



Annual Report
The Life and Mission of
Croydon Uniting Church
2016

presented at the Annual General Meeting
23rd April 2017

**Croydon Uniting Church
Annual Report of the Life and Mission of the Congregation 2016**

Our Guiding Vision

We at Croydon Uniting Church with God's grace and guidance will witness and proclaim the good news of God's love through Jesus Christ to the local and wider community.

We will focus particularly on:

- **Our prayer life, contemplation and discernment**
 - **Pastoral care of the frail and aged**
- **Ministry with children, youth and their families**
- **Actively serving the local and wider community**

This is a report of the life and ministry of Croydon Uniting Church; within these pages a passionate, active, forward-looking community of God's people is represented. 2016 has been a year where much work towards the future has been discussed, as well as a year for celebrating the community that is present now.

Numerically, at the end of the 2016, Croydon Uniting Church consisted of 128 confirmed members, 5 members-in-association, 23 people who are baptised but not confirmed, and 23 adherents, with approximately 45% of the total attending worship on any given Sunday.

This report is organised into the following sections: ***Spiritual Matters, Caring for the Congregation, Leading and Planning for the Congregation, Serving the Community, Connections with Other Churches, and Administration, Finance and Property***. This is broadly the organisation of each meeting of the Church Council, which concentrates our focus firstly on our ministry and formation as a Christian community, then moves to our engagement with the wider world in ministry and mission, and the stewardship of our many assets (people, property and finances) which enables us to be people of God in this place at this time. The Church Council holds our vision, and the guiding mission goals formed during 2015, in its thoughts and deliberations at all times.

Spiritual Matters

We continue to thank God for the leadership of Rev. Bronwyn Daniels as our Minister of the Word as she has actively and ably led us throughout 2016; her Call to the East Kew Uniting Church, announced in the last weeks of 2016, represents a critical moment for the congregation she has served since 2008. Her report outlines the many tasks and committees that she has been involved in, and we are sure there are many more tasks besides those listed! Her busy role included co-ordinating committees for **Worship** (p. 15), **Pastoral Care** (p. 18) and **Children, Families and Youth Ministry (CFYM)** (p. 17). Her full **Minister's Report** can be read on page 14.

Worship is an integral part of our community's life, and Bronwyn has lead our worship with care, grace and careful discernment. She involved a wide range of people in numerous ways, involving teams and inviting guests to further enhance our worship. We are also thankful for our active lay preachers and lay worship leaders.

We recognise that creative worship takes time and gifts to lead, and we thank all those involved in leading our 10:00 am Sunday morning worship, our Monthly Quiet Church, our monthly Pastoral Care Services and our occasional special services held throughout the year. There are Organists, Choir, Band, Bible Readers, Prayers of the People leaders, and those who assist Bronwyn in leading worship at Aged Care Facilities, as well as the array of “behind the scenes” rosters that enhance our worship experiences – such as those involved in Cleaning, Flowers, Communion Preparation, Stewards, Greeters, Data Projector, Sound, Morning Tea and more.

We are thankful for the small but faithful **prayer group** and prayer chain which continued to meet to anchor or service and witness in prayer.

Our **CFYM (Children, Families and Youth Ministry)** continued in 2016 with **YUCC** (Youth of the Uniting Church in Croydon), **Sunday STEPS** (Stories Told, Experienced Practised and Shared), **Music Together** and **FFEET** (Families and Friends Exploring and Eating Together) all continuing throughout the year. **KUCA Club** (Kids of the UCA) has been in recess.

Playgroup continued to serve the local community over two sessions each week, which Jacqui Nicholls continues to lead. We thank her for her enthusiasm for the role, which is much appreciated.

In a volunteer capacity, Carolyne Chandler continued as CFYM Co-ordinator, ably supported by Mary Birch in her vital role as Administrative Support for CFYM. Mary’s work includes the co-ordination of the Music Together program, our outreach program run in-conjunction with Connections UnitingCare Agency for young children and their parents.

Caring for our Congregation

Pastoral Care is also an integral part of our community, and our congregation places great importance on caring for those in and without its midst. A dedicated team of Pastoral Carers support the Church Council and its Elders to live out this responsibility, and to keep regular contact with all our Church family through phone calls, visits and delivering our quarterly Church Newsletter and important updates throughout the year. To all those involved we give our thanks. The **Pastoral Care Committee** oversees this vital component of our congregation.

