



SEEDS ANNUAL REPORT

2021

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Our Mission

**Bringing people
to Jesus and
being
transformed
into His
passionate
disciples.....**

Senior Pastor Report



*God's loyal love couldn't have run out,
his merciful love couldn't have dried up.
They're created new every morning.
How great your faithfulness!
I'm sticking with God (I say it over and over).
He's all I've got left. (The Message translation)
Lamentations 3:22-24*

What a year 2021 has been. The twists and turns, on and off's have continued. We have masked and vaxx'd, shut down and restarted (well sort of), online and in person... the list goes on.

Through this whole period, we have slowly started to realize that we do not have much control at all, and that only trusting in our gracious heavenly Father can we have any stability in life. God is our only reliable and stable friend.

God has yet again proven to be so faithful and dependable. It's my experience that there is no end point to this part of who God is. I'm talking about personally and as a church. I love the verses in Lamentations chapter 3.

When I look back over the year, through all its twists and turns, I can see the hand of God in our lives and in our decisions.

This year is not so much about what we have done, what we have achieved or where we have taken ground. It's about what God has been doing and how God has proved to be so good to his church. God is the one who has provided the strength, the gel for our community, the inspiration for our being.

My prayer is that the lessons of who God is will remain strong for us as we walk into the future and they will shape our responses to the world. In a time of flux our anchor is God, in a time of stability our anchor is still God.

My biggest theme this year, that has been under all my preaching and leading, has been one of obedience. Our best path as a church and individuals is to obey the instructions of God. This is always the right thing to do. Right up high on that list is the command to be disciples who make disciples. 2022 will see us develop this theme and further apply it to our lives.

Of course, it would not be a Senior Pastors report without me saying thank you to our team of amazing volunteers, our elders, and our staff. There is no way we could run without your tireless effort and dedication. You continue to bless and give in measures that will only be fully seen in eternity.

I look forward to seeing firsthand Gods actions in our church, in our lives and in our community as 2022 comes into being.

With my prayers,

Jonathan Davies
Senior Pastor

Seeds Annual Report 2021

02

Chair Report

The Year after the Unprecedented Year.....

As I reflect back on 2021 I am reminded again of how different our experience of church has been this year. We have seen how a new kind of normal has emerged, which is not what we imagined it would be. Seeds Uniting Church has continued to orient it's ministries to suit changing COVID restrictions, and to serve our community according to God's will.

This year has deeply challenged many in our church community, including a number of our staff. I can not adequately describe this, so I will steal the words of another, "...it was tough, but God is faithful". I have been reminded time and again this year that whatever comes, God is in the midst of the situation, and He is truly faithful.

During 2021 the Seeds staff, under Senior Pastor Jonathan Davies, have sought to lead Seeds forward into deeper discipleship, whilst also adapting to new restrictions and different ways of Seeds "being church". This has seen new initiatives or adaptations of previous activities, beginning. I particularly wish to acknowledge the success of Kidventure this year and I look forward to hearing about the next adventures of our younger members. I wish to thank the whole staff for their tireless efforts this year to support the work of Seeds Uniting Church, and going above and beyond, time after time to ensure that the ministry can continue.

We must acknowledge the work of Bayley Lang over the past 7 years, in particular his work in transitioning our worship to an online recording and then to broadcast. Bayley's deep commitment in time and energy enabled Seeds to move into an entirely new ministry space online. His work in developing the creative ministries of Seeds expanded our horizons and deeply impacted the wider Uniting Church. We wish Bayley and Sabrina all the best in their future endeavours and ministry life. As Rod Dyson's retirement approaches we must also acknowledge the profound impact Rod has had in developing the discipleship aspects of Seeds, mentoring other staff and overseeing Seeds Uniting Church at various times. We wish him all the best as he finishes his time in paid ministry, and hope that there are times of relaxation in the near future.

This year the Church Council focussed on consolidating the resources of Seeds and positioning the church ready for the expansion of ministries. We know that God has ministry opportunities for the church to move into and we strive to enable these to be realised. I wish to thank all the members of the Church Council for their service this year, guiding Seeds Uniting Church. Your willingness to faithfully and wisely discern the way forward has heartened and encouraged me throughout this time. As always, the many ministries of Seeds Uniting Church can not happen without the commitment of our volunteers. Thankyou for faithfully giving of yourselves, time and again, to go above and beyond, to realise the mission of Seeds.

