able to send families home with what they need. It really is a loaves and fishes story.*

The team and I would once again like to thank our church family, individuals and schools in our community who have generously given their support to the Food Pantry over the last year, this enabling us to assist struggling families in the Casey area.

Also, a massive thank you to Foodbank who have visited us to see what we are doing. As a result, they are now allowing us to visit them weekly to collect free food for our orders which they supply at an amazingly low price.

All this helps us to provide for the increasing need in our community.

The families we support are our neighbours. Statistics tell us that 1 in 7 families are struggling to put food on the table and keep a roof over their heads.

We have continued operating the pantry by interviewing every client at each visit. This helps build a relationship and we can offer friendship and prayer support. (If the client is ok with this). It also enables us to be aware of their needs and assess if their circumstances have changed in any way. We see ourselves as offering crisis care and allow an initial 8 fortnightly pantry visits. Our reasoning being that over 4 months most people will be able to overcome the crisis that may have occurred through loss of a job, a sick child, or some other change in circumstances.

There are exceptions to every rule, so we use our discretion to support clients who are terminally ill or whose circumstances are not going to change in 4 months. An example being clients whose ex-partners are in prison. They need support at this time and often on these persons release as many face danger and have to move to safe locations that is expensive and may require children to change schools and other changes.

Unfortunately, domestic violence is a major problem in our community. In the last 6 months we have had 424 client visits, which is a massive increase on last year when we had 231 visits in 12 months. Each client receives an average \$100-\$200 worth of food per visit. The pantry team realised long ago that although our resources are limited we are always able to send families home with what they need. It really is a loaves and fishes story.

A couple of anonymous stories give a picture of what some of our clients face:

*One client has been caring for her grandchildren in the house that she rents. The parents, (her daughter and partner), come and go as they please. She gets no assistance, thanks, or respect from her daughter, only abuse. At one stage the daughter threatened her life. We have tried to support her with food and friendship as best we can. Pastor Mat spoke to her to see if police intervention was required.*

*Another client arrived at the pantry with a black eye. Not wanting to make our client uncomfortable but recognised that we had a duty of care to ask the client if the Police had been informed. In this case they had been called. When the incident occurred.*

I trust this gives you a flavour of what the pantry does each week.

One of the highlights of last year is that we were awarded the Community Group of the Year in 2023. It was such a blessing to be recognised by the community and by the City of Casey.

The team would like to thank Pastor Michael for his support and encouragement. Also, a big thanks to Karen, Melinda, Michelle, Jaclyn, and Alex from the admin team. We couldn't do this without you.

# Bringing Christmas to Life *Pastor Michael*



*Your SPIELL (time spent Serving, Praying, Inviting, Eating, Listening, and just pouring Love over them) has touched the hearts and lives of 102 people and 34 families.*

A big thank to everyone who has been a part of Bringing Christmas to Life. By being part of BCTL you are being His presence in every place. And this includes everyone who prepared food, bought gifts, prepared hampers, raised funds, donated funds, served on the day, set up, packed up, etc.

Your SPIELL (Time spent Serving, Praying, Inviting, Eating, Listening, and just pouring Love over them) has touched the hearts and lives of 102 people and 34 families. How do I know this? Because, when asked "What has being here today meant to you?", I have received feedback like...

1. I am so grateful for being invited, it has been an emotional experience as the genuine kindness and warmness is definitely what my children and I are needing to help heal.
2. Being here today, with my children and me, means a lot to us. I felt that I was not in a strange place, but rather as if I was in a place that I knew well, and this was because all the people who were present made me feel comfortable and happy, especially by taking care of me and my four children. I would like to thank all these people for all their wonderful, true effort that made us all feel God's great love for us to meet all these wonderful people.
3. Happiness & appreciation for putting a huge smile on my kids faces ❤️ and some stress off my shoulders knowing there is support for my family.

2024's BTCL will be overseen by Pastor Mat Daniels. Please give him the same support you have given me in the last 2 years.

I am so proud of our church, and I pray that this experience would continue to transform you and others around you into His likeness. Thank you so much!





# Next Steps Lunches *Michael, Anna & Nigel*



*We want to give everyone the opportunity to be transformed into the person God wants them to be.*

Success is moving people on the spiritual journey – Taking their next steps!

As a growing church, we have many people who come and check us out. But we don't want them to just come and go. We want them to come and grow! We want to give everyone the opportunity to be transformed into the person God wants them to be.

And this is what the Next Steps Lunches are all about. It gives people to opportunity to integrate into Berwick by sharing our vision, mission, and purpose over a delicious meal. It also gives everyone the opportunity to spend time with the pastors, connect with others, and help them take the next steps in their journey of faith.

In 2023, we had...

- 146 people attend Step 1
- 127 people attend Step 2
- 118 people attend Step 3

The new video presentations have worked well, and we encourage everyone whether newcomer or not to check out the Next Step Lunches. We could tell you more about it, but it would be best that you experience it instead. So, come and join us the next time it runs!





# Friendship Group

Sharon Edwards



*The Seniors' Friendship Group exists to create a warm welcoming atmosphere, where folk can enjoy fellowship and have fun with others.*

The Seniors' Friendship Group exists to create a warm welcoming atmosphere, where folk can enjoy fellowship and have fun with others. The program has 3 focuses: Educational, Spiritual and Social.

In term one, we enjoyed listening to Mark from Beaton's Bees, who spoke to us about the complex life of bees, and honey production, a musical afternoon from Lloyd Poole, and a movie entitled "Lifemark." Armchair Travel to Argentina and a Communion Service filled out the program.

In term two, Capt. Anne Hill from Salvation Army Employment Plus spoke of her experiences as a Chaplain, and Ps Gary Lewis taught us games associated with his book "Ageing Brains...Ancient Games." Max Myers from Missionary Aviation Fellowship, spoke of his experiences in New Guinea as a pilot. Ps Graeme Cann gave a book reading and we celebrated the Coronation of King Charles 3rd with a high tea!

In term three we welcomed Nichole Kelly from Benwerren, a place where mothers with children can have time out in the Yarra Valley. We joined in a high tea with one member's family to mark an 80th birthday. The movie "Simon Birch" was shown, and our Worship Pastor Monya brought beautiful vocal items to enhance our Christmas Break up. We enjoyed some fun with the varied Christmas dress-up outfits!



# Life Groups & Pastoral Care *Michael Rojas*



*Life Groups are our primary way to fellowship, pray and learn together. Care Meals Team bless families with fresh home cooked meals at their time of need. Care Calls & Visits Team visit, pray and care for people in their homes or in hospital.*

I'm very pleased to inform you that, in 2023, we:

- Started with 330 people in 30 groups and
- Ended with 421 people in 46 groups.

That is...

- An increase of 53 % in the number of groups
- An increase of 28% in the number of people
- The end of year figures gives us about 60% saturation rate against a weekend attendance of 700. However, we do have about 1900 adults in our database and against that, our saturation rate is only at 22%.

What contributed to the increase in groups and participation in groups in the churchwide series we ran in Term 2 called the Daniel Dilemma. It is where we learned the significance of applying grace and truth in our lives. And it was a true church wide series that was not only run in Life Groups but also in Kids church and FUSE Youth. We intend to run another church wide series in 2024 so watch this space! I am also very glad to inform you that Arlo Van Rhyn has stepped up to lead our Life Groups Ministry in 2024 so please give him the same support you have given me.

Life Groups are our primary way to fellowship, pray and learn together. It is also a place where we get to pastorally care for each other. But sometimes we need extra help, which is where Sue Nicholls, our newly appointed, Pastoral Care Ministry Leader comes in. Sue will support me in ensuring that the church is pastorally cared for with the assistance of the Care Meals, Care Calls and Visits Team.

The Care Meals Team were able to bless families with fresh home cooked meals at their time of need. We are very thankful to Jackie Schreurs who has been leading this initiative since 2019 but she has now stepped down from this role. Sue Nicholls has stepped up to lead the Care Meals Team in 2024.

We also have people in our Care Calls & Visits Team who visited, prayed, and cared for people in their homes or in hospital. I'm glad to announce that Michael Barry will be leading this team 2024.

As part of our desire to minister to young Families, Mikayla Nicholas and Sue Nicholls organised the Young Families Picnics and a Young Families camp which were well attended.

I am very grateful to everyone who lead community and provide pastoral care in our church. Life Groups are our primary channel of connection, community, and care in our church, and they are supplemented by our Community Hosts, Care Meals Team, our Care Calls & Visits Team, our Playgroup Director, Young Families Events Coordinator, the Pastors, and the Elders when required.

If you are not in a Life Group, then I invite you to join one or start one. Just reach out to Arlo and he will point you in the right direction.