During 2016 we have continued to develop our response to the important **Safe Church** Initiative of the Uniting Church and our obligations to the Keeping Children Safe legislation. At the November Church Council meeting, the Statement of Commitment for Keeping Children Safe was adopted, as was the Code of Conduct for Keeping Children Safe. The Uniting Church’s Code of Conduct for Lay Leaders was also formally tabled at Church Council in January 2016. These documents are available on Congregation’s website, <http://www.croydon.unitingchurch.org.au/info-brochures/ethical-practices/>

Our congregational life is further enhanced by the activities of the Evening Fellowship and the continuing care of our history by the History Group. Reports from the **Evening**

Fellowship and **History Group** provide further information on these important parts of our Church Community. These can be found beginning on pages 19 and 21.

The **Memorial Garden Committee** continues to exercise responsibility with diligence and care for this part of our Church Property and its important place in the hearts of particular members of our congregation. A full report from the Committee is included on page 22.

Leading and Planning for our Congregation

2016 has been a busy year for our **Church Council**, which met on 13 occasions throughout the year. A significant component of all Church Council work this year has been around planning for our future as a Uniting Church community in Croydon. Aably led by our **Church Council Executive** (Rohan Pryor, Brownyn Daniels, Carolyn Chandler and Paul Chandler) we have sought to guide the congregation in the next stage of planning for our life for now and into the next five to ten years and beyond. We have spent time discerning, dreaming, worrying, thinking, talking and suggesting possible processes and steps to help us all think about strategy, membership, leadership, ministry and assets (including property, income and reserves).

The **Project Control Group**. Rohan Pryor, Paul Chandler, Kerry Shearer and Charles Popple were appointed by the Church Council as representatives to this group in 2015, which also includes the consultants and Synod and Presbytery Representatives. The Property Development is detailed below.

The **Mission Development Group** was formed towards the end of 2016, and their work is also described later in this report.

Leadership responsibilities though this strategy and review period have placed great demand on key leaders and we acknowledge and thank the Church Council Executive, Project Control Group and Elders/Church Councillors for their continuing commitment to leadership at Croydon Uniting, and for their willingness to share their gifts and time in these various roles.

Serving the Community

A significant part of our outreach and mission continues to be Helping Hand, serving those in need in the local Croydon community. We continue to thank Connections for the use of the space we use to run this important and vital program, and we thank the many volunteers (both from within the church community, and from beyond – including past Helping Hand clients) who staff Helping Hand, as well as those who assist with tasks such as the Bread collection. We are delighted that Dianne Bull has continued in the role of co-ordinator.

Once again, the challenge for the Helping Hand Support Committee continued to be securing funding to continue this work through funding the co-ordinator position, and we thank the Helping Hand Support Committee for their continuing work in this regard. Reports from both the **Helping Hand Support Committee** and our **Helping Hand Co-**

ordinator paint a more detailed picture of this important outreach project beginning on page 23.

A key area of concern for the Croydon Uniting community is Social Justice, and we thank once again the Social Justice Committee for their important role in ensuring this is an area of our attention, and for identifying ways we can respond. Asylum Seeker Support is also part of this, and we thank all the work undertaken in both these areas. A report from the **Social Justice Committee** on page 26 provides further information.

The Presbytery Mental Health Ministry Project was again in our thoughts as Evening Fellowship and the Congregation both contributed \$500 (\$1 000 in total) to its continuing work.

An outreach activity sponsored by our congregation is **Croydon Parish Players** (CPP). 2016 was their 60th anniversary year, and they produced the musical *Hairspray* and the play *Arsenic and Old Lace*. During 2016 they once again donated funds to Helping Hand and other worthy causes, a key part of their outreach to the wider community. The Church Council Executive has continued to meet with the CPP key committee to strengthening our relationship, and to manage the impact of the property changes on CPP operations.

Chaplaincy at the local schools, Croydon Primary and Melba College, continued to be actively supported with donations from a small number of members covering our church's considerable donation of approaching \$8 000 towards supporting the Chaplains at both schools and many in the congregation supported other fundraising events throughout the year. We appreciate the long-continued dedication, effort and diligent support of Bruce and Carole Turner on the local Chaplaincy committee (who manage both funding and support for the two chaplains) and we again thank them for this important work in the community. A report is to be found on page 27.

We also recognise the role of our Lay Preachers, Organists and others in supporting worship at places beyond our congregation, including Walmsley Retirement Village and other congregations further afield.

