

CREATIVE MINISTRIES NETWORK CONGREGATION COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2018

**7th anniversary of the formation of CMN Congregation
15th anniversary of the establishment of Creative Ministries Network
35th 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 2018.

Office-bearers

At the Congregation Council's annual meeting in February, the following office-bearers were appointed for 2018: Chairperson – Linda Hoskins, Deputy Chair - Susan Earl, Secretary - Miranda Walker, Treasurer - John Bottomley and Minute Secretary - Margaret Neith.

Gatherings

Our program of gatherings expanded in 2018, with an extra regular dinner and faith reflection gathering, making them quarterly, and the introduction of seven monthly Sunday evenings of 'Honest Conversations' in members' homes. The Council thanks all those who welcomed us into their homes for these gatherings.

The gatherings continue to evoke matters for our further reflection and study. Two evenings were devoted to members' hopes for the Congregation. The value to members of listening and sharing each other's concerns and struggles in their work, personal and family lives was warmly affirmed. Another conversation considered how we may provide pastoral support for whistle-blowers in situations of unfair or corrupted work practices. The question was referred to the Mission to Work Committee for further consideration. Our gatherings were also enriched by the creative talents of our members, including the production of a video, poetry reading and sacred storytelling.

Two groups met for Contemplative Worship in Reservoir and Ormond respectively, while another thirteen people received the service via email for the second and fourth Sundays of the month. For the second half of the year, the Ormond group met on Tuesday evenings.

Congregation Council Meetings

The Congregation met in Council on four occasions. Our average attendance was six members at the meetings, where the organisation of our worship, studies and service continue to be carried out in a generous spirit of participation and truth-seeking.

The annual meeting reviewed our membership roll, with Linda Hoskins received on the baptised members' roll and Philip Moran received on the adherents' roll. A later meeting requested a report about having the Eucharist on the occasions when the congregation meets for a meal.

The Congregation Council appointed John Bottomley as a Program Coordinator for a period of 12 months, to liaise with the Chairperson as needed to facilitate better planning for our gatherings.

The Council expressed its disappointment that the result of the November 2017 Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee life and witness consultation with our Congregation was never forwarded to the Council, even after repeated enquiries.

Mission activities

Solidarity with post-war Sri Lanka

Margaret Neith continued as Coordinator of the Congregation's liaison with the Jaffna Diocese of the Church of South India (JDCSI) and reported regularly at our Council meetings. Features of her reports included:

- Nine tea-chests of toys, books, teachers' aids, educational games and DVDs to JDCSI child care centres, and the two colleges.
- Support for the establishment of a sister-school relationship with Girraween PS, a NSW primary school. The school has sent nine boxes of books to Jaffna College. The initiative comes from a Tamil-Australian teacher who first went to Jaffna as a volunteer with a project organised through our contacts.
- \$30,000 was forwarded to JDCSI and \$2500 was forwarded to CHH. The JDCSI grant was banked in a term deposit with the Union Bank Colombo according to our agreement with the Diocese.
- The congregation consented for \$30,000 of an earlier grant to be used by JDCSI in their struggle for justice with the Trustees of Jaffna College Funds.
- A letter under the Chairperson's signature was sent to Wellesley United Church of Christ from the Congregation explaining our support for the Diocese and Jaffna College.
- The Centre for Holistic Healing DVD documentary was shown in India at a conference attended by the Bishop.
- Marg facilitated contact between a former teacher of textile arts at RMIT with contacts in CHH. Marg's former teacher was a guest speaker at Jaffna University, and is interested in a project to link local women craft practitioners with skills training and marketing opportunities.
- Reports on the Jaffna College legal case were appreciated.
- Two members spent a month in Sri Lanka with JDCSI to work on various projects, and donated a computer for the Jaffna College library.
- Marg developed a script for a 'Welcome to Jaffna College video', which was produced by a College teacher for their sister school in NSW.

Mission to Work Committee

Steve Crump served the Committee as Convener and John Bottomley as Coordinator for 2018.

The Committee has focused on mental health and work, and support for whistle-blowers. Both projects are at an exploratory stage. A proposal for a companioning peer support ministry course was submitted to the UCA Theological College, but appears to be in limbo. The Committee's study, edited by John Bottomley, was published by Coventry Press, titled *At Work with John's Gospel: a spirituality for life's fruitfulness in all our labours*.

The Congregation supported Steve to attend the annual Work and Faith Dinner at Ridley Theological College.

Webpage

The Congregation's webpage address is: <http://creative.unitingchurch.org.au>. The site is in its second year.

Finances

The Council is pleased to report that all of our compliance responsibilities for the year have been met, including:

- The audit of 2017 financial reports was completed and forwarded to the Presbytery.
- The annual Synod finance and property online report for 2017 was completed.
- The Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission 2017 report was completed.

- The Congregation made its first contribution to the Synod Mission and Service Fund.

The Treasurer enquired with Uniting about the Creative Ministries Arts Fund that was transferred to Uniting, which advised it had no use for it. Uniting granted \$1,368.41 that remained in the Arts Fund to the Congregation account for arts projects. The future of an Arts Fund to support the Congregation's creative ministries is under review by the Synod. In the meantime, the six-monthly statistical returns for the Register of Cultural Organisations (ROCO) have been brought up to date and forwarded to ROCO.

Gratitude

We rejoice in all the ways God's Spirit was with us in 2018. We are grateful to our members who contribute so much of their faith, wisdom and hospitality to our gatherings, and for the relationships which continue to grow through our shared journey.

We look to the future in hope as new possibilities greet us. By God's grace, we pray that we will continue to live out our vocation as a Congregation of the Uniting Church in Australia.

Chairperson: Linda Hoskins
Deputy Chair: Sue Earl
Treasurer: John Bottomley
Secretary: Miranda Walker
Minute Secretary: Margaret Neith