



# Kairos



## News in and around Camberwell Uniting Church

Volume 6 Number 2

June 2013

### From the Minister's Desk



Warmest Greetings,

Out the window of my study, where it looks cold and wet, the plane trees have almost lost all of their leaves in less than a week. I guess I'll be looking for the rake next. There's a family of Eastern Spinebills who regularly visit the grevillea just next to my window and I've noticed that they are a nervous troupe, always keeping an eye out for the swooping Wattlebirds, who like to think that they own the bush and the nectar it makes.

Some occupants of churches are a little nervous too these days, with Synod declaring 'special circumstances' and preparing to sell property deemed 'surplus to needs'. There's more explanation on the specifics of these matters from the Moderator and General Secretary. I think our role is, like the little Spinebill, to get on with the normal things of our lives and of the church and not become paralysed by fear of a resources swoop. If Camberwell had a spare tennis court or unoccupied manse, this might concern us directly, but as it is, there will be a long list of places to look at before here.

It will raise the question for us about what we can share, if asked to make a contribution to dealing with the financial position of the wider church. We don't have much room in our budget and there are large costs on the horizon here. But when the figure needed is some \$56 million it concentrates the mind a little more sharply on the joint needs of the wider church and the part we all play - as well as to make sure we don't do

anything like this again. My role with the Synod Board of Mission and Resourcing – BOMAR, has had me at the table as all this has unfolded, but the Acacia project was not one of our direct responsibilities. It remains a big challenge though.

At one level, all this is only money and money is only a means to an end for us, not our core business. We do need to be good stewards though and look after the resources that we have in trust. Much more life giving is the local mission of this community. Like the experience of much of life today, with its busy programs, competing needs, many varied and demanding parts, we have a lot going on. In particular our Messy Church is growing and being a positive, welcoming and creative place for people of all ages. It is not church as we have known it. We are used to other ways of being. But this different model seems to be what many need and respond to today.

Like the story of Pentecost in Acts 2, the Messy Church gives us some chance of relating the gospel to our culture and gives kids and their families the chance to hear about God's love in a way that they can understand; 'in their own tongues'.

Australia is variously described as 'post Christian' or 'pre Christian' or a 'highly secular' society, so where does the gospel fit here and how is it to be 'good news' for us and our community? The answer, it seems from our experience, is a messy one.

Finally can I encourage you to join in the Winter Study series this year, titled:

**'plain or mounted' – the ethics and spirituality of Jesus revisited.**

Poetry, pictures & other perspectives in Matt. 5,6,7 & Luke 6. Sundays 4 – 6pm, August 4, 11, 18.

The invitation is to revisit some of Jesus' core teachings, using some creative angles and reflecting on what it means for us today. I'm sure it will be rewarding.

Grace and peace.

Rev'd Ian Brown

## Winter Study Series



'plain or mounted'  
– the ethics and  
spirituality of  
Jesus revisited.

Poetry, pictures & other  
perspectives on Matt.  
5,6,7 & Luke 6

August 4, 11, 18 – from  
4 – 6pm for discussion  
and a light meal to  
follow.

### Editor's Note #1

Hello,

As a result of bad luck and poor plumbing, our daughter Catherine, with son-in-law Steve and almost-two-year-old grandson Hugh have had to temporarily pack up and move back home with the parents for a short time, while the

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damage caused by a burst hot water pipe in a bathroom (removal and replacement of carpet, polished floor boards, heating system and garage roof) is undertaken.

In the overall scheme of things, given that they are all safe (the cat gave the alarm) and they will be able to return, it will be a small inconvenience, and nothing on the scale of our northern folk who lost so much more as a consequence of water due to the extreme force of nature.

Anyhow, and tenuously related to the above at this point, the fact is I have agreed to take on the role of editor of Kairos. It took me some time to reach this decision, mainly because I have never done anything like this before, and also because I felt more than a little daunted in following the somewhat large footsteps of my predecessor, the Late Rev Dr Alan Reid.

Much like the image below taken last week at our front door on arrival of our family back home.



I would like Kairos to remain as a touch point for all people in our Church community, something that they can read at leisure, relate to or discuss items, pass on to friends, learn new things about the people who you may only see one day a week or have known for years, and above all, enjoy the content.

