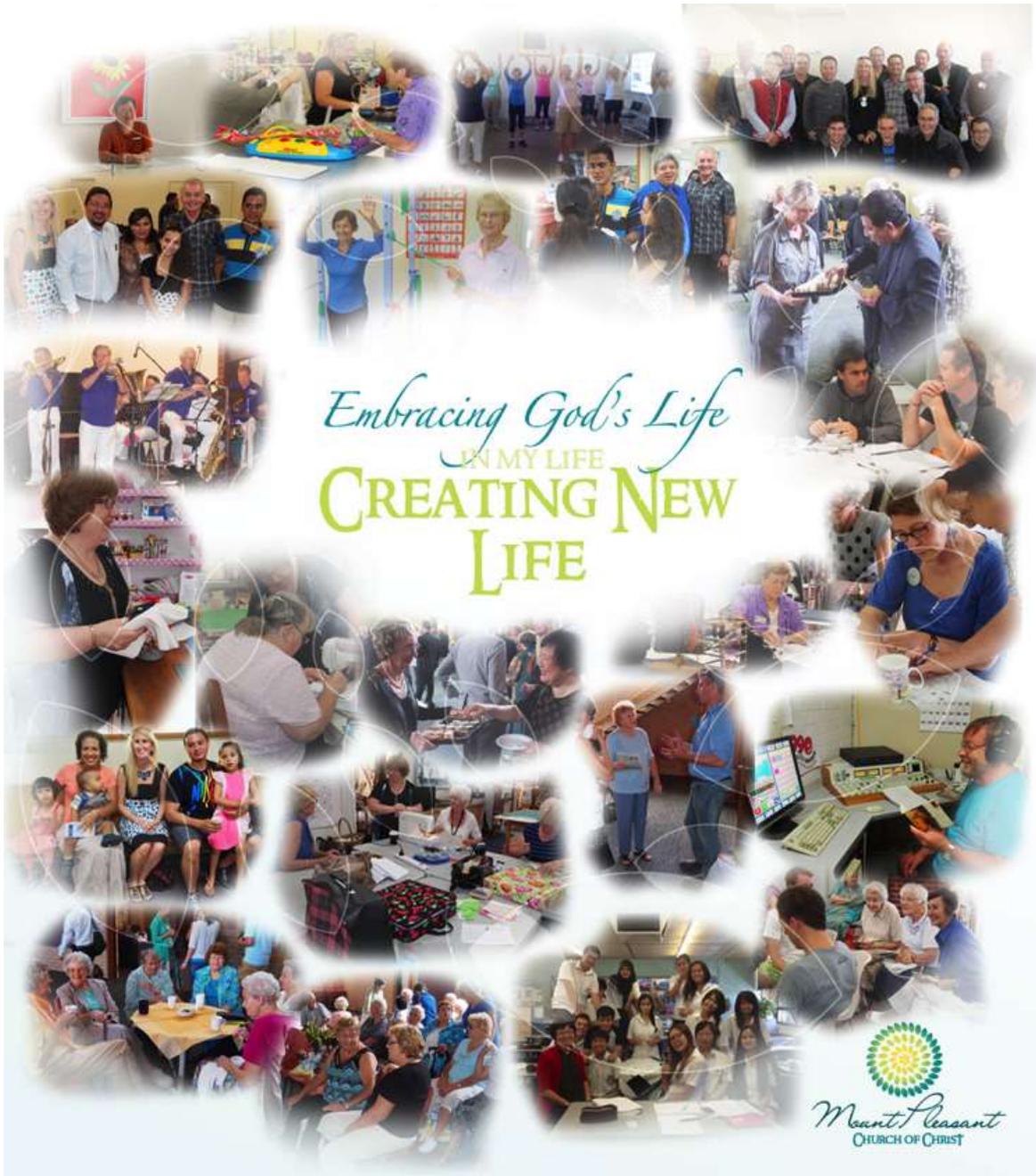


REPORTS TO 2016 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



Embracing God's Life
IN MY LIFE
**CREATING NEW
LIFE**



SERVANT LEADERSHIP TEAM

"The universe is the theatre of God's glory." 1

"Remember our Message is not about ourselves; we're proclaiming Jesus Christ... For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' made his light shine in our hearts to give us the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all surpassing power is from God and not from us." 2 "The last and final word is this: Fear God – stand in awe of God. Do what he tells you." 3

