2023

ANNUAL REPORT

The Gap Uniting Church

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THE GAP UNITING CHURCH

OUR TEAM in 2023

MINISTRY TEAM

LEAD MINISTER
REV. ROD FISHER

FAMILIES PASTOR
PS. KATHERINE RUHLE

YOUTH & YOUNG ADULTS PASTOR
PS. HANNAH STAINES

INTERGEN WORSHIP PASTOR
PS. MICHELLE MCDONALD

CHURCH OFFICE ADMINISTRATORS
JEAN KNAGGS (OFFICE SUPPORT)
SILVIA LOPES
HANNAH STAINES

MINISTERS IN ASSOCIATION
REV. MIKE FOLLAND
REV. BRIAN LEE
REV. HELEN MILLS
REV. DR. RAY REDDICLIFFE
REV. JOHN RUHLE
REV. YVONNE SUTHERLAND
REV. DAVID NIX

REGISTERED LAY PREACHERS
MALCOLM CAMPBELL

CHURCH COUNCIL

CHAIR
GEOFF BATKIN

SECRETARY
SHERYL MCLENNAN

TREASURER
(CURRENTLY VACANT)

CHURCH LEADERS
GEOFF BATKIN
BERYL EDWARDS
EMMA HOLMES
DAVID LOCKIE
ROSS MCDONALD
PENNY SLATER
ELISE PEGG

WHO WE ARE AND HOW WE WORK

The Gap Uniting Church is a community of people of all ages and stages of life and faith, committed to following Jesus, and growing as life-long disciples together. We are one expression of the many different congregations who make up the Uniting Church in Australia (UCA).

Together with other congregations and agencies in our region, we form part of the **Moreton Rivers Presbytery** - an area from the northside of the Brisbane River up as far as Caboolture. The Presbytery is responsible for the oversight and support of the mission and ministry within our region.

We are also part of the **Queensland Synod**, which is responsible for the provision and oversight of the governance and regulations across our state, to equip, support and enable the various expressions of the Uniting Church in their particular roles within the life of the wider church, including hospitals, schools, aged care, child care, chaplaincy, congregations, and more.

The **Gap Uniting Church Council**, together with our **Ministry Team,** provides leadership and oversight of our congregation, following the guidelines approved and endorsed by our community of faith, guidelines which guide and support the structure and operations of the Council.

The Gap Uniting Church, the Moreton Rivers Presbytery, and the Queensland Synod, work together to undertake the call and mission of God in our local community and beyond.

We give thanks for the many people who are, and have been, involved in leading and serving within our local and wider church, not only throughout 2023, but all of those whose faithful service has brought us to this point.

OUR PURPOSE & VISION

OUR VALUES

BELOW ARE THE TOP FOUR RESPONSES/RESULTS FOR THESE AREAS FROM OUR 2021 NCLS (NATIONAL CHURCH LIFE SURVEY).

CORE STRENGTHS

- Service
- Vision
- Leadership
- Culture

WHAT PEOPLE VALUE ABOUT THIS CHURCH

- Wider community care / emphasis on justice
- Sermons, preaching or teaching
- Small groups: prayer, discussion, Bible
- Practical care in times of need

FUTURE PRIORITIES

- Worship services that are nurturing
- Sense of community
- Ensuring new people are included
- Ministry to children and youth

OUR THEME

Our theme for 2023 was "NURTURE", and our focus and priorities for the year, taken from our new Strategic Plan, were aligned around:

- nurturing our people for growth.
- nurturing people/programs which need special care
- nurturing faith and discipleship across generations.
- nurturing existing and new expressions of church.
- being a place of Nurture in and for our local community.

This Annual Report highlights many examples of programs and events following our theme.

STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2025

2023 was the first year of implementing our new Strategic Plan for our congregation. The six main goals (below) provided a simple and sharp focus for our Church Council, Mission Teams, and Ministry Team in our planning and priorities throughout the year. This Annual Report highlights many of the surprises and successes in some of these areas, as well as helping to focus on our priority areas moving into 2024.

VISION

BY 2025, THE GAP UNITING CHURCH WILL BE A PEOPLE AND PLACE WHERE:

- **People of all ages and stages feel welcome and nurtured in worship**
- **All people are valued by, and learning from, one another**
- **People connect, grow, serve, and are cared for through Small Groups**
- **Children are cherished and celebrated**
- **Young people are engaged in their faith**
- **We are known, accessed, and valued by our local community**

GOALS & PRIORITIES

OUR SIX MAIN GOALS AND PRIORITY AREAS IN 2023-2025 ARE SHOWN BELOW:

ENGAGING WORSHIP	• Our gathered worship services are welcoming, inclusive, and engaging for all ages and stages.
NURTURING FAITH	• Supporting activities and defined growth pathways that help us to grow in our discipleship, connection, and care of each other.
VALUING GENERATIONS	• All ages and stages of life and faith are valued, interacting, and learning together across the life of our church.
BUILDING COMMUNITY	• Our focus on our wider community leads us into 'Fresh Expressions' of being and doing 'Church'.
SUSTAINING GROWTH	• Every member is empowered to make meaningful and significant contributions to the life and growth of our church through their serving and giving.
STRENGTHENING LEADERSHIP	• Equipping, mentoring, and training people to lead and serve in the local and wider church.

WELCOME TO OUR ANNUAL REPORT

Greetings to the community of The Gap Uniting Church! 2023 was a very significant and full year in the life of our church and wider community, and the first year of living out the challenges and opportunities of our new Strategic Plan.

Our theme and focus for 2023 has been Nurture, and this year we have been focused on being more intentional about the kinds of people, programs and activities that help to Nurture us, as individuals and as a church community.

Many of these things were celebrated in a special video compilation as part of our Belonging Sunday celebrations in November, but it's good to mention a few of them again, as well as some other personal highlights for me from last year.

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2023

- An incredible **Neighbourhood Series** in January and February, including a wonderful construction day beforehand, and the **Justice Games** event toward the end.
- The **commissioning services** of Hannah and Michelle in their pastor roles in February.
- In March I had the privilege of leading a very special **baptism** service for three of our young adults at the Enoggera Reservoir. Also in March, I conducted the **wedding** of Nathan and Elise Pegg – the first wedding I've ever done for people who are actually part of my congregation! Both very special memories for me!
- In June I had a much-needed break, and holiday, and spent a month travelling in the UK with Jen, both for my **long-service leave**, and also as an early 25th wedding anniversary gift to one another. So many highlights and memories, as well as some much-needed rest.
- Knowing that we have such **capable leadership** among our Ministry Team and other leaders and teams was another highlight for me during that time.
- Our **Church Council Retreat** (29-30 July) was a particularly special time for me – both as an opportunity to intentionally invest in our Church Leaders, and also to have the time and space to do so in such beautiful and relaxing place.
- Our **Church Camp** (18-20 Aug) was very special in 2023. It always is, of course, but last year we had more people of all ages in attendance, particularly teenagers and young adults. All our Ministry Team were involved in planning/leading this great example of being an Intergenerational Church, which made it even better, and we hope to have more people involved in 2024.
- Our **Food of our Faith** series which ran across our whole church through July and into September – this included Worship, Small Groups, GROW, Playgroup, Camp, Investment Sunday, and new expressions such as PlayChurch.
- **Investment Sunday** (10 Sep) was a great celebration – inspiring worship, wonderful food, and great stories of the great things that have been happening in the past year.
- Another highlight for me was **The Marriage Course** in Aug-Sep. A small but fabulous team were able to offer catering and hospitality across the 7 weeks of the course – a wonderful way to help to Nurture relationships in our community.
- Our **Emotions Series** in October was a short but powerful series with topics of grief, anxiety, anger, and finding joy amid these – not spoken about enough in church or society. This was also embraced well across GROW, PlayChurch, and Night Church.
- In the last week of October, we had a special **Songs of our Faith** afternoon and **Older Persons Sunday** – two events which allowed us to hear and share important stories and reminders of the valuable contribution of the older folk in our community, and what we can continue to learn from them.

MORE HIGHLIGHTS

- A huge highlight for me was our **150th Anniversary Celebrations** in the first week of November. It was a culmination of much planning and preparation, consultation and communication, discernment and discussions, ideas and inspiration – an incredible example of what can happen when we're prepared to be open to the opportunities God puts before us, and let go of how we think things need to happen. It was a good learning opportunity and challenge for all of us into the future!
- **Belonging Sunday** at the end of that week (5 Nov) was another special highlight.
- Our services and events across **Advent and Christmas**, in 2023, were very special In addition to our regular services, we had an *Advent Mural, No-Rehearsal Nativity Play (& Carols), Blue Christmas*, and the new *Gardening on the Green*. In addition, we were able to *Grow the Garden of our Soul* with a wonderful resource that Kath Ruhle created for use by the whole Synod.

Of course, none of these things would, or could, have happened without the leadership and support of the amazing people we have in our Ministry Team, as well as our office staff, and all those who help to provide guidance and support through our Church Council, Mission Teams, and other programs, special events, and planning teams.