To maintain its relevance will require some input from you, especially if you find out or hear something of interest, please pass it on to the office. Equally, if you wish to voice your opinion on a particular issue, it may be that we can highlight this in a future edition.

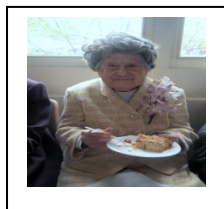
I thank those who have had faith in me to undertake this job. I hope I, and Kairos, live up to your expectations. With yours and God's help we will.

Stuart Ensor

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## Viti Rush

We are here to celebrate a life of selfless service – the life of Alice Jean Viti Rush (nee Cook).



Viti was born into Methodism, and her life reflected in full its major tenets of Christian living, and on putting faith and love into action – and so did Mum.

Where did the name Viti come from? Mum's father, the Rev. Richard Osborne Cook had a calling to missionary work in Fiji for the Methodist church, commencing in 1902. He was joined by his fiancé, Elinor Violet May Cook (not a relative), and they married in Suva in 1904. They were blessed with the birth of their first child, in Suva, on Fiji's main island Viti Levu, on 8 September 1905, and Viti seemed a good name for the little one. Both parents were known by their last Christian names; hence Alice Jean Viti became known as Viti.

Viti's parents Oz and May had 5 children, 3 of whom were born during their time in Fiji. However, they returned to Australia in 1910 due to problems with May's health.

Viti's early life was tough - ministers were not well paid, and Gran's poor health placed a great load on Mum's shoulders, as the eldest child - not much of a childhood for mum. When the family came back from the country to a circuit in Coburg in 1920, however, she received a scholarship to MLC, and the two years she spent as a boarder were what she described as "the happiest times of my childhood".

After coming second top in her Intermediate level book-keeping course, she took her first job with William Horton early in 1922 – Mr Horton, a staunch Methodist, "headhunted" MLC's top students for his staff. Given the family's difficult financial circumstances she donated 50% of her wages to the family, and continued doing so until she married.

Mum loved, and was extremely proud of all of her siblings – as she has been of their children, and their children's children. Until Mum's last few weeks, we went to her to find out what was happening in both sides of the family. Of course, she followed with even greater delight the goings on of her own 4 children and their spouses, her 9 grandchildren, her 13 great grandchildren – and just recently she was able to cuddle, not long after her birth, her great great granddaughter, Katie.

After Oz died in 1923 at the age of 47 the family was almost destitute, Mum saying this was the most miserable period of her life. They moved to Malvern, before moving to live with her Mother's mother in Wattletree Road. It was at the Glendearg Grove Methodist church she first met Newstead Rush, one of 7 brothers.

The Rush brothers were a happy outgoing lot, good at sport and quick with a joke. Newstead however, was different. Although being a good runner who received a medal for his long jump exploits at Wesley College, he was not one to push himself forward into the sporting limelight. He was a Church organist, blessed with a superb bass-baritone singing voice, and was a kind and gentle soul. Mum found him irresistible, and the feeling was returned. They married on 27 February 1932. Given the Depression, Dad's reliable bank job was a blessing for the young couple, and on their marriage they were able to move into a new house in Camberwell. On 28 February 1933 their first child, Shirley was born.

Newstead and Viti were the traditional parental unit: Dad worked and brought in the money, and Mum stayed at home and brought up the family. Dad was the life and soul of the Cooalongatta Road Methodist church – he was the Secretary of the Trust, and the church choir master and organist for 44 years. Mum was the supporting act – at various times she was the Secretary of the WAOM (the Women's Auxiliary for Overseas Missions) and the (reluctant) Treasurer of the Ladies Guild, as well as (of course) working for the church fete and a host of other charitable church-related purposes. Mum was the reliable backstop for the wonderful childhood of all her four children. Mum's wisdom, nurture, and care and concern enabled us to have the best possible start to life in the wartime 40's, the golden 50's and the swinging 60's.

The 60's were also a good time for Mum and Dad. After Dad's retirement, they had two overseas trips as well as other shorter jaunts. They developed an interest in Staffordshire china, and enjoyed the arrival of the grandchildren. And Dad continued to work in his beloved garden which, along with his Church and family, was his pride and joy.

All good things come to an end, however. Early in the 70s, Mum and Dad moved from the family home with its big garden in Fordham Avenue to a unit in Fermanagh Road. But Dad unexpectedly died in September 1976, aged only 70. Mum grieved, and never forgot the



lovely man she married. Until the very end of her life she would say how much she missed Newstead, and how she was looking forward to being with him again.