Embracing God's Life – In My Life – Creating New Life is the encouragement of the montage depicting snapshots of everyday life activities of members of the Mount Pleasant Church of Christ, past and present. Each year new snapshots of our lives add to the montage that is God's story unfolding among us and through us. Birthdays ushering in new decades, anniversaries that mark special years to celebrate, losses we honour with remembrance, holidays we enjoy, welcoming new members to our church family and fare-welling others, supporting one another in births, deaths, weddings, funerals, family happenings – the joys and heartaches, and other special events or new seasons in our lives. Moving homes, changing job circumstances and new directions open up exciting but uncertain possibilities, and the passing of years gifts us with greater capacities on one hand, while at the same time are accompanied by decline in others. Church partnerships have gifted us special friends and the story grows well beyond our individual snapshots. Our lives individually and corporately, as the Mount Pleasant Church of Christ, are a participation in the Gospel – the 'Good News' – the Message of Jesus Christ. Whatever part we play Paul assures us in his letter to the Romans that *"He knows us far better than we know ourselves, knows our pregnant condition, and keeps us present before God. That's why we can be so sure that every detail in our lives of love for God is worked into something good. God knew what he was doing from the very beginning."* (8:27-28)

As we reflect over this last year in light of the years that have gone before and our hopes and expectations for the years ahead, I believe there are many ways to view the Mount Pleasant Church of Christ. We can apply the measure of the '3 B's' – Building, Budget & Butts, which has become quite a prevailing yet somewhat simplistic reduction of the heart of the Church Growth Movement and is quite relative in its application. This report does seek to acknowledge these are important pragmatics and we have a responsibility to be wise stewards in regards to these areas of church life. We can consider a more relational approach, seeking to hear from one another and those who visit with us how we perceive our church. There have been many comments from both members as well as visitors confirming the significance of this congregation in some respect. I heard of one visitor's comment: *"This church is visionary!"* However, there is also awareness that weaknesses do exist, and we should not be afraid to acknowledge these and their implications. Given, however, that personal perspectives by nature will differ, how do we embrace the differences while moving into the future with a unified purpose. I believe that the way is to embrace the prevailing theme of church culture – that of 'Growth,' as well as the personal relational strengths of our church family and commit to the growth highlighted by God through these scriptures:

"Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen" 4 "It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ...speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love as each part does its work." 5

This is the growth we seek – growth in Christ, growth that is from Christ, and

this is the priority of our reflection. The church of Jesus Christ, the Mount Pleasant Church of Christ, is built up – grows, as each of us, by the power of His Spirit within us, is faithful to our part in the body. It is my privilege as your sister in Christ to offer my part to join with yours as we continue to trust our lives to the will and purpose of our God for our church family. To Him be the glory!

1. Explicit Gospel p.40 Matt Chandler; 2. 2 Cor 4:5-7; 3. Ecc 12:13; 4. 2 Pet 3:18; 5. Eph 4:11-13, 15-16

Gay Addison

Recently I came across the ancient Zulu word – **‘ubuntu’**. What I have been told is that a rough translation of the word is, ‘I am because of you.’ As I reflected on the meaning, I found myself truly thankful that I am because of what God in Christ has done, is doing and will complete in me. This is an aspect of the Gospel, the ‘good news’, which has come into renewed focus for me over this last year. Further, on reflection, I am also truly thankful that I am because I am part of the Mount Pleasant Church of Christ – a community of believers who continue to offer to me a glimpse of a God who is genuinely caring, prayerfully and relationally supportive, diverse yet ‘one’. I find that there is a beauty and richness to our older folk and an energy and boldness to our younger adults that continues to encourage me in my life journey. As I move amongst the other Churches of Christ within our Association it remains my privilege to offer both greetings from the Mount Pleasant congregation and the encouragement that I experience from being part of a small community of saints who believe that God is at work in and through their everyday lives. As I am writing this report I am reminded that yesterday was a cold and wet Sunday morning with a number of folk absent from our meeting due to sickness or holidays. Reflecting on the size of yesterday’s meeting, it is evident that over the last few years God hasn’t chosen to significantly increase our Sunday morning numbers, though it has been great to welcome new folk into the Mt Pleasant church family. What does the future hold for us as a legal entity and as a community of believers? Truly, God only knows; but for me it remains a privilege to be part of a leadership team and a local church that values the ‘now’ and is willing, I believe, to embrace the ‘tomorrow’ with a courage and confidence in our God.