Thank you to everyone who helped to make 2023 such an incredible and memorable year, despite all the challenges.

STAFFING CHANGES

2023 was also a big year of changes in our staffing and Ministry Team.

- Hannah Staines began in her new role of **Youth & Young Adult Pastor**, while also continuing with some of the things she was doing in her Office Administration role. Hannah brings passion, energy, and fresh ideas to all she does, and we continue to be committed to finding the best ways to support her, and all our team, in their roles.
- Jean Knaggs began in the new role of **Office Support Worker** early in 2023, a role created so we could continue to best support the essential work of our church office.
- Kyle Hunter finished up in his role as **Youth Pathways Officer** in mid-2023, and we thank Kyle for the valuable work he has done, particularly with that group of boys.
- Kath Ruhle finished up in her role as **Families Pastor** at the end of 2023, a role in which she has served faithfully and exceptionally since the beginning of 2018. Kath has had a significant impact in creating and leading many exciting programs, events, teams, and resources over many years – her work has laid a great foundation for our continued work and ministry in this area, and she will be dearly missed.
- After much advertising, emails, and interviews for this role, we were delighted to be able to appoint **Katy Jones as our new Families Pastor**, commencing in February.

In the pages that follow, you will find a summary of the various events, activities and roles that made up the year that was 2023. On behalf of the team, I encourage you to take the time to read and reflect on what was truly a remarkable year for our church community – a year of challenges and a year of ***Nurture*** – and a year of preparing ourselves for the next season of the adventure God is calling us into, as we focus on our calling and purpose as the church – *growing life-long disciples of Christ*.

REV. ROD FISHER
LEAD MINISTER

CHURCH COUNCIL REPORT

On behalf of the church Council, it is my privilege to share this report outlining the role, activities, decisions, opportunities, and challenges that the Church Council embraced during 2023.

At the Gap Uniting Church, we are part of the wider mission and ministry of the Moreton Rivers Presbytery, the Queensland Synod, and the national Uniting Church in Australia and some of our members participate across the different 'Councils' of the church.

As a Congregation, we are blessed to have an incredible group of faithful, committed people actively engaged in volunteering and ministry within the Congregation and within our wider church and local community.

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY

The responsibility of the Church Council is to give priority in its life to building up the Congregation in faith and love, sustaining members in hope and leading the Congregation to a fuller participation in Christ's mission in the world. The Church Council fulfills this function through its discernment, prayer, planning, oversight and supporting a shared leadership and participation model across the life and witness of the Congregation.

The Council works with the four Mission Teams (Reach-Out, Resource, Engage-In and Worship teams) and the Ministry Team (including our Office Support team) to lead and support our Vision and Mission.

ACTIVITIES & DECISIONS

Some of the main areas of focus for Church Council during 2023 included:

1. Discernment, prayer, and planning
Towards the end of 2022 following a period of consultation, prayer, and discernment, both the Council and the Congregation agreed on a new Strategic Plan (2023-25). Our Purpose continues to be "Growing Life-Long Disciples of Christ" and the theme for 2023 has been 'Nurture'.

The Strategic Plan 2023-25 has guided our Vision, Strategic Goals and our Staffing roles and responsibilities as well as our resourcing allocations. The six Strategic Goals/Priorities are: Engaging Worship; Nurturing Faith; Valuing Generations; Building Community; Sustaining Growth and Strengthening Leadership.

The Council members also find great benefit as we share together in the annual Council retreat, being a time of prayer, reflection, and visioning – thanks to Rod for his planning and leadership of our Council Retreat.

2. Oversight and support of the Ministry Team
One of the Council's most important roles is about guiding and supporting our Ministry Team and members of the Office Team (led by our Lead Minister – the Rev Rod Fisher). During 2023, we welcomed Hannah Staines as our new Youth & Young Adults Pastor in February 2023 (following the conclusion of Fa Matangi's ministry at the end of 2022). Also, Kath Ruhle indicated her intention to resign her role as Families Pastor *(after 6 years in the role)* towards the end of 2023. As a Council and Congregation, we are extremely grateful for the commitment and special gifts in ministry that Kath has shared with the children and families and all members of our Congregation – Kath will be greatly missed.

These changes during 2023 in the membership of the Ministry Team caused us to carefully reflect on the staffing and ministry model for 2024, and beyond, and how the Council best orientates new staff and provides ongoing support for the Lead Minister and all members of the Ministry and Administrative teams.

The 2023-25 Strategic Priorities included emphasis on: nurturing our people for growth; engaging & discipling young people; intergenerational opportunities in all our church activities; 'fresh expressions' of being church; flourishing Small Groups.

Towards the end of 2023, the Council approved new staff support and accountability policies and also, as part of the Budget process for 2024, the Council confirmed the staffing allocations for 2024.
As a Council, we are looking forward to working alongside our Ministry Team and Mission Teams as together we pursue our Purpose, Vision, and Priorities.

3. Pastoral Care
One of the most important aspects of 'Growing life-long disciples of Christ' is how we support and care for each other. Although pastoral care has been a priority for our Congregation over many years, the Council has spent time reviewing the model for Pastoral Care and seeking to regularly communicate with Congregation 'how we support each other'.

One of the Strategic Priorities has been 'Flourishing Small Groups' and these groups have continued to provide one of the ways that pastoral care is exercised in the life of the Congregation. Towards the end of 2023, the Council developed a planned approach (led by Penny Slater) to 'Growing life-long Disciples of Christ' amongst our Congregation:

- What individual disciples do: Learn about Jesus; Grow more like Jesus; Share Jesus with others.
- Our church's role in supporting discipleship is to: Equip; Nurture and Mentor.

This approach will be one of the ways in which we support on-going 'growing life-long disciples of Christ' in 2024 and beyond.

4. Financial, property and resource planning

As a Council, we prayerfully discern how we steward the financial, property and other resources that God has entrusted to our church for mission. We are extremely thankful for the generosity of so many within our Congregation who regularly give their time, their gifts/talents, and their financial contributions to support our mission.

To supplement the funding for the church operating budget, including the Ministry Team staffing model during 2023-25, the Council sought approval from both Presbytery and Synod to access our Mission Development Fund of $160,000 (to be used at a reducing level each year). This has meant that our church will need to progressively seek additional new income sources/financial support to fund our overall budget over this next three-year period. This has been a focus area for Council discernment/planning during 2023.

The Council is also committed to the consideration of a strategic property review during 2024 to optimise the use and maintenance of all our property (land and buildings) for the longer-term.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Many Christian churches are progressively 'ageing', and this is true at the Gap Uniting Church. Our average age of people attending is 62 years with 77% of our members who are older than 50 years. One of our challenges and opportunities is how we engage as an intergenerational church community supporting children, young people, families, young adults, and people of all ages. This has been one factor driving the decisions of the Council in our staffing model and Strategic Plan 2023-25.

We have been blessed in 2023 to welcome new children, families and young adults and people of all ages as new members – this has included celebrating baptisms for young children and young adults!

We are fortunate to have an active on-line church community each Sunday morning and thank those who support this vital way of 'being church' (normally some 15-25 people are participating most weeks).

We are fortunate in the membership of our Church Council to have a balance of men and woman (and age diversity) with a variety of professional skills and ministry backgrounds. Towards the end of 2023, we recognised and thanked Dave Lockie for his service over many years on Council and also as the Reach-Out Mission Team leader. We also welcomed Lode De Brabander as a new member of Council.

The Council is also extremely grateful for the commitment and support of all those involved in the work of the four Mission Teams, as well as the significant number of our members who volunteer in so many different capacities in support of our mission and ministry.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful for the many people who give of their time to serve and volunteer in so many roles across the life of our church. We especially value those who have been volunteering over many years (in some cases decades). You are the lifeblood of mission and ministry.

Our Ministry and Administrative Team members, Rod, Kath, Hannah, Michelle, Silvia, and Jean - you are hardworking, creative, and talented in the diverse roles you have – as a Council, and on behalf of all members of our Congregation, we thankyou for your leadership and support, as together, we engage in our mission in this church and the wider community.

To all members of the Council, I say thank you – for the wisdom and ideas we share; for the creativity, listening and problem-solving skills you bring; for the times of prayer and discernment that we have together; and for all the work you do behind the scenes!

We are looking forward to how God's spirit will lead us in 2024 and beyond.

GEOFF BATKIN
CHURCH COUNCIL CHAIR

ENGAGE IN

It appears from the outside that the Engage In Team is very small. But every time your Small Group facilitates connection and deep friendship, the GROW team teaches a song to the children, a church member prays for another, or a Bible study brings new insight, you are the living embodiment of engagement in this body of Christ. One of my favourite things to do is to come to church early and sit and watch people engaging in church – some ensuring the worship is relevant and insightful, others greeting friends and spending time listening about how the week was, and still others welcoming people as they come into the door. Some have toiled through the week to ensure people are engaged with the message in different ways, from the beautiful banners with memorable messages, the flowers that remind us of the wonders of creation, to the objects that represent the teaching for the day. You all encourage and facilitate engagement.