Despite her loss, Mum battled on, and with hindsight we can see a new life emerge for this wonderful woman. She started delivering talks to church groups on Staffordshire china and its historical connections. She continued to read voraciously and joined a Scrabble group. After the Cooloongatta Road church closed Mum moved to the Camberwell Uniting Church, where she made many new friends. She also connected with ECOS, an outreach program of the South Hawthorn Uniting Church. ECOS is an acronym for English Conversations for Overseas Students, these students being mainly Korean Methodists studying at Swinburne and Melbourne Universities. The objective of ECOS was to help the students improve their English, by talking to them, and playing Scrabble with them.

Mum flourished in this role, striking up warm relationships with the students – some visited her at home, brought their partners and children around, and even when they returned to their home countries some continued to correspond with her. Mind you, it helped when she became 100 years old. Apparently there is a Chinese belief that if you touch a 100 year old person it will bring you good luck – she was regularly being stroked at ECOS. Shirley, Laurie, Colin and Martin were even luckier – we were stroked by Mum all our lives!

Mum left Fermanagh Road in 1999, and moved into Moorfields in Hawthorn, a Methodist Centre with independent living arrangements. However, the Synod decided to redevelop the site, and Mum moved to hostel accommodation in Faversham House in Canterbury in 2008. As well as superb facilities, and a really homely feel, the staff has uniformly been gentle, caring and loving – more like an extended family, than aged care facility workers.

Notwithstanding her seemingly indestructible constitution (she went through a broken hip operation when she was 104, and last December survived hospitalisation with pneumonia), in her last year Mum had started to slip. Over 2012 and into this year her eyesight was minimal, her hearing was a struggle, and her skin was starting to break down and failing to heal. Nonetheless, her mind remained as sharp as ever, and as recently as 3 weeks ago she was still enjoying her weekly game of Scrabble with Laurie. In her last couple of

weeks she became weaker, and she recently said to a nurse “I think the angels are now ready for me”.

Mum felt she was only a little candle burning in the night, but her light was clear and bright, and warmed not only those closest to her, but many in the wider world. We have been advised that since ECOS circulated to their ex-students the news of Mum’s passing, they have received expressions of reflective sympathy and sorrow from many students touched by Mum’s love. In addition to the ECOS Korean connection, these messages of condolence have come from countries as diverse as China, India, Japan, Colombia, and Austria.

For those of us who are left behind, we are saddened – but we are not sorrowful for you, Mum. You have left us all better people, and you go to a better place. So “Goodnight Sweet Mum. May flights of angels sing thee to thy rest”. Or, perhaps even more appropriately, in the words of Matthew 25.21 – “Well done, thou good and faithful servant: ... enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”

This is an edited version of the eulogy written & spoken by Martin Rush (Viti’s son)

## Ruth Akie – A lay Preacher for 50 years



After my father, the Rev. Frank Woolhouse had a heart attack during his appointment to West Brunswick, I commenced helping him with church services.

This led to feeling a call to preach, so I did the necessary study (under his tuition) and passed the Local Preachers' examinations set by the Methodist Church of Australia.

In this time, and as part of the requirement for accreditation, I prepared and took church services in the West Brunswick Circuit - some of which were required to be assessed.

I was presented with my Local Preachers' Certificate by my father on February 21, 1962.

Sadly he died a few weeks later.

I continued preaching and taking Sunday School Anniversaries when I moved to Ringwood Methodist Church (this is where Gael McRae heard me). Since that time I have

remained associated with the Lay Preachers' Association of the Uniting Church and have attended Presbytery, Synod, and National conferences.

My role has subsequently broadened and I have used my skills in other areas including chaplaincy and pastoral care.

I was honoured to be presented a recognition certificate for 50 years since accreditation, by the U.C.A. President of the Lay Preachers' Association, Mrs Lyn Bromage.

Thank you to all who helped me celebrate that meaningful day.

Ruth Akie

## News from Church Council

At Council meetings in February, March and April many property matters have been discussed. The work to improve the underfloor **Hall ventilation** *should be started soon*. Manly plumbing have also been asked to give an estimate for upgrading the **toilets behind the chapel** so that they can be made useable. In the near future **the kitchen will be steam cleaned. New carpet has also been laid in the chapel**. The decision was made at our March meeting to fit a reverse cycle air conditioner in the Meeting Room at a cost of \$2,000.

