

## CREATIVE MINISTRIES NETWORK CONGREGATION COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2016

### On the 33<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary of the founding of our Network

#### Introduction

We are delighted to present this annual report to you as an account of our Congregation's activities during 2016.

#### Office-bearers

The Congregation Council's annual meeting was held in February, and the following office-bearers were appointed for 2016: Chairperson - Sue Earl, Deputy Chair - John Bottomley, Secretary - Miranda Walker, Treasurer - John Bottomley and Minute Secretary - Marg Neith.

#### Gatherings

There were two further gatherings in members' homes on 29th May and 2 October. Both gatherings featured Bible studies using commentary material from Tom Wright, which have been highly valued. Our Lenten study also followed Wright's commentary on Luke's gospel for the lectionary readings, and also was well received. Thanks to members who opened up their homes for our gathering, and to all our members who come with yummy food for us to share.

#### Retreats

We again conducted two retreats, one for a weekend in June at Camp Wilkin, Anglesea and the second in November for a full day in Carnegie. Our June retreat addressed 'The God questions I ponder in my daily life'. We broke into groups of two to present our thoughts and invite the responses of other members, and were enriched by these conversations and the creative art and meditation opportunities that followed. We were thrilled to welcome Sue Barber for lunch and give her an update on congregational matters. The November retreat explored the theme of 'Forgiveness' where personal experiences were integrated with our Bible study, again aided by a Tom Wright commentary.

#### Remembrance

We were saddened to learn of the death of Rev. John McCahon. John was a founding member of the group of ministers 'in secular employment' who established the Urban Ministry Network in 1984 as a social development and research consultancy group and faith community.

#### Mission activities

##### Closure of Creative Ministries Network Unitingcare

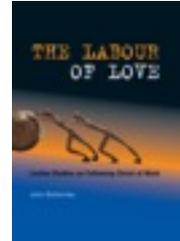
The closure of CMN as a Unitingcare agency resulted in a number of administrative concerns for our Congregation Council. We opened a CMN Congregation account with UCA Funds Management; approved the opening of a bank account; set about establishing our own web page, and negotiated the transfer of the CMN Peace Fund to the congregation for projects in Sri Lanka that support post-war recovery and community peace and reconciliation efforts.

The Congregation was troubled by the lack of understanding in the Synod on the nature of the Memorandum of Understanding between the CMN Board and the Presbytery of Port Phillip East that established our Congregation. Our establishment as a Congregation has followed the policy of the national Assembly to form faith communities and congregations out of UCA education and community service institutions, but our formal relationship with CMN has largely been ignored in the disbanding of the agency Board and the establishment of Uniting. The Congregation agreed write to the Uniting Board to clarify their commitment to the agreements between the CMN Board and the Presbytery that affect the Congregation.

### Mission to Work Committee

Subsequent to the changes to the CMN agency, the Congregation Council established a Mission to Work Committee to further our commitment to our founding vocation, and agreed to commit to a journey towards establishing a (Parish) Mission to Work agency. We agreed there was a need for a project on 'lessons learned and reconciliation after organisational sponsored violence and trauma' to help our Congregation to better address such events as part of our future 'mission to work'.

A *Labour of Love* Lenten study was endorsed as a study of the CMN congregation, and the publication was launched by the Presbytery Chairperson, Rev. Dr. Tony Floyd at Springvale UC. The Mission to Work Committee was asked to develop a network of study groups and contacts for future faith and work programs.



### Solidarity with post-war Sri Lanka

The CMN Board transferred its Peace Fund to the congregation for Peace projects in Sri Lanka. Policy guidelines for the approval of projects to be funded in solidarity with the Jaffna Diocese, Church of South India (JDCSI) and institutions of the Diocese, including the Centre for Holistic Healing, Jaffna College and Uduvil Girls College, were adopted. The purpose of the fund is to make funds "available for projects in Sri Lanka that promote post-war peace and reconciliation, emergency relief in war and natural disasters, community health, education, welfare, counseling, social cohesion, community building and improving multicultural and inter-religion relationships. Priority is to be given to projects benefiting girls and women." It was also agreed the funds be dispersed over a period of about 5 years.



We approved a small grant for an Australian volunteer to visit Jaffna College to provide a professional development program for two weeks in January 2017. Funding for Uduvil Girls' College and Jaffna College to introduce a staff professional development program to introduce new teaching methods at both colleges was approved.

The Congregation invited interested members and friends to contribute direct debit donations to the Fund for further support.

Margaret Neith and John Bottomley visited Sri Lanka in August to follow up relationships with JDCSI, to learn of new challenges facing the church, and to take part in the launch of a book John co-authored with Bishop Daniel Thiagarajah, *The Bones of the Righteous Shall Never be Broken*.



An application was submitted to the Synod Ecumenical Award for our mission in Sri Lanka, but was unsuccessful.

### **Thanksgiving**

We rejoice in all the ways God's Spirit has been with us in the sometimes painful but often joyous moments of 2016. We are grateful to our members who contribute so much of their faith and wisdom to our gatherings and the relationships which have developed through our shared journey. We look to the future in hope for the new possibilities that greet us and will, by God's grace, continue to form us as a Congregation of the Uniting Church in Australia.

Chairperson: Sue Earl

Deputy Chair and Treasurer: John Bottomley

Secretary: Miranda Walker

Minute Secretary: Margaret Neith

19 February 2017

**Creative Ministries Network Congregation**  
**Income and Expenditure Reconciliation Statement**  
**2016**

<b>Income</b>	<b>\$</b>
Opening Balance	1,000.00
Lenten Book Sales	382.00
Donations	695.81
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>2,089.46</b>

**Expenditure**

Jaffna College Dictionaries	322.00
Total Expenses	322.00
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>1,767.46</b>

**Creative Ministries Network Congregation**  
**Sri Lanka Peace Fund**  
**Statement of Income and Expenditure**  
**2016**

**Income**

Opening Balance	96,556.78
Donation	25.00
Interest Revenue	612.26
<b>Total</b>	<b>97,194.04</b>

**Expenditure**

Air fare subsidy for volunteer teacher	500.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>96,694.04</b>