The three priority areas of the Engage In Team – Pastoral Care, Small Groups and Discipleship – infiltrate everything we do. With our theme of "Nurture" in 2023, we have seen a continual provision of pastoral care in the church, coordinated by Jean Knaggs with the Small Group facilitators and all of us who care for others. We have a wonderful group of prayer warriors that support those in need, as well as providing practical assistance through the provision of meals, and recognition of milestones that demonstrate care and compassion. Jo Lockie continues to coordinate Small Groups (small in size, but not in nature), and we share below some of the wonderful stories of how these groups provide connection and care. 2024 is looking exciting as we work with the "Follow" theme to implement our Discipleship Model, including a mentoring program to guide people in living out their faith in all aspects of their life.

We are always looking for people to support engagement in the church, but have particular needs for occasional, short term or longer-term support for our children in Sprouts and GROW. One of our Small Groups has led the way by taking a special interest in early childhood ministry at the church and are involved through prayer and volunteering. We would be excited to hear from anyone who would like to support this ministry or any other area coordinated by the Engage In Team.

PENNY SLATER
ENGAGE IN TEAM LEADER

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION (RI)

Religious Instruction (RI) is provided in some of our local primary schools with the support of church leaders across all local Christian denominations. These programs are scrutinised and approved by the education department, state church leaders, and individual schools, and are delivered in various formats by trained and approved volunteers from local churches.

The Gap Uniting Church has coordinated the RI program at The Gap for many years and, in recent years, has done so by holding a special chapel concert once each term. Due to several factors, this was unable to occur in 2023. The Gap Baptist Church has continued to coordinate the RI program at Payne Road in 2023 and is looking to commence a similar program at Hilder Road in 2024.

If you are interested in helping with, or finding out more about, the RI program at The Gap, please get in touch with our Ministry Team.

REV. ROD FISHER
LEAD MINISTER

LOCAL CHAPLAINCY

The Local Chaplaincy Committee (LCC) for The Gap & Mt Nebo is responsible for overseeing and promoting the support and resourcing of school chaplains employed by Scripture Union in our local state schools – including The Gap, Payne Road, Hilder Road, Mt Nebo, and The Gap State High School. Each school has very much valued and supported the role of their chaplains over many years. Other than Hilder Road, who explored an alternative role to a chaplain in 2023, all our local schools were fortunate to have new chaplains in place in 2023, for the first time since Covid.

The Gap Uniting Church has played an active role in supporting the work of chaplains in our local schools for many years, both financially and through practical support with breakfasts and other events. Rev. Rod Fisher stepped into the role of LCC chairperson in 2023 to assist in leading this important team during a time of transition. He is unable to continue in this role in 2024, but is passionate about supporting the work of chaplaincy, and would love to encourage others to consider being part of the LCC. The LCC meets once per term, and is made up of representatives from local churches, schools, and the wider community. If you are interested in finding out some more information, contact Rod.

REV. ROD FISHER
LEAD MINISTER

GROW

During 2023, GROW Sunday School (GROW, Sprouts, Faith & Fitness and PlayChurch) was coordinated by Katherine Ruhle and was supported by a wonderful team of volunteer church teachers and helpers (Faye Holmes, Emma Holmes, Fiona Harris, Shane Hunter, Sandy Hunter, Karen Schutz, John Ruhle, Owen Webb, Jean Knaggs, Sue Gibson, Valerie Green, Peter Rolls, Glenda Whittred, and Alan and Barb Waltisbuhl).

This year, the Ministry team deliberately chose three engaging church-wide themed series with the hope of connecting with more people across our church community and supporting them with their faith journey. Most of GROW's planning revolved around these three themed series – Who is My Neighbour?, Food of Our Faith, and Emotion.

An exciting new addition to GROW this year, was Sunday morning PlayChurch. PlayChurch ran during the Food, and the Emotion series, with the goal of providing a safe and fun environment for community and church families with young children to connect, and learn more about God, and faith. Eleven families (8 community and 3 church) were involved with these PlayChurch sessions. The families enjoyed this group, and a couple of community families have since started attending church and GROW. It is hoped that PlayChurch will continue in 2024.

Some of the highlights of GROW this year were:

- Who is My Neighbour? Series (church-wide theme)
- Pentecost Rotations with lots of visitors from church (Art, Games, Cooking, Science, Drama)
- Food of Our Faith Series (church-wide theme)
- Emotion Series (church-wide theme)
- Prayer mornings – praying in many ways.

Throughout the year, families were often provided with resources that could be used at home to support their faith journey. The resources included Pentecost resources, Bible stories, Easter resources, prayer resources, and Emotion resources. It was special to be able to have a Christmas resource 'Love in Action: Preparing and Nurturing the Garden of our Soul', that could be used by GROW families and all members of our church congregation.

PS. KATHERINE RUHLE
FAMILIES PASTOR

SMALL GROUPS

2023 has been a year of steadily maintaining community and connections. We have seen a few changes of people into, or out of, groups and it is obvious that for those who are part of a small group, it is a very valuable part of their life and faith. The church wide themes and studies were explored by some of the small groups. This has a duel benefit of supporting coordinators by providing resources for small groups as well as creating unity across the church community. We had a unique event this year, the launch of a new study, 'Food of our Faith'. One of our small groups hosted a Potluck Dinner for existing small groups plus other interested people to try out the first study. Another new initiative this year was setting up a Messenger Chat for small group coordinators. This has provided an easy way to share ideas and information and encouragement with each other.

Here are some stories from our small groups.

"Our group meets fortnightly during the day. It is a very supportive group. We have discussed a book on prayer, written our own Psalm, and have had many other great discussions."

"Changing the make-up of a group might cause concern for some. With our group I believe it has been highly positive. I can't remember when we welcomed Renuka and Chris (maybe 18 months ago?). It took a little while as we settled into new relationships, but everyone was committed and patient (probably Renuka and Chris had to be the most accommodating!). I feel this has resulted in a deeper level of sharing - a real enrichment for our group."

"I think a highlight for me would be the further development of our friendship, and much valued trusted space to share, laugh, pray, eat and reflect."

"I was inspired by the Brene Brown quote last weekend about the difference between Belonging and Fitting In, and so our small group are planning to discuss this together next time we meet and see where it takes us. "

JOANNA LOCKIE
SMALL GROUPS COORDINATOR

PASTORAL CARE

Pastoral care is alive and well and flourishing in the church. People who have had a need have generally been cared for by their Small Group or families. There have been other acts of kindness, such as Night Church making meals which were frozen and used for needs inside and outside the church.

To increase the capability of our congregation in caring for others, "Essentials of Care" training was offered to Small Group facilitators in 2023 and will be offered again in 2024.

QR codes have recently been placed on pew Connect Cards to allow easy access to the Pastoral Care form in the church information system, CCB. In 2023, pastoral care was provided mostly through word of mouth, where people contacted the Pastoral Care Coordinator to pass on news of people who were unwell or needed assistance. The five people currently in the prayer chain were then contacted by email with deidentified information or with names included if permission had been given. Generally, there was an increase in prayer requests through the prayer chain this year, and in 2024, we would like to recruit more prayer warriors and support them through regular get-togethers.

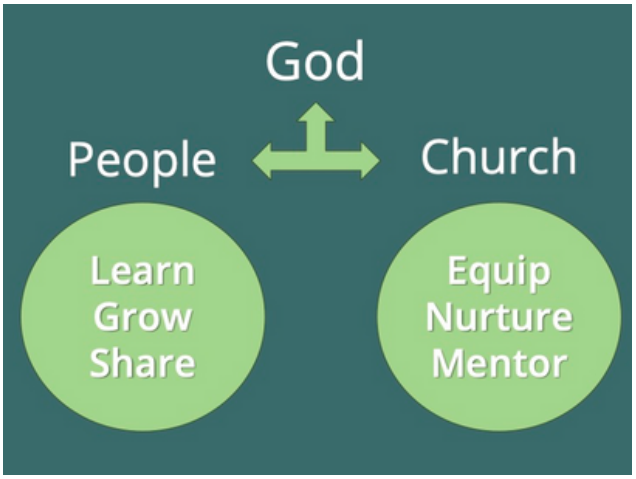
Milestone Ministry was supported through the delivery of cards to recognise different milestones such as birthdays, baptismal anniversaries and other special events. Children who had anniversaries of their baptism in the church were sent a card until they turned five, at which point they received an invitation to Sprouts and GROW. For those with birthdays recorded in CCB, cards are delivered or posted on a weekly basis. Those families that were affected by the death of a loved one through the year received a special invitation to the annual Service of Solace.

