

ST MICHAEL'S UNITING CHURCH



CHURCH COUNCIL UPDATE 10 MARCH 2022

The Church Council held its first meeting for the year in February. We are pleased to provide the congregation with an update of our current work.

NEW MEMBERS AND OFFICE BEARERS

The Council warmly welcomed four new members Ann Kinnear, Catherine Jones, Neil Blood, and Brian Smith and we look forward to their contributions to Council.

We also elected following office bearers for 2022.

Chair of Council	Laura Beckett
Treasurer	Ian Cox
Secretary	Maree McDonald
Chair of Property	Peter Anderson
Chair of Church Services	Lorraine Woolley
Chair of Contact and Care	Lyndell O'Brien
Chair of Programs	Neil Blood

STAFF OFFICE APPOINTMENT

We are very pleased that Justine O'Loughlin has been appointed as Administration Manager to support the work of the Minister and to work with Glen Tonkes, Finance and Operations Manager, to undertake administrative functions and to support work of the Council. Justine took up the position at the end of February.

We expressed our great appreciation to the outstanding work done by Glen Tonkes and Alana Pryor-Leong during the time the office was not fully staffed in 2021.

RISK MANAGEMENT

The Treasurer Ian Cox and the Finance Committee of Council have taken the lead in developing a Risk Register and at each Council Meeting risks are noted and monitored. Each Chair of the four Committees, Property, Church Services, Contact and Care and Programs will monitor and report to Council any risks identified in their area of operation.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

The Treasurer Ian Cox, the Finance Committee, and Glen Tonkes Manager of Finance and Operations reported a sound financial result for the year ending 31 December 2021 and have prepared a balanced budget for the approval of the Congregation at the Annual General Meeting for 2022. As a Council, we are grateful for their excellent financial management on behalf of the congregation.

STRATEGIC PLANNING GOALS

In August 2020 the Council approved the church's Strategic Mission Plan 2020 to 2024 which identified our Mission to provide "a vibrant, inclusive, hospitable and community focused city church, sharing a contemporary and progressive Christian theology embracing spirituality, the arts, wellbeing, justice and compassion". The Strategic Plan built on a report from Rev Terence Corkin following his facilitation of congregational workshops and consultations in 2019. Our initial goals were focused on maintaining community and connection during lockdowns.

In December 2021, the Council including our newly elected members, met again with Terence Corkin who led a workshop to develop specific goals to support our 2020-2024 Mission, Vision and Strategic Directions for this post-lockdown, covid-normal time.

Alongside this, Peter Anderson and Glen Tonkes have been working with Synod Property Services and Purcell Architects on the Conservation Management Plan. It has become apparent that major work will be required to meet occupancy regulations including disability access requirements in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1992, and to increase the number of toilets in the church to meet occupancy requirements for public events and community-based activities.

It is with these issues in mind that it is critical to further develop and implement strategies that will open the church to accommodate community-based activities. Following receipt of Terence Corkin's Report from the 2021 planning session, a working group consisting of the Minister, Laura Beckett, Ian Cox, Lorraine Woolley, Ann Kinnear, Brain Smith, Val Gill, and Maree McDonald has been established to bring focused goals and an implantation plan back to Council.

The Council endorsed this vision for the future and agreed to the following proposal to support, in principle, the redevelopment and revitalisation of the church:

That the Church Council supports the concept of the redevelopment and revitalisation of St Michael's Church to implement the church's Strategic Plan of being outwardly focused and providing an inclusive, hospitable, and welcoming church space for the people of Melbourne that enables access for all people.

MINGARY COMMITTEE

The Mingary Committee, which supports St Michael's relationship with Cairnmillar Institute in the operation of the Mingary Cairnmillar Counselling Service, met in February.

A new cohort of counsellors has started on site, and we expect that face to face counselling will resume in the next few weeks. Telehealth counselling will also continue. The new counsellors receive supervision and support from a Cairnmillar staff member, who is based at St Michael's when the Service. A group-based parenting program will also be offered in the near future.

120 COLLINS STREET PROJECT

The project to revamp the lobby of 120 Collins Street will take approximately 18 months to complete and will result in major disruption. Construction noise, from Monday to Saturday, from 7am up to 7pm, will adversely affect the use of the church for weddings and other events. With the support of UCA Synod Property Services, every step has been taken to protect our heritage church during construction.

A hoarding will soon be erected across the back of the church which will block access between the Church and the St Michael's Halls and Offices. Access will be via a newly constructed tunnel, which connects our Hall and Office entrance to the steps at the corner of Russell and Little Collins Streets. Disability access will be via a lift on Little Collins Street near Russell Street. We recognise that this creates a significant burden for the congregation, and we continue to explore ways to maintain our commitment to hospitality and community during this time.

We appreciate your understanding as we negotiate a situation that is in many respects beyond our control.