Connections with Other Churches

As a congregation in the **Yarra Yarra Presbytery**, the Presbytery continues its work as a council of the UCA with responsibility for a large regional area. Bronwyn Daniels and David Collett regularly attend Presbytery meetings, and Presbytery representatives have worked alongside us in our Strategy Process throughout the year.

As a member of the **Outer Eastern Cluster of UCA Churches** we again shared in combined worship on the UCA Anniversary and on Easter Day (Dawn Worship). We continue to hold the other cluster congregations (Croydon North, Lilydale, Montrose and Mooroolbark) in our prayers as we all grapple with what the future looks like for our individual congregations and as a cluster of UCA congregations in the Outer East.

As members of the **Maroondah Fellowship of Churches**, we hosted a meeting during the year and we thank those who regularly participate in this on our behalf.

We continue to host the **Chin Christian Fellowship, Melbourne** (CCCM), a Baptist community which meets in our buildings, and thinks of this site as 'home'. As is our practice, the Memorandum of Understanding between the two church communities was re-affirmed in 2016, and the Executives continue to meet regularly. CCCM enthusiastically contribute to grounds and cleaning rosters, support working bees as well as contribute a financial donation. We have been pleased to be able to continue to offer a 'home' and our support to them, as they focus their own energy on supporting their people as they settle in Australia as refugees.

Administration, Finance and Property

Once again we are supported in our work by Peter Mitchell in the role of **Office Secretary**. His work includes the diligent management of bookings for church building use, the preparation of the many documents that require regular and occasional preparation and assisting the minister, along with the many other tasks that arise in our church's daily life.

The **Property Management Committee** has continued to meet diligently. We thank the committed members of the Property Management Committee as we recognise the different circumstances they have worked under during our strategic and property review process. Whilst less practical action was required of the PMC during this last year, they nevertheless arranged for the replacement of a fence (between the manse and no. 8 & 10 Tallent St) and attended to routine matters. We are continually grateful for those who undertake roles on cleaning and grounds rosters and for our employed cleaners, Seni and Suka Seviua. The work of all these people leads to a property which is presented as well cared for.

The finance of the church has been carefully monitored by the Church Council. With prudent spending, the result by the end of the year was a modest surplus. Regular offerings were 7% down compared to 2015, due to death and transfers, compensated by several annual donations which came in during the 2016 calendar year. This highlights the need for the property redevelopment project, as our capacity to make large expenditure on buildings, without impacting future ministry and mission, is diminishing each year. The property was used somewhat more than in 2015, with rent up by nearly 25% compared with 2015, but still at only 76% of 2014 levels; the inability to maximize rental income also emphasizes the need for property redevelopment.

Statements of Income and Expenditure are found on page 28. We note a generous gift from the family of the late Nancy Plant, in her memory, and a significant bequest from the estate of the late Shirley Jefferies. The Church Council has set these funds aside (note the 'bequests' item on p. 28) for consideration as detailed finances of the 'property project' become better known, and when the value of the Jefferies bequest is known (expected to be executed during 2017).

Graham and Maggie McKern commenced as **Stewardship Co-ordinators** in 2016, with a Program taking place in early 2016. The use of video over several weeks and Graham and Maggie's professionalism was much appreciated.

The generosity of the congregation cannot be underestimated (refer to page 28). With Kay and Spencer Yen no longer able to take on the responsibility of a Christmas Bowl collection in Main Street, 2016 was the first year for approximately 23 years that this has

not taken place. We thank Kay and Spencer for their work in this service in recent years. And so the over-\$1800 collected for the Christmas Bowl was contributed during Christmas services and individual donations from within Croydon Uniting. In addition, over \$8300 for Asylum Seekers and over \$5900 for Helping Hand. Indeed, over \$16,000 for various appeals was collected, which is 11% above offering, or nearly \$100 for every adult (and in addition to this, there are the substantial gifts to the wider community from Evening Fellowship and Croydon Parish Players).

Property Redevelopment

The "property project" has been underway since late 2014 with the first meeting with the Presbytery Discernment Partners in November of that year. A summary of the process and decisions to the end of 2016 is presented on pages 31-33. A further sequence of formal approvals occurred throughout 2015, with the funding for the feasibility study approved and the Croydon Uniting representatives on the Project Control Group approved in October 2015. One of first actions of the PCG was to contract *Resolution Property Group* to lead the development of the feasibility study. Very significant work had occurred in the first half of 2015 to articulate the goals and future directions of Croydon Uniting, and the likely property needs that would accompany them.