‘Ubuntu’ Bill Addison

This year has been a very interesting one personally and the support I have received from the church family has been brilliant. I really appreciate being able to continue to build friendships with people from different generations and value the wisdom and acceptance that is continuously offered. The central focus on God's character that comes from the leadership and the discussions that we have during group and personal discussions has helped me engage with my quiet times, Bible readings and challenges in a different way and it feels like a healthy way to be growing in my faith.

Kate Stannard

When Gay first asked if I'd consider being on the Servant Leadership Team (SLT) 2 years ago, I politely declined. I felt I had too much on my plate and I didn't want to overcommit myself. When she asked again last year, I didn't even hesitate and said yes! In fact, for the past few months Peter, Danielle and I have been 'on probation' on the SLT. We've been meeting every second month with Bill, Gay and Kate to discuss the functional heartbeat of Mount Pleasant Church of Christ. What really makes our church work? What missions are we supporting? Who looks after the building maintenance when the storms hit? Do we need a new website? How can we make our church a better place for worship,

fellowship and community? It's been a wonderful few months of discussing these and other topics with this amazing group of people. I've gotten a better understanding of Bill and Gay's leadership for our church and they are *truly* servant leaders. They always ask first, always consult, always do their research before making decisions. It's been wonderful to support them in that decision-making process knowing that they really care about our church's legacy now and into the future. I look forward to learning and growing whilst serving on the SLT. Mount Pleasant Church of Christ is amazing place of love and we are all so blessed to have each other.

Taku Scrutton

SHEPHERDING ELDERS

A Caring Church by Selwyn Hughes 2009:

“A caring Church is excited about the challenge of bringing its members to maturity. A caring Church is a church whose leaders demonstrate care and concern for each other. In a caring Church people can share deep feelings and hurts without fear of being rejected. A caring Church is a Church with a system of loving support. Love isn't about sentiment or feelings – it's about giving help to real people. A caring Church is a Church whose members pray constantly.”

I do believe that our Church is such a caring Church. Ephesians 4:11-12 *“It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.”* Use gifts to strengthen the Church. Working together the Church can express the fullness of Christ.

The Shepherding Elders team – Les, Merlwyn, Dot, Stella and Barbara, together with Gay and Bill continue to meet every second month. We prayerfully discuss the needs of the Church, Pastoral Care and relationships are high on the agenda. Hebrews 10:24-25 *“And let us consider how we may spur one another on towards love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”*



Encouragement from one another. Worship together.

Thank God for Les. He is so committed to the Lord Jesus. We cherish his wisdom and prayers.

Stella has dedicated herself to the “In Touch”, Bible readings and leading the service occasionally. Thank you!

Dot continues with her warm, welcoming greetings on a Sunday morning. We thank you too.

Merlwyn is a prayer warrior. Her prayers are an inspiration. Thank you for your commitment to preparing Holy Communion every Sunday.

I (Barbara) am surrounded by such wonderful, faithful Christians. Thank God for good health, guidance and grace from our Lord Jesus Christ to be able to continue with Pastoral Care.

“Finally, the Church belongs to God, not to us. Therefore it has a confident future. Whatever its present struggles, in the long term, it’s a winner.” Selwyn Hughes 2009

