

SWUC Financial position YTD June 2018

As treasurer I am happy to report that the financial position of SWUC, up to the end of June 2018, is a satisfactory one in relation to the benchmark numbers set in the 2018 Budget.

We are very aware that the current weaker economic position in SA is giving way to tighter than usual household budgets, and are very grateful to you all for your faithful support of God's plan and purpose here despite this.

The main income streams for this Congregation are Direct Giving (via debit orders/EFT's) and Giving at Services – 67% and 19% respectively. At the end of June 2018 we were 9.5% over budget for Direct Giving but unfortunately 28.4% under budget for Giving at Services. In total, for these 2 important income streams, this means that our income from Giving was 1.1% over budget. If we can get the Giving at Services income stream closer to the budget benchmark it will ensure that we keep track with our income needs.

Fundraising was identified as an important activity to supplement our above-mentioned income streams, and an amount of R222,500 was set in the budget. Currently we have raised approximately R28,000 in the current year to date, which leaves us with a remaining target of about R195,000.

Please support the activities that our Resourcing Team have planned for the rest of 2018.

Our expenses up to the end of June 2018 are well within the budgeted amount – a big thank you to Tim and the Staff Team for their great discipline in managing costs carefully.

Overall, to the end of June, we have a positive cash flow, with adequate funds at our disposal in the current account and a small buffer in our investment account – both at Nedbank. But we still need to meet significant denominational assessments which we have held back on, payment of which is required before we can proceed to call a new Leading Minister.

We just received the good news that a bequest, which we had notification of three years ago, has finally been received, an amount of R506,000. These funds will allow us to bring all our financial obligations up to date, and since we have decided not to include bequests in our budgeted income, we will retain the balance in our investment account, where we should really have in reserve at least two months' operating costs.

Johan Pretorius
Treasurer

Update on our Vacancy Committee's Progress

David Wynne
Secretary of that
Committee

Members of the church will be aware that a special general meeting of the congregation was held on Sunday, 15 July to elect and appoint members of the congregation (some of whom were nominated by Council, some by members of the Congregation) to serve on the Vacancy Committee, which has been set up to seek and recommend a suitable replacement for Tim Hawkridge who completed his Ministry here on Sunday, 5th August.

We have been fortunate to have the current Minister from the United Church in Stellenbosch, Rev Tony Robinson, to lead us through this process and to ensure that we go about it according to our Constitution and the requirements of the two Denominations to which we are accountable. This is an appointment made by the two regional bodies of those Denominations. Tony has already made a significant impact on those involved and has a very sound grasp of the procedures involved.

As a result of the decision of the Special Congregational Meeting, the following is the full team which has been delegated to work through, evaluate and make recommendations on the applications for the position of Leading Minister:

Tony Robinson (Assessor to the Vacancy; Chairman), André Parker, Anthony Wait, Eric Rose-Innes, Berryoni le Roux, Cheryl de Beer, David Gray, David Moore, Peggy Wright, Delia Russell, Duncan McKenzie, Gavin Cooper, Gillian Arendse, Neil Cloete, Neray Lubbe, Rob Waddington, Wolhuter Theron, Stan Verrier, Yemu Ndlovu and David Wynne (Secretary).

This process is already under way and will continue until we are in a position to make a recommendation to the congregation. This may happen soon, but the committee has resolved that it will not force the pace and that a recommendation will not be made unless we are satisfied that the nominee is the right fit for SWUC.

Since all the discussions of the committee are confidential, we make the request to members of SWUC not to ask committee members for information about the applicants, but to trust that the process will finally produce a candidate who is suitable for the consideration of the congregation.

When the white smoke comes out of the church chimney, all will be revealed! Habebimus sacerdotem!
David Wynne

THE UNITED VOICE

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www.swuc.co.za

From Tim's Desk

Dear United Church Members and Friends,

I cannot actually believe that this is the last note I will write for the Newsletter. Time has rushed past so quickly since I first shared with you my conviction that my season here was almost complete. Now, as I write to you, it is 5 days from complete (apart from some tidying and packing which will have to come afterwards).

I simply cannot find the words to adequately express my deep appreciation for the privilege of ministering amongst you for 22 ½ years, time shared with many other staff and member leaders who carried responsibility alongside me and from whom I have learnt so much. The most formative of all these relationships was undoubtedly the 10 year colleagueship and much longer friendship I have enjoyed with Martin Lund. All in all, it's been a varied but wonderfully rich journey, marked by both success and failure, in all of which God has remained close.

In the years I have served here there has been great joy, but also deep sadness. There have been times when I operated comfortably within my strengths, but others when I was challenged out of my bracket. There were decisions and actions I would repeat willingly, but there were also mistakes I wish I'd never made. As I think of all the children I've seen grow up to take their first steps of independence, I feel privileged. As I recall the folk who were once with us, but are now with the Lord, there are some I still miss palpably. This is the tapestry of ministry, just as it is the tapestry of life.

The overriding sense I have right now is gratitude. I'm reluctant to finish, because I love you all deeply and I will miss you enormously. But I'm ready to leave because I've completed what I can add to this community, and I know you need a new voice and new perspectives to move you into the next season. I'm simply grateful to have led, taught, counselled, shared, journeyed and grown here.