# Welcome Team

*Denis Giroto*



*Throughout 2023 the church has seen consistent growth in our congregation and thanks to God's provision our volunteers numbers have increased from 25 to 36 by the end of 2023 which has enabled us to better serve our growing church congregation.*

Throughout 2023 the church has seen consistent growth in our congregation and thanks to God's provision our volunteer numbers have increased from 25 to 36 by the end of 2023 which has enabled us to better serve our growing church congregation. With a larger team we were able to expand the number of volunteers serving as Welcomers, Roamers and Ushers.

The number of newcomers who came to the Connect Lounge has increased but differed from week to week, but the team is doing a great job in expanding our footprint by connecting more regularly now in the Foyer and Auditorium due to our increase in volunteers.

We were introduced with new iPad's to connect newcomers instead of using the paper connect cards. The iPad enables us to introduce newcomers to our website to inform them of courses, events etc. and the opportunity to fill out their details to receive Pastor Braam's update and connect with a life group. Six months on since they were introduced, the iPad has become an effective tool in connecting newcomers.

At our annual meeting in July, we introduced some structure changes with additional co-leaders to each of the three teams to better support our growing teams & for readiness for dual service trials later in the year. Special thanks to Chad, Anita, Louisa and Lorraine for accepting the role. We also introduced a serving position/tasks sheet to enable leaders to finalize each volunteer's role prior to serving day which became necessary for managing time in our initial prayer time and clarity due to a growing team.

In August we had Welcome training for the team to benefit our new members. Special thanks to Debbie Ratten for leading the training to better equip us in serving our church.

One of my focus points for the last half of 2023 has been planning in readiness for future dual services. The dual service trials in October and November gave us a good indication that we were ready for this next season.



Please see below some testimonies from newcomers who have experienced the welcoming atmosphere at Berwick...

*Kevin Musgrave - I was introduced to BCOC through a family friend, as I had recently immigrated from South Africa & was new to the area. I was in Australia without my family at the time & as the weeks went on I felt really excited to come to church because it was so warm hearted & welcoming. Mark Hermans from Welcome took me under his wing from the start, he had me over for dinner one evening & contacted me regularly. The welcome didn't just end at the door. When my family arrived there were certain members of the Welcome Team that knew my story & made my wife Julia & kids Cam & Josie feel right at home. The Welcome teams efforts have been much more than just a welcome, it's played a huge part in helping us find our feet in our new home. A special thanks to Sue who was such a help to Julia, suggesting a wonderful school, helping with phone numbers, explaining how to get Josie into kindergarten & sending texts every so often to find out if all was ok. What an example of walking the walk not just talking the talk you all are. Thank you so much, we are so grateful & so pleased the Lord led us to BCOC.*

*Alan Cook - What a welcoming committee we have, one feels so welcome coming through the doors. Bronwyn, Denis, Gary, Vern & the whole mob do a great job & as a newbie and a born again I feel so welcome. Since my first day at BCOC the smiles & greetings are outstanding. I know many feel the same so keep up the good work, Jesus will be proud of you all.*

*Jed Crispin - The power of a good welcome can never be overestimated. The body of Christ ought to be the most welcoming place on the planet, where people from diverse backgrounds are smiled at, listened to, respected and affirmed as people of dignity, and appropriately embraced into an ever-extending family of believers. BCOC does this well. Our sense of welcome was immediate and happened at the end of the first service when Warwick, one of the believers we were sitting with, warmly introduced himself and struck up an amicable conversation - it was spontaneous, natural and appreciated. Another Sunday, it was Sue in the foyer, though she wasn't an official welcomer on that occasion, noticed my wife and I as newcomers and engaged us in a thoughtful and meaningful conversation. Soon after, we joined Sue & Murray's lifegroup to study the Daniel Dilemma which led to our widening circle of BCOC friendships. Now both Jeannie (my wife) and I/Jed have come full circle and have joined the welcome team ministry. It's a joy to be part of the BCOC family, serving the God who has his arms wide open in welcome to all who will come to Him. (Matthew 11:28-30)*

Thank you to John & his Coffee Ministry for supplying newcomers with hot beverages. I would also like to express my gratitude to Greg, Mark & Chris our team leaders for managing their teams with communication during the week & serving every 3 weeks.

To all our volunteers, thank you for sharing your gifts and talents through Christ to support our mission in serving our church community.



# Communion Team

Dean Zurla



*An outstanding opportunity to receive a life-changing experience and share a life-giving blessing.*

We haven't had a report about our Communion Team for a while or maybe none at all. Please allow me to share a few highlights of what happened starting from 2022.

When we came back on-site after the lockdowns, there were tables set as stations where we hand out bread and communion cups. We were wearing masks and gloves but there was still the risk of transferring the COVID virus from one recipient to another. Then came the "pre-packed communion cups". How great are they? Now, communion tables are stationed outside the main hall doors where our team hands out the communion cups. We only need to chase those who missed taking theirs from the door.

By October that year, I have accepted the role as the team's coordinator. I've been managing the rosters and act as a reserve to fill-in occasionally. Helen Ogilvie came on board replacing me in Team 5.

Learning from what our Welcome Team was already doing, we've created our own WhatsApp group. This is what we used to send out quick messages to each one in the team i.e. roster swaps, thoughts, something different happening on a given Sunday, Baptism Sunday and more. These changes have worked well and flowed smoothly throughout 2023. Sometime in term 2, it was very sad when a valuable couple left our team.

Pastor Michael and I sat down in the middle of last year to discuss how the team will prepare for our church's plan to start a 2-service Sunday. We've planned to recruit more volunteers to grow to 4 teams of 2 volunteers in the next 3 months. And then double the number to make 4 teams of 4 volunteers by January 2024. With every ministry requiring more volunteers, recruitment was very hard. In August, we were blessed with Michael Barry and Allan Nudas to fill the vacancy in Team 3. As I write this report, we are still 5 teams of 2 volunteers.

So how will we manage the 2-service Sundays? Majority in our team are happy to start from the first service and finish after communion of the 2nd service. We are still hopeful for more volunteers. In the meantime, we continue to overcome, and we will because this ministry belongs to Jesus.



# Car Park Team

*Jonathan Fletcher*



*Through God's provision, we have the privilege of starting the very new Car Park Ministry.*

In 2023, we recognised that sometimes it could be hard to find a parking spot and with our current growth spurt, we have cars come in and leave because they couldn't find a place to park.

Through God's provision, we have the privilege of starting the very new Car Park Ministry. I am very glad to inform you that Joff Fletcher has stepped up to lead this ministry which aims to basically do 2 things. That is, (1) be a welcome presence as cars enter the car park and (2) make it easy for people to find a place to park.

I have received some excellent feedback saying that (1) people felt cared for/loved seeing the orange vests and jackets and that (2) the church is very intentional is welcoming people even in the car park. It is a very new ministry, and the team are constantly fine tuning and making it simple to welcome people and find them a place to park.

I want to commend the Car Park Team in the work that they do, and I encourage you to honour them by following their instructions and simply smiling back. And if God is leading you to serve in this way, please reach out to Joff.

Ps M on behalf of Joff Fletcher





# Kids Ministry

*Glennie Eades*



*Our goal was not just to present the Bible narrative, but to welcome Holy Spirit to come and empower the children to be Christ's followers; to see lives transformed through the Gospel.*

The Kids Ministry team and I had the great honour and privilege to serve the families of Berwick Church of Christ during 2023.

We were blessed to have opportunities to pray for, encourage, teach and engage with the kids of BCOC (aged from 2 - 12 years). Our goal was not just to present the Bible narrative, but to welcome Holy Spirit to come and empower the children to be Christ's followers; to see lives transformed through the Gospel. This entailed facilitating space for genuine God encounters as we unpacked the truth of God's Word together.

Kids were encouraged to see God as their loving heavenly Father, to know that they are beloved children called and chosen to be His representatives in their spheres of influence; to receive the revelation that God sees, cares, listens and responds when they pray and seek Him.

## **Highlights for the year:**

2023 saw steady growth in BCOC Kids Church attendance as new families joined our Church Community. With the growth came the need to expand from 3 to 4 rooms and under the expertise of Bron Alley, Room 5 was set up to cater for our Kinder 4's - Preps.

With the growth in attendees came the need to onboard and train more volunteers. Our Kids Ministry team grew from 35 to 46 during the year. Many parents provided valuable feedback, telling us that their kids absolutely love coming to Kids Church.

Over the year we observed a greater level of engagement and participation of kids in discussions and group activities. This is a result of God's great favour and faithfulness in answering prayer, the work of the Holy Spirit in guiding our planning and practice; and in helping kids to hear and understand how much God is invested in them.

During the year, Grades 4-6 joined in with main service by watching Water Baptisms and hearing testimonies. These sessions were followed by group discussions unpacking the relevance and significance for a believer.