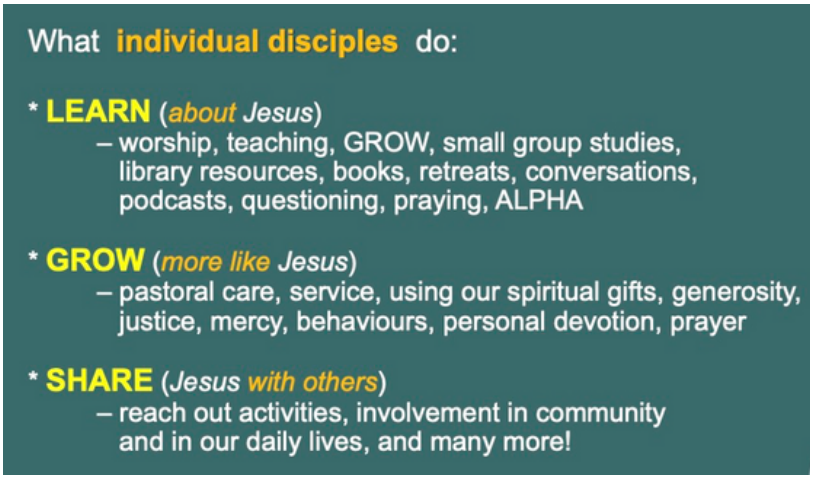
JEAN KNAGGS
PASTORAL CARE COORDINATOR

DISCIPLESHIP

The Engage In Team has developed the discipleship model for the church which will drive activities in the new year. A summary of the model is provided below. The model has been designed to be simple enough to remember but also covers a range of experiences that grow lifelong disciples of Christ. To add to the training received from the Presbytery in February 2023, the church is looking forward to a Discipleship Training Day on 10 February 2024.

One focus of the model is the mentoring / coaching program and expressions of interest for mentors and mentees are being gathered from December 2023 through a CCB form. Mentoring/coaching training will take place early in the new year.





PENNY SLATER
DISCIPLESHIP COORDINATOR

MEMBERSHIP ROLLS & LIFE EVENTS

As at 31/12/2023, the membership records in CCB show the following information:

Confirmed Members	200
Members in Association	6
Baptised Members	14
Adherents	159

Our Pastoral Care Team will continue to review and update our membership records in 2024. If you have any questions about membership, or if you need to update your information, please get in touch with the Pastoral Care Team.

BAPTISMS (11)
Marley Dawson, Nathan Pegg, Amir Seresht, Jayd Dow, Benny O'Keefe, Chris O'Keefe, Harry Lawson, Evie Smits, Hugh Smits, Cooper Smits, Harrison Wessels.

MEMBERSHIP TRANSFERS
- IN (2) – Chris & Renuka Russell
- OUT (2)

WEDDINGS (1)
Nathan & Elise Pegg.

DEATHS (3)
Karen Martel, Jim White, Alma Davie.

FUNERALS (7)
Peter Rixon (Memorial), Margaret Kranz, Lupita Green, Karen Martel, Jim White, Alma Davie, Colin Laing.

INTERMENTS in COLUMBARIUM (8)
Jim & Pam Ainsworth, Ken McMullin, Coral MacArthur, Elizabeth Thomas, Karen Martel, Bev McMullin, Jordi Evans.

REV. ROD FISHER
LEAD MINISTER

Reach Out

In 2023, the Reach Out team put most of their energy into the planning and running of the 150th Celebrations. You can read more about it below. The Reach Out team said a farewell, and thank you, to Dave Lockie for his energy and passion for the wider community, and leadership of the Reach Out team. A special thanks to Amber Dean, who played an invaluable role in helping to support and organise the team throughout 2023. We welcome Emma Holmes as the new Reach Out team leader in the new year, and look forward to the many ways that this team can build in relationship with our Gap community in 2024.

150TH CELEBRATIONS

In 2023, the Gap Uniting Church celebrated its 150th anniversary, with the Reach Out team leading the celebrations with the vision to engage the broader community. A seven-day themed event was conceptualised and executed by a dedicated sub-committee over a six-month planning period. The result: 22 events across seven themed days, in collaboration with 50+ community partners. It was supported by the Lord Mayor's Community Fund, Jonty Bush, local MP Member for Cooper, and Steve Toomey, Councillor of The Gap Ward.

This achievement reflected the collective effort of a committed team, showcasing the "Body of Christ" at work. Special acknowledgments include:

- Rod Fisher, for your unwavering support and belief in the team and event;
- Emma Holmes for having the creative vision to bring this to life through amazing digital and printed media;
- Dave Lockie, for your support, inspiration and leading the "Welcome Ceremony";
- Mia Blake, for your bold, passionate leadership of the "Deep Listening" and "Fun & Adventure" days;
- Julie Price, for your passion and momentum in pulling together an incredible day celebrating "The Arts";
- Fiona Harris, for your brilliance in bringing to life (and MCing) the "Sustainability" day;
- Jenny Anderson, for your experienced and faithful coordination of the Saturday festival, Coffee Shop and Silent Auction;
- Scott McDonald, for sharing your experience, support and pragmatism on all things siteworks and financial.
- Ross McDonald for your experience and wisdom on treasury, grants, risk assessment, and flexibility in filling gaps as needed (setting up TVs, barristering, large-scale map printing, etc.).

The gratitude extends to Faye Holmes, Jeff Hilder, Geoff Batkin, Hannah Staines, Silvia Lopes, Jean Knaggs, Coffee Shop day coordinators & volunteers, Sound & Tech crew, Saturday stall holders, the Showbag team, congregation volunteers for each day and many more who contributed to the success.

Despite challenges, the experience fulfilled the core vision of forging new community connections, and we trust this will serve us well into the future.

AMBER DEAN & LODE DE BRABANDER
150TH PLANNING TEAM COORDINATORS

FIT AFTER FIFTY

This fitness program provides an opportunity for mature age people in our community to build and maintain functional fitness, while meeting with others in a caring, friendly atmosphere. It is mostly attended by people not otherwise associated with our congregation.

Many thanks to our lead instructors for 2023 including Terri (Wednesday morning), Karen (Monday and Thursday evenings) and Kimi & Pinki (Tuesday and Thursday mornings). Kimi started in 2023 with us but left mid-year and we were blessed to find Pinki to replace her. We also thank Caroline, Michelle and Danny who provide back-up when others are unavailable.

Morning class numbers have maintained reasonable levels in 2023, however, the evening classes continued to be low, despite extra efforts in advertising. These classes have not covered costs for many years and the considerable losses incurred are not viable long term so the sad decision was made to cancel the evening classes at the end of this year.

Many thanks also to all our faithful attendees; my other committee members, Beryl Edwards and Barbara Waltisbuhl; and any others who provided guidance and support to the program throughout the year.

SALLY ALGATE
FIT AFTER FIFTY CHAIR

GUCCE

GUCCE, in its present form, in 2024 will celebrate the "China Milestone" of 20 years. In readiness, Vanessa has been teaching tiered china plates as an extra project during the last term.

Every Wednesday in the school terms, 23 to 32 enthusiastic crafters gather to enjoy ongoing embroidery instructed by Elaine Zendler and cardmaking led by Lyndal Massey. These ladies have been dedicated for many years – quite the backbone of the group. They have our ongoing grateful thanks. Other members bring their own projects along and altogether great friendships and a keen sense of belonging and sharing is apparent within the group. Val Jenkins presents a short meditation time each day. Members pay $4 per week, plus craft expenses. We appreciate Vanessa's barista skills and her delicious morning teas are always enjoyed.

Over the years, many and varied donations totalling well over $12,500 have been made. Just to mention some – support for The Gap UC: cyclones, bushfires, floods, droughts, Frontier Services, Kids Hope, Kairos Outside, Timor Children's Foundation Dental programme, vacuum cleaners, coffee machine and dishwasher maintenance, church defibrillator, and more recently, for the new coffee machine, special latte glasses and coffee cups and saucers. In addition, the group has supported a refugee family from Pakistan/Thailand to settle in Canada and is now helping a women's home for the homeless in Toowong.

Special thanks to Terry Edwinsmith for setting up the tables each week. Jenna for her administrative work. Occasional help from supporters outside the group is greatly valued. Many thanks once again to our faithful auditor, Barrie Rollason, over many years.

As we look to the future, remember to keep crafting.

JENNA EDWINSMITH
VANESSA MARLOW
JANICE HARRIS
GUCCE COORDINATORS

MENS GROUP

Men's Group meet regularly at the church on the 2nd Thursday of each month at 09:30 am. Field trips also punctuate the year's activities.

On 9th February, our first meeting for the year, Mr Simon Wright, an employee of Endeavour, formerly Help Industries, spoke of his work with the disabled. Questions from the floor, found Simon speaking about the NDIS and the new funding arrangement implemented by the federal government. Simon's excellent presentation was very well received by the attendees.

On the 9th March, Malcolm Stirling gave a brief overview of his life which included schooling, jobs, and ended on the topic of computers. Remember the Commodore 64?

Mr Bob Walden was our speaker for the 13th April meeting. Bob's topic was entitled: "My life in Refrigerated Transport 1959 to 1981". This was a 'boy's own' adventure, as Bob spoke about the many prime movers in service over the years, the evolution of the refrigerated containers, the cold room premises, all subject to flooding and the various company drivers with their general work stories. This was a trip down memory lane as streets, factories and sites along Breakfast Creek were mentioned.