Barbara Cunningham

WORSHIP TEAM

Paul in Romans 12:1 encourages the church as related here by the Message version: *“So here’s what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him.”* The NIV describes this as our *“spiritual act of worship.”* Jesus, in speaking with the Samaritan woman as recorded in John 4, has this to say about worship: *“Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem...a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth.”* Worship is thus not confined to what



we do in church but is the acknowledgment of God and all his power and glory in everything we do. Each one of us who is committed to this acknowledgment of God is therefore a member of the MPCC Worship Team. We express through our daily lives, in all manner of ways, not just that we believe in God but that we believe his character to be loving and powerful – able to fulfill his promises for our good. However, there are also those among us who serve in specific roles to create the context for our shared expression of our honour, gratitude and adoration to our God through music and song,

communion and scripture. This team prepare during the week, arrive early on Sundays to set up, and lead in various roles throughout our service. As a congregation I am sure we would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation for the generous offering of their giftings and time, and to say ‘Thank you’ for their invitation to remember and worship our Lord together. These currently include: Aldy, Amos, Bill, Danielle, Elaine, George, Graeme, Kam, Len, Lindley, Merlwyn, Norma, Roy, Serena, Stella, Susan C, Susan M, & Taku, as well as those who participate in the ministry teams which are reported below.



Gay Addison

CHILDREN’S MINISTRY

This year the children's ministry has seen a number of changes. The children attending group regularly are younger than previously planned for and the change has created different needs and dynamics during the morning sessions. As a team, Kam, Anne and myself have been challenged to adapt to the different age group and the need for the teaching of foundational Christian concepts and biblical language, and it has been a good time of growth for all of us. We are currently teaching a series on the miracles of Jesus and enjoying the experience of seeing the awesome power of God through fresh eyes! The team continues to support, encourage and enthuse each other and have maintained the aim of providing for and loving every child and young person that walks through the door of Mount Pleasant.



Kate Stannard

SERVERS TEAM



Greetings Team! It would seem I have 'Lost a few months of this year' but as I'm very fond of Gay, I have no difficulty – (Well just a touch) – in accepting she is correct and it really is almost a year since the 2015 AGM! The last 12 months have been hard on the health of some of our beloved church family and brings a sadness as we try to offer assistance where possible. Thank you again to all those who are able and willing to continue serving the elements and count the offering every Sunday. Each roster member is, as always, ready to step in when someone has taken ill, or has a family problem. We are all happy to 'carry the baton' so things

go smoothly. Each person is a very valued member of the team and I offer my sincere thanks to one and all. I'm sure we'll continue to honour God by giving of our best.

Blessings and Love – Beryl Northey



KITCHEN TEAM

I am sure you will all join me in thanking our great "Kitchen Team" who so happily and faithfully man the Kitchen each Sunday, which allows our congregation to enjoy a very special time of fellowship together over a "cuppa".



One only has to stand at the

door and listen to the very animated and "happy chatter" to appreciate how special this time of sharing really is during morning tea. We are delighted to welcome Sharon, Penny, Peter and Colin onto the Roster. Team Members find it is a great way to get to know one another better whilst manning a "tea towel" or running the "dishwasher" so don't hesitate to let us know if you have a burning desire to join our team!!! Love to have you on board.



We combined with our friends from Grace Church for our Easter Sunday Service, which also then gave us the opportunity, following the service, to enjoy a time of fellowship with them over a nice morning tea. Our monthly hymn singing afternoon is always inspirational and fun and some of our Team are

always on hand to assist with the meal we share afterwards. Plans are in place for a luncheon later in the year which will be held following our morning Church Service. Thanks again "Kitchen Team" for your contribution to our Church Fellowship.

Norma Gilham

MEN'S GROUP

Our meetings are held on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of each month. Members enjoy playing carpet bowls and the game of 'Rummikub.' Les Smiths art of concentration with the latter game, and his consistent winning, has earned him the title of champion.

Morning tea break is enjoyable with lots of different subjects being discussed. Thank you to the church ladies who provide transport. Currently we have postponed meetings until Les is again able to join with us. If any of the men are interested in attending they would be welcome.

Colin Slipper

GARDENING CLUB

The Garden Club meets on the first Tuesday in each month and this year we have enjoyed many different speakers who specialise in growing different plants. We currently have 20 members who attend regularly. It is a happy group and one I am proud to be the President. Members of the Church are always welcome to attend. We have sold plants at meetings and again have been able to give donations to the Mustard Seed Orphanage and other charities. The Garden Club is the only contact some of our members have with a church and I would value your prayers for them. Once again a big thank you to the members who have helped throughout the year. Your help has been greatly appreciated.