## **Kids Church and Team Activities:**

In 2023 we held Whole Kids Ministry Team Lunches every term. These enabled us to revisit the vision and values of BCOC, to build connection and community and to receive a word of encouragement. Room Leaders also met monthly to review Kids Ministry and gave valued feedback and suggestions for improvements. Together we developed a plan to accommodate Dual Services. They also received regular mentoring sessions to assist them in leadership development.



The Kids Ministry Team also enjoyed a Retreat Day in July where we focused on who God is as revealed in Psalm 103 and who we are as His beloved children. This was a time of heart ministry, fun, fellowship and connection – the aim was to spiritually sow back into the lives of our volunteers who give out so much.

We started term 4 with a blast of blue as the team donned their newly designed Kids Team T-shirts.

I would like to thank Monya Van Staden for her creative designing.

Kids Church 2023 came to a close with an exciting fun day featuring Captain Eric and his assortment of amazing interactive scientific experiments built around the good news of the Christmas Story.

### Team and Leaders of 2023:

I would like to acknowledge the dedication of all of our Kids Ministry volunteers who served and prayed for the children in our care:

- The Sign-in Team, led by Kevin Lau, who warmly welcomed families and ensured the registration of every child to comply with our Child Safety Standards.
- The newly formed Kids Safety Team, led by Johan Coetzer, who ensured that the Family Life Centre was secure during Kids Church.
- The Kids Ministry Team Members who worked energetically and joyfully helping kids engage in games, worship and prayer, to understand the Word and its application.
- Our Room Leaders who prayerfully and diligently prepared resources and activities, directed and co-ordinated weekly sessions and actively trained up other team members in leadership. I would like to make special mention of each Room Leader and the area they served in:
  - ~ Wonderkids (2-year-olds – Kinder 3's): Leonie Simons, Dania Jacob, Melanie Hamilton, Hannah Zhang
  - ~ Room 5 (Kinder 4's – Prep): Bron Alley, Amy Fussell, Josh Matthews, Casey Currey
  - ~ Room 6: (Grade 1-2): Giselle Drewitt, Cathy Dillon, Gerlfraine Lombardo
  - Room 1: (Grades 3-6): Lauren G, Caleb Noonan, Shane Drewitt, Zoe Matthews
- Lauren Alley who also faithfully served in the role of Kids Ministry Hub Leader – stepping in and supervising Sunday Kids Church on occasion. We are greatly blessed by her exemplary leadership and ministry experience.

Without the commitment and diligence of the entire Kids Ministry Team, we would not have the flourishing ministry of Kids Church that our families enjoy.

### On a personal note:

I would like to highly commend the dedication of the whole team as they committed to faithfully serving the children and families of BCOC.

I would also like to express a huge thank you for all who have prayed for Kids Ministry during 2023. This is one critical way that we partner together to serve our church and local community; to see God's will being done and His kingdom transforming lives.

Finally, I am most grateful for the way God has strengthened, blessed and encouraged us. To Him belongs all the glory and praise for the great things that He has done!





# FUSE: Youth Ministry

*Genny Smith*



*While not without challenges, 2023 was a year for defining culture, building strong foundations and creating momentum to expand our impact in our community.*

Our youth ministry, FUSE (Fearless Unashamed Supernatural Existence), had an incredible year in 2023.

Firstly, I would like to thank our 22 amazing leaders who gave their all to serve our youth here at BCOC. In no particular order, these were Nick Kapranov, Jordan Smith, James Izvekov, Ryan Walker, Kevin Kang, Caleb Noonan, Gemima Ntambwe, Courtney Cameron, Zoe Herat, Sam Green, Vanessa Rus, Arielle Barron, Shaz Wolstenholme-Gilbert, Elliott Robins, Kaiden Jude, Kelly Sparks, Ethan Small, Alex Groza, Jackson Ratten, Luke Gardiner, Matthew Shambrook and Annie Hermans. Without these dedicated leaders, FUSE Youth would not be able to run and be the ministry that it is. I would also like to thank all the parents for your continued support, help and encouragement of our events and our ministry. We are forever grateful to you and really appreciate all that you do. Lastly, I want to thank the youth of 2023 for being such an incredible bunch of young people who have embraced and embodied everything that FUSE Youth stands for.

We had so many incredible opportunities as a youth ministry in 2023. We had the honour of kicking off the year with our first ever FUSE Fest! This was an opportunity for our young people to give back to you, the wider church community, while raising money for our youth ministry. The money raised went towards both resources needed within the ministry, along with providing more opportunities for teenagers to be sponsored to attend events such as State Youth Games and FUSE Camp! The event was a huge success with a large majority of our church family hanging around and supporting our youth. We were able to raise over \$12,000 to be put towards SYG and FUSE Camp sponsorships as well as resources for our youth programs. We want to thank the entire church for choosing to be so generous in supporting our teenagers - so many lives were transformed because of it!

Across the year, we had many high energy fun and fellowship nights. These included "Water Night, Outback Night, Junk Yard Wars, RUSH HQ, Fear Factor, Fuse's Famous All-Nighter and so many more. These nights were not only a whole lot of fun, but also opportunities used for intentional fellowship, outreach and culture development. Other big opportunities included Youth Alive and 3 Merge events that brought youth groups from all over Casey together for a time of worship. These events are always such an honour to host and a real highlight as they promote unity amongst denominations and help our young people connect outside the walls of their own youth group.

We had four key focus series across 2023. Our term one focus was 'Where's your heart?', where we encouraged our young people to prioritise their focus back to God. In term two, we joined the wider church for the 'Daniel Dilemma.' As a part of the Daniel Dilemma, we were able to launch a FUSE mid-week life group which enabled us to go deeper in discussion about topics covered during our Friday worship services. In term three, we tackled our theme 'The Mission'. We focused on intentionally developing our young people as disciples of Christ and furthermore, gave them tools to be able to disciple others around them. This all built up to our first ever Fuse United night where we saw our youth intentionally invite friends, delivered a Gospel message and had 13 youth give their life to Christ on that one night! Lastly, our term four series was "What's Holding You Back?" where we focused on empowering our young people to dive all-in and be bold for Jesus! Across all of our worship nights, we saw God move in profound ways. In 2023, we saw a genuine and authentic culture of worship rapidly grow within our youth ministry. A significant highlight for us as leaders has been seeing our young people no longer just looking to the leaders for prayer, but rather gathering around each other in prayer. There is nothing quite like looking around a room of 70+ teenagers worshipping, ministering and praying together. A big shout out to Alex Groza who spent the year leading worship for us and teaching our young people what worship is.

Across 2023, we had two key camps that were massive for Fuse. We had our annual Fuse Camp at The Summit, where our youth grew deeper spiritually and encountered God in a very real way. Friday and Saturday were filled with ridiculous fun, bible study, small group discussions and worship. Sunday morning's open mic session is always the highlight of camp! We sat for almost 2 hours while youth stood in front of their peers sharing what God had done for them over the weekend. We had only scheduled 1 hour for this which goes to show how powerfully God moved. We also had a massive SYG in 2023. Including helpers, we took a group of 170 to SYG! The weekend was a huge success where we saw many youth give their life to Christ, community formed and a very good time had playing loads of sport! Again, I would also like to thank everyone who volunteered behind the scenes or on the weekend at SYG - you all know who you are and we couldn't have done it without you!

While not without challenges, 2023 was a year for defining culture, building strong foundations and creating momentum to expand our impact in our community. God has been so faithful and we have seen him move in miraculous ways! We had many young people making decisions to follow Christ, others being baptised and many being discipled. 2023 was an incredible year of growth, excitement and connection and we are looking forward in anticipation for what God is going to do in 2024 through our youth ministry!





# FORGE: Young Adults

*Jordan Smith*



*As a Young Adult community, we hope to continue to collaborate and connect with Young Adults in our community and neighbouring communities so that we can continue to bring the Good News to every place.*

2023 began with our annual Bonnie Doon Camp and we saw 75 Young Adults come and spend time together across the entire weekend. There was plenty of water sports and fun times as well as fellowship and worship. We also continued with our Youth & Young Adult (Y&Y) services and saw these services become a great place of fellowship among our community.

We continued to engage in life groups, with the Thursday life group and Friday couples group continuing. We also introduced a brand-new Young Adults life group this year which was also on a Thursday. We saw a need for increased life groups as our YA community grew, so we added another Thursday life group to help accommodate this growth.

Y&Y Services were incredible in 2023, as we saw God move in so many different ways. We saw a desperation for the truth from our YA community and a hunger for the Gospel, and the Y&Y services were great opportunities for YA to come together under the one name: Jesus Christ.