The 11th May found us at Walk-about Creek Restaurant with 17 attendees. Time well spent indeed.

A ride on the City Cat from West End to Hamilton North Shore occurred on the 8th June, with a meal at the North Shore Restaurant mid journey.

Former church member, Granton Smith, spoke at our 13th July meeting about his time at Channel 7. He recounted his outside broadcasts as well as time in the studio. Much was technical talk but a great yarn. Thanks Granton.

Rev Rod Fisher gave a photo/slide presentation of his recent UK-Ireland trip. It was our 10th August meeting and Rod held our attention with gripping yarns and fabulous photos projected onto the church's big screen. Very memorable indeed.

Church member, Peter Jackson, with a female Aboriginal Elder, spoke of the up and coming Referendum concerning the 'voice'. This occurred on the 14th September. This presentation was well attended and very well received.

A trip to Walk-about Creek Restaurant for coffee was the 12th October meeting.

On the 9th November, Malcolm led us on a trip to Qld Museum where members roamed the various floors to see dinosaurs and butterflies. Morning tea/lunch followed in the cafeteria. This outing was very well attended.

14th December is our final meeting for the year. The Gap Tavern is the venue for lunch.

Thanks must go to Malcolm Stirling for his continued co-leadership of Men's Group and to Michael Preston for his devotions at the commencement of each meeting held in the church. Thanks also, to the loyal band of supporters who meet monthly.

TERRY EDWINSMITH
ON BEHALF OF MENS GROUP

KIDS HOPE

2023 has been another strong year for the partnership between The Gap State School and The Gap UCA. In addition to unwavering support from the Principal and Deputy Principal, in Term 2 Leanne Fryer was welcomed as Chaplain. When addressing our congregation in November, Leanne talked of the positive impact of KHAUS on students – and their families - who require a little more care when navigating the complexities of life.

2023 Mentoring Team: Sincere thanks to these stars for their faithfulness.
Continuing: Jess Ruhle, Sheryl McLennan, Katrina Arnold, Fiona Preston, Jo Lockie, Val Jenkins, Elaine Zendler, Margaret Graham, Jocelyn Hayes, Julie Price, John Ruhle, Geoff Batkin, Judy Batkin, Rod Fisher, Colin Beavis, Roger Beer, Kate Modderman, Christine Jackson and Jenny McDonald
New Mentor trained in Term 1, 2023: John Algate
Taking Leave/Retiring at the end of 2023: Rod Fisher, Colin Beavis, Fiona Preston
Prayer Partners: Thank you for your devotion; the mentors see the results of your prayers.

This year, mentors have played Yatzee, Uno, Jenga, Rummikub and Chess. We've painted, coloured-in, sewn, stuck and folded. We've chatted, encouraged, suggested, learned and guided. We've smiled, laughed, sighed, wondered and sometimes, just endured, as we've all grown vital relationships.

In 2024, with three new mentors, the team will continue to nurture our little people by enacting the four pillars of the KHAUS program: 'Know my name', 'Only me', 'Faithfulness' and 'You believe in me'.

JENNY MCDONALD
KH AUS COORDINATOR

SENIOR FRIENDSHIP GROUP

Our year began with the local Verandah Band and they was followed by some reminiscing, two visits to Walkabout Creek Café, and one to Café Tara, a talk about scams by a member of the Police force, gentle exercise, soup day, another musical morning and a speaker who has done challenging work with the United Nations. Kath Ruhle's Early Music children and the Kindy children also delighted us.

Our membership has grown to 37 but attendance fluctuates. Sadly, one member passed away early in the year. The spirit of friendship and caring is very strong within the group – a lovely group to be a part of.

The home-made morning teas are a big hit and I want to thank all those who prepare and serve. Thanks to Audrey Connellan and Mavis Algate who are retiring from food preparation. Special thanks to Jane Heywood for her big contribution and also to our excellent treasurer, Bob Walden who is retiring from that role. Our challenge – we need a replacement! Thanks to the other members of our committee – I couldn't do my job without you.

DESLEIGH BYRNE
SENIOR FRIENDSHIP GROUP LEADER

PLAYGROUP

Playgroup was coordinated by Katherine Ruhle during 2023. Katherine was supported throughout the year by church volunteers (Jean Knaggs, Sue Beavis, Karen Boyd, Helen Bowtell and Frances Pretorius), community parent helpers, a craft team (Alan and Barb Waltisbuhl) and a paid personal trainer, Erin Baxter.

Playgroup was run on Tuesday and Thursday mornings, in the Lower John Knox hall, in a similar fashion to 2022. Tuesday Playgroup was run as a 'normal' playgroup (free play, craft, sandpit, morning tea and singing) and Thursday Playgroup was run as a 'Fit & Fun' playgroup (free play, parents' PT session, morning tea and sandpit play). Both groups had between eight to 12 regular families attending each week.

It was wonderful to see the friendships that were formed throughout the year, and the support that families were given by each other, and by members of our church community.

Following on from 2022, we celebrated children's birthdays with cupcakes and a card, and celebrated the birth of babies with a lovely church pack which comprised of a special 'Cuddly' blanket made by the GUCCE team, a box of tea, a church card, and information about having a baby blessed/Baptised.

During the year, invitations were given to Playgroup families to attend the 'Build a Neighbourhood' afternoon, Back to School service, the early childhood Messy Play morning, The early childhood Bush Dance, Day Camp, PlayChurch, and the Christmas Carols and Mural evenings. It was great to see several families come to these events and enjoy themselves. Also, during the year, Christmas resources were made available to the Playgroup Families.

PS. KATHERINE RUHLE
FAMILIES PASTOR

FIRST STEPS IN MUSIC

First Steps in Music was led by Katherine Ruhle during 2023. Classes were held on Monday and Friday mornings in the church Foyer, and occasionally in the Fellowship Room. Throughout the year, there were over thirty-five church and community families regularly attending the classes. Children were brought to classes by the mothers, fathers, grandparents, and carers. It was wonderful to see friendships formed and children gaining confidence over the year.

This year, our First Steps in Music themes aligned with Playgroup themes and some church themes (Who is My Neighbour? and Food of our Faith). Together, everyone had fun exploring the themes 'Animal Fun', 'Food Glorious Food', 'Around the World' and 'In My Garden'.

As in past years, First Steps in Music was able to join with the Senior Friendship Group on three occasions for a time of singing and dancing. The adults and the children really enjoyed spending time together and there was lots of laughter, loud singing, and waving of colourful scarves. Following on from last year, Katherine, continued running First Steps in Music classes with the Kindy and pre-Kindy children at The Gap Uniting Early Learning. These sessions were greatly appreciated by the Kindergarten and were a great way to build connections between the church and the Kindergarten community.

During the year, invitations were given to First Steps families to attend the 'Build a Neighbourhood' afternoon, Back to School service, the early childhood Messy Play morning, The early childhood Bush Dance, Day Camp, PlayChurch, and the Christmas Carols and Mural evenings. It was great to see several families come to these events and enjoy themselves. Also, during the year, Christmas resources were made available to the First Steps families.

PS. KATHERINE RUHLE
FAMILIES PASTOR

EARLY CHILDHOOD EVENTS

This year, we held three early childhood events for families with young children. We started the year with a Messy Play morning which 28 families attended. These families were from church, Playgroup, First Steps, the UEL Centre and the community. It was a fantastic morning of playing, chatting, and mess-making.

During the middle of the year, we held an early childhood Bush Dance, in the church. Together, we played with farm toys, did some simple dances, and played some games. It was lovely to have over 10 families join us for the event and a sausage sizzle.

We finished the year with our much-loved No-Rehearse Nativity Play and Carols night.

We had many church volunteers help at these events – chatting with families, supervising children, helping with food preparation and cleaning up.

All these events were great ways to connect with community members and to show our love and care for them.

PS. KATHERINE RUHLE
FAMILIES PASTOR

JUSTICE GAMES

In January, as part of our Neighbourhood series, we trialled a new resource called Justice Games by Susy Lee. The topic of the games was 'It's all Relative' and we learnt about our wealth compared to people all around the world, and what our response is to that knowledge. As part of the event, we had a giant auction for life's basic needs, had group discussions, and family time.

We had a great group of families, young adults and older people from our church and the community join us for the event.

After receiving positive feedback, we will host another Justice Games event for the Presbytery in February 2024, this time based on Consumerism.

PS. KATHERINE RUHLE
FAMILIES PASTOR

YOUTH PROGRAMS

At the beginning of this year, we said goodbye, and thank you, to Kyle Hunter as our Youth Pathways Officer. Kyle played a significant role in keeping our young people engaged in Friday Night Live in 2022, especially during the transition of Youth and Young Adults Pastors. Friday Night Live was a regular youth program in 2023, with the help of Michaela Gregory and Joel Gregory as the main FNL leaders. We simplified it this year, having board games and movie nights, but finished off the year with a big water fight.

We decided to close Friday Night Live as a youth program for the church, in order to make room for new programs in the new year. We hope to continue engaging with our regular youth through Night Church and new youth programs in 2024.

