

MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT, WORSHIP AND PREACHING

GEORGE MARCHINKOWSKI

Staff

At the start of the year, the United Church office found itself short staffed, under-resourced, and battling with a lack of institutional memory. In February, **Denise Amory**, our receptionist and Church secretary was diagnosed with cancer, and by the beginning of March, she was on sick leave. Denise died on 30 April. We miss her and mourned her passing. In those first four months of the year, we continued with the generous practical help of our members and the fervent prayers of our prayer warriors. Thanks to **Bevan Sylvester**, **Shannon Wagstaff** and **Bethuel Lephallo** for their hard work during the later part of 2018 and the early months of 2019.

On 1 March, **Mathew Seaward** joined the staff on a part time basis. Mathew was given the responsibility of ministering to youth and young adults. Apart from running the Friday night **Impact Youth Group** and the Sunday morning **Teen Church**, Mathew has also established a group for young adults called “Drifters”. In September, Mathew’s hours were increased to half time and this was to include time he spends ministering at **several local** schools including Parel Vallei, Beaumont, Somerset West Primary and Danie Ackerman.

On 1 June, we employed **Ne-Ray Lubbe** as our half-time (mornings only) **Church Administrator**. Ne Ray has taken over the work previously undertaken by Veronica Swanepoel which is basically the entire administrative function of the church including Communication, Membership Roll, preparation for worship and facilities management. Ne-Ray has tackled her roll with enthusiasm and determination. **Stephen Anderson** also joined us half-time in the **Reception** in June. Stephen is the warm, kind voice who phones members for their birthday, answers the phone and greets you at Reception. The other half day is filled by various volunteers such as Ralie Zaayman, Denise Fourie and Naomi Pepler. We are grateful to the many others who helped at one time or another.

We are a happy and enthusiastic staff who seek above all **to make it possible for our members to serve Jesus**.

Worship

At United, we worship together once a month – on the first Sunday of every month. We call that service United@9. For the remaining Sundays, we worship in three services, Thursdays at 10h30 and Sundays at 8 and 10am. Communion is celebrated on the last Sunday of every month (sometimes earlier in December).

We are blessed to have the services of 4 organists, **Anneke Neethling**, **Felicity Weber**, **Andrew Brown** and **Rosemary Gray**. Bevan sometimes plays the organ at United@9 and special services. At 10am services, our worship team leads the music. We are grateful to **Ruth Truebody**, **Sascha Marchinkowski** and **Rosemary Gray** for leading the team. We are blessed with talented musicians: **Gillian Arendse** (Bass guitar), **Brian Damsell** (Guitar), **Alex Carswell**, **Don Storey** (Guitar), **Delia Russell** (Guitar), **Chris van Rooyen** (drums), **Irina Tulis**, **Alison Digby** and **Barbara Ferreira** (vocals). We are grateful for their leading. It’s not easy but they do it as a service to the Lord. During 2019, we experienced such a variety of lovely services.

Every month, an average of **112 people** are involved in making worship services happen. These include greeters, those who play and lead music, the projector and sound operators, the flower arrangers, scripture

readers, communion servers, bankers, service managers, Sunday school teachers etc. That's a lot and we are grateful.

Preaching series

During the year, we alternated between following the **Revised Common Lectionary** (set readings for churches in the world) and doing Preaching series. We used the Lectionary during **Epiphany** (January), **Lent** (March/April), **Pentecost** (late May and early June) and **Advent** (December). Preaching Series included "**The radical sayings of Jesus**" (February/March), "**Moses: Leading God's people to freedom**" (June/July) and "**A church in the neighbourhood**" (August). Special services were held in on **Ash Wednesday**, Holy week (including "**The stations of the cross**"), and **Ascension**. A **Stewardship** series was preached in September with **Commitment Sunday** on 6 October. A service of **Remembrance** was held in November and, for the first time, an early Christmas Eve service ("**Christingle**") at 5:30pm.

We seek to equip the Saints for the works of service in our preaching. Bevan and I consider it a privilege to study the scriptures and deliver the messages. We are grateful to **Martin Lund**, **Rob Waddington**, **David Maasdorp** and **David Gray** for assisting where needed this year.

Membership development

There are **15 Life Groups** active at United. Some meet at the Church and some meet in homes. They are spread across the mornings, afternoons and evenings of the week. Some study scripture, a book and chapter at a time and others use DVDs or courses in commercially available books. We are proud of these groups. I have visited them all. We meet twice a year with the leaders and have a **Communion** for all attendees twice annually as well. Thank you to Laurian Kroezen, Stan Verrier & Judy Ingram, Dave Moore, Rob Waddington, Lucretia Peterson, Bob Campbell, Graeme Bamford, Berryoni Le Roux, Rennie Rose-Innes, Don Isles, Pegs Faure & Jean Veasey, Louisa Barrish, Ann Mackenzie, Cheryl De Beer and Peggy Wright for leading and facilitating these groups.

In addition, Bevan and I run **DNA** (our New members orientation) and **SHAPE** (a short exploration of spiritual gifts) three times a year. This year, we will thoroughly overhaul the DNA curriculum, making it more fitting for orientating new members who want to join the church.

In March, we ran a Lenten series looking at how each of the Gospel writers told the story of Jesus and in Holy week, three of our members (**Cheryl de Beer**, **David Gray** and **Mathew Seaward**) told us about what Jesus means to them.

In March, we held a **Day of Prayer** and I taught on the **Lectio Divina** in July. A **Boiler Room Prayer vigil** was sadly cut short by the fire in late October.

In August and September, we explored the new landscape of Church in the **Missional Masterclass** series on Wednesday nights. All in all, a very full year of learning.

The fire in the kid's zone

One of the most unexpected events that shaped our year was the fire that broke out in the Kid's Zone that broke out in the last week of October 2019. We give thanks to God that there was no injury and that the fire was contained to the Kid's Zone block. In the months that followed, much of our attention was taken in making claims from Insurance and sorting out the cleaning and repainting of the Link and kitchen/pantry area. We are pleased to report that the contents claim as settled and payed out and that the building demolished, rubble removed and is in the process of being rebuilt. To God be the glory!