State Youth Games was also a huge part of our Young Adults calendar, with 50 YA attending to compete in sports for the weekend. This was a great opportunity for our Young Adults community to get alongside other like-minded Christians for a weekend full of games and good fun. Our group also received the 'Spirit of the Games' award, given to the team who displayed the best spirit throughout the entire weekend. Well done to our Youth and Young Adult community for being His presence at SYG!

As a Young Adult community, we hope to continue to collaborate and connect with Young Adults in our community and neighbouring communities so that we can continue to bring the Good News to every place. By building a solid foundation in Christ, we aim to reach out and be His presence in every place. We are looking forward to what 2024 will bring for this amazing group of Young Adults.



## 2024 - Plans

2023 was an incredible year to see what God wants to do with our community. As the timing of this report is being written in March, we have added some of the early plans in 2024 to provide hope and communicate the planned direction of the YA ministry. We started the year very strongly with a social and have also just returned from our YA Summer Camp.

We have established a very strong YA Leadership team who are all passionate about seeing God's Kingdom come here on earth as it is in Heaven. They are passionate about our Young Adults and seeing them grow into what God has planned for them to be.



# Playgroup

*Gue Nicholls*



*Playgroup is a ministry of Berwick Church of Christ. We are here to provide a safe and fun place for parents and young children to interact with each other and with other families.*

We expanded to seven groups in 2023 with the need to start another baby group, and once again the mums and grandmas have made wonderful connections. In a number of our groups we have had non-Christians visiting church and becoming involved in other church activities, including picnics, marriage course, Alpha, Woman to Woman and the Christmas service. Huge thanks to the Christians in the groups inviting them and coming alongside them, which is what Playgroup is really all about.

We held our first Young Families Camping Weekend with over 60 people in Warburton. The aim of this weekend was to give families from the church and the Playgroup community the chance to connect in a very relaxed environment, and it was wonderful to see the enthusiasm with which families embraced the opportunity.

Some of our mums have stepped up in leadership roles in their groups during 2023, and many have also come alongside non-Christian families in an informal way, arranging walks or social catch ups. We also have a wonderful team of child-free helpers who each assist one morning per week in playgroup (during school term) and also help with occasional practical needs (meals for sick families, cutting or preparing craft, wrapping gifts for mums or children) as their capacity allows.

If you have a regular free weekday morning and love spending time with mums and their children I'd love to chat about how you could get involved! Ideally all of our playgroups would have 2 child-free helpers and a few Christian mums in them ready to be His presence to the community families who join us each week.



# Boys Brigade

*Andrew Sidebottom*



*We provide a Christian community that supports boys and young men, and assists in their Christian growth, physical development and leadership training, while teaching life skills.*

For 2023 it was a full return to all our usual activities, including Juniors Camp In, Company Camp, Seniors Water Sports Camp, Seniors LAN Night, State Camps, our usual Monday night program and state events.

For the Seniors the highlight of the year would have to have been the Seniors Water Sports Camp and I would like to express my thanks and gratitude for all the work that the Cameron family puts into this each and every year. 2023 was also the first year we were able to include one of the smaller companies in this activity. This was done to encourage and support some of the smaller Boys' Brigade companies by pooling and sharing resources.

We finished 2023 with our numbers getting close to our pre 2020 numbers. At the end of 2023 and early in 2024 we have seen significant interest in Boys' Brigade from new families. In fact, the first 3 weeks of 2024 we had close to 20 new boys. This increase means we started 2024 with a 200% increase in the number of boys in our youngest group (Anchors: Prep to Grade 2); 25% increase in our middle group (Juniors: Grade 3 – Grade 6) and a 20% increase in our oldest age group (Seniors: Grade 6 – 18 Year Olds). The increase in our oldest age group is the most surprising as we don't historically get new boys joining once they are in High School, but we have had several boys joining us in Year 10 or above so far this year.

There have been some significant changes within the leadership team in 2023:

- Andrew Gray (Seniors OIC [Officer In Charge]) stepped down towards the end of 2023 so he could focus on his studies at Ridley Bible College as well as working in the Children's ministry at the Anglican church he is involved with.
- Lucy Loupis also left with Andrew Gray (they got married in March 2024)
- Phil Baes took on the Seniors OIC (Officer In Charge) role towards the end of 2023
- Joel McQuie took on the role of Omega's OIC (Omega's are the older boys – Grade 10 and above)
- Marry-Anne re-joined us in 2023 as our Chaplain.
- Caleb Noonan continued in taking on more responsibility to become the Juniors OIC in 2024 when our current Juniors OIC (Anthony Groza) leaves to pursue other ministries within his home church.

We do still have a need for additional leaders, especially in Anchors (Prep – Grade 2).

As always, we welcome anyone who is interested in finding more out about the Boys' Brigade program (either in relation to volunteering or as something for your son to get involved in) we would encourage you to speak to myself or one of the other leaders – the following attend BCOC – Andrew Sidebottom (attends Clyde Church), Brendon Cameron, Joshua Fowler, Caleb Noonan.





# Coffee Ministry

*John & Gaby Sutton*



*This ministry has become a cornerstone of our church's identity, weaving a warm and inviting atmosphere for all who step through our doors.*

Another year has passed and the Coffee Ministry continues to stand as a beacon of community engagement and fellowship. This ministry has become a cornerstone of our church's identity, weaving a warm and inviting atmosphere for all who step through our doors.

The heart of our coffee ministry lies in the passion our team has to serve Christ and His people. The dedicated volunteers, inspired by this spirit, go beyond the simple act of serving coffee. They are ambassadors of hospitality, ensuring that every person feels not just welcomed but truly valued. Engaging in conversations, actively listening to the stories of our people, they offer a comforting presence during both celebratory and challenging times.

The impact of our coffee ministry extends far beyond our church walls. We have been actively involved in events orchestrated by the wider church body that reach out to the broader community, including Alpha and "Bringing Christmas to Life" reinforcing our commitment to service.

This dynamic platform for spiritual and social connection is an integral part of the various ministries that have transformed our church. Berwick Church of Christ has become a haven, a place where individuals experience genuine fellowship, find support, and are embraced by a caring community. The impact of this ministry goes beyond the warmth of a cup of coffee; it's about cultivating a sense of belonging and spreading the love of Christ in a tangible and heartfelt manner, enriching lives within and beyond our congregation. The amazing people who faithfully serve each weekend in the coffee ministry continue to be "His presence in this place".





# Men's Ministry

Peter Jankovic



The Men's Ministry holds community focused evangelistic events for Christians to invite neighbours, work colleagues, friends, and family. Guest speakers share personal stories which usually have a secular topic with a faith foundation.



## Christopher - Miraculous survival

122 guests came along on the 2nd April, 2023 and enjoyed a BBQ. Christopher Rantall talked about his miraculous survival, paying tribute to Arron who in the final seconds before hitting the ground, cradled a total stranger to protect his passenger. It was great to see about 10% of the guests were non-Christians. Thank you to the 20 volunteers who helped on the day.



## God's Squad Christian Motorcycle Club

125 guests came along on the 8th October, 2023 to hear about the God's Squad history and vision. Guests enjoyed a BBQ and fellowship together while checking out 12 Harley Davidson Motorcycles which lined the car park and were greatly admired. Thank you to the 18 volunteers who helped run the night.





*Our Governance Committee (Gov Comm) is an enabling ministry of the church, facilitating us to operate in an ever increasing legislative environment.*

Our Governance Committee (Gov Comm) is an enabling ministry of the church, facilitating us to operate in an ever increasing legislative environment.

Gov Comm, facilitates the safe operation of our church's ministries taking in account our obligations under Federal, State and Local Laws. We are guided by John 15:12:

*"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.  
No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends.  
You are my friends if you do what I command you."*

We believe Jesus holds us to a higher standard, and that the church should be that standard bearer as it relates to being a safe place to fellowship, volunteer, participate and worship our God.

While policy development, review and refresh is the backbone of the committees work, 2023 saw our focus expand to strategic matters, namely the response to the updated Child Safety Standards, Emergency Management planning and sourcing Occupational Health, Safety and HR capabilities.

## **Child Safety Standards**

In July of 2022, 55 new standards were released by the Victorian State Governments, Commission for Children and Young people of which we were required to respond, these covered areas such as Aboriginal Culture, Childrens Rights, Diversity and Inclusion and Volunteer Equipping. A significant effort has been invested in this area and improved child safety in particular, though age appropriate information and training and the introduction of a Child Safety Team, who monitors access to "children only areas" during services.

## **Emergency Management Planning**

In conjunction with our Emergency Management consultant, we completed a refresh of our emergency management plan and put it into action during the winter months completing an evacuation drill, of which the learnings have been incorporated into improving our plans in readiness for the next exercise.

