



Autumn 2017

From the Editor

It seems that to get your quote onto a calendar (or these days, the internet), you need to have a triple-barrelled name ... like Edwin Way Teale, who came up with this one ...

"Autumn is a time of harvest, of gathering together. For nature, it is a time of sowing, of scattering abroad."

Considering the diversity of this newsletter he had it right for our congregation as we're busy with the now, but sowing the seeds of massive change. One change is that our valued producer, Rod Mummery, has also been persuaded to write the Church Council Report which alludes to a number of items in this, another packed newsletter. Thanks to Rod and all those who gave their time and words to make it so.

Read it at your leisure!

Suzanne Yanko
Editor

Lent is one of the seasons of Easter

by Rev Craig Thompson

Lent, with its attentive turn to Christ's way to the cross, is upon us again. As you've probably heard me say several times before, Lent is, with all the church seasons, one of the seasons of Easter as much a season of the Easter it follows as the one it anticipates. As such, it presents the same opportunity as does every liturgical season to consider who Jesus the crucified and risen one is and who we are in him.

Each season, however, sings in the Easter song in its own peculiar key. Perhaps the key for Lent is minor, with more than a little discordance. Our part is to hear the song, to resonate with its strains and to feel the clashes in the death and the life which Lent relates first Christ's, then ours.

The fifth century bishop, Saint Maximus of Turin writes of "the forty days that lead us to baptism into the death and resurrection of Christ":

"In a time of favour I answer you, on the day of salvation I help you." (Isaiah 49.8) After quoting this, the apostle Paul continues with the words: "Now is the acceptable time! Now is the day of salvation!" (2 Corinthians 6.2).

I, in turn, call upon you to witness that now the days of redemption have come, now has come, in a sense, the moment of spiritual healing. We can take care of all of the stains from our vices, all the wounds from our sins, if we pray constantly to the doctor of our souls, if we do not neglect any of his prescriptions

The doctor is our Lord Jesus who said: "It is I who bring forth both death and life" (Deuteronomy 32.39). The Lord first brings forth death and then he gives back life. Through baptism, he destroys in us adulteries, homicides, murders and theft; then he brings us back to life as new persons in eternal immortality. We die to our sins, of course, through baptism, we return to life in the Spirit of life Let us surrender to our doctor with patience in order to regain health. Everything that he will have detected in us that is unworthy, soiled through sin, eaten by ulcers, he will trim, he will cut it, he will take it away, so that once all the wounds inflicted by the demon have been eliminated, only what belongs to God will remain.

This is his first prescription: to consecrate forty days to fasting, to prayer, to vigils. Fasting heals flabbiness, prayer nourishes the reverent soul, vigils reject the devil's traps. After this period of time given to all these observances, the soul that is purified and exhausted from so many practices, comes to baptism. It regains strength by plunging into the waters of the Spirit: everything that had been burnt in the flames of illness is born again in the dew of heaven's grace By means of a new birth, we are born again changed."



They knew how to say it in those days! Yet, however it is said, the dying and the rising Christ's, and ours is the heart of the matter.

Lent is an opportunity to reflect and to change, to excise something or to grow something: to die and be raised with Christ. Make the most of the opportunity to watch and listen and reflect, to begin to inhabit some new way of acting or being for as long as is necessary (40 days?) to make it a true "habit", a new how and where for living, more deeply rooted in Christ's habitation in God.

News from Church Council

by Rod Mummery

Again, matters around the Mark the Evangelist Futures Project have comprised the larger part of Church Council business in recent months. After the congregational meeting of 4 December Church Council, noting the preference of the Congregation at its meeting of 4 December, resolved to express its preference for proceeding under Option 5.a+.

At its meeting last week (2 March) the final version of the Business Case was approved. The Business Case will now go to Yarra Yarra Presbytery for approval, then to several Synod bodies before being considered by the Synod Property Board on 19 April for final approval.

