



Annual Report 2022

It is unfortunate that for many of us the year 2022 will be remembered as a year of hurt and turmoil. You commenced the year with the recommendation of the church council concerning worship locations and throughout the year that remained a constant topic of discernment and conversation. The fire at Glebe Road was deeply distressing. Throughout the year all the members of the ministry team concluded their placements and new ministers were brought in.

Yet, through all this, Ipswich Uniting Church has continued to make an impact in the lives of the people to whom we're called to minister.

As a congregation we have adopted a mission statement: Growing Together and reaching out to make disciples of Christ. I'm constantly inspired by this statement for two reasons. The first is that it gives us a purpose as a church, that is grounded in the mission and ministry of Jesus. The second is that the 3 verbs (growing, reaching and making) remind me that there is an impact that we should be making. It's a question that I often ask myself, "what difference for the kingdom of God have I made today/this week/as a result of this activity or meeting?"

In preparation of this annual report, I've asked the leaders of our groups to reflect on the impact that their groups have had on people throughout the year. As a result this report may look a little different than usual. It does not contain a report from each group, and their activities are not listed. Rather, we focus on how the groups and activities of our church are contributing toward the achievement of our mission.

Thank you to the many of us who are engaged in various aspects of ministry in, through and beyond our congregation. As we worship, serve and witness together we are Ipswich Uniting Church. My prayer for us is that when it comes time to present our annual report next year, that we have a year of joy, growth, excitement and impact to report on.

Grace and peace

David Fender
Lead Minister

Growing Together

We will grow together in community so that we can encourage each other in discipleship.

2022 was a year of transition as we continued in our journey of amalgamation.

Throughout the year we found opportunities to bring people together:

- A combined worship service in March
- A combined traditional service in November
- Social events throughout the year
- Involvement of people from multiple locations in activities such as Trivia afternoons, Men's Breakfast, Garage Sales, Family Picnics and more.
- The beginning of rotating worship services in December
- Church Council and church committees became great places for people from across our congregation to serve alongside each other.

As these events took place across the year some members of our congregation discovered new activities to be part of and there was greater support, both through attendance and people serving, for our activities. Some members also discovered another dimension to relationships. These people found a church-based connection as they connected with people that they knew from other spheres of their lives and we were all reminded that discipleship is all encompassing, not just our times connected to the church.

Worship continued to be a major focus of our spiritual life. As was also the pastoral support that we gave to each other, putting into practice the command to "love one another".

A visit to our partner church in Dili, Timor Leste, renewed a long term partnership. This partnership has been and will continue to be a means of growth in our understanding of the international dimension of the church of God.

During 2022 we had 6 small groups meeting regularly, with about 40 members in total. As people met in these groups they were supported, encouraged and challenged in their faith and discipleship. Members of these groups speak with excitement of the new insights they receive as they study the bible and the support they have knowing others are praying for and with them.

Fellowship Groups, Men's Breakfast and our outreach groups all provided opportunities for us to find deeper connections with others and support each other as we shared life together.

As we began growing together we started to sense our collective identity as Ipswich Uniting Church and the impact of that could be seen in new friendships being formed, a desire to focus our efforts on common goals, and an articulation of our shared values.

Reaching Out

As an expression of our discipleship, we will love and serve others locally, nationally and internationally.

One of our group leaders stated, “Discipleship can come in many forms.” And certainly, as we think about our outreach activities, we are active and impactful in expressing the love and inclusion of Jesus to all people.

Our church has 7 groups that are dedicated to reaching out beyond the life of our congregation.

- Adult Leisure Group
- Painting for Pleasure
- Craft, Coffee and Chat
- Mainly Music
- UnitingKids
- Fab Fridays
- Glebe Garden Club

Activities in these groups include music and movement, craft, painting, games and gardening. As people engage in these activities they talk, share, develop friendships, are supported in life and have an experience of God. Of course, all the groups include a healthy amount of eating.

In the middle of the year we were able to commence a youth group. We now currently have over a dozen youth meeting each week, with a dedicated team of leaders. This is an amazing achievement that is very rarely seen in churches today.

Our groups impact people through reducing their social isolation and providing a caring community to help navigate difficult times of life.

During the course of 2022, we also saw an impact in people’s spiritual lives as some attendees have expressed an interest in attending our worship services or participating in other outreach activities of our church.

Other ways that our church reaches beyond our gathered community in very practical ways include:

- The NewLife Op Shop. Often in the encounters with customers, the shop volunteers have an opportunity to offer a listening ear, a physical space to be still and a welcome cuppa. The shop also provides appropriate clothes for those attending court, or newly released from prison.
- Support for chaplains at Brassall, East Ipswich and Silkstone schools, including serving at Breakfast clubs, mentoring students through the Kid’s Hope program and provision of money and groceries for the chaplain to bless families with. The money

we provide supports children to attend camps and other activities, and in one instance with the purchase of eyeglasses.

- Retiring offerings were a monthly feature in our Brassall worship services, with money being given to a range of organisations within Ipswich.

Making Disciples

In response to Jesus' Great Commission, we will create opportunities for people to hear and respond to the gospel.

There is significant potential for growth in this area. In their own ways, through word and action, each of our outreach groups provide opportunities for people to hear the good news of Jesus.

Xtreme meets each week at the same time as our 10:15 am service. Focussing on children in primary school, this activity presents the story of Jesus in a relevant and engaging way. It is exciting to hear the reports from parents about their faith conversations with their children and to see our teenagers offering leadership in our church and beyond as they own their own faith.

During the year we had 5 baptisms.

Thank you

Ipswich Uniting Church is you.

This report highlights the impact that we have had as a church as we have committed ourselves to the mission and ministry of God in Ipswich. The impact occurs because of the countless hours, the dedicated commitment and the faithful obedience of you and your fellow members of Ipswich Uniting Church.

Whether your service is up front or behind the scenes; in leadership or helping others; in, through or beyond the gathered church; broad reaching or focussed, we value and thank you for your service. We each contribute in our own ways, and the sum of what we give builds the whole.

What's Next?

In 2023 we will continue to follow God's call on Ipswich Uniting Church by pursuing our mission. We will move together into a new worshipping space on Glebe Road, following an important season of union at Jacaranda Street; we will consolidate our efforts in outreach through the Op Shop, chaplaincy and other activities including a community Christmas event in Cameron Park; and we will focus on making disciples who make disciples by creating opportunities for people to hear and respond to the gospel.