Dot Hickey

ADMINISTRATION, FINANCE & FACILITY

It has been coming up to a year since Jan has concluded her employment with us, which assisted with the areas of administration, finance and the facility. It has been a testament to God's provision to have people who have been able to offer some much appreciated support in these areas. Since the beginning of 2016 Susan has been offering administrative help manning and tending to the office one morning a week. While this is in addition to other areas of ministry Susan offers into the life of our congregation, I am grateful to God that, in the wake of her retirement, this has been a blessing to her at the same time it has been a blessing to us.

I have stepped in to pick up responsibility for the finance with the support and oversight of a Christian Accounting Firm, Corporate Plus, while maintaining our regular yearly audit to ensure transparency and accountability. Internally, all payments are double-checked, currently by Merlwyn, Susan or Kate, financial reports are submitted at each SLT meeting and annual reports are provided each AGM. Corporate Plus have provided their assistance at a much reduced rate and with the view to being able to enable Gay to take full responsibility for this reporting in the near future, with consultancy available as needed. Their help in this has been of great value in establishing a manageable process of financial reporting.

As regards the facility, Peter has volunteered to take oversight of all matters pertaining to the facility. His experience and expertise for this role has already been demonstrated in so many ways, some more obvious than others, yet all so necessary when it comes not only to maintenance but also wise management of this facility. In terms of rentals we retain our three major groups – Kingdom Light, Grace Communion and Bible Study Fellowship. However, this year Bible Society and two other leasers have concluded with us due to their changing needs and circumstances. Kingdom Light had indicated that they would have hoped to move into their own building by September this year, but this goal has not been realized. We continue to trust God in this regard and will continue with our ongoing arrangement for now.

Gay Addison

I volunteer at the Church Office every Tuesday morning for half a day. I am thankful to Gay for giving me the opportunity of helping out in the church office. It was a steep learning curve, of course, when I first started with the different systems and operation of the office but I hope I am improving all the time. I must say though I have truly enjoyed every minute of the experience.

Susan Chiang

Hi everyone. I have taken on the responsibility of the general maintenance that comes up from time to time. Some of the items you would have noticed are:



Two new chair trolleys that assist all users in moving stacks of chairs. This has been well accepted and will certainly help with keeping the carpet in a safe state as it avoids the practice of dragging them over the surface.

The carpet in a number of areas was repaired removing any trip hazard.

The overhanging trees around the side have been trimmed away from contact with the guttering.

Some trimming of shrubs and overhanging trees was done in the front car park earlier in the year.

Other things include checking and making sure all lights are working etc

If anything comes to anyone's attention please let me know.

It is a pleasure to serve our fellowship at MPCOC in this way. Thank you all – Regards Pete.

Peter Pannekoek

MEMBER'S REFLECTIONS

“During last year, we had the Sunday worship service taking a different format on some occasions. For me, it was a great idea, reminding me of the ‘early church.’ The services held in the hall were relaxed and informal. MPCC has enabled me personally to change and grow stronger in God’s light.”

“I consider it a privilege to be a member of the Mt Pleasant Church of Christ. The sense of God’s presence with us each Sunday is very near. The love and concern of one member to another is a great blessing. May God continue to bless our pastors in the work they are doing amongst us.”



“Although we have a diversity of ages within our congregation it is exciting



to see the emergence of a strong group of young adults who meet regularly in a Home Group with our Pastors. It is a real joy to see some these young people participating in the Leadership of the Church.”

HYMN SINGING

One Sunday a month for 10 months of the year, a group (8-12) of hardy souls venture forth to 'The Coffee Pot' and indulge in a bit of Hymn Singing. During the time spent together, we usually sing about 8 hymns and a few older choruses. Before each hymn is sung, we learn a little about the background of the writer or what was the inspiration for the great words that have been penned. Sometimes, for a change, we read some passages of the Bible from which the ideas for the Hymns may have come. Often the Hymns are those chosen by the singing members and they will relate the importance of the hymn to them.

After singing lustily, those that wish to remain for a little light supper of chicken and salad or soup and bread. If we have been really good, someone will have brought along some 'afters' to devour. One other piece of enjoyment is all the chatter that goes on, even if they have only seen each other 7 hours before. Many thanks go to the soup suppliers, salad "sourcerers" and bread bringers, let alone the efforts by "afters" arrangers. Finally, thanks to those who attend who make the time most enjoyable.