Other matters considered by the Council include:

- Ann Wilkinson has agreed to be the Safe Church Contact Person,
- Use of worship space for the Eighth Day Baptist Church (while their site is being redeveloped) was approved; they worship in the Hall on Sunday afternoons,
- David and Vicki Radcliffe were received as confirmed members. We welcome them to the congregation. You can find out a little about them in their article below,
- The Mark the Evangelist Day and All Saints Luncheons were confirmed as 23 April and 5 November respectively,
- The date of the Congregational AGM was set for 30 April,
- Ann Wilkinson's resignation as elder was received. The Council recorded its appreciation of her ten years of service, including three years as the Chair of Church Council,
- It was resolved that the Mark the Evangelist host a public address by Brother Peter Bray (Vice Chancellor, Bethlehem University in the Holy Land) on Monday 20 February see below for a report on this very successful event,

- It was agreed to hold a Congregational picnic on 26 March at the Australian Native Gardens, Parkville.

(Comments, suggestions and queries are welcomed by the Church Councillors: Gaye Champion, Michael Champion, Belinda Hopper (Secretary), Gus MacAulay, Rod Mummery (Treasurer), Tim O'Connor (Chair), Maureen Postma, Craig Thompson (Minister) and Alan Wilkinson (Presbytery appointee).)

The Commonality of Churches

by David and Vicki Radcliffe

For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among you. (Matthew 18:20)

We have just returned to Australia after living in West Lafayette, Indiana in the USA for the past nine years. Whilst there, we were members of the First United Methodist Church (FUMC) in West Lafayette (www.fumcwl.org). Previous to living in the US, we attended the Indooroopilly Uniting Church (www.indooroopillyuc.org.au) in Brisbane where we first met Mary and David Sutherland. We began attending MtE in September, 2016.

We thought we would share some of what we experienced at FUMC, in the heartland of the US, where regular church attendance is still a normal way of life, although that is changing. FUMC has a substantial congregation of around 500 members and offers four service times on a Sunday, the 8.30am, 11.am, both traditional services and two contemporary services called "WIRED". The Church had moved from being right in the middle of the campus of Purdue University in 2005 to a site on acreage further out of town, and had built a multi-purpose building able to accommodate the various activities that were offered. Between the 8.30am and 11am services, they hold Adult Sunday School classes as well as classes for children and the youth. Year round there is a large variety of topics and types of classes, each running for a term, so there is something for everyone. These classes were an excellent place to explore matters of faith amongst fellow sojourners and a great activity by which to really get to know others in the congregation. There is also a strong emphasis on missions, such as donating food to the various Food Pantries and to at-risk children in the various elementary schools in the area.

At First United, we didn't have a traditional sanctuary, but used a space which had been designed to be used as a gymnasium once the real church sanctuary was built, sometime in the future. During our time at FUMC there were serious, sometime contentious, discussions on building a new sanctuary, then the global monetary crises came along and the parishioners were reluctant to go ahead. This process reminded us of Indooroopilly UC's deliberations to renovate their sanctuary and surrounding rooms during the time we were members there, as well as the recent deliberations of the MtE congregation regarding the decisions about property following the calamity with the church steeple.

Looking back at being members of the above Churches over the past 20 years, we realize that all of these places have a commonality, despite the differences in their size and location, and, for that matter, even the country they were in. First and foremost, they have had a welcoming atmosphere. In all of these places we have felt the outpouring of love and acceptance. Secondly, all three Churches have been associated with nearby universities or places of learning which greatly enhances the congregation as a whole. And third, all of the Churches have had a number of retired ministers who are part of the congregation and who are more than willing to lead worship themselves, when in need – a true fountain of knowledge and experience at our fingertips.

We are feeling very blessed in being accepted as members of the congregation of MtE and look forward to continuing our spiritual journey with you.

David and Vicki Radcliffe live in North Melbourne and have two children, Dylan (with grandson, Eric) who lives in Melbourne and Sarah who lives in London.