## **Occupational Health and Safety and Human Resources capability uplift**

As our church has grown and employment law has developed, we identified the need for external professional assistance in these areas and have now partnered with an Online / Over the Phone organisation who have already delivered significant value in the areas of HR and assisting us to refresh and modernise our policy approach and content.

Our intent in 2023 was to move from reactive to strategic in our governance approach and we continue to make steps in that direction.

2023 was an overwhelmingly busy year for Gov Comm, not just with the large projects highlighted above, but with 59% growth of volunteers, so by the numbers, we:

- Processed 143 new volunteers, lifting overall volunteer numbers to 383.
- Had 255 volunteers complete or refreshed their Safe Ministry Check Training.
- Managed and kept records of 672 Working With Childrens Check's (new and/or renewals).

All praise to our Father in Heaven, who draws people to himself, for the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Therefore pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into His harvest.

I'd like to thank the members of our committee Karen Fletcher, John Goh and Ps Michael Rojas, who's commitment to this calling facilitates the operation of our ministries to the glory of God and the expansion of His kingdom.



# Church Planting

Ken Rayment



*Hearing the many stories of changed lives makes me wonder, 'Why doesn't everyone want to be involved in this ministry?'*

## **FOLLOW CHRIST – Grow Groups**

During the year we ran both the Search to Find and Alpha Evangelism courses, followed by the Discipleship course Growing to Maturity (GTM). Hearing the many stories of changed lives makes me wonder, 'Why doesn't everyone want to be involved in this ministry?'



Photo: GTM Freedom Weekend!

## **Michelle's Testimony**

*During Covid lockdown, I was in my sister's room on my own. I was at a low point in my life. I was broke, I had no job and I had nothing left. I found myself cursing out loud saying to God, "Why did you create me if you knew this was gonna happen to me?"*

*Out of nowhere, I heard a voice. It was so so real that I freaked out and looked around to see who had spoken. The voice said: "What do you have to lose, you have nothing".*

*My eyes instantly were drawn to a book in the corner of my sister's room. I went over to it and picked it up and dusted it off. It was a Bible. A Bible - I had no intention of reading it. It had nothing relevant to say to my life. I flicked open a page, glanced at a few verses and to my complete surprise, every word spoke to me and what was happening in my life! "How can this old thing know what I am going through?"*

*My eyes were open and I began to wonder if there was a God. I said to the one who spoke, "If you are real, I will find you." I became obsessed with the word of God and I devoured that Bible.*

*I ended up hearing about GTM so I attended the Growing to Maturity course at Berwick. Through GTM 1-3 I experienced tremendous healing and freedom from my past. GTM helped me to look back so I could move forward.*

*The God I sought I did find, my Heavenly Father. He is Jehovah El Roi (The God who sees). He saw me then and He sees me now. And He has a special place in my heart! Thanks, Dad, I love You!*



## **ENCOUNTER PRAYER**

We have a growing team of people committed to praying for freedom and healing in people's lives. They minister on Sundays, at key events in the Grow Groups, and at other times on a need basis.

We provided two major training events to equip and grow the team. The visit of Ken Fish, and our own Prayer Ministry Training.



## PLANTING FAITH COMMUNITIES - Clyde

2023 was a year of investing in our Church planting core team. We ran what we called the "Jesus Apprenticeship", which involved a combination of taking people chronologically through the gospels as if they were being mentored by Jesus, practical skill training in evangelism and prayer ministry, and hands-on ministry involvement.

One of the strategies for reaching into the community was a free Emotional Health Seminar followed by the 5-week Thrive Clinic. Tabitha a young mum who we met door knocking came to both the seminar and the Clinic. On the last night of the clinic, I recorded her story:

### Tabitha's Testimony

*They came to knock on my door and I was sleeping. I was telling myself maybe I shouldn't open the door as I was feeling down, alone, confused and upset. I was just crying all the time. I was broken and just so lost because of my life situation. At times I would lock myself in my house. I have two kids.*

*I woke up and went to open the door, and I saw them nearly leaving. They handed me a flyer and told me about it.*

*When I first went along, I wasn't expecting anything, I just listened. They started talking about a situation that I related to. I thought "This is exactly some of the things I'd been going through".*

*They had a small group where we were able to share our stories. After a while, I was comfortable to ask them to pray for me.*

*Previously, I had been going to counsellors. They told me what was happening but there was no change, nothing made sense. But after that prayer, I slept and the next day some things I was looking for started revealing themselves to me. It was amazing. I felt I got the answers I was looking for.*

*I started coming along and since that time I thought "Wow this is amazing" I started feeling better, feeling a lot happier!*



Tabitha has since got employment and she and her girls now regularly attend Clyde Church.

### Gatherings and Public Launch

Alongside the training and outreach, we ran monthly gatherings in a home. Then on October 8th, we held the public launch of Clyde Church. Thereafter meeting monthly in a hall and on the other Sundays initially in homes - this transitioned to meeting all together in a local Café that is closed on Sundays.



### Thank you

One of the most rewarding parts of my role is working closely with individuals and teams who have a heart for God and his people. You guys are my heroes! Thank you for giving so selflessly and being willing to step up, grow, learn, and have a go!

# Marriage Course

*Tim & Leola Moore-Coulson*



*We were blessed to see the enrichment and healing God provided to couples through this great course.*

We held our first Alpha Marriage Course in term 3, 2023.

Nine couples enrolled in the 8 week course, with one couple dropping out half way and one couple who could only attend half of the series.

Providing a time for couples to receive teaching and then have a guided conversation together, we saw God at work in relationships. Couples discovered more about each other and talked through different aspects of themselves and what they can bring to the marriage, as well as how they can love and support their spouse in different ways. Each week acted like a date as a different topic was discussed over candlelight, with coffee and dessert served. This then culminated in the 8th week when couples were encouraged to go out on a date together.

We had a range of age groups and number of years married – including a couple who were not yet married, as well as a mixture of couples from church and the community. We were blessed to see the enrichment and healing God provided to couples through this great course. And we would encourage all couples to find time to sow into their marriage through this course, no matter where you are at. As facilitators we are blessed each time we run it as we also take the time to talk about things we don't discuss on a regular basis.

We are thankful for the support of our daughter, Rachel, who assisted with set-up, making coffees, serving desserts and pack-up. We look forward to running the course again in 2024, in term 2 and term 4. And we would love others who have a heart for marriages to partner with us as we build this ministry to reach more couples both in the church and in the community.



# Encounter God

Jan Watt



*It is very exciting and rewarding for us as team members when we see what happens in the lives of those we pray for, and we give all the Glory to Him!*

We have been blessed to welcome 5 more Team Members this year, making a total of 18 faithful prayer warriors who love to pray and intercede on behalf of those who come forward for ministry.

People have all sorts of needs and we are privileged to be able to pray, intercede, bless, impart prophetic and encouraging words as the Lord leads.

We had a team meeting in March where we were able to come together, pray for each other and pray for the year ahead.

We meet ½ hr before the church service to wait upon the Holy Spirit for His leadership and guidance, to listen to what's on His heart and pray accordingly. Often he releases words of knowledge that relate to people we pray for at the end of the service.

## TESTIMONIES

*A person was prayed for on a regular basis who was set free from bondage to alcohol and was also prayed for strength and courage to stay pure and clean. He gave updates that he was doing great. He was unemployed and was prayed that God would supply this, He had applied for a few but didn't hear back. All glory to God as he has started working at his new job.*

*Another person was unable to read his Bible or pray and was released from spiritual oppression and we thank and praise God for setting him free.*

*A young man feeling very broken and depressed due to harsh words spoken against him. As he was prayed for God's awesome peace was released that he had never experienced before in his Christian walk.*

*A lady has been released from demonic oppression.*

*The joy of the Lord has been experienced by some.*

People have been released from emotional pain & some people have received physical healings. Generational bondages have been broken.

It is very exciting and rewarding for us as team members when we see what happens in the lives of those we pray for, and we give all the Glory to Him!





# Living Springs Counselling Centre



*Living Springs Counselling Centre is a ministry arm of Berwick Church of Christ that assists individuals, couples, children and adolescents who are dealing with issues in their lives, through professionally trained counsellors, therapists and mentors.*

The Living Springs Counselling Centre turned 25 in 2023 after being established in 1998. Each year it goes from strength to strength and 2023 was no exception. We have had on average 30-40 sessions per week. There are 5 rooms available in the centre for the counsellors to use depending on their availability and the needs of their clients.

Living Springs Counselling Centre is a ministry arm of Berwick Church of Christ that assists individuals, couples, children and adolescents who are dealing with issues in their lives, through professionally trained counsellors, therapists and mentors. Help is available in self development, grief, trauma and emotional stress. Relationship difficulties, separation, marriage problems, divorce, parenting problems are also counselled, as well as those dealing with suicide, depression and addiction issues. We also provide Spiritual Mentoring for those who want more out of their spiritual life.