As we approach Christmas and look forward to 2022 we will continue to live out our mission, to bring people to Jesus and be transformed into His passionate disciples

Bob Buxton

Chair of the Seeds Uniting Church Council

Seeds Annual Report 2021

03

Finance

2020/21 generated a very pleasing operating surplus for Seeds of just over \$170,000. This arose from a combination of unique factors. The 2021/22 budget, which incorporates some significant prioritised property works including some works deferred from 2020/21, estimates a net deficit of \$66,000.

Initial projections for 2022/23 and beyond estimate a nominal annual operating surplus, which will maintain a level of cash reserves for future property projects and church planting.

A comprehensive presentation of finances will be made at the upcoming AGM on 22 November 2021.

Thank you to all who give generously to the work of God through Seeds Uniting Church



SEEDS

STORIES

05

Building A Disciple Culture

Rod Dyson
Associate Pastor

For the last 21 months I have been relearning discipleship. I have been reminded that it is not the church of God that has a mission in the world, but the God of mission who has a church in the world. I have been reminded that God is active in the world and my call is to participate in that activity. I don't have to generate the activity; I have to join it. We will share this more and more with Seeds Uniting Church in the months to come.

Part of my relearning has come from asking a couple of people to read the bible with me. These are not people who would say they are followers of Jesus. They know some things about Jesus and together we are learning a lot more from the Gospel of Luke. They are learning and I am learning - from them (and the gospel). They approach the gospel of Luke without suspicion. They are open to what they find there rather than trying to make it fit their belief system. They find that each time we meet that there is something in the reading that day that relates exactly to their circumstances. They are beginning to know Jesus more.

They are hearing things, they are telling others about that and doing things that the gospel is saying. They are being discipled toward faith.

I'm excited. I have lots to unlearn, I need to truly know Jesus and I need to listen a lot to the Holy Spirit. Instead of finding evangelism to be a burden I am being carried along by the winds of the Spirit.

I love The Message version of Matthew 11.28-30:

"Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly."

It's true!

06

Food Relief - Seeds Care

Maragert Davidson
Business Manager

In June this year we had a message asking us for a food hamper from a young Mum who was living in her car with her two young boys after fleeing domestic violence. We supplied her with a food hamper (packing as much as we could in)! Most times we do this we don't hear anything again, but after a month we had another message from her asking for another hamper, she said that the previous one had just run out! We could tell from her messaging that she was super grateful for the help.

The second request came around the time of the week lockdown in July and she commented that she had been unable to get suitable food to cook on her camp stove because of the panic buying in the supermarkets, a situation which I am sure you would appreciate adds to the stresses of an already unhappy situation. We were able to talk to her a bit more this time and learnt that she has spent some time in a secure facility after having tried to take her life because of the hopelessness she was feeling. She was much better and very grateful to the police who found her, and the people who had taken care of her. She was focussed on the future and her two boys (and the dog)! We supplied her with another hamper which she said she would take with her to the Yorke Peninsula to stay in a camping ground because the accommodation was just so cheap. I also asked her if there was anything we could pray for, for her and she asked for prayer around finding suitable accommodation for her little family.

She sent us some photos of her little family camping, saying the boys didn't really know much of her situation, they were just enjoying the fun of camping and roasting marshmallows over the fire – in the middle of winter! We have not heard anything more from her, we hope and pray that this is due to her finding suitable accommodation.

The hampers we prepare and give out can have a profound effect on the lives of those in need.

Margaret Davidson
Business Manager

07

Youth Alpha

Kate Morgan
XS Coordinator

Alpha is always a great opportunity to connect with those who may not have much of a faith background. This year we had many youth come to Alpha who had very little experience with faith or the church. Whilst this can be challenging, especially at first, week after week they kept coming back to Alpha and then regularly to XS on a Friday. Many of the youth started coming for the food, games or because it was a way to hang out with their friends. It was powerful to see those who came not expecting to get anything out of Alpha, finish it with a hunger and sense of safety to ask big questions.

It was incredibly evident from the transformation in their attitudes and attendance that even if they hadn't met Jesus yet, they loved the environment and felt so at home that they could continue to reach out to us leaders. The continued meeting with leaders and involvement at XS just shows the seeking for connection, relationship and deep down Jesus that Alpha provided a safe place to explore. It has been incredible to see week by week, moment by moment how God has been working through the Alpha ministry and is continuing to work in the lives of these young people since.



Seeds Online

Sarah Beresford
Executive Assistant



seeds.online.church

Our online community continues to grow, with over 15,000 views over the last 9 months on *seeds.online.church* alone! That doesn't include our YouTube views, which increase week on week. We are so thankful that we have this opportunity to reach further than the walls of this building.

More excitingly we are connecting, reaching and praying with those who cannot attend worship in person for whatever reason, be it for health, mobility or geographical reasons. With a team of online hosts, we are able to engage with those joining us each week through our chat and prayer functions, which has created a beautiful online community.