Graeme and Lindley Thompson
(Co-ordinators)



MINISTRY PARTNERSHIPS

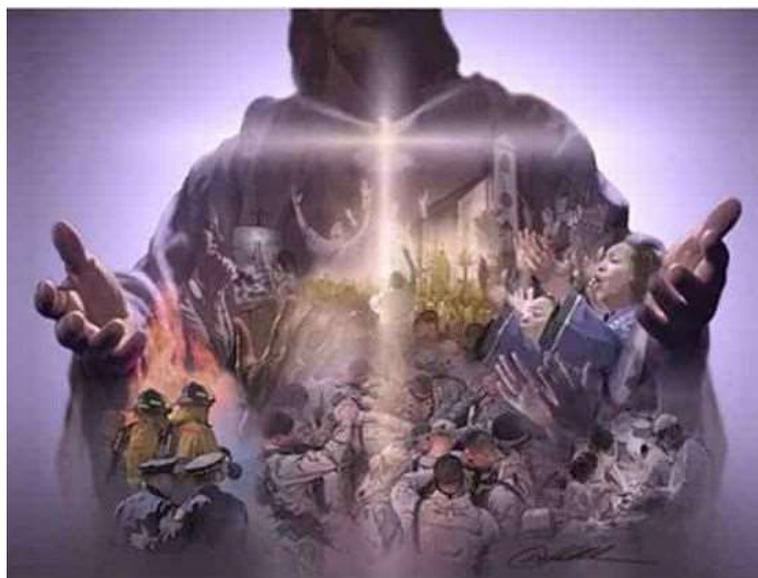
“You are Christ’s body – that’s who you are! You must never forget this. Only as you accept your part of that body does your ‘part’ mean anything.” 1 Cor 12:27

As the Mt Pleasant Church of Christ, each one of us has a role, and no matter what that role entails, at any moment of time our church family is not complete without YOU. However, this also extends beyond our congregation to the broader body of Christ – it is not complete without US. We have a part to play as members of God’s family and so partner with others in the ministry of God’s Kingdom under the headship of Jesus Christ. He has blessed

us with the privilege of joining with the church in Myanmar through the ministries of Peter & Bethel Mission-Rakhine Mission Band for Christ, Myanmar Graduate School of Theology & Overseas Council Australia, as well as Mustard Seed Orphanage. We have also connected with their neighbors through the ministry of Alicia and Urban Neighbours



of Hope in Klong Toey Slum. Through the ministry of Bible Society we have partnered with the church in South Africa this year, and through Churches of Christ Overseas Aid we have contributed to their Christmas Appeal projects. The Samaritans Purse Shoe Boxes we contribute go towards ministering to needy children in over 100 countries. Our partnerships around the globe extend beyond such congregational expressions as individuals also contribute generously in a vast variety of ways. Genesis in Africa and Indonesia, Open Doors and the persecuted church in a number of nations, Compassion and their ministry for Christ to the poor, are just a few of these. However, we also partner with the church in our local community through our association with Churches of Christ in Western Australia, as well as their mission arm of Global Mission Partners through which we support Indigenous Ministries Australia. This association allowed us to offer assistance following the Yarloop fires through the Harvey Church of Christ. Association with Mission Australia saw our Quiz Night raise funds for their Christmas lunch and teaming with the Melville Minister’s Network enabled us to be a part of the Love Community Christmas Hampers. We support the homeless of Perth through the ministry of the Holy Spirit of Freedom Community and have connected with the youth across Western Australia this year through the ministry of Duncan and Youth For Christ. In each of these ways our contributions, whether small or large, do not stand alone, but find their meaning in partnership with the Church over which Christ is the head. Thank you for your part as together we partner with His Church.