Each one on the team is qualified and has all the appropriate affiliations. The team consists of Christine Buckingham (Counsellor) Emily Weary (Social Worker) Jason Crestani (Child Phycologist) Georgi Watts (Counsellor), Martin Gillespie (Counsellor), Nycey Stanley (Counsellor), Benita Daniel (Counsellor) and Warren Gomez (Counsellor)

We were delighted to welcome Isabella Goldstein to the team in 2023 – Isabella specialises in transformative life journeys towards positive change for couples, adults teenagers and children.

One of the counsellors recently received this feedback:

“Thank you for working with us. We are no longer sparring partners but listening together to make decisions that will meet the needs of us both while making space for each other”.

If you would like to make an appointment to see any of the counsellors please head to the website <https://berwickchurch.org.au/living-springs/> to look through the counsellors profile to see who may be the best person to assist you or someone in your family, to look through the fee schedule and then simply fill in the enquiry form.



# Associate Pastor

*Mat Daniels*



*Of all that God has been doing I am so excited by the salvations, baptisms and testimonies of transformation that we witnessed during 2023, well done to all involved.*

2023 was an incredible year of growth for our church, and for my sons. We continue to praise God for all the wonderful things we see happening in and through BCOC. Of all that God has been doing I am so excited by the salvations, baptisms and testimonies of transformation that we witnessed during 2023, well done to all involved.

My 2023 started with a focus on partnership and volunteer participation in ministry, we have seen growth in both over 2023. Knowing each of us are called to be on mission for our Lord and partner in the growth strategies of the Kingdom of God inspires me to dream of all the church could be if we only all found our place in the body, if we all fulfilled our roles, we would become like a beautiful orchestra, all performing our part in harmony with each other. Ministry needs are never the issue, we always have more need for partners in the vision, mission and purpose of BCOC, it is the people who will take up responsibility for the needs and volunteer their time, treasure and talent for the sake of the gospel, for the advancement of the kingdom, and for the salvations of souls.

Thank you to all who have served, partnered and sacrificed to see God move in and through us for the benefit of those around us.

I was excited to move back into the Follow Christ pillar of our church late in 2023, taking the baton from Pastor Ken, releasing him to be more available for Clyde. Thank you Ken for the wonderful example you set to follow, I am filled with hope for the future of these ministries. I also took over from Michael the Food Pantry late in 2023, and I was so humbled by the wonderful work these hero's do each week serving the community and helping those in need to just get through the next few days with dignity and hope. I trust we can keep building on the foundations in all of these areas.



# Our Statistics

*A brief snapshot of what has happened throughout the year in terms of growth and attendance.*



## Partners

Partners means a person accepted into membership of BCOC under rule 19.3 of the Constitution.

Statistics	2021	2022	2023
New Partners	6	56	57
Total Partners (as at end of year)	244	281	313



## Baptisms

Baptism is the complete immersion into water of those who have confessed their faith in Jesus Christ as God's Son and their Saviour.

Statistics	2021	2022	2023
Baptisms	27	22	43



## Attendance

Attendance statistics for our services, youth group and kids church for your information.

Statistics	2021	2022	2023
Adults - average attendance at 10am services	325	379	572
Nitrokids (Grade Prep-6) - average attendance	49	45	88
Little Sparks/Wonderkids - average attendance	13	19	18
Facebook Live Stream Views - average at 10am Services	-	292	253
YouTube Live Stream Views - average at 10am Services	-	253	300
FUSE Youth - average attendance on Friday nights	44	56	70
Y&Y Service - average attendance at 5:30pm services	53	79	118
Clyde Gatherings - average attendance on Sundays	19	19	34



# Treasurer's Report

*Brett Hutchinson*



*The audited statutory financial reports of Berwick Church of Christ for the year ended 31 December 2023 are outlined on the following pages. The audit was performed by RCR Financial Group (formerly known as Rucker Financial).*

The BCOC fiscal year runs from 01 January to 31 December. We had another very good year financially in 2023, enabling us to continue to invest in Ministries and to reach the community as God calls us. Thank you to all who have supported the church financially and to the leadership of the church for your guidance throughout the year.

In consultation with the Board, we set a tithing income budget that grew 0.5% on FY22 actuals and a 2% increase on FY22 budget; this was conservative on the back of rising interest rates and 'cost of living' pressures, and did not account for potential increases in attendance. In most years we receive one-off gifts, but we can't plan or rely on this to achieve our income targets. Nonetheless, we did budget for \$125K in gifts for FY23; this was down 49% on FY22 actuals.

The FY23 expense budget was 4.6% higher than the FY22 budget, largely reflecting the current inflation rate. The net result was that our FY23 budget had a very significant forecast loss of \$323K. We had a healthy buffer given the excellent prior financial years, so we planned to rely on this buffer to maintain momentum and continue to invest in Berwick Church of Christ.

The actual bottom-line result for FY23 significantly exceeded the budget expectations. This was primarily because of an unbudgeted gift from a faithful church family of \$404K and general giving/tithing which was 14.8% over budget (attendance grew 35% in 2023). We also came in \$103K under budget on expenses. Income was 135.6% and expenses were 94.2% of budget, resulting in a profit (surplus) of \$295K vs a projected budget loss of \$323K.

Our tithing and offerings income was up \$175K on budget and gifts were up \$304K on budget. The really positive aspect of giving is that it continued to grow throughout the year and finished very strongly in December. We account for gifts separately to tithes and offerings, as gifts are often one-off and often provided specifically for a Ministry or project. We also account for Humanitarian and Food Pantry giving separately.

The Food Pantry income was up 34% on budget, but expenses were up 50% on budget. Our current Food Pantry expenditure exceeds average regular giving. You will have heard multiple calls from the pastors throughout the year to give to the Food Pantry.

Thank you to all our committed church partners and attendees who continued to give generously to support the mission of the church. Most people who have given electronically over the past two years have continued to give reliably and consistently. It is this support that has enabled us to continue to invest in the life of the church.

At the last AGM in May 2023, I reported that the Victorian State Revenue Office (SRO) had levied Land Tax from 2014 to 2023 on the parcel of our land that was previously undeveloped. We received notification in mid-2023 that the SRO had rejected the initial appeal lodged by CCVT and Moores Legal. The land tax liability currently sits at \$552K. As you will read elsewhere in this report, BCOC is appealing this decision at VCAT. We have engaged a legal team including counsel and total costs are estimated at around \$100K, some of which are represented in the FY23 accounts. The notes to the financial statements include an acknowledgement of the contingent liability for land tax.

The audited statutory financial reports of Berwick Church of Christ for the year ended 31 December 2023 are outlined on the following pages. The audit was performed by RCR Financial Group (formerly known as Rucker Financial). A simplified view of our FY23 results is shown below.

## Berwick Church of Christ

### Financial Reports for the Period Ended 31 December 2023

	Actual	Budget	Difference
<b>Income</b>			
Hire of Facilities	5,557	8,000	(2,443)
Food Pantry	35,653	26,600	9,053
Humanitarian	1,895	1,650	245
Tithes & Offerings	1,356,987	1,182,000	174,987
Gifts	428,789	124,752	304,037
Other Income	130,699	101,920	28,779
<b>Total Income</b>	<b><u>1,959,579</u></b>	<b><u>1,444,922</u></b>	<b><u>514,657</u></b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Administration Expenses	167,062	247,842	(80,780)
Building Costs & Upgrades	263,373	227,038	36,335
Utilities	66,939	62,470	4,469
Food Pantry Expenditure	53,981	35,890	18,091
Humanitarian	4,298	1,650	2,648
Missions	1,800	2,800	(1,000)
Staff Remuneration	899,040	868,796	30,244
Other Expenses	207,715	320,957	(113,242)
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b><u>1,664,209</u></b>	<b><u>1,767,443</u></b>	<b><u>(103,234)</u></b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b><u>295,371</u></b>	<b><u>(322,521)</u></b>	<b><u>617,892</u></b>
<b>Assets ##</b>	5,160,211	4,525,154	637,257
<b>Liabilities ##</b>	(2,200.00)	(3,650.00)	1,450.00
<b>Net Assets ##</b>	<b><u>5,158,011</u></b>	<b><u>4,521,504</u></b>	<b><u>638,707</u></b>

**## After adjusting for net tax liabilities**

#### Some Key Points from FY22:

- The church generated a profit (surplus) of \$295K which was \$618K higher than budgeted.
- Tithes and offerings averaged \$113,082 per month, which was a record high. This amount was 15.4% greater than the monthly average for FY22.
- We received Gifts of \$429K.
- Faithful families regularly contributed financial support to the Food Pantry, with total contributions of \$36K vs a budget of \$27K.
- Humanitarian giving was \$1.9K versus a budget of \$1.7K.
- Missions expenditure comprised gifts to Empart.
- The church has no current loan or mortgage liabilities so none of your giving goes to service debt.