The Project Control Group met very regularly in the first five months of 2016, in feasibility study work, preparing a Business Case and considering the suite of options available. Nine options were presented to the congregation, firstly at an open Church Council meeting on May 24, and then at a congregational briefing on June 5. At its meeting on June 6, the Church Council carefully considered the presentations which had been made and the feedback received from the congregation. It resolved to approve "option 3A-1" as the preferred option and to proceed to the next stage of the process, a full project plan, and to approve the sale of the manse at 49 Croydon Road. The business case that was approved through a chain of Presbytery and Synod Committees (ie "option 3A-1") was:

1. Sale of 49 Croydon Rd
2. Subdivision and sale of part of 31 Croydon Rd
3. Construction of car park to service congregation
4. Retention of manse
5. Allowance for refurbishment works of existing missional spaces and manse
6. An "interest only mission fund" to be established from the residual of proceeds from these works

On August 24, the final level of approval, that of the Synod Property Board, was received for proceeding with the business case.

The sale of the Croydon Rd manse was an important component of the goal of realizing property and directing those funds to refurbishment and mission; it was also important to fund the development of the Business Case. It was sold on October 29, 2016 for \$825,000; the loan from the Presbytery of Yarra Yarra which had funded the feasibility study and other works up until that time was repaid, and the substantial planning and surveying works required for the development of the Business Case could then proceed. To date, Croydon Uniting Church has not needed to pay any money in order to advance the very significant property works which are necessary for our future.

With the Business Case approvals in place and funding secure, *Resolution Property Group* were contracted (again), this time as Development and Project Managers. As of the end of 2016, they had identified *Millar Merrigan* as suitable appointees for the detailed planning works including surveying, engineering, arboriculture, and subdivision design. It is expected that the full Project Proposal will be ready for the sequence of approvals by late August 2017, and (consistent with the program of works that this proposal will specify), occupancy of the hall will need to cease by about the end of August 2017.

Mission Redevelopment

Alongside the 'property project' has been a clear acknowledgement that the mission and ministry of the congregation needs to be reconsidered, developed and supported. There were several advantages of the "feasibility study" process in relation to property: a short-and-sharp process, external facilitation and secretarial support. As 2016 proceeded, the Church Council gave thought to applying this same approach to the development of mission. What emerged was the "Mission Development Group" (MDG) which was approved by Church Council on October 25.

The MDG has been charged with the exploration of a range of feasible options for further focus and development. This will feed into the property planning and design processes. The MDG is a group of people associated with Croydon UC who have the gifts and skills to explore, consider a range of 'missional strategies'. Church Council appointed Caitlin Reid, Carolyne Chandler, Chris Mellerski, David Chandler, Jacqui Nicholls, John McDowell, Keith Amos and Nick Walter to the MDG with external consultant Rev Ric Holland as facilitator and Mrs Jo Boldiston as secretarial support. A modest cost of \$5,100 has been necessary to achieve this facilitation and support, which will be covered from within the 2016 and 2017 budgets.

The membership of the MDG has not been as representatives from particular groups within the congregation, but to bring together a spirit-inspired team with strategic and pastoral skills, a future-oriented attitude and genuine care for the congregation, to make recommendations. The 'congregation' is to be understood in the widest possible sense – not just the Sunday morning worshipping community.

In setting up the MDG, the Church Council is conscious that substantial changes have occurred within the lifetimes of all Church members, and that this change is increasing even faster and further. The place of the Christian church has become unclear in a pluralistic, multi-cultural and multi-faith Australia, and in a globalised world with rapid mobile communications and an equally rapid expansion in human knowledge. Christians still believe the good news of Jesus Christ holds abundant and eternal life, but the ways of sharing this good news have changed and will continue to change. 'Mission' is understood broadly as reaching out in faith to share that good news in word and action, 'ministry' as deepening personal discipleship and faithful community.

The MDG was given a reporting schedule of no later than March 2017 in order to both constructively contribute to the property redevelopment project, and to prioritize the development of missional directions.

In Memory

In recognising the achievements and events of 2016 we also remember the lives of those people who have died in the last 12 months.

We remember Norm Stewart, Alma Rahilly, Nancy Plant, Heather Cameron, Nancy Rowson, Lorraine Cannon, June Daghish, Madge Milligan, Greg Buckeridge, Barbara Renouf, Jean Harper and Shirley Jefferies. We give thanks for their lives shared with us, and have ongoing memories of the times that they spent in our Church community. We pay tribute to them for the many and varied contributions that they each made to the life of this church and beyond.