To date we have received three quotations for **resurfacing the rear car park** with bitumen and to provide a contrast, we will be considering a price for concreting this area at our May meeting. A **designated parking spot** has been marked out for the 'Illoura' van in the general church car park.

The **rental flat repairs** are well under way. The work has involved the installation of a new toilet, repairs to the grouting in the bathroom, re-glazing of the bath and the fitting of new flywire screens and new curtains.

At the **Working Bee** on 23<sup>rd</sup> March, very effective pruning work was completed on the trees in the front of the church. A **new hirer 'Stage Left'** has been granted permission to mount a sign on the external wall of the church somewhere near the Kumon sign.

At the AGM on Sunday 14 April, the congregation agreed by consensus that the recommendation from Church Council regarding the **reconfiguration of the interior of the church** be accepted on the basis of the

lowest quotation. Since then the necessary paperwork has been forwarded to Synod for its approval.

For our Issues Discussion at the last Council meeting we looked at one of the papers prepared for Synod – '*Afghanistan – what are the prospects for peace?*' It is an extract from a much larger document and raises many issues of concern.

Elaine Robinson

## News from CASS

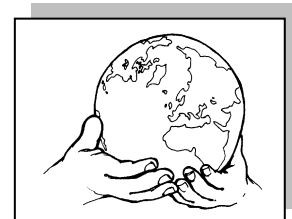
In April, our guest from the Asylum Seeker Project was Georgina Crawford, a Hotham Mission Asylum Seeker Project Case Worker from the Community Team.

Georgina works with people on bridging visas helping them with their applications for permanent visas. She also liaises with immigration sources and coordinates with other resources to provide assistance to those without Centre Link support. After Hotham Mission's very successful appeal for second hand bicycles at the end of 2012, Georgina is now helping to organise bicycle training program so participants can access the donated bicycles.

Georgina indicated that the amalgamation of Hotham Mission's Asylum Seeker Project with Lentara Unitingcare has provided the ASP with greater impact. Currently the ASP team is working on three main campaigns -

- Concession for utility bills for those with minimal income;
- Federal Election – a campaign to influence people to vote to support asylum seekers and to contact local MPs;
- Right to work – trying to influence the Federal Government to allow people on Bridging Visas to work/study whilst on visas. The Website [righttowork.com.au](http://righttowork.com.au) provides information. Postcards in support of this campaign were distributed and CASS members were asked to consider sending these to the prime minister.

Currently there are eight young men in 'Illoura' and there are two vacant beds. Since we first became part of the Commonwealth Government's Community Detention Program in



2011, 41 unaccompanied minors have lived at 'Illoura'. Of these young men, 33 have been granted permanent protection visas and have moved on to shared private rental or been accommodated with families.

In response to a request from the carers at 'Illoura' for recreational equipment, we raised \$250 in March. Two soccer balls, one volley ball, 4 table tennis bats, eight table tennis balls and one table tennis net were given to the young men who have made good use of the soccer balls in particular since then.

Since the demise of the Metcard system, the ASP has provided its clients with myki cards. This means that the cheques for the Basic Living Allowance (\$33 per week) now include the cost of 10 Zone 1 rides per week - \$35. We decided that the focus for our May fund raising appeal – **myki top up month** – would be to contribute money that can be used to provide 10 such rides for as many people as possible.

We are now able to give advance notice of our October fund raising function. On **Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> October** at 2 pm, **Thomas Heywood** will provide an **organ recital** from which we will gain 20% of the takings. Further details of the afternoon will be available in August.

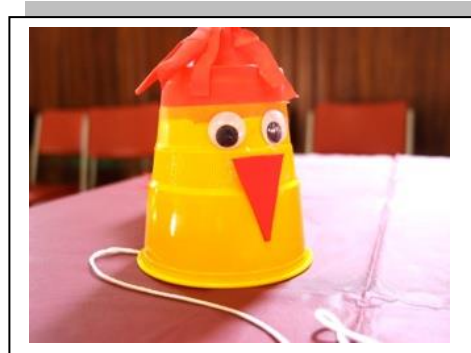
Finally, Oliver Chan, who attended our October 2012 and February 2013 meetings, finished working as the Community Education Officer for HMASP on March 18. In an email to CASS, Oliver expressed his thanks for the warmth and support given by CASS members to himself and the ASP.