I would like to thank my wife Glenda, our family, and the Board for supporting me in the Treasurer role. I would also particularly like to thank Melinda Izvekova for her role in the day-to-day management of the financial affairs of the church.

**Berwick Church of Christ Inc**  
**ABN: 37 625 301 987**  
**Regulation No.: A0059580G**

The Board of Elders has determined that Berwick Church of Christ ("the Church") is not a reporting entity and that these special purpose financial statements should be prepared in accordance with the accounting policies outlined in note 1 to the financial statements.

In the Opinion of the Board of Elders:

- 1 The financial statements and notes present a true and fair view of the financial position of the Church as at 31st December 2023 and its financial performance for the year ended on that date.
- 2 At the date of this statement there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Church will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

The Statement is made in accordance with a resolution of the Board and is signed for and on behalf of the Board by:



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Elder: Bronwyn Cameron

Dated this 15th day of March 2024



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Elder: Matt Ormiston

Dated this 17<sup>th</sup> day of March 2024



**Berwick Church of Christ Inc**  
**ABN: 37 625 301 987**  
**Regulation No.: A0059580G**

**FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 2023**

	Note	2023	2022
		\$	\$
<b>Income</b>			
Children's Ministry		746	2,578
Community Outreach		35,653	26,284
Creative Arts		1,632	20,860
Clyde Church		4,847	-
Executive:			
Humanitarian Offerings		1,895	5,894
Tithes & Offerings		1,352,139	1,176,141
Other Income	7 (a)	61,275	84,966
Sub-Total Executive		1,415,309	1,267,001
General:			
Gifts Received		404,350	212,040
Hire of Facilities		5,557	10,689
Interest Received		2,958	1,195
Other Income	7 (b)	24,183	6,339
Sub-Total General		437,048	230,263
Young Adults Ministry		9,464	2,208
Youth Ministry		54,881	43,302
<b>Total Income</b>		1,959,580	1,592,496
<b>Expenses</b>			
Children's Ministry		12,057	11,547
Community Outreach		53,981	21,763
Creative Arts		47,828	45,560
Executive:			
Humanitarian Gifts & Expenses		4,298	646
Mission Gifts & Expenses		1,800	2,550
Next Steps Process Expenses		14,291	905
Remuneration Expenses	7 (a)	899,040	801,122
Other Expenses	7 (a)	72,007	25,025
Subtotal Executive		991,436	830,248
General:			
Administration Expenses	7 (b)	106,608	83,958
Building Cleaning & Maintenance	7 (b)	263,373	89,487
Utilities	7 (b)	66,938	54,944
Other Expenses	7 (b)	60,454	35,885
Sub-Total General		497,373	264,274
Young Adults Ministry		8,706	2,389
Youth Ministry		52,828	42,355
<b>Total Expenses</b>		1,664,209	1,218,136
Net Operating Surplus		295,371	374,360
Other Comprehensive Income		-	-
<b>Total Operating &amp; Comprehensive Income</b>		295,371	374,360

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements

**Berwick Church of Christ Inc**  
**ABN: 37 625 301 987**  
**Regulation No.: A0059580G**  
**STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY**  
**AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2023**

	Note	Retained Surpluses	Restricted Surpluses	Total
<b>Balance as at 1 January 2022</b>		4,391,980	98,500	4,490,480
Surplus from ordinary operations		374,360	-	374,360
Transfers		98,500	(98,500)	-
<b>Balance as at 31 December 2022</b>		4,864,840	-	4,864,840
Surplus from ordinary operations		295,371	-	295,371
Transfers		-	-	-
<b>Balance as at 31 December 2023</b>	8	5,160,211	-	5,160,211

**Berwick Church of Christ Inc**  
**ABN: 37 625 301 987**  
**Regulation No.: A0059580G**  
**FINANCIAL POSITION**  
**AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2023**

	Note	2023	2022
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Cash and Cash Equivalents	2	1,177,292	899,045
Receivables	3	31,791	7,954
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>		1,209,083	906,999
<b>NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Property, plant and equipment	1c, 4	3,966,080	3,966,080
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>		3,966,080	3,966,080
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>		5,175,163	4,873,079
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
Accounts Payable	5	12,752	5,839
Bonds Held	6	2,200	2,400
<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		14,952	8,239
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>		14,952	8,239
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		5,160,211	4,864,840
<b>EQUITY</b>			
Restricted Surpluses	8	-	-
Retained Surplus	8	5,160,211	4,864,840
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>		5,160,211	4,864,840

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements

**Berwick Church of Christ Inc**  
**ABN: 37 625 301 987**  
**Regulation No.: A0059580G**

**CASH FLOW STATEMENT**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

	Note	2023 \$	2022 \$
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>			
Receipts from Church Members, Customers & Others		1,956,622	1,591,301
Interest Received		2,958	1,195
Payments to Suppliers and Employees		<u>( 1,687,137)</u>	<u>( 1,214,346)</u>
<b>NET CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>	9 (a)	<u><u>272,443</u></u>	<u><u>378,150</u></u>
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES</b>			
Purchase of Property, Plant and Equipment		-	-
Proceed from Sale of Property, Plant and Equipment		<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
<b>NET CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES</b>		<u><u>-</u></u>	<u><u>-</u></u>
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES</b>			
Repayment of Borrowings		-	-
Borrowings		<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
<b>NET CASH FLOWS PROVIDED BY FINANCING ACTIVITIES</b>		<u><u>-</u></u>	<u><u>-</u></u>
Net Increase/(Decrease) in Cash Held		272,443	378,150
Cash at Beginning of Year		896,443	518,293
Cash at end of Year	9 (b)	<u><u>1,168,886</u></u>	<u><u>896,443</u></u>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements



**Berwick Church of Christ Inc**  
**ABN: 37 625 301 987**  
**Regulation No.:A0059580G**  
**Notes to the Financial Statements**  
**for the Year Ended 31 December 2023**

**NOTE 1. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES**

The Board of Elders of Berwick Church of Christ Inc ("The Church") has determined that the Church is not a reporting entity because there are no users dependent on general purpose financial statements. Therefore these are special purpose financial statements that have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 and section 60.40 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013.

The following is a summary of the accounting policies that have been adopted in preparation of these financial statements.

**(a) Historical Cost Accounting**

The financial statements have been prepared on a cash basis (except for PAYG Withholding Tax and GST), based on historical costs and do not take into account changing money values or, except where stated, current valuations of non-current assets. The accounting policies have been consistently applied, unless otherwise stated.

**(b) Consolidated Accounts**

The financial statements represent all ministry areas of the Church apart from Playgroup and Boys Brigade which operate autonomously.

**(c) Property, Plant & Equipment**

All plant and equipment are expensed and all land and buildings are recorded at cost.

The title for the Church property is held in the name of The Properties Corporation of Churches of Christ ("Prop Corp"). Prop Corp holds the title as trustee for the Church and does not retain any beneficial interest in it.

**(d) Goods and Services Tax (GST)**

Revenue, expenses and assets are recognised net of GST, except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO). Receivables and payables are stated as inclusive of GST. The net amount of GST recoverable from or payable to the ATO is included in the statement of financial position

Cash flows are presented on a gross basis. The GST components of cash flows arising from investing or financing activities which are recoverable from or payable to the ATO are presented as operating cash flows, and have been included in receipts from customers or payments to suppliers.