"From a Small Seed a Mighty Trunk May Grow"

by Beth Stewart-Wright, Programs Manager, UnitingCare Hotham Mission

(Article in the January edition of Hotham Herald)

There is a certain beauty in small things. Small can be agile. It can be flexible. As a rule, small creatures generally require less energy to move and function effectively than other big and cumbersome entities. Small can be intricate and detailed, and it can also be exquisite in its simplicity. And small can also possess tremendous power.



It's a common folly that some people assume that being small equates with insignificance or inefficacy, that somehow because of a particular entity's restricted stature it is incapable of real impact.

Consider for a moment the Irukandji jellyfish a tiny marine stinger endemic to the warm waters of Australia's northern coasts. It is no bigger than a human thumbnail and yet it possesses a venom that is 100 times stronger than a cobra, and 1000 times more potent than a tarantula bite, and is capable of killing an adult in less than 30 minutes.

Or reflect instead on the amazing Rufous hummingbird one of the world's smallest birds which grows up to a mere 8cm in length and weighs about 2.5 grams. Despite its diminutive size, it can fly at speeds of up to 54km/h and travels an extraordinary distance of 6200 km for its annual migration from Alaska to Mexico, making it one of the furthest travelling migratory birds in the world. A tiny bird only 8cm long, weighing less than a 20 cent piece, travelling a 12000 km round-trip every year.

And then there's the Penicillium fungi the microscopic sporous powder-like fungi that grows in moist soils and rotting organic matter and was considered little more than a pesky mould that spoilt one's fruit and vegetables that was until Scottish Scientist, Sir Alexander Fleming, discovered its antibiotic properties in 1928 and began the process of manufacturing the drug penicillin for the treatment of infections. That tiny green and white mould found inhabiting the bottom of the domestic fruit bowl was one of the greatest medical discoveries of all time and continues to be credited with saving millions of lives worldwide, every single year. Here are three examples of very small life forms capable of remarkable things, each with unique and truly significant abilities. And it is among this class of small and yet invaluable wee things that Hotham Mission can be counted.

Hotham Mission whose history is rooted in the benevolent institution of the former Methodist Mission based on top of Hotham Hill (now known as North Melbourne), began its journey supporting down-and-out mothers and impoverished children suffering the throes of life in the Depression-era urban slums. Today, it remains true to its heritage and is comprised of a small, single-digit team of dedicated individuals committed to creating positive change, tangible impact and real opportunities for some of Melbourne's most disadvantaged, marginalised and vulnerable young people and their families. Driving this small team is a powerful engine of volunteers, generous benefactors, committed congregations, an enthusiastic governing Board and a strategic and passionate sense of equality and empowerment for those with whom we work. And the seeds which have been sewn by this committed tiny crew are reaping a rich harvest.

In 2015, Hotham Mission supported some 200 young people and their families across a broad range of programs and partnerships with other agencies. These included the various holiday programs, homework clubs, early intervention and prevention programs, food security initiatives, asylum seeker accommodation and advocacy support, and programs delivered by other services providers supported by Hotham Mission. As we expanded our reach to touch more local agencies, schools and youth-focussed organisations, we refined our approach and honed our operations to ensure greater access to resources, improved delivery of programs, and dedicated ourselves to providing relevant and effective supports to those who needed it most.

In 2016, this renewed approach saw an expansion in the level of impact that our little Mission has had on the local community. The number of young people and their families, to whom we provided support and opportunity, has doubled to nearly 500 young people and their families. The Food for Thought nutritional support program jumped from 15 fresh food parcels delivered to schools and service providers each week to 70, feeding on average 250-300 people a week. Many of these young people come from migrant backgrounds, some are young mums, others are unaccompanied minors, and all are experiencing food insecurity.

The Hotham Mission subsidised lunch voucher system, which operates out of local high schools, saw the number of vouchers issued in 2016 rise from 344 to 492. That's nearly 500 hungry high school students who would otherwise be without adequate access to healthy food each week. Close to 50 students received support through the Renshaw Education Support program which helps to purchase text books and materials for young people who are continuing their education, and 20 kids received transitional support through our homework club and Mess Club programs.