In Conclusion

Croydon Uniting Church consistently demonstrates its commitment to fellowship, spiritual discernment and formation, worship and working for the community through its diverse, vibrant and active community. Its varied and busy life and mission live out its strong sense of call to be God's people in this place, to show Christ's mission in care and concern for not only those in the church community but beyond.

As we continue to wrestle with these challenges of strategy, membership, leadership, ministry and assets we aim to open ourselves to look with new eyes and to listen to God's call to continue to be a people *Making a Difference* - living as a faithful and called people in this time and place.

Carolynne and Paul Chandler
Co-Secretaries, Church Council

Croydon Uniting Church Vision and Mission Goals

Our Guiding Vision:

We at Croydon Uniting Church with God's grace and guidance will witness and proclaim the good news of God's love through Jesus Christ to the local and wider community.

We will focus particularly on:

- *Our prayer life, contemplation and discernment*
 - *Pastoral care of the frail and aged*
- *Ministry with children, youth and their families*
- *Actively serving the local and wider community*

Mission Goals – January 2015

1. Congregation / faith community needs: *nurturing discipleship for mission*

- a. Worship (flexible worship & fellowship spaces with accessible facilities - including toilets)
- b. Pastoral care (including frail and aged, and social networks)
- c. Faith development (including children, youth & their families)
- d. Careful consideration of the Memorial Garden

2. Financial sustainability: *for the next 10+ years*

- a. Pay for ministry team (minister & other missional staffing needs)
- b. Accommodation for minister (manse/funding)
- c. Financial costs including insurance, building services (power & gas), property maintenance
- d. Support of wider Uniting Church commitments (faith development, education & resourcing, social justice, international mission, etc.)
- e. Adapt & streamline property needs and use

3. Build local community partnerships: *sharing God's love in Croydon*

- a. Church play groups
- b. Helping Hand (location possibilities, financial support)
- c. Local school chaplaincy

4. Support wider community: *sharing God's love for the world*

- a. Asylum seeker support
- b. Social justice advocacy & action

5. Potential new areas of mission focus: *sharing God's love in fresh words and deeds*

- a. Faith formation in the 21st century
- b. New initiatives in Aged care outreach/pastoral care/support

6. Building partnerships: *host relationships & tenants*

- a. Croydon Parish Players
- b. Chin Christian Church Melbourne
- c. Music Together program
- d. Other regular users

CHURCH COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP 2016

all Church Council members are Elders

Adele Allen
 Meron Allen
 Carolyne Chandler (Co-Secretary)
 Paul Chandler (Co-Secretary and Convenor of Finance Committee)
 David Collett
 Bronwyn Daniels (ex officio – Minister of the Word)
 Jill Davison
 Chris Hill
 Stephen Honey
 Don Marsham
 Peter Mitchell
 Charles Popple
 Rohan Pryor (Chairperson)
 Kerry Shearer
 Bruce Turner
 Barney Wilson
 Valerie Wilson
 Kay Yen
 Concluded term at 2016 AGM: Mary Birch

CHURCH COUNCIL AREAS OF OVERSIGHT 2016

Bold are Church Councillors

Congregational Office Holders

Russell DAVISON (Chairperson – Congregation)
Valerie WILSON (Secretary – Congregation until 2016 AGM)
 Keith AMOS (Secretary – Congregation from 2016 AGM)

Church Council Executive

Bronwyn DANIELS (Minister)
Rohan Pryor (Chair - Church Council)
Carolyne CHANDLER (Co-secretary - Church Council)
Paul CHANDLER (Co-secretary - Church Council and Convenor - Finance Committee)

Church Council Employees

Mary BIRCH (CFYM Admin Assistant – casual max. 4 hrs per week)
Peter MITCHELL (Office Secretary – 12 hrs per week)
 Jacqui NICHOLLS (Playgroup Co-ordinator – 6 hrs per week)
 Dianne BULL (Helping Hand Co-ordinator – 1 day per week) FUNDED BY OUTSIDE DONATIONS

Project Control Group

Charles POPPLE
Kerry SHEARER
Paul CHANDLER (Co-Secretary – Church Council and Convenor – Finance Committee)
Rohan PRYOR (Chairperson – Church Council)