PETER: BETHEL MISSION – RAKHINE MISSION BAND FOR CHRIST

Our partnership with Peter's ministry to the Rakhine and Shan States as well as Myanmar's capital, Yangong, has continued to offer both an encouragement and challenge to our lives as disciples of Jesus. At the same time, our prayerful and practical support heartens Peter and the developing churches as they face a variety of challenges to the ministry of the Gospel of Christ in Myanmar. This truly is an expression of the body of Christ at work for the glory of Gods Kingdom and God's love for the world. We've shared together in news of floods in



Rakhine and the provision of much needed aid, such as food, clothing, and water purification. News of more fighting between the Rakhine Armed Insurgents and the Government Military has also seen people fleeing their homes with all the associated needs for food, shelter and medical attention. RMBC also continue their boarding school for underprivileged young people whose parents struggle to care for their basic needs and would otherwise be denied an education. Such opportunities for the practical demonstration of the love of Christ have paved



the way for sharing the Gospel and the growth of the church. Salvations have been followed by baptisms and these celebrations have established the need for discipleship and therefore, leadership training. Such growing need is what caused Peter to step down from his position with MEGST in February (conclusion of their academic year), allowing him greater time to offer to this mission work. The growth of the church has not had a warm reception overall.

In one village in Shan state, a number of families were evicted and in other areas it has not been possible to secure rentals for missionaries seeking to move into an area to provide assistance to the new Christians. This has led to the purchase of land and the building of a simple mission centre in Rakhine. In addition to the needs of the church and the local communities, Peter's eldest son, Brang Nan, has also had some medical problems in March this year and Peter expressed his appreciation for our support, not only to he and his ministry, but to his family as well. Such is the blessing we all experience in being a part of the family of our God, and was why it was particularly special for us to have the opportunity to meet Peter in person last year. He made a special stopover in Perth just so he could meet us and pass on how much our support means. We continue to keep in touch via email and pass on the prayer and praise points so we can continue to stand alongside our brothers and sisters in Myanmar.



MEGST & OCA

February this year saw us celebrate the graduation of **Y Pong Sar** (right) and the introduction to our new student, **Kong Yeng Mro** (below). Following his graduation Y Pong Sar was committed to being a Youth Minister. He wrote: *“Nearly all young people face the challenge of education and technology but they have no time to turn to God. I want to teach them both technology and the Word of God. God has called me to serve him. I thank the Lord for putting the spirit of giving into your heart for my study and I will pray for your ministry and (church) family.”* Along with our previous students, Biak Run Sang, Min Min Tun, Engan Hla Dan and Lian Lam Cing (who for reasons unknown was not able to complete her studies), we will forever be a part of the story of the ministry the Lord ordains for them. Looking forward to his anticipated graduation in 2018, we now also have the opportunity



to share in Kong Yeng Mro’s vision for ministry: *“After I complete my graduation I will mostly focus on evangelizing my Mro people from Rakhine and working in ministry places.”* Our support of these students is made possible by the ministry of Overseas Council Australia. They have been a great mission partner to us and reciprocally they express their appreciation to us for: *“partnering with them in supporting ministry training colleges and students in the developing world as they raise up leaders for the church who will preach the gospel in their local contexts.”* Such mutuality is the reality of being a part of God’s body. I would also like to take this opportunity to say *“Thank you”* to all

who participate, prayerfully and financially, in supporting our students and the building up of the body of Christ in Myanmar. Since we first undertook to support a student at MEGST I believe all of our student sponsorship has been donated through special offerings.

HSFC:

MINISTRY TO PERTH’S HOMELESS

This year has seen the continuation of our donations in support of the Holy Spirit of Freedom Community as they minister to the homeless and poor on the streets of Perth city. The provision of something to eat and drink, as well as practical items such as sleeping bags, creates the opportunity for team members to build relationship and discover other avenues of support. Whether it be on the cold and rainy streets, in hospitals, courtrooms or makeshift ‘homes’ under bridges, they are motivated by the simple yet powerful message of God’s saving love and grace through Jesus Christ. Still, it is tough and though many seeds are sown their mission field is a challenging one. It was a privilege to have Mandy visit with us again this year and hear more of her stories of how God is at work among the street community. We praise God for offering the light of Christ and the hope that is to be found in him through this small group of faithful disciples. They similarly praise God for the encouragement they receive through our simple offerings to them and offer their thanks to us in return. It is truly only together that we are the family of God!