Our partnerships with vital local organisations such as the Kensington Adventure Playground (otherwise known as the Venny), Kensington Neighbourhood House and the Somali Women's Development Agency, and Lentara's Asylum Seeker Project, has reached innumerable vulnerable and marginalised young people and their families, including asylum seekers, refugees and socially disadvantaged migrant families.

Furthermore, Hotham Mission's newly instituted Social Research Unit continues to carry out exciting research into the impact, incidence and prevalence of food insecurity amongst youth in the city's inner North West. We racked up more volunteer hours than ever before 12,000 collective hours and have expanded our funding base to include support from the City of Melbourne, RACV, the Cato Trust, the Jack Brockhoff Foundation, the UnitingCare Share Appeal, and generous donations from Glen Waverly Uniting Church, Ivanhoe Grammar School and many others.

In 2017, Hotham Mission is dedicated to continuing the valuable work we do in our local community. We are not a large organisation and we have no fancy trappings, no shiny new buildings, no elaborate conference rooms, comfy couches or expensive coffee machines. We do not have the luxury of a massive marketing team and commercial resources, however we are blessed with a wonderfully dedicated group of volunteers and part time staff with genuine passion to move our mountains. Our currency is one of opportunity working with young people and their families to give them the best chance possible to self-actualise, to recognise their potential and to fulfil it without the added stress of chronic food insecurity, lack of social supports and financial constraints.

In 2017, the small Mission which sits atop the old Hotham Hill will continue to do its invaluable work, always supported by the volunteers who will always be integral to our success. We are small, but we are agile, we are responsive, we are creative, and above all else, we are capable of great things, all of which add up to a community impact which is truly, no small feat. As the 19th century poet and author George Eliot stated, "Great things are not done by impulse, but by a series of small things brought together."

Bethlehem University an Oasis of Peace in the Holy Land

by Heather Mathew

(A report on the address* by Brother Peter Bray at the Elm Street Hall, North Melbourne, on Monday 20 February 2017).

Brother Peter acknowledged the capacity crowd, and explained that such gatherings and opportunities to speak matter immensely, enabling him to return to Bethlehem University and tell people that they are not forgotten by the outside world, that there are people overseas who care and are interested in their welfare and their world. It helps to keep



their hopes alive, and to know that as Palestinians they are not automatically equated with terrorism. Visitors are very important because visits gives students and staff a sense of solidarity with the outside world.

In speaking of the role of the University, Brother Peter contextualised the situation of the Palestinians through an area map illustrating the fact that some 10% of the land that was Palestine remains in Palestinian hands.

Brother Peter's talk was interspersed with video clips of several students speaking about their experiences, their hopes, their fears, their yearning to live life to the full.

Restrictions for Students

Students at Bethlehem University face many restrictions in their daily lives. Movement has become even more restricted since the 2005 encirclement of Bethlehem by the separation wall and has four checkpoints on its perimeter. Travel within Israel/ Palestine is subject to numerous physical barriers apart from the extensive barrier of the separation wall: there are many checkpoints scattered across the land, there are also flying checkpoints' that appear unpredictably, metal gates, road blocks and road barriers.



Checkpoints or barriers may be closed arbitrarily, without notice, requiring detours that may be arduous. A student who comes from Jerusalem to Bethlehem, for example, can never predict how long the bus journey may take, for once the bus arrives at the checkpoint the occupants may be subjected to a cursory check, they may be required to leave the bus and stand for long intervals in the hot sun while their papers are checked, they may be subjected to a strip-search. The system is arbitrary, the student can never know what is going to happen. Fear and uncertainty is with them each day. Yet students display courage and resilience in confronting their anxieties and fears.

It is important to note that resistance is not terrorism. It is important to resist. It takes courage and persistence. Brother Peter told of one student who was challenged by the soldiers at a checkpoint and she just shrugged her shoulders and kept walking and passed through the checkpoint. She was determined to get to her exam. on time! Brother Peter observed that fear leads to negativity and that the first duty is to be equal to a situation.

