

Words From A Messy Desk

27th July, 2023

To my Noranda Uniting family,

We had a really productive meeting last night at Church Council. When we had our Life & Witness Review earlier in the year, one of the recommendations was for us to update our **congregational profile**. This is something that each congregation is supposed to do on a regular basis so that the Presbytery gets a better idea of how each congregation is travelling. It also helps us to reflect a bit on who we are as a congregation.

As we filled in the numbers of how many members and that sort of thing, we realised that the numbers do not tell the story of who we are. When we started to talk about our connection to Camboon Primary, or our connections through Toddler Jam or the yoga group, or our connections made through one off events, or even in the way we do worship, we started to affirm that the numbers don't tell the story of community that exists in this place.

One of the other priorities to come out of the Life & Witness Review was our need to consolidate our pastoral care networks. Part of that process was the pastoral care survey that many of you filled out over the last couple of weeks. There were some interesting results. I had known that with all my Presbytery commitments, I wasn't doing as much visiting as I would like and I felt like I dropped the ball a few times, and that was affirmed in some of the surveys. I have dropped some of those other commitments, but more than that, I have now asked the Church Council to hold me accountable in the amount of visiting I do.

But more substantially, we have agreed to allocate each member of the congregation to a pastoral care list to be overseen by **pastoral carers**. So now we're putting the call out for people who are willing to have a list of half a dozen or so congregation members with whom they touch base regularly, ensuring that those members know that they are cared for and, with permission, passing any urgent crises to me.

It was also decided that we would start including people generally from the congregational directory as people to pray for so that we're not just **praying for each other** in tough times, but all through the year. With that in mind, this week, I'm going to ask that as well as praying for Audrey H, Neville & Maureen L and their grandson, Jean C, and Denise B, could you please support and bless Denise A, Mary & Bill B, Alex C, Gaye & Bill G, Margaret L, Amy & Terry P, and Verna S in your prayers as well?

Finally from the Church Council meeting was the realisation that our **offerings** in June were down substantially. Up until then, I had been impressed by how our offerings were improving. If not for some major building expenses this year, it was looking like our first break-even year for quite a while. I know that June's dip was just a glitch and we will be back up to where we've been in no time.

Speaking of generosity, I have once again been overwhelmed by the generosity of all those who are contributing to this Sunday's breakfast. As you should be aware, this coming Sunday is **Breakfast Church**. We'll be starting at 9am in the hall with breakfast available before,

during, and even after the service (if there's any left by then). As we dine together, we'll be exploring the story of Jacob wrestling with God in Genesis 32:3-31 and talking together about how that story relates to our own lives.

After Sunday, it's only a few weeks until the **High Tea**, raising money for the Harry Perkins Institute and the Leukemia Foundation. Unfortunately (for those of us who missed out), it is already sold out. However, if you'd like to make a donation for the cause, please speak with Rae R or Michelle and I'm sure they'd be more than happy to accept your generosity.

I also need to let you know a bit about Julie Ridden's visit to us last Saturday. Julie gave us lots to think about, especially with regard to the benefits of a church that is intentionally intergenerational, **valuing different generations together** rather than separating us into different groups. We've got a few ideas that started brewing from that and we're hoping to have another meeting in a few weeks to see how we can put these ideals into practice.

I think that's all from me. I have to say that between all the comments from the meeting last night to the energy around the discussions on Saturday to the excitement around this coming Sunday, I believe the Spirit of God is active in this place. As we heard Jacob say in our story this last Sunday: *"How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."*

With love and hope,

Your minister,
your brother in Christ,
Ivan

0422 428 574
noranda.rev@gmail.com