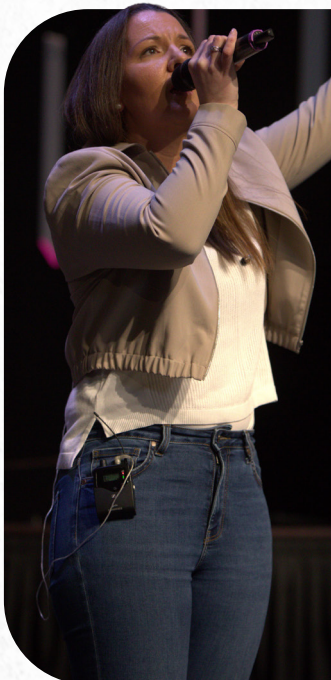


# Annual Report 2025



HORSHAM CHURCH OF CHRIST

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*Transforming our community in the name of Jesus.*

# Elders' Report

Rheinard Korf

## Reflections on 2025: From Transition to Spiritual Transformation

*"Look to the Lord and his strength; seek his face always." - Psalm 105:4*

There was a certain sense of anticipation as we entered 2025. This was our first year where we had Jarrod Risson step into his role as Senior Pastor. This was a welcoming change as we felt the gap of leadership during the search and appointment process.

## A Shift in Our Rhythms

In the early months of the year, our meetings felt somewhat awkward and even a bit clinical. We were largely going through the motions: sharing a brief devotional message, running through agenda items, and reviewing reports from Tanika, Jarrod, and the Finance Management Group. Occasionally, we would discuss goals and challenges, but our meetings were quite predictable. It felt safe, and following a challenging year, there was a sense of relief; personally, I was happy sitting in a space of complacency.

However, later in the year, we intentionally shifted our focus from being agenda-driven to dedicating a full hour of our time to praise and worship. This became a pivotal point for us as Elders. In alignment with Psalm 105, our attention moved away from 'dots on a page' and back toward seeking the face of our Lord Jesus, whose church we are called to lead.

## Clarifying Leadership & Relationships

As Chair of Elders in 2025, it became clear that we held many unspoken expectations and assumptions regarding 'who does what'. This was compounded by the dual challenge of navigating a new Senior Pastor relationship while lacking a formal process for the Chair of Elders handover. These factors meant that, at times, things did not run as smoothly as expected.

Moving into 2026, we are focused on finding greater clarity and strengthening the relationships between the Chair of Elders, our Senior Pastor, and the broader team. We want to ensure that our structures support the ministry rather than hinder it. To assist with this, we are looking forward to utilizing Planning Center Online (PCO) to help us with our processes and the scheduling of our key activities.

## Growth & Development

Through professional development in 2025, we discovered that our Eldership consists of many like-minded individuals. While we have many 'wonderers' and 'ideators' who excel at envisioning the future, we recognised a need for a broader group of discerners—those who can help explain initiatives and effectively enable and equip others for service.

## Transitions and Looking Ahead

We were pleased to have Glenda serve as an Observing Elder before being officially nominated and affirmed later in the year. Conversely, 2025 marked the end of Dinah's time serving with us as an Elder. We are thankful for her contribution and are glad to see her continue serving the church in her new staff role in 2026.

As we move forward, we will continue to look for new Elders through a process of observation. This involves direct invitation from the current Elders, but also relies on the discernment of the congregation. We invite the church to nominate those they see serving with the heart of an Elder for our consideration and invitation.

As we look toward the future, we do so with hope, seeking to be a leadership team that does not rely on its own understanding, but seeks the Lord and His strength in all things.

Rheinard Korf  
Chair of Elders



## Senior Pastor *Jarrold Risson*

***“For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid,  
which is Jesus Christ.” - 1 Corinthians 3:11***

Jesus Christ is our firm foundation. There are many things that we as the church can do, but only that which is built on Him endures and bears fruit for His kingdom. The simple yet profound truth is that we exist to glorify God, equip the saints and share the love of Christ with the world around us. The reality of how we carry out that mandate is often varied and complex!

2025 was a year of clarification: recognising the time of transition, identifying key areas that required immediate attention and prioritising the work to be done. I admit that I spent much of the first half of the year saying, “there’s a lot going on!” That will always be true, as with any growing family, but what is important is clarity about what we are doing, what needs attention and what may no longer be necessary.

We celebrate the conversations and deepening relationships throughout the Alpha course in term two. People who previously were not connected found a safe place to explore the Gospel and ask some tough questions without fear. Others who were new to church, started coming because someone invited them, or because they felt compelled to come. We saw people come and find a place where they could rest, heal and recover from what had been a difficult season in their lives.

Our 50 Days of Prayer ran from Easter Sunday to Pentecost, creating an intentional time for people to come together daily and unite in prayer: prayers of praise and adoration, prayers for the church, for the city, for healing and relationships. One of our prayers is still being answered, with generous giving enabling significant progress on the Ministry Centre debt, and the amount owing effectively being less than \$1.5m.

We continue to discern the best way to help people get connected into the church community. There are some aspects that are the same for everyone, and some that are unique. Ultimately, we continue to ask the question, “how can we be disciples who make disciples?” How do we best facilitate people joining Life Groups, serving as part of a team, knowing and being known? We give thanks for those who participated in Accelerate and Veta Morphus, with a strong focus on leadership development as well as practical theology.

We made the difficult decision to conclude the River Community Mentoring ministry. Along with reestablishing the Pastoral Care team, we will consider what God might be inviting us into and how to best provide care for the wider community.

Our staff have served faithfully and graciously, navigating the difficulty of being short-staffed with a great deal of patience. I am incredibly thankful for Tanika, Lachie and Angela who consistently go above and beyond in serving the church. We are excited to be welcoming two new members as 2026 begins, with Dinah Fax as Receptionist and Bree Russell coordinating our events and communication. These two ladies joining our team will enable the rest of us to narrow our focus in our work, expand our ability to minister, and prepare more effectively moving forward.

I love that we are part of the body of Christ: we need each other and are called to live in holy community. This was highlighted when we held “The VOLLIES” in November: a night when we could honour and celebrate everyone who gave time, effort and enthusiasm to serving the Lord and His church throughout the year. More than 140 people were invited to that celebration, and it was a beautiful time to thank those who attended for their particular contribution and recognise faithfulness in service.