An Oasis of Peace

Once the students reach the campus of Bethlehem University however, they can feel safe. At Bethlehem University, they are nurtured in a peaceful oasis with its attractive gardens carefully cultivated to offer students a sense of beauty, of calm, of safety that contrasts with their world outside.



The University is a joint venture between the Vatican and the De La Salle teaching order and was established at Bethlehem in 1973. It has 16,000 graduates and has 3200 students currently. More than 70% of the students are female. Some 73% of the students are Muslim and while less than 2% of the people of Israel/ Palestine are now Christians, Bethlehem ensures that around one-third of its students are Christian in order to build understanding and a sense of community but without proselytising. Israeli regulations prevent Jewish students from attending Bethlehem University.

Prophetic Role of the Church

To those who wonder why an avowedly Christian University has been set up in an environment where Christians are a small minority, Brother Peter explains that the mission of Bethlehem University is to enact the Gospel of John (10:10): to provide an environment and atmosphere and opportunities through which its students can live life to the full. Students are offered the opportunity to study in a safe environment, they are treated with respect. The University seeks to offer a beacon of hope and a quality higher education that will enable

graduates to have better employment prospects and fit them for leadership roles in their communities.

A constant watchword for the staff and administrators at Bethlehem University is: is there a better way'?

Brother Peter quoted the words of the Patriarch Michel Sabbah, "resist any temptation to fear and despair", while acknowledging that there is cause to be afraid, that fear must be confronted by reason. The audience was reminded that the first victims of Islamic extremism are Muslims, and that Christians and Muslims must stand together. In balancing the religious affiliations of its student body, the University can pursue its aim to build relationships between the two faith groups, and to encourage the development of open minds. In a graphic of the separation wall shown by Brother Peter, the graffiti of, 'Bridges not walls!' seemed to this writer to illustrate something of the work of Bethlehem University.

Bethlehem University seeks also to preserve the Palestinian culture and while opportunities for extracurricular activities are limited, it offers traditional dance events, for example.

Through his presentation, Brother Peter described the prophetic role of the church that Bethlehem University seeks to fulfil, without allowing fear to paralyse its mission. It has no political power or influence, except for the spoken word. As followers of Jesus, faith is enacted through words and thus no-one can be called the enemy, hate cannot be harboured. Through its institutions schools, hospitals, clinics – all are welcome. The Christian presence is made visible through words and institutions, and its faith can be the antidote to fear.

Responding to the question, "Is there a hope for change in Palestine?" Brother Peter holds out little hope at the moment; but then he said, "Look at what happened in South Africa, Northern Ireland, the fall of communism in East Germany, and East Timor."

How to Connect with & Support the work of Bethlehem University

- If you would like to connect with Bethlehem University, you can discover more about the work of the university by visiting www.bethlehem.edu
- For ways to support and get involved, visit www.bethlehem.edu/gateways/visitors-friends-gateway

If you would like to receive the email newsletter News from Bethlehem University, complete the form at www.bethlehem.edu/page.aspx?pid=992

If you would like to support working towards peace and justice in Palestine/ Israel, consider joining

- The Australia Palestine Advocacy Network (APAN) a national coalition that advocates for peace and justice based on UN resolutions and international law www.apan.org.au
- Palestine Israel Ecumenical Network Inc. (PIEN) www.pien.org.au

* Address to a public gathering presented by the Uniting Church in Australia, Congregation of Mark the Evangelist, North Melbourne, in collaboration with the Palestine/ Israel Ecumenical Network Inc. (PIEN).

Film Group – Enjoying time together

by Lorraine Yick

I was asked by the Editor to write an update on the (informal) film group.

I can hardly remember when I was handed over the role as the co-ordinator of the film group, which meets monthly for over 10 years. Throughout the years, the way of operating remains unchanged a movie in the morning of the first Friday of the month at the Kino Cinema in the city, and coffee/light lunch at the adjacent food court afterwards. I would choose a movie (suggestions are welcome) and then inform the regular goers by e-mail/phone the day before (i.e. Thursday) about the arrangement. Others who would like to join can always telephone me to find out the information.