BIBLE SOCIETY

This year we met Rick Pekan who took over Phillip's role when he and his wife (pictured right) left Bible Society to prepare for mission work in China (Leaving January 2017). As Rick lives further south it suited him to find office space closer to home and so they have moved out of our offices. However, we still meet regularly at a variety of events and Rick affirms how significant the support of MPCC is to their goals here in WA. Their Get The Word Out Project this year has been focused on South Africa and it has been great to hear and be a part of supporting what God is doing in this nation through the ministry of Bible Society. However, Rick also forwarded the powerful story of the translation work on the Bunong New Testament, sharing: "Your support of the Bible Society's Get the Word Out Southeast Asia project in 2015 has been an essential part of this work. Bible Society expresses their thanks for your contribution to this work and hope the attached story encourages you through appreciating such donations have a real impact." I will therefore allow this story to express the importance of our partnering with others in support of the ministry of Bible Society in getting God's Word into the hands and hearts of people all around the globe.



Tot Nhernh, 93, is a member of the Bunong tribe, which, like all the hill tribes in Cambodia, is traditionally animist, regularly sacrificing livestock to the spirits. In the 1970's, he and his family fled to Vietnam to escape the ravages of war. While finding



safety there, they nevertheless felt overwhelmed with grief and fear. But then some Vietnamese people began to visit these desperate refugees. They offered them help and friendship, and also shared some good news: God loved them and had released them from all bondage through his son, Jesus. Mr Nhernh recalls how he felt all his fear falling away, replaced by a peace and freedom he had never experienced. He was among several

Bunong refugees to become Christians, learning much about their new faith during their time in exile. When the war ended, he could not wait to return home and share the Gospel. He and the other new Bunong Christians planted small churches in Bunong villages, and also evangelised other hill tribes. They, too, had lived in fear and obligation to make costly sacrifices to the spirits, and were overjoyed to hear about the freedom and peace they could have in Jesus. Although work to translate the Scriptures into Bunong had begun in Vietnam in the 1960s, the work had been disrupted by the war and the manuscripts lost. Some small portions of Scripture in Bunong were published before the war but these were only available in Roman script – understandable to the Bunong in Vietnam but not to those in Cambodia, who use Khmer script. So Mr Nhernh and other Bunong evangelists in Cambodia were sharing the Gospel by simply telling people the story of Jesus. Later, people began writing out the few Bunong Scripture booklets that were available into Khmer script so that these could be shared more widely with Cambodian Bunong people. The two decades of communist rule that followed the war were very difficult for the Church in Cambodia, particularly for ethnic minorities like the Bunong. But Christianity grew steadily, and today, around 10% of Cambodia's Bunong people are Christians. (Around 75% of the Bunong in Vietnam are Christians.) This May, around 50 years after the first attempt to translate

the Scriptures into Bunong was stopped by war, the Bunong people of Cambodia and Vietnam will finally receive the very first New Testament in their language. Undertaken by Vietnam Partnership, the Bible Society in Cambodia and SIL, it will be printed in both Khmer and Roman scripts. Are Bunong Christians looking forward to getting the first New Testament in their language? The look of delight on the face of 93-year-old Tot Nhernh when he thinks about holding it in his hands says it all! Story by Bonnie Lepelaar, Bible Society in Cambodia.



ALICIA: UNOH – KLONG TOEY SLUM

I remember the quote from a resident of Kibera slum in Kenya: *“There is hope in the slum because Jesus is in the slum.”* Alicia is a living testimony to that. In her newsletters ‘Unlished’, Alicia continues to keep us updated with what God is doing in Klong Toey. Along with the Urban Neighbours of Hope Team, Alicia embraces the challenges of slum life with her confidence in the love and grace of God and his calling upon her life to share the ‘Good News’ of Jesus Christ with the poor yet precious people there. It has been a privilege to hear her stories which evidence a maturity that comes from following Jesus in the midst of difficult and changing circumstances. This year we have been able to provide financial support to the ministry there and to assist with the purchase of transport. Alicia expressed appreciation for our generous gift and writes: *“Thank you so much for partnering with us here and helping us to share our resources with our neighbours. Love you all and thanks again for your support.”*



Indeed, it is we who praise God and thank Him for the privilege of being able to partner with Alicia in this small way as she stands for Jesus in Klong Toey. We look forward with a sense of anticipation to the ongoing story of His saving love and power there.

FINANCIALS

Our financial affairs are available for inspection at any time and presented each year at our **Annual General Meeting**