So thank you for receiving Sandy and me and our children when first we moved here at the start of 1996. Thank you for making Jesus real to my children, and allowing them to exercise their own ministries amongst you as they grew. Thank you for the unconditional love you showed me whether

I did well or messed up. Thank you for allowing me to be part of your lives in such deep moments of both pain and celebration. Thank you for allowing me to be authentically myself, and for not trying to squeeze me into some prescribed mould. Thank you for your wise counsel in moments when I sought it, but also in moments when I didn't want to hear it. Thank you for encouraging me when I was struggling to hold onto hope, especially during the periods of my kidney failure and transplant, and later during my marital struggles and subsequent divorce. Your love and grace as a Congregation has helped me to do what God called me to do consistently, even in the midst of my own personal challenges, and most recently has allowed me to heal in the process. Thank you for your acceptance of my conviction that the season was changing for us all, and for releasing me with the grace and appreciation I have experienced.

I leave you with the prayer of Paul to the Ephesian Church on my lips (Eph 3:14-21 NLT)

When I think of all this, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father, the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth. I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.

Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. Glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen.

No longer your shepherd, but still very fond of the flock,
Tim.

From our Council Chairman

André Parker

Dear Friends,

This is the last newsletter to appear while Tim is still technically our leading minister. By the time you read this we will have bid him farewell at our combined service on Sunday 5 August, and he will be enjoying some leave before starting on his next assignment from the Lord. I would nevertheless like to use this opportunity to pay tribute to Tim on behalf of our Church Council and Congregation.

I am not qualified to give you a historical overview of Tim's 22 years of faithful service as spiritual head here at Somerset West United Church. Suffice to say that every member can attest to Tim's leadership role in shaping our Christian values amidst a secular world. This is particularly true for our longer serving members who have walked a long road with him.

Tim's attributes are widely known and appreciated here at United. Foremost among these are his excellent bible-based teachings, focusing on God's saving grace and the commission to enable God's missing children to come home. As a leader, Tim epitomises the servant-leadership example first set by our Lord.

Tim's departure leaves a huge hole here at United, but he leaves with our thanks for a job well done, and with our best wishes and prayers for the next chapter in God's plan for him. In the words of our Master: "Well done good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!" (Matthew 25:21)

Best wishes to you all,

André Parker

From our Membership Care and Development

Bevan Sylvester

Greetings!

After a lekka time of leave (thank you for all the birthday wishes), it feels good to be back and get into the swing of things. I had a good rest and feel ready to support our journey, together with other Staff and Council members during the next few months.

Here follows a short report on some of the things that have taken place.

The teaching series PARTNERING WITH GOD went very well. I appreciated the attendance. These were lectures on how we are called to partner with God in His mission to the world. Some of the thoughts were comforting, others were challenging, but I trust that all were inspiring. My hope is that people who came would have found these lectures enriching to their spiritual life and journey with Jesus.

There was a DNA Workshop held on 26 May. Six of the folk who attended this were welcomed as new members on the 3rd of June. It is always good to see how our congregation is growing.

The Resource Team's first movie evening went well. R1800 profit was made. It looks like everyone is looking forward to the next one...

I would like to remind you that the prayer meetings at church are now weekly (Thursdays at 17:30), and would like to encourage more folk to attend, as this is an important part of the church's life.

Lastly, let me thank Tim for all he has done for us. We wish him well in his new beginning – may it be filled with blessing and grace. May God continue to undertake for him – and us – in the future. May we be filled with a sense of expectation to see what God has in store for Somerset West United Church, and let us trust the Holy Spirit to continue His beautiful ministry amongst us.

Staff and Council are relying on the participation and contribution of every member, as we make sure that ministry continues and our church moves smoothly through this transitional period. We cannot do without each one of you! I am looking forward to the road ahead as I know that you will pray for our church faithfully.

Yours in Christ,

Bevan

Community Engagement Feedback

Veronica Swanepoel

Paradigm Shift Programme

Job creation is on many lips at present, and many believe that the best way to enable this is by training people to run their own micro and small businesses. We are delighted to have started a new group of 12 participants with module 1 of this business entrepreneurship training course. This is the 4th year we've run this, and the feedback from those who have previously has been wonderful. Not only are they learning how to establish their own living, but they are discovering that God's way is always the best way.

Now that the Programme has been established and is being marketed by previous participants, we have been

able to run this year's at our United Church Campus instead of in Nomzamo / Lwandle, as in previous years. This has actually suited potential participants better, since many of them in any case come to Somerset West on a Saturday to purchase stock and materials for their current businesses. This has also made it much easier for our volunteer trainers to attend and allowed the use of technical equipment for presentations.

It's great to see additional volunteers on board our Paradigm Shift Team, so that this year's ministry is in the hands of David Wynne, Don Iles, Henry Truebody, Wilhelm van Zijl, Bevil Blaine & Laurence Baumgardt. We're so grateful for their willingness to share their business knowledge, personal faith, and precious time with these wonderfully eager-to-learn entrepreneurs.



Paradigm Shift

Community Leadership Development

Several of our Church Councillors (and a retired church councillor) have undertaken to provide some development seminars with the leadership team Masibulele Presbyterian Church in Lwandle, which we at the United Church were instrumental in establishing. This has been offered at their request, and it is hoped that we will be instrumental in assisting them to further grow their perspective on leadership issues, and sharpen their leadership skills, and thus lead that congregation towards new levels of functionality and impact. Our sincere thanks to David Wynne Henry Truebody and Andre Parker for their initiative and willingness in undertaking this project.



Impact - pizza evening at the end of term 2



Vera Potter turned 103 recently



Although Tim will be sorely missed, the good news is that Bevan will stand in the breach until the appointment of our next Leading Minister. He is up for the challenge, and will commence a series of sermons entitled "Great Expectations" as from next Sunday.

Now, more than ever, is the time for us to stand together as a congregation, so your faithful attendance of services and prayerful support is required during this time."