We seldom have breaks, the activity goes all year round, except during times when I was away or for reasons of extreme weather forecast. The group is not strictly restricted to church members, their friends are welcome. Bev's friend, Ros, has been with us for years and we enjoy very much her company and her funny travel tales.

At the moment, we have 5-6 regular participants. It is enjoyable going to movies together and spending time talking to each other in a relaxed environment. As the co-ordinator, I have the privilege of choosing a movie, but at times it could be difficult when there were no "suitable" movies around. In those circumstances, I would just make the choice to the best of my judgment, knowing that even the movie is not that appealing, the group would always laugh it off and could still have a good chat on the movie.

The year 2017 appears to have a good start, with two good movies in a row "Uniting Kingdom" in January and "Lion" in February. Both are true stories. The former is about the true-life romance between Botswanan King Seretse Khama and his British wife Ruth, who had to face obstacles of racism in the 1940s. The latter is about the story of Saroo, who was adopted by an Australian couple from an orphanage in India and grew up in Hobart, and about his quest to find his lost family in India with just a small store of memories and the help of some newly-developed satellite-imaging technology.

As for the future of the film group, I would assume business is as usual as long as there is the demand.

A new way to hear Messiah, thanks to the Australian Brandenburg Orch and Choir by Suzanne Yanko

My opinion: www.classicmelbourne.com.au/reviews/handels-messiah

And now the centrepiece of the newsletter:

Mark the Evangelist Property Business Case Overview

by MTEFP Working Group
(Alan, Craig, Rod & Greg)

The Business Case for the Mark the Evangelist Futures Project is expected to be completed in March and April for submission to the various councils of the Church for approval. This overview provides a preview of the very large Report (currently 452 pages including appendices) which will be presented at that time for consideration.

In summary, the reasons for this project are:

- Union Memorial Church requires substantial work to bring it up to a fit-for-purpose state;
- The cost of this work is prohibitive; and
- The Congregation of Mark the Evangelist (MtE) needs to know what alternatives are available meet the following criteria adequate space for mission including worship, financial security, and an appropriate local presence.

The critical success factors of this business case are:

- Over 16 months the feasibility study extensively explored options identified by MtE, the project consultants, and Synod property development staff;
- The Congregation resolved by majority vote its preference for Property Option 5.a+, basing their future worship on the relocated 1859 bluestone Church (the Hall) with maximised meeting space rather than Union Memorial Church;
- Property Option 5.a+ provides the basis for MtE financial sustainability into the future.

Financially, Property Option 5.a+ results in net sale proceeds (\$7.9m) which will allow for:

- church missional building renovation (\$1.7m);
- an IOMF to finance the core expenditure (\$172k p.a.) of UnitingCare Hotham Mission;
- ongoing MtE expenditures (ca \$350k p.a.); and
- through BOMAR, a contribution (\$1.0m) towards the wider work of the church.

The implementation of this property option will be effected by:

- selling the property in February 2018;
- starting the building renovation in June 2018; and
- completing the renovation by January 2019.

1.1 Options Explored

Seven different property options were explored over the sixteen months duration of the feasibility study. These options together with further sub-options – ranged from selling the whole site and purchasing, leasing or amalgamating elsewhere, to staying in Union Memorial Church and selling three-quarters of the site, including the 1859 bluestone Church (the Hall). The involvement of the congregation in this discernment process was extensive. The congregation's preferred option was to stay in the 1859 Church and sell three-quarters of the site, including Union Memorial Church (UMC).

1.2 Heritage and Planning Advice

High-level Heritage and Planning Advice to inform the Property Options was obtained from consultants who are experts in their respective fields. The advice received has been integrated into the Property Options Assessment and has informed the assumptions used in this Business Case report.