Elaine Robinson

## Messy Church

### March 24 - Easter

Easter is such a big story from Palm Sunday through to the Resurrection on Easter Sunday! So we made people to place along the road to Jerusalem and wave palms as Jesus rode by (but no donkey) in this year's Easter Messy Church. Then everyone made a bread roll of their own design with a decoration on top (to represent the Last Supper), crosses were made out of beads, roosters were made that crowed (when Peter denied Jesus three times), Roman Soldier helmets were painted (the Roman soldier recognized Jesus as the messiah when he was on the cross) and the empty tomb was made from air drying clay, gravel and branches.



Ian wove all these activities into the Easter story in the Celebration in church including the items made. "Hey King where's your Crown?" and "If I were a butterfly" were the songs we all sang with actions, after an interactive prayer thanking God for giving us Jesus.

We all joined for a yummy tea including eating the bread we made.

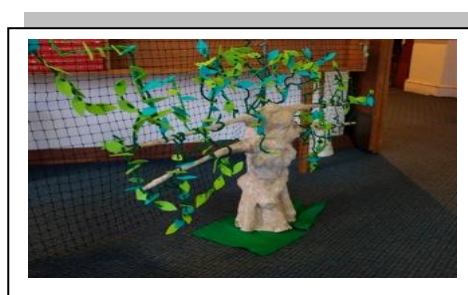


We had a family visiting from another church who has "Messy Church". They were interested in how we "did" Messy Church and they think they might come again as theirs is on at a different time. I hope they do!!!!!!

### April 28 - "The Vine"

In the gospel of St John chapter 15:1-11, Jesus said, "I am the true vine". Messy Church this month was centred around growth, fruitfulness and staying close to Jesus (the vine).

Our gathering activity was making branches to attach to a central vine trunk with Heather.



Then there were bookmarks decorated with vines, with Marg Ritchie icing biscuits and decorating with mint leaves, creating the images of vine leaves on muslin by hammering the leaves (a most popular and noisy activity), decorating a large vine with bunches of grapes using sponges, and making bunches of grapes using beads with Ruth and Owen.

In the celebration, we sang “I love you and God loves you” and “I’ve got Peace like a River” with a verse about the Vine. The story was of “Basil the Brilliant Branch” and Ian reflected on how we are all part of “the vine” – God’s Family - even though we are different.

We ended with baked potatoes and salad followed by the iced biscuits and ice cream.



We had the most children so far with lots of adults, including new people with no previous connection with our church. Like the vine, we find ourselves growing in Messy Church. What a joyous event it was!  
Fiona Ensor

## Synod 2013

The tenth Synod of the Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of Victoria and Tasmania, was again held at Latrobe University, beginning on Friday night, 3<sup>rd</sup> May with the opening service and installation of the new moderator, Mr Dan Wootton, and concluding at 5.30 pm on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup>. Ian Brown and I were members of Synod: Ian through his role as Chair of BOMAR, and I through the Presbytery of Yarra Yarra. It was a large Synod, with 375 members, 75 more than in 2011.

The Moderator chose the theme: **Wait, Listen, Trust: Hope comes** for his first Synod as Moderator. The theological meanings of each of these words were frequently reflected upon as the Synod struggled with diverse views and responses to major issues facing the church. Dan replaces Isabel Thomas-Dobson, who was given a standing ovation following her departing speech on Saturday morning. She will take up

the position of Associate General Secretary in October. This was also the first Synod for Rev. Dr Mark Lawrence in his new position as General Secretary. Some of us at CUC will remember Dan and Kathy and their young children, Heather and Jamie, when they were members here.

Each morning began with Worship, followed by a lively and challenging Bible Study presented by Rev. Dr Monica Melancthon, Professor of Old Testament, UCA Centre for Theology and Ministry.

Fifty reports were included in the papers for pre-Synod reading, representing all aspects of the church’s life and ministry. There were a number of key topics generating discussion, including the Uniting Church’s involvement in ecumenically teaching Christian Religious Education in schools through ACCESS Ministries. The Synod resolved to affirm the UCA’s involvement, to seek ways to strengthen our relationship, and made recommendations to ACCESS Ministries.