**Berwick Church of Christ Inc**  
**ABN: 37 625 301 987**  
**Regulation No.:A0059580G**  
**Notes to the Financial Statements**  
**for the Year Ended 31 December 2023**

	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
<b>Note 2. CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENT</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
New Cheque Account	259,302	180,128
RaboPlus General	169,868	667,361
RaboPlus - LSL	35,355	32,059
Rabo - Term Deposit	700,000	-
RaboPlus Food Pantry Account	4,005	12,372
RaboPlus - Humanitarian Fund	8,762	7,125
	<u>1,177,292</u>	<u>899,045</u>
<b>Note 3. Receivables</b>		
GST Refundable	<u>31,791</u>	<u>7,954</u>
<b>Note 4. PROPERTY PLANT AND EQUIPMENT</b>		
Freehold Land and Buildings at Cost	3,966,080	3,966,080
Add : Additions	-	-
	<u>3,966,080</u>	<u>3,966,080</u>
<b>Note 5. ACCOUNTS PAYABLE</b>		
Credit Card: Karen Fletcher	4,635	967
Credit Card: Melinda Izvekov	3,771	1,635
PAYG Withholding Tax Payable	4,346	3,237
	<u>12,752</u>	<u>5,839</u>
<b>Note 6. Current Borrowings</b>		
Bonds Held	<u>2,200</u>	<u>2,400</u>
<b>Note 7. Further Details of Ministry Income &amp; Expenses</b>		
<b>(a) Executive</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
<u>Other Income:</u>		
Counselling Centre Income	18,505	17,786
Course Fees & Income	-	139
Gifts Received	24,439	35,382
Miscellaneous Income	13,280	28,279
Alpha Course Income	4,931	3,380
Prayer Ministry Income	120	-
	<u>61,275</u>	<u>84,966</u>

**ABN: 37 625 301 987**  
**Regulation No.:A0059580G**  
**Notes to the Financial Statements**  
**for the Year Ended 31 December 2023**

<b>Note 7. Further Details of Ministry Income &amp; Expenses</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
<b>(a) Executive (continue)</b>		
<u>Remuneration Expense:</u>		
Salaries & Fringe Benefits	783,161	680,394
Fringe Benefits Tax	392	-1,657
Long Service Leave	11,976	10,233
Superannuation	91,676	75,637
Relocation Expenses	4,260	31,220
Workcover	7,575	5,295
	<u>899,040</u>	<u>801,122</u>
 <u>Other Expenses:</u>		
Congregational Care	1,734	1,446
Church Planting Expenses	6,401	564
Counselling Centre Expenses	342	137
Course & Training Expenses	15,098	5,942
Guest Speakers	7,514	1,456
Hospitality	8,486	5,037
Intern Expenses	125	449
Life Group Resources	10,000	2,160
Miscellaneous Ministries Expenses	3,748	3,057
Growing to Maturity Expenses	5,794	1,234
Life Keys Expenses	259	-
Training & Travel Expenses	5,499	45
Weekend Services Expenses	7,007	3,498
	<u>72,007</u>	<u>25,025</u>
 <b>(b) General</b>		
<u>Other Income</u>		
Books	835	1,000
Kitchen & Catering	22,195	3,795
Sundry Income	114	32
Sundry Receipts Redirected	1,039	1,512
	<u>24,183</u>	<u>6,339</u>



**Berwick Church of Christ Inc**  
**ABN: 37 625 301 987**  
**Regulation No.:A0059580G**  
**Notes to the Financial Statements**  
**for the Year Ended 31 December 2023**

<b>Note 7 (b) General (continued)</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
<u>Administration Expenses</u>		
Advertising & Publicity	992	11,733
Audit Fees	5,400	4,977
Bank charges	1,734	1,653
Computer Expenses	12,816	8,067
Computer /Office Maintenance	-	121
First Aid Expenses	1,601	651
Hire of Facilities	1,058	470
Legal Fees	12,158	-
Postage	251	368
Printing & Stationery	22,903	24,671
Registration & Subscriptions	29,704	26,339
Repairs, Resources & Equipment	308	250
Security Costs	12,182	645
Sundry Expenses	605	-
Telephone	4,896	4,013
	<u>106,608</u>	<u>83,958</u>
<u>Building &amp; Cleaning &amp; Maintenance</u>		
Cleaning Contract	37,522	33,140
Cleaning & Caretaking Expenses	12,809	9,017
Repairs Replacements & Maintenance	213,042	47,330
	<u>263,373</u>	<u>89,487</u>
<u>Utilities</u>		
Electricity	21,603	17,729
Gas	482	440
Insurance	29,863	22,323
Rates	14,990	14,452
	<u>66,938</u>	<u>54,944</u>
<u>Other Expenses</u>		
Book Purchases	413	2,610
Re-branding Expenses	5,747	5,147
Hospitality, Supplies & Amenities	24,516	21,531
Kitchen & Catering Costs	27,796	5,085
Gifts Paid	943	-
Sundry Receipts Redirected	1,039	1,512
	<u>60,454</u>	<u>35,885</u>

**Berwick Church of Christ Inc**  
**ABN: 37 625 301 987**  
**Regulation No.:A0059580G**  
**Notes to the Financial Statements**  
**for the Year Ended 31 December 2023**

Note 8	Surpluses	<i>Opening Balance</i>	<i>Income</i>	<i>Expenses</i>	<i>Transfers</i>	<i>Closing Balance</i>
	<b><u>Restricted Surpluses</u></b>					
	Children's Ministry	-	746	(12,057)	11,311	-
	Clyde Church	-	4,847	-	(4,847)	-
	Community Outreach	-	35,653	(53,981)	18,328	-
	Creative Arts	-	1,632	(47,828)	46,196	-
	Executive	-	1,415,309	(991,436)	(423,873)	-
	Young Adults Ministry	-	9,464	(8,706)	(758)	-
	Youth Ministry	-	54,881	(52,828)	(2,053)	-
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,522,532</b>	<b>(1,166,836)</b>	<b>(355,696)</b>	<b>-</b>
	<b><u>Retained Surpluses</u></b>					
	<b><u>General</u></b>					
	Cheque Account	180,127	434,090	(497,373)	142,458	259,302
	Other Accounts	4,684,713	2,958	-	213,238	4,900,909
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>4,864,840</b>	<b>437,048</b>	<b>(497,373)</b>	<b>355,696</b>	<b>5,160,211</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>4,864,840</b>	<b>1,959,580</b>	<b>(1,664,209)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>5,160,211</b>

**Note 9 Cash Flow Information**

	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
<i>(a) Reconciliation of Net Cash Provided by Operating Activities to Operating Surplus</i>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
Net Surplus	295,371	374,360
<b>Change in Assets &amp; Liabilities</b>		
(Increase) /Decrease in receivables/ prepaid	(23,837)	9,700
Increase /(Decrease) in other creditors	909	(5,910)
<b>Net Cash used by operating activities</b>	<b>272,443</b>	<b>378,150</b>
<b>(b) Net Cash and Cash Equivalents</b>		
Cheque Account	259,302	180,127
Deposits at Call	917,990	718,918
Credit Cards	(8,406)	(2,602)
	<b>1,168,886</b>	<b>896,443</b>

**Berwick Church of Christ Inc**  
**ABN: 37 625 301 987**  
**Regulation No.:A0059580G**  
**Notes to the Financial Statements**  
**for the Year Ended 31 December 2023**

**Note 10 Contingent Liability**

The church land is held on trust by CCVT Properties Corporation (Prop Corp). The State Revenue Office (SRO) have removed the Land Tax exemption for a part of the church land and back-dated land tax to 2014. Prop Corp have paid the outstanding Land Tax liability (2014 to 2023) of \$552,142.50 as they are legally liable for this. Prop Corp may seek a financial arrangement with BCOC for the repayment of the land tax liability. A VCAT appeal has been lodged by BCOC on behalf of Prop Corp and subject to the outcome of that appeal, some or all of the land tax may be refunded to Prop Corp. This note advises that there may exist a contingent liability, up to \$552,142.50; this is not represented on the Balance Sheet.



**Berwick Church of Christ Inc**  
**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 2023**

**Opinion**

I have audited the financial report of Berwick Church of Christ Inc, which comprises the assets and liabilities statement as at 31 December 2023, the income and expenditure statement for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies, and the statements by members of the Board of Elders.

In my opinion, the accompanying financial report presents fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the church as at 31 December 2023 and its financial performance for the year then ended in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements and the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 Vic.

**Basis for Opinion**

I conducted my audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report section of my report. I am independent of the association in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110: Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (the Code) that are relevant to my audit of the financial report in Australia. I have also fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

**Emphasis of Matter - Basis of Accounting**

I draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared to assist the association to meet the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 Vic. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose. My opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

**Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Report**

The committee is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with the financial reporting requirements of the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 Vic and for such internal control as the committee determines is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, the committee is responsible for assessing the association's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters relating to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the committee either intends to liquidate the association or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

**Berwick Church of Christ Inc**  
**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 2023**

**Auditor's Responsibility for the Audit of the Financial Report**

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this report. As part of an audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards, I exercise professional judgment and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. I also:

*Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.*

*Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control.*

*Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.*

*Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the entity's ability to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion. My conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of my auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the entity to cease to continue as a going concern.*

*Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.*

I communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.



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**Geoffrey B. Johnson, FCA**  
**RCR Audit and Assurance Pty Ltd**

Dated this 18th day of March 2024  
Doncaster East, VIC 3109







baptism



food pantry



next steps



search



alpha



boys brigade



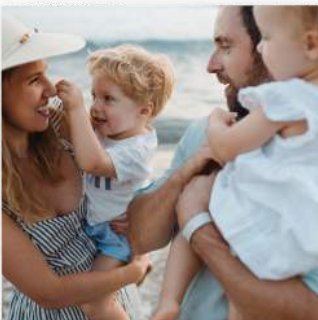
men's prayer



encounter god



gtm



child dedication



car park team



men's ministry



# Annual Report 2023