We know of people who have come back to Jesus, after joining us online by chance at a relatives house and have connected in weekly since to hear us share the gospel!

Some of our rural churches in South Australia have benefitted from our online content, and have shared that they have been blessed by what has been made available to them, helping them significantly.

Seeds were recently contacted by a family from overseas, who were hoping to move to Adelaide. With us still in the midst of a global pandemic, this has impacted their emigration plans. In their home country they have been unable to attend worship for some time, and discovered us online. They have connected with us each week and now identify Seeds as their home, and we have been able to pray into their situation! Even though they are over 16,000km away. How amazing is that!!??

Going Deeper

Prayer Team

Following the 21 days of prayer and fasting in 2019, the Lord impressed upon the hearts of several people who attended, to continue to meet weekly at 6 am to pray. It became clear as we shared what was on our hearts that the Lord was gathering a group together to pray for our Church, our Community and for revival in our Nation. We felt compelled to ask the Lord, if He was writing a letter to the body of Christ today (such as those we read in the book of Revelation) , what would He say?

2 Chronicles 7 v 14 soon became our scripture of focus that the Lord kept reminding us of each week:

"If My people, who are called by My name will humble themselves and pray, and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear from Heaven and will forgive their sins and heal their land."

Week by week as we came together and prayed, asking God to restore a right heart within us, for forgiveness for ourselves, and on behalf of our wider community, for the Nation, God began to speak about what we were to focus on as we gathered. He gave us pictures, dreams and visions to encourage and focus our attention. We share these with our Leadership and Elder team, so they know what we sense God is saying to us.

God drew us back again and again to His word, His character and His promises. Our determination to seek His heart and His thoughts, His will and His way as we prayed became increasingly stronger as we were encouraged by stories of revivals past, and how God had answered the prayers of those who were faithful and willing to humble themselves before Him. We knew then and know now that many other people were and are praying, even though they may not be able to join us at 6am in the Cafe every Wednesday morning. So we join in Spirit with them all.

One thing has remained constant as we have met. God's presence with us is tangible. We have laughed, rejoiced and wept together, and we have grown in confidence and boldness to pray and intercede for the needs of our Church, our community and our nation. We have been so blessed and encouraged by how God is growing our heart to walk into all He has for us, to embrace and believe the inheritance He has for us as His Children, and the authority that He has given to us, as we come into agreement with His word that declares we are seated with Him in Heavenly Places.

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For over two years this small group has been meeting and growing. Those used to praying in a group, and those who aren't. Those confident within that and those who aren't. We sing and worship as we come into the presence of God in this time before our part of the world awakens.

Our passion is for Revival—to see God work in the lives of believers and non-believers. We pray to this end. We pray for God's Church here at Seeds—for the Pastors, the Elders, for all in leadership capacity.

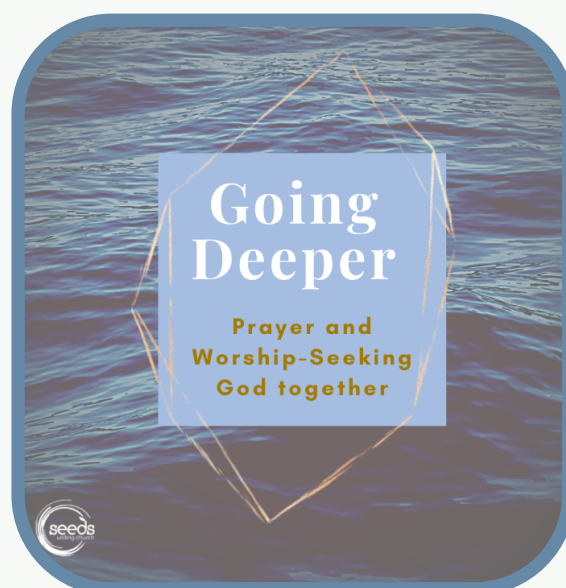
We are definitely NOT all "morning people"! It is not easy—winter mornings can be very cold and dreary, but somehow God stirs us and challenges us ... “Come and meet together and I will be with you”. We pray that one day we will need to move into the auditorium as the café area cannot contain us!

Meanwhile, we can be expectant to what God wants to do in and through each of us and in turn what His strategic plan is for His church called Seeds. Our God never stops working, never stops loving, never stops caring.