In Term 3 and 4, "Knit and Chat" began with the help of lovely ladies from the congregation who popped in to help, or donated items. This was aimed at lower high school students, and ran weekly on Friday afternoons after school. It has been so nice getting to know these high school students while we learn how to knit and crochet.

It has been a privilege to get to know the young people in our church and the high school students at The Gap State High School, as well as the chaplain, Dave Leth, and other leaders of the High School. I look forward to the new programs to come for our young people in 2024.

PS. HANNAH STAINES
YOUTH & YOUNG ADULTS PASTOR

Worship

Reflecting on 2023, and how we work towards fulfilling our Purpose of "Growing Life-Long Disciples of Christ", I am truly grateful for the 90+ people (volunteers) who regularly participate and support our Morning Worship services (including On-Line Worship) as: Service coordinators; leading our music and singing; leading worship; welcoming people; Bible reading; prayer; supporting on-line Morning Worship; technical crew; and computer support. Within the Worship Mission Team Plan, we have expressed our motivation and priority as offering "Engaging Worship" so 'Our gathered worship services are welcoming, inclusive and engaging for all ages and stages'.

Our Worship Mission Team members for 2023 are: Rev. Rod Fisher; Geoff Batkin; Beryl Edwards; Jenny Anderson and Judy Batkin, with leadership and support from: Hannah Staines; Kath Ruhle and Michelle McDonald. As a Church community, we are blessed through the gifts of our Ministry Team (Rod, Kath, Hannah and Michelle) as they help planning, coordinating and leading worship each week.

GEOFF BATKIN
WORSHIP MISSION TEAM LEADERR

CONNECT CREW

Who is Connect Crew?

Connect Crew is a team of very warm, welcoming people serving either once a month, bimonthly, or once a quarter. Connect Crew seeks to serve our church community by being that first point of contact as people come in through our doors each Sunday morning. A friendly face, connecting people as best we can. Each week, there are generally two people on the Crew, sharing a combination of responsibilities.

New Connect Crew members would be very welcome!

In 2024, it would be wonderful to have others join our team, especially as there will be times when several of our team will be away travelling interstate or overseas. If you would be interested in joining the Connect team and serving in this way, I would be very happy to answer any questions you may have about the role. Perhaps you might like to serve as a family or as a small group. It would be great to see all ages, both younger and older congregational members, being part of our welcoming Connect Crew team of volunteers.

JUDY BATKIN
CONNECT CREW COORDINATOR

PREPARING THE CHURCH FOR WORSHIP

The Preparing the Church for Worship roster covers the role carried out by Volunteers, as opposed to the work carried out by the paid Cleaner. The new system has been in place since about August 2020. The cleaning takes two people about an hour and preferably needs to be done on Saturday mornings. We have tried to cut down on what the paid Cleaner does and cover some of the smaller jobs.

In 2023, there were 12 people on the roster on a regular basis. We will need more people so that Volunteers will only be required to do cleaning preparations every two months. We are very grateful to those who help out in this important ministry.

JENNY ANDERSON
ON BEHALF OF THE RESOURCE TEAM

CHURCH ONLINE

Our online church platform is still being valued and used by many people and households each Sunday, and has also been a wonderful resource for funerals and other events. It has also been one of the ways that new people have connected with our church, often long before ever showing up in person. In order for this to continue being a wonderful ministry and resource into the future, we need a few more people who are willing and able to be trained as a host for this platform. It is not complicated or difficult, and happens behind-the-scenes, but it is something we want to see continue to grow as more opportunities arise. If you want to find out some more about what is involved, please talk to Jocelyn Hayes or our Worship Team.

REV. ROD FISHER
LEAD MINISTER

INTERGENERATIONAL WORSHIP

What a year it has been, exploring the concept and experience of intergenerational worship – an opportunity for people of all ages and stages of life to support one another in learning about and praising God, growing relationships with one another, and takings steps together in our journey of being life-long disciples of Christ.

Both our Morning Worship and Night Church spaces have enjoyed venturing into this intergenerational approach this year:

- In early 2023, our "Build a Neighbourhood" series gave everyone the chance to be part of building a real neighbourhood installation and to reflect on how we bring God's good news to our communities.
- Our Lenten and Easter services gave us the chance to explore the story through our senses - hearing the crowds of the marketplace on Palm Sunday, tearing the cloth on Good Friday, exploring the colours of Easter Sunday and experiencing the wind of Pentecost.
- In mid-2023, our "Food of Our Faith" series gave us opportunities to explore stories in the bible relating to food and gathering together for meals. In this series, we wrote prayers on tablecloths, shared meals together, and used our hands and mouths to explore the idea of Jesus, the bread of life, and God as living water.
- On Church Camp, our Sunday worship service was co-created by every person present on camp – with different individuals and groups leading prayers, bringing scripture to life, serving communion and sharing reflections together.
- Across the year, our Back-to-School Sunday, Day Camp Reunion and Older Persons Sunday services were an opportunity to celebrate and hear the stories of particular age groups of our congregation, and to recognise how all ages are needed in our community of faith.
- Investment Sunday (September) was a chance to join together in making investments in our church's future, and considering where each of our contributions might make a difference.
- Our Emotions Series – exploring what it means to recognise our emotions, to share with and support others with painful emotions, and to look to Jesus for guidance in managing emotions in a healthy way.
- Our Advent Series saw us reflecting on what it means to prepare and nurture the garden of our soul and together we built a garden in our church – clearing the weeds, preparing the soil, planting seeds, tending the garden and reflecting on the legacy we want our garden to leave. As our garden blossomed, so did our advent mural – with new flowers added each week as we journeyed together to Christmas.

As the Intergenerational Worship Pastor, it has been a joy to see our congregation growing their relationships with God and with one another, and partnering together on their faith journeys. I know God will continue to grow each one of us as we walk together as a community of faith.

PS. MICHELLE MCDONALD
INTERGENERATIONAL WORSHIP PASTOR

NIGHT CHURCH

What a year for Night Church! There were many different ways of doing the worship space, new series' and events this year. Night Church ran a series on discipleship by watching a study called Followship, and listening to different stories from people in and out of the church. Our R-Rated series gave us space to talk openly about topics that we don't often discuss in church, and brought in some new people to Night Church. For our Food of our Faith series, we made food for those in need and sorted and packed items for the food drive. In our Emotions series, we tackled what it looks like to have anxiety as a Christian, and we took out our anger on tables and punching bags. Night Church also celebrated its 6th birthday this year by starting off the 150th celebration week with a BBQ and smoking ceremony at the end of October. We finished off the year running the Carols at the No Rehearse Nativity, being creative with pots and plants on the lawn, and running the Christmas Eve service.

This year we have been intentional about combining our AM and PM services together and working better as a whole church, through our different series', combined services, and special events. The Belonging Dinner and Christmas Mural are wonderful examples of our community spending time together and building intergenerational relationships. The Night Church planning team started meeting more regularly and has worked together with the Morning Worship planning team so that services and events run smoother.

It has been a special and busy year, and it has been a joy leading, worshipping and discipling alongside the lovely people at Night Church.

PS. HANNAH STAINES
YOUTH & YOUNG ADULTS PASTOR

TECH TEAM REPORT

Our Tech Team, and the equipment we have, plays an important role in supporting the worshipping life of our congregation, both in person and online, as well as other important events and activities throughout the year. Most of the tech stuff happens behind-the-scenes and, when all goes well, nobody notices. If you want to know more, or get involved, please let us know!

EVENTS IN 2023

- 150th Celebrations - Cemetery (Aug) and Whole Church (Nov) - forums and concerts.
- Easter and Christmas Events.

MAINTENANCE

- replaced damaged headset radio mic system.
- fixed intermittent fault in lobby amp.
- repatched and updated labelling on the alternate (simple) auditorium sound system.
- repaired and protected the input plate for the foyer sound system.

CURRENT/FUTURE PROJECTS

- Installing floor pits and connection points at the current camera locations. This will remove the need to have cables running across the floor.
- Installing new power, video, audio, and network lines for future needs and communications.
- Purchase and install a remotely controlled (PTZ) camera and support system.
- Updating our wireless mic system (>20 years old), and installing new pulpit mic.
- Updating the BOSE system controller and levels in foyer/lobby/overflow areas.
- Updating the control systems and coordination for the AV area.
- Review replacement of faulty keyboard - too old/costly to repair.
- Review servicing/tuning/replacing drum kit.

LEX PRICE
TECH TEAM COORDINATOR

Resource

The Resource Mission Team (RMT) provides the oversight and day to day financial management of the church budget, as approved by the congregation and Church Council. Also, the maintenance and upgrading of the church property and resources, to ensure we have sufficient support for our congregation, programs, external users, and events.

Our aim has been to make the best use of financial resources so that we can provide a functioning campus to all the users of The Gap Uniting Church.

I am thankful to the Resource Mission Team including Trevor Anderson, Ross Carseldine, Sally Algate, Rod Fisher, Gary Bowtell and Jenny McDonald, for their time, discernment, and support throughout 2023.