1.3 Building Concepts and Key Assumptions

Concept designs, informed by Planning and Heritage advice, were prepared by Architects for each property option to maximise the development potential of the site. Site measurements were used to inform the opportunity to convert the heritage-listed buildings into alternative uses. The concept for the subdivision and development of the preferred option will still be subject to Heritage Victoria and City of Melbourne approval at the next Concept stage of the project.



1.4 Mark the Evangelist (MtE) Mission Objectives

The Mission Objectives confirmed in August 2015 relate to serving the community evangelistically through worship, spiritual expression and service, and involve using resources to make positive contributions to the wider UCA Church and community. The Mission Objectives are identified under five broad headings:

- Being Served: Faithful Christian Worship
- Being Served: Diverse Spiritual Expressions
- Serving the Community - Service
- Serving the Community - Evangelism
- Serving the Wider Church

At the outset of the feasibility study, each mission objective was elaborated and the associated property objective was spelt out. The space requirements to meet those property objectives were then identified. This report includes an assessment of how each option satisfies MtE's Mission Objectives.

1.5 Financial Feasibility of Each Option

Detailed financial feasibilities have been compiled and analysed by the Project Consultant, SEMZ Property Advisory. The feasibilities are based on the collective input of the consultant team including an Architect for drawings, Planning and Heritage specialists, and a Cost Planner for cost estimates of the works. The financial analysis shows the outputs of each Property Option in terms of the net proceeds realised for MtE upon the completion of that Option. It also looks into the detail of the 2016 operational deficit, cash at bank, and the depletion of MtE financial resources over time. This analysis shows the preferred Option to be among the five most likely alternatives, given the financial performance results which emerge.

1.6 Operational Cash Flow Analysis

The financial objective is that each Property Option considered should generate sufficient proceeds to support MtE and its Hotham Mission expenses. The Operational Cash Flow Analysis overlays the proceeds from the property options onto the business operation of MtE.

For each option, total income, total expenses and the net operating position are calculated from the 2016 MtE Budget and forecast into the future. The purpose of this exercise is to show the impact of the proceeds of each property option on the operational performance of MtE.

1.7 Site Development Program

Each property option has an indicative time line that shows a delivery date for the proceeds of that option to be realised. Selling the site, including disposal of a portion, indicatively would involve a year-long process. Alternatively, an option which involves residential development could indicatively take up to four years until proceeds are realised, given the approvals and permits which would be required.

1.8 Overall Feasibility Assessment

Each property option has a number of financial criteria that must be met in order that it may be deemed viable. It must be commercially viable and meet UCA development criteria for internal Synod approvals. It must also achieve specified development return rates so that it is an attractive proposition for a bank to fund the large costs involved. The Strategic Property Option Report discounts four of the options or sub-options on the basis that they are not viable, and therefore would not receive Synod approval, or because it is unlikely a bank would provide the necessary debt funding.

1.9 Conclusion the Five Property Options for Consideration

Following the investigation that was undertaken as part of the Strategic Property Options Report, the Options that best satisfy missional, financial and commercial objectives for consideration by MtE are:

- Option 1 Sell the whole site, then purchase, lease or amalgamate with another Congregation
- Option 5.a Stay in the 1859 Church (the Hall) and sell three-quarters of the site including UMC.
- Option 5.a+ Stay in the 1859 Church (the Hall) and sell three-quarters of the site including UMC (maximise the meeting space available)
- Option 6.b Develop then sell two-thirds of the site and stay in UMC and the 1859 Church (the Hall) (minimal restoration option)
- Option 7.a Stay in UMC and sell three-quarters of the site including the 1859 Church (the Hall)

1.10 Recommendation Property Option 5.a+ Preferred

Property Option 5.a+ is MtE's preferred property strategy. It has been confirmed by MtE that Option 5a+ (with maximised meeting space) best satisfies the Congregation's mission objectives and preferences. It also provides an acceptable commercial return to MtE in comparison to each of the options considered, and presents the congregation with an acceptable return with due account being taken of the risks involved. Should MtE proceed under Option 5.a+, then a review of their operational budget will be undertaken in tandem with the next phase of the process, to ensure the best possible financial position in which MtE might operate, within their means.