The major issue dominating the Synod was that of the financial difficulties facing the Church, largely arising from the closure of Acacia College. A letter from the Moderator, and a statement from the General Secretary on this are published in this Kairos.

In the midst of making far-reaching decisions for implementation, and concerns about challenges facing the church in this Synod, there were particular highlights; moments of light relief, humour and inspiration; opportunities to meet and talk with other members; inspiration to **be** the church in new and creative ways; and encouragement for the church to unite in facing financial difficulties and other challenges.  
Marg White

## Letter from Moderator Dan Wootton

Dear Friends,

I write this following a challenging and engaging meeting of the Synod. The theme I had chosen was *Wait, Listen, Trust: Hope comes*, and this hopefully resonated with the members, as we waited and listened with each other, and ultimately made decisions which rely on trust.

One particular Synod agenda item, the financial sustainability of the Church, sparked substantial engagement over much of the four days. It proved to be a journey of intense involvement, prayer and lament. Out of it all, I believe that a sense of hope is emerging.



The Synod has resolved to declare that special circumstances exist and will initiate sale of real estate to raise approximately \$56 million. The sale of real estate will be guided by principles that include engagement with presbyteries regarding missional concerns. The Synod also resolved to consult with presbyteries, congregations, agencies and other UCA bodies across the Synod to look at other ways of generating funds for this project.

Working in parallel with this resolution, the Synod also resolved to undertake a major strategic review of the entire Church, which will help inform the implementation of special circumstances; form a vision and plan for the future of the Church and undertake a holistic financial sustainability review to support that vision and plan. The new Standing Committee will meet in June to consider this significant resolution. Terms of reference need to be written. Specialists across a range of disciplines will be invited to assist in this body of work. And you, the people of the Church, will be informed and supported all through this journey.

The oft-quoted phrase in paragraph 3 of our Basis of Union speaks of the Church as being "a pilgrim people, always on the way towards a promised goal..." I can use no better imagery than that to describe the circumstance in which this Synod now finds itself.

We are all pilgrims on the road and some of us are carrying larger packs than others, some with multiple tents and equipment, others with little or none. In all this, one thing has been made clear; there will not be an expectation of those with little resources to share the load. Whereas those with greater resources will be encouraged to consider rationalisation and sharing.

Last Friday night in my final words to the gathered people of God, I spoke of hope: our contact with God's Word renews our hope, consoles us in times of wavering, challenges our complacency and gently guides us in our attitudes and behaviour.

As you and the various councils of the church inevitably become involved in these matters I would urge you to reflect on your responses, and be reminded of the fruits of the Spirit set out in Galatians 5. How do we receive the actions of the Holy Spirit? Through patience; generosity; forbearance; honesty; humility.

Blessings, Dan Wootton Moderator

## Letter from General Secretary Rev Dr Mark Lawrence

### Summary paragraphs re resolutions (38 & 20) in relation to Financial Sustainability and Divestment Principles

Requested by Synod 2013 members to assist in communicating these resolutions with other members of the Church.

To contribute to the financial sustainability of the Uniting Church across Victoria and Tasmania, the Synod meeting has made some challenging decisions. The Synod declared that special circumstances exist (Reg. 4.6.3), and the church is now looking to raise nearly \$56 million over the next 18 months: \$36.6m to extinguish the Acacia College debt; \$7.32m to replenish Synod reserves; and \$10m to develop a fund from which interest may be used to provide resources to assist with projects that meet with unforeseen circumstances and need support from the wider Church. The Synod also resolved to consult across the Church about how each council, agency, etc, may contribute to the reduction of the debt burden. A second proposal outlining divestment principles for special circumstances was passed by consensus. This includes the establishment of a project control group consisting of specialists across a range of disciplines (including property, finance, and missional awareness), which will have oversight of this significant task, and report to the Property Board.

In the light of declaring special circumstances, the Synod meeting also resolved by agreement to undertake a major strategic review of the whole Church. The Standing Committee has been asked to develop the scope and shape of this review.

Congregations and other parts of the Church will be supported through the processes of divesting real estate, and the strategic review.  
Mark Lawrence

**Kairos** is the Greek word meaning "time", that is, those times which are turning points demanding decision while the opportunity remains. Although it refers primarily to the coming of Christ it may also refer to the present time in the life of our congregation.  
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