Mission Development Group

Rev. Ric HOLLAND (Convenor and Facilitator)
 Joanne BOLDISTON (Admin Support)
 Carolyne CHANDLER
 Keith AMOS
 David CHANDLER
 Caitlin REID
 John MCDOWELL
 Chrissy MELLERSKI
 Nick WALTERS (Croydon Parish Players President)
 Jacqui NICHOLLS (Playgroup Co-ordinator)

CROYDON UNITING CHURCH 2016

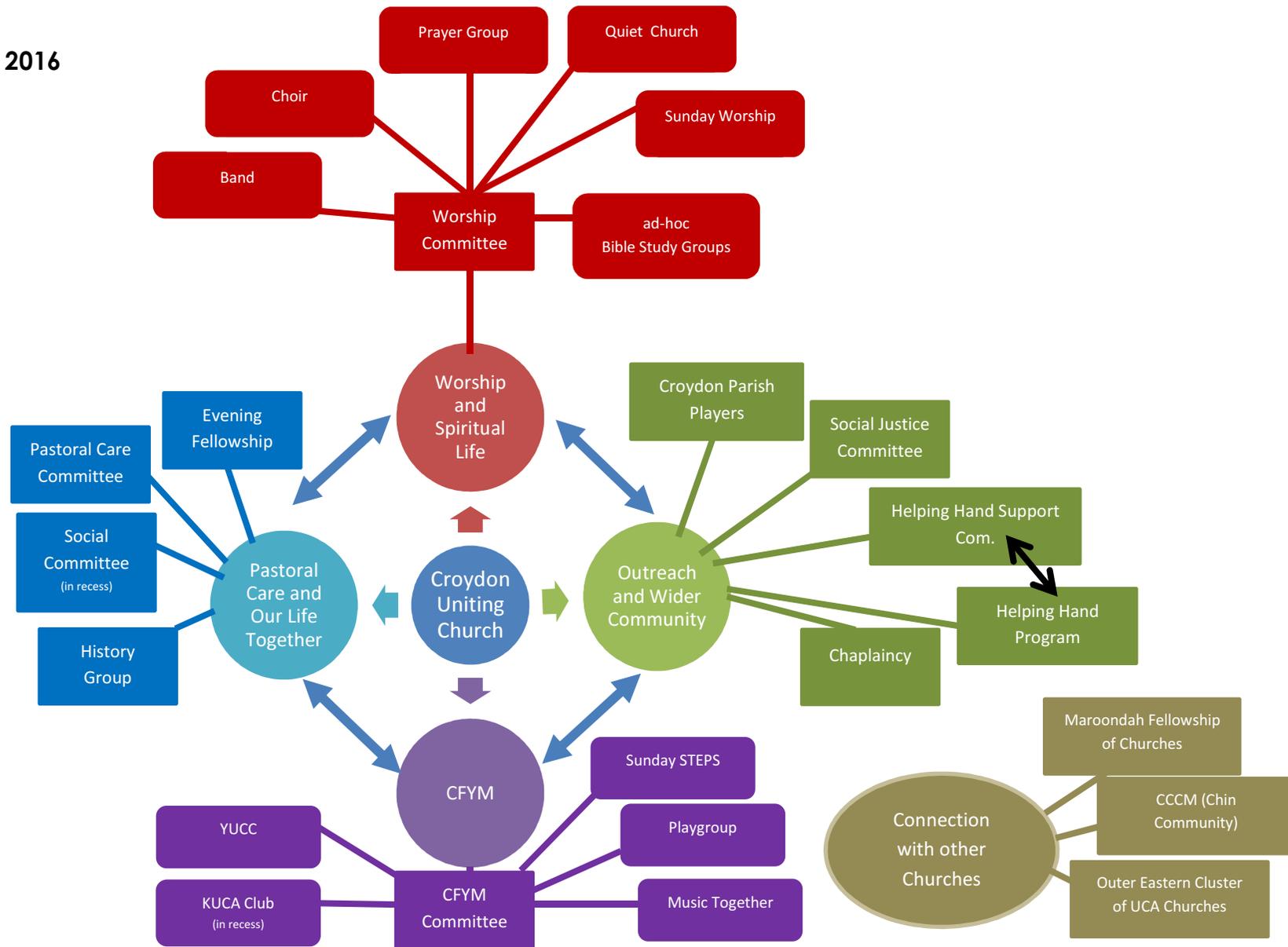
What we look like....

Circles are "areas" of our Church's Life

Rectangles are Church Council Committees or Groups with "Structure"

Rounded Corner Rectangles are Groups or Key Activities

The STONES at the bottom are the Councils or Groups which lead or support our life as a faith community.



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