Options involving restoration and retention of Union Memorial Church were not favoured for a number of reasons including the following: the estimated cost of restoring the superstructure of the building and the interior at a minimum of \$4 million is very high; the exterior and interior heritage requirements represent significant constraints; and future maintenance risks are considerable.

1.11 Risk Analysis

The common risk applicable across all Property Options is that of not acting during this period of market buoyancy. Swift action is required to take advantage of the market opportunity, and the risk of not doing so is that maximum value may not be achieved from the Options proposed. Property development carries a higher-than-usual challenge, given the heritage value, size, and type of development proposed. Lengthy consultation periods with Heritage



Victoria may be required and time will increase costs and reduce project viability. The preferred Option minimises these development and heritage risks. The summary of key risks associated with Option 5.a+ includes:

- Planning
- Sales price achieved
- Lack of buyer interest
- Niche developer market
- Heritage
- Subdivision
- Parking requirements

1.12 Summary Proceeds for MtE Property Option 5.a+

Property Option 5.a+: Stay in the 1859 bluestone Church and sell two-thirds of the site including UMC (with maximised meeting space)

High Level Financial Analysis (amounts rounded to \$ 000s)

Total Net Revenue	8,894
Total Costs (Inc. Finance)	1,028
Land Value	8,894
Net Profit	7,866
Total Equity Required	0
Additional Equity Required	0
Project ROC	-
Equity IRR	-
Project IRR	-
Project NPV	-
Missional & Form 3i Costs	1,651
BOMAR Contribution	1,034
MtE Net Proceeds	\$ 5,212

The BOMAR contribution for wider church sharing was calculated on the basis of the decision of the BOMAR Board on 20 September 2016. The Board acknowledged Mark the Evangelist's missional support for its integrated agency UnitingCare Hotham Mission. Accordingly BOMAR supported an exemption to the Property Sale Proceeds policy for Mark the Evangelist to provide a source of income for the continuation of the current UnitingCare Hotham Mission allocation level. The request to BOMAR which will be presented with the final full Business Case will relate to the one policy variation requested, the final figures for the current UCHM expenditure, and the resulting contribution to the wider work of the church.

1.13 Proposed Cash Flow Projection Property Option 5.a+

Proposed Cash Flow Projection (amounts rounded to \$ 000s)

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total Revenue	599	307	519	521	522	523
Total Expenditure	724	519	500	512	525	537
Net position	-125	-212	18	8	-2	-14
Cash Reserve	\$ 2,427	\$ 2,215	\$ 7,445	\$ 7,453	\$ 7,451	\$ 7,437

1.14 Next Steps

Starting with the review and completion of this Business Case, the next steps will proceed through the Presbytery, Property Application Review Team, BOMAR, Synod Finance Committee and Synod Property Board approval stages in March and April. Form 3F and 3I stages will begin in May 2017 leading to an expected property sale in February 2018, with building construction starting in June 2018 and finishing in January 2019.



Noticeboard

Lenten Studies:

Four Studies on the Lord's Prayer (text by Bruce Barber)

Fridays February 24 March 17, 9.30-11.00am, Habitat Uniting Church (Augustine)

Wednesdays March 8 March 29, 7.00-8.30pm, Mark the Evangelist, North Melbourne

Details on website.

26 March Congregational Picnic following worship (Australian Native Gardens, Parkville)

Easter Services:

Palm Sunday 9 April 10AM

Maundy Thursday 13 April 7:30PM (including the Eucharist and the foot-washing ritual)

Good Friday 14 April 10AM

Easter Vigil 15 April from 8PM

Easter Day 16 April 10AM (including the Eucharist and a re-affirmation of baptism)

30 April MtE 2017 AGM

23 April MtE luncheon following worship



Uniting Church in Australia

The Congregation of Mark the Evangelist - North Melbourne