OFFICE/ADMINISTRATION

Jean Knaggs has joined our staff this year, in a part time role. With Silvia Lopes, this team provides an excellent resource for being the first point of contact for many church enquires, helping mange the property and repairs, producing documents and newsletters for the ministry team, events and congregation, hall hire, and managing events like funerals and internments.

The key contact hours for the Office are 9am to midday, with the Office staff only available by appointment from midday to 3pm to allow them to focus on projects, priorities, and Church support.

FAIRS AND SALES

We held two events during the year.

The Plant and Book Sale was well supported by the community, with a steady influx of people for the first three hours. The Child Care centre and Night Church team added extra variety to the day. The work by the volunteers in the preceding months made the day possible.

In October, a Garage Sale was held, combined with clothes. Again, this event was made possible by the great effort by a few individuals, over a few weeks, to sort all the donations into a reasonable order and display for sale. The effort went well for the day despite a slight tightening of restrictions 3 weeks beforehand.

Both events achieved our forecast budget for the year, bringing in $18,000.00.

We are blessed to have had an active Resource Mission Team for 2023 and I would like to thank them for their support and efforts throughout the year.

CHURCH FINANCIALS

The 2023 calendar year will finish with an increase of $36,138.88 over our budgeted income that was a forecast deficit $219.00. For the complete financials, please refer to the audited accounts later in this report.

The large amounts that have the main impact on the increase of $36k, are as follows:

Increases

- 150th Celebration, +$5k
- AEC pre-polling, +$8k
- Additional Interest, +$3k

Reduction

- Staffing costs by use of Synod provisions for Long Service for the Lead Minister, -$6k
- Less hours for Youth Pathways Role and for the Youth and Young Adults Pastor, -$8k

These variations are unlikely to occur in 2024, so the new budgets have been formulated to address the current predictions. Our congregational giving has plateaued following the uptake after a return from Covid restrictions over 2022. Investment Sunday remains a strong boost bringing $28k. The two sales during the year, the Plant and Book Sale and the Garage Sale, continue to provide reasonable incomes of $18k for the year.

Overall, our 2023 budget income is inflated as we draw down on the our reserves in the MDF fund to support mission of Ministry Teams costs. This value of this draw down was $65k for 2023. This amount will reduce to $54k for 2024, and $40k for 2023. To continue with our current Ministry staffing levels for 2025 and beyond, our total income will need to increase to make up for the loss of this income from reserves.

PROPERTY

The property is maintained largely by volunteers, with trades people coming in for work that requires some specialist skill (electrical, plumbing, pest control and cleaning). Gary Bowtell, Roger Beer, Peter Rolls, and Jenny & Trevor Anderson are major contributors to this team, with the support of others. An annual working bee in February was well supported and will continue in 2024.

2023 saw the 150th anniversary of the Pioneer Cemetery., A huge effort was put in by Jeff Hilder, Roger Beer and Peter Rolls over many months to restore and paint the concrete and stonework for the gravesites and improve the remainder of the grounds, Additional signage has been added at the entry and information signage has been added to many of the grave sites. Jeff and Ann Hilder prepared all of the background information for historical updates and ran the day. It was very well attended, with over 100 people attending, as well as Council and State members.

As the new church building is now over 20 years old, we are moving into a cycle of replacing or upgrading our appliances and furniture. A second-hand coffee machine has been purchased and a new fridge and double oven has been ordered for the main kitchen. The oven will be installed in the New Year. The office furniture in the Pastors office has been upgraded.

ROSS MCDONALD
RESOURCE TEAM LEADER

CEMETERY TRUST

2023 was an activity-filled year for both our church and our Cemetery, as each celebrated 150-year milestones.

The Cemetery observed this significant anniversary on the 5th of August with an event that was well attended by an estimated 300 people.

This occasion was the culmination of months of planning and hard work by church volunteers, in many different roles and capacities, from liaising with external parties, planning arrangements for the day, to hours of physical work. To these numerous, generous individuals, a huge "Thank You!" Without you, the resulting outcome would not have been possible. The restored, clean, clearly-signed area is testimony to your respect and care for our special Cemetery. Though, too many to name individually, I would notably like to acknowledge the following individuals:

Jeff Hilder, who actively participated in and oversaw a lot of the work that was undertaken, liaised with different parties as to the event's arrangements, and, together with Ann Hilder, compiled a book commemorating the Cemetery's 150th anniversary.

Roger Beer and Peter Rolls, who worked tirelessly with upgrade works. In addition to the Cemetery's ongoing general maintenance, on many an early morning, these two could be found hard at work, cheerfully cleaning, sanding, painting, clearing, levelling and mowing.

Aside from the preparations for the 150th Anniversary, work continued at a steady pace for the Cemetery. In summary, as at the 30th of November 2023, the Cemetery's annual statistics were as follows:

Burials: 0
Niche reservations: 21
Blessing & Placement of Ashes in niches: 8
Niches that became available due to transfers: 1
Niches relinquished to the church (owners relocated): 2
Number of available niches: 139

SILVIA LOPES
REGISTRAR - COLUMBARIUM WALLS

Financial Reports

BALANCE SHEET - CHURCH COUNCIL

UCA - THE GAP
AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2023

ASSETS

BANK

F-1 MSS BENEFIT ACC INV0085	11,104.66
F-2 THE GAP TITHING ACCOUNT	2,860.04
F-2 THE GAP GENERAL ACCOUNT	222,231.03
F-5 MDF CAMP CONSTABLE	103,134.44
UCA CEMETERY TRUST	75,437.46
THE GAP PARISH FAIR COMMITTEE	4,191.79
TOTAL BANK	**418,959.42**

CURRENT ASSETS

ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE	00.00
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	**00.00**

FIXED ASSETS

CP-2 BUILDINGS AT COST	1,079,762.94
TOTAL FIXED ASSETS	**1,079,762.94**

TOTAL ASSETS	**1,498,722.36**

LIABILITIES

CURRENT LIABILITIES

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE	19,156.75
GST & PAYG	2,539.39
ROUNDING	1.26

SUB-ENTITIES - FUNDS HELD

SUB-ENTITY - FRIDAY NIGHT LIVE	2,628.34
TOTAL SUB-ENTITIES - FUNDS HELD	**2,628.34**

SUB-ENTITIES - OPERATED BY CONGREGATION

CEMETERY TRUST	75,437.46
CHURCH FAMILY CAMP	468.65
FAIR & FUNDRAISING	4,191.79
FIRST STEPS IN MUSIC	1,220.13
FIT AFTER FIFTY	1,632.04
PLAYGROUP	3,826.80
TOTAL SUB-ENTITIES - OPERATED BY CONGREGATION	**86,776.87**

CONGREGATIONAL LIABILITIES

GRANTS/DONATIONS NOT YET PAID	1,001.00
PROVISION - STAFF LEAVE	37,504.96
STAFF PRESENTS (HOLDING)	(370.00)
TOTAL CONGREGATIONAL LIABILITIES	**38,135.96**

GRANTS NO YET PAID	(2,500)
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	149,238.57

TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	**149,238.57**

NET ASSETS	**1,349,483.79**

EQUITY

ASSET REPLACEMENT RESERVE	55,011.85
CURRENT YEAR EARNINGS	36,138.88
RETAINED EARNINGS	1,258,333.06
TOTAL EQUITY	**1,349,483.79**

T. EDWINSMITH CPA
AUDITOR
Audited 06/02/2024

PROFIT AND LOSS

UCA - THE GAP
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

TRADING INCOME

DONATIONS AND GRANTS

FROM CHURCH GROUPS	1,200.00
RETIRING APPEALS - NON CONGREGATIONAL	1,001.00
SYNOD & PRESBYTERY GRANTS	15,000.00
TOTAL DONATIONS AND GRANTS	**17,201.00**

FUNDRAISING & EVENTS

CONGREGATIONAL EVENTS/ACTIVITIES	7,892.97
BOOK & PLANT SALE + 150TH CELEBRATIONS	17,500.00
GARAGE SALE	8,000.00
TOTAL FUNDRAISING & EVENTS	**33,392.97**

GIVING & GENEROSITY

INVESTMENT SUNDAY	28,870.00
REGULAR GIVING	250,855.55
TOTAL GIVING & GENEROSITY	**279,725.55**

OTHER

MINISTERIAL SERVICE REIMBURSEMENT	2,972.73
UCIS MDF ACCOUNT INTEREST	6,207.45
UCIS MSS ACCOUNT INTEREST	412.53
USE OF MDF FUNDS	65,157.03
TOTAL OTHER	**74,749.74**

PROPERTY

CHILD CARE CENTRE HIRE	51,990.00
GENERAL PROPERTY HIRE	18,667.28
TOTAL PROPERTY	**70,657.28**

TOTAL TRADING INCOME	**475,726.54**
GROSS PROFIT	**475,726.54**

OPERATING EXPENSES

CHURCH ADMINISTRATION

ADVERTISING	876.35
BANK CHARGES	1,024.08
COPYRIGHT	1,970.22
SOFTWARE LICENSES	4,038.16
STEWARDSHIP	190.80
TRAINING & CONFERENCES	2,142.07
VOLUNTEER HONORARIUMS	1,000.00
WEBSITE	909.62
TOTAL CHURCH ADMINISTRATION	**12,151.30**

CHURCH OFFICE

OFFICE RESOURCING	5,844.25
OFFICE STAFFING	66,176.87
TOTAL CHURCH OFFICE	**72,021.12**

MINISTRY TEAM

LEAD MINISTER	79,140.36
FAMILY PASTOR	54,078.61
WORSHIP PASTOR	19,596.39
YAYA PASTOR	65,157.03
PATHWAYS OFFICER	2,105.30
TOTAL MINISTRY TEAM	**220,077.69**

MISSION TEAM - ENGAGE IN

CATERING	299.04
FAITH ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES	403.86
FAMILY MINISTRIES	302.15
TOTAL MISSION TEAM - ENGAGE IN	**1,005.05**

MISSION TEAM - REACH OUT

APPEALS & OUTREACH DONATIONS	3,501.00
CATERING	791.34
LOCAL OUTREACH SUPPORT	8,240.00
WIDER CHURCH	59,273.62
TOTAL MISSION TEAM - REACH OUT	**71,805.96**

MISSION TEAM - WORSHIP

CATERING	436.37
EQUIPMENT & RESOURCING	2,733.60
MORNING WORSHIP	465.82
NIGHT CHURCH	399.60
TOTAL MISSION TEAM - WORSHIP	**4,035.39**

PROPERTY

CLEANING	15,412.73
EQUIPMENT & ASSETS	14,918.40
GROUNDS	4,596.11
INSURANCE	11,916.23
PROPERTY MAINTENANCE & MANAGEMENT	5,905.78
RATES & UTILITIES	5,741.90
TOTAL PROPERTY	**58,491.15**

TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	**439,587.66**
NET PROFIT	**36,138.88**

T. EDWINSMITH CPA
AUDITOR
Audited 06/02/2024

THE GAP FAIR COMMITTEE

UCA - THE GAP
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

ASSETS

BANK

COMMONWEALTH BANK	4,191.79
TOTAL BANK	4,191.79
UNREPRESENTED CHEQUES	-
NET ASSETS	**4,191.79**

EQUITY

RETAINED EARNINGS (2022)	955.19
2023 CHANGE IN ACCOUNT BALANCE	3,236.60
TOTAL EQUITY	**4,191.79**

FAIR AND SALES

FAIR INCOME

APRIL SALE DAY (PLANTS AND BOOKS)	12,113.31
OCTOBER SALE DAY (CLOTHES AND GARAGE SALE	8,773.30
FAIR DONATIONS	5.00
150TH CELEBRATIONS	12,715.28
150TH DONATIONS	2,800.00
TOTAL FAIR INCOME	**36,406.89**

CHANGE

APRIL FLOAT	360.00
OCTOBER FLOAT	580.00
150TH FLOAT	1,600.00
TOTAL CHANGE	**2,540.00**
GROSS PROFIT	**33,866.89**

FAIR EXPENSES

APRIL SALE DAY	21.00
GARAGE SALE	66.06
150TH CELEBRATIONS	4,727.38

FAIR OVERHEADS

ADMINISTRATION	-
PUBLICITY	-
EQUIPMENT	-
TOTAL FAIR OVERHEADS	-
TOTAL FAIR + GARAGE SALE EXPENSES	4,814.44
OPERATING PROFIT	**29,052.45**

OTHER INCOME

HIRE OF EQUIPMENT	8.00
INTEREST	-
TOTAL OTHER INCOME	**8.00**

OTHER EXPENSES

BANK FEES	-
CONTRIBUTION TO PARISH	25,823.85
TOTAL OTHER EXPENES	**25,823.85**
INCREASE (REDUCTION) IN ACCOUNT BALANCE	**3,236.60**

TO BE AUDITED

FIRST STEPS IN MUSIC

FINANCIAL REPORT 01/01/23 TO 31/12/23

INCOME	**5,456.11**
WEEKLY FEES - FIRST STEPS	5,456.11
EXPENSES	**5,653.66**
INSTRUCTOR FEES & WAGES	5,568.11
BANK CHARGES	85.55
SUB-ENTITY BALANCE 01/01/2023	1,417.68
INCOME DEPOSITED	5,456.11
LESS EXPENSES & PAYMENTS MADE	5,653.66
SUB-ENTITY BALANCE 31/12/2023	**1,220.13**

T. EDWINSMITH CPA
AUDITOR
Audited 06/02/2024

PLAYGROUP

FINANCIAL REPORT 01/01/23 TO 31/12/23

INCOME	**4,635.00**
FEES - THE GAP UC ACCOUNT	4,635.00
EXPENSES	**2,875.21**
BANK CHARGES	75.66
EQUIPMENT & RESOURCES	1,289.55
FITNESS INSTRUCTION	1,510.00
SUB-ENTITY BALANCE 01/01/2023	2,067.01
INCOME	4,635.00
PAYMENTS MADE	2,875.21
SUB-ENTITY BALANCE 31/12/2023	**3,826.80**

T. EDWINSMITH CPA
AUDITOR
Audited 06/02/2024

FIT AFTER FIFTY

FINANCIAL REPORT 01/01/23 TO 31/12/23

INCOME	**12,944.10**
WEEKLY FEES - FAF	12,944.10
EXPENSES	**11,953.04**
INSTRUCTOR FEES & WAGES	11,884.08
GENERAL EXPENSES	32.00
BANK CHARGES	36.96
SUB-ENTITY BALANCE 01/01/2023	**640.98**
INCOME DEPOSITED	12,944.10
LESS EXPENSES & PAYMENTS MADE	11,953.04
LESS DONATION TO CONGREGATION	-
BANK BALANCE 31/12/2023	**1,632.04**

T. EDWINSMITH CPA
AUDITOR
Audited 06/02/2024

G.U.C.C.E.

OPENING BALANCE AS AT 1.1.23	**2638.49**
FEES	**2975.95**
PLUS DONATIONS	26.90
	5641.34
LESS EXPENSES	**3,998.49**
DONATIONS	
TIMOR CHILDREN'S DENTAL PROGRAMME	1000.00
UNITING WORLD	1000.00
GIVIT (FIRES IN TARA)	1000.00
THE GAP UNITING CHURCH	1000.00
PETY CASH	725.00
	4725.00
BALANCE AS AT 31.12.23	**916.34**
BALANCE AT BANK AS AT 31.12.23	**916.34**
PETTY CASH BALANCE	**41.84**

J.O. EDWINSMITH
TREASURER FOR GUCCE
16.01.2024

B.M. ROLLASON
HON. AUDITOR

IN MY OPINION THE FOREGOING STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS FOR 2023 AND THE FINANCIAL POSITION AT 31.12.23 FAIRLY PRESENTS THE RELEVANT TRANSACTIONS AND FUNDS HELD.

THE GAP CEMETERY TRUST

STATEMENT OF INCOME & EXPENSES - YEAR ENDED 30/11/2023

BANK BALANCE 01/12/2022	**64,985.10**
INCOME	**31,000.00**
COLUMBARIUM	30,900.00
CEMETERY	100.00
EXPENSES	**24,747.64**
COLUMBARIUM	5,250.00
CEMETERY	19,497.64
BALANCE AT 30/11/2023	**71,237.46**

S. LOPES
TREASURER/COLUMBARIUM REGISTRAR

T. EDWINSMITH CPA
AUDITOR
Audited 30/01/2024

CHURCH CAMP

FINANCIAL REPORT 01/01/23 TO 31/12/23

INCOME	**9,520.00**
REGISTRATION FEES	9,520.00
EXPENSES	**10,291.61**
2023 CAMP DEPOSIT & FEES	9,270.00
2024 CAMP DEPOSIT	879.75
ACTIVITY REIMBURSEMENTS	50.58
BANK CHARGES	91.28
SUB-ENTITY BALANCE 01/01/2023	1,240.26
INCOME DEPOSITED	9,520.00
LESS EXPENSES & PAYMENTS MADE	10,291.61
BANK BALANCE 31/12/2023	**468.65**

T. EDWINSMITH CPA
AUDITOR
Audited 06/02/2024

SENIOR FRIENDSHIP GROUP

BANK RECONCILIATION 01/01/23 TO 31/12/23

CREDIT BALANCE 01/01/2023	**863.27**
INCOME AS AT 31/12/2023	**1045.05**
LESS EXPENDITURE 31/12/2023	**990.00**
CREDIT BALANCE AS AT 31/12/2023	**918.32**
BALANCE AS PER BANK STATEMENT 31/12/2023	**918.32**

R. WALDEN
TREASURER

B.M. ROLLASON
HON. AUDITOR

Auditor's Statement, 02/02/2024:
I certify that in terms of records provided to me, the accompanying statements present fairly the transactions for the Group for the period ended 31/12/2023.

The Gap
UNITING CHURCH