In late 2020 the Lord spoke to us about expanding the invitation and beginning a group in the evening for those who wanted to grow in their relationship with God, and explore developing His spiritual gifts. And so, Going Deeper was established. This group meets on the last Tuesday of each month for a time of worship and encouragement, where we can exercise those gifts together. We have been so blessed to encounter Holy Spirit together and hear people step out in faith with words of encouragement, revelation of Scripture, words of wisdom and knowledge, prophecy, leading worship and speaking in tongues. This time is given over to Holy Spirit, for what He wants to do and say through each of us as we make ourselves available to His leading and to hear His voice.

We'd love to extend this invitation to all - weekly at 6am in the Cafe on Wednesdays, and on the last Tuesday of the month in the Cafe at 7pm.

We are so excited for what God has for us in this next season, and believe that we can all hear from God and gain greater and deeper revelation of His word, with which we can encourage each other. These are great opportunities for growing our faith, equipping and empowering us to embrace "the mission of God in the hands of ordinary people".



Young Adult Small Group

Carolyn Sharp

A new young adults group formed at the start of the year for those who had just finished year 12 and were heading into work and study. The purpose of the group is to grow in faith and understanding of God and ourselves through bringing our own life and questions to the Bible and seeing what happens. Memorable topics have been: What about dinosaurs? God revealed in the natural world, spiritual gifts, hearing the parables and letting them sink in and teach us, just like Jesus did with his followers. Guest speakers have been a highlight. David Sharp shared about Pentecost, Hetty Browning shared her fascinating life and faith across Indonesia, Netherlands and Australia. We invited Rod Dyson to tackle two tricky topics, violence in the Old Testament and Jesus and Feminism. The group has grown through sharing food, mmmm.... doughnuts, drawing, stillness, prayer, looking at different translations of the Bible and well -known stories in all four gospels to see different angles. At the end of each week, they head off to Hungry Jacks to eat more food and hang out.

Best of all has been the growth in relationships with each other and with God through the year. The challenge as a leader has been to not to give answers but to let the group discover for themselves. It has been an absolute pleasure to lead this small group with their enthusiasm to meet together every week and to share life, faith, questions and community. Almost all of the group are involved in some form of leadership in their employment or church. This small group provides an opportunity to be transformed together as disciples of Jesus.

12



Baptism



Brenda Payne

“Do you admit that you have sinned, and that you are in need of a saviour?”

This question, posed to those of us blessed to receive baptism, is short and the answer brief, but it’s actually the most fundamental question a person can ever resolve in their life.

In *Mere Christianity*, CS Lewis writes, “Now what was the sort of ‘hole’ man had got himself into? He had tried to set up on his own, to behave as if he belonged to himself. In other words, fallen man is not simply an imperfect creature who needs improvement: he is a rebel who must lay down his arms. Laying down your arms, surrendering, saying you are sorry, realising that you have been on the wrong track and getting ready to start life over again from the ground floor - that is the only way out of our ‘hole’.”

I was baptised at Seeds in June 2021. It was a public declaration of faith and commitment, prefaced by a testimony sharing the story of my journey to Christ. But what couldn’t be conveyed through the microphone was the profound experience of first realising the reality of my sin. That I have been rebelling against our Father, willfully rejecting Him and pushing away, even after everything our Saviour has done in His love to bring us all back.

Arriving at this point was unexpected after twenty years of searching through different religions and philosophies for something I couldn’t put my finger on. Secular culture always said not to bother with Christianity, it was antiquated and sexist, and I carried lots of fear and superstition from my ‘spiritual but not religious’ upbringing. When curiosity did have me exploring, it was to browse denominations looking for one I could “agree with.” I would get confused, frustrated, and hung up on details that had nothing to do with Jesus.

After a time of giving up and calling myself an unwilling atheist, I was driven to find some real people who know what they're talking about to see if they could explain their Christian faith to me, or else it would prove once and for all that religion was not for me.

Seeds was hosting an Alpha course, so I signed up. The people were friendly and knowledgeable, and helped unpack my questions and fears in a safe environment with no pressure. They taught me what no internet search had ever been able to convey - that what I sought wasn't religion, but a personal relationship with God through his Son, Jesus Christ.

After Alpha's orientation, I continued reading and learning in my own time. One of the books was *Mere Christianity* and, having been properly introduced to Jesus and God's love, I was shocked to finally understand just how stubborn my nature has always been against Him, and how ungrateful I have been.

There's nothing to do at that point except lay down your arms and repent from the bottom of your heart, again and again, and turn back to Him continually. I began attending Seeds church online and in person regularly, joined a small group, and put my hand up for baptism.

Through baptism we can be confident in our faith and in His grace, but it's not the beginning, and it's not the end. It's starting life over again from the ground floor. Ready to rebuild, but this time for God.

BAPTISED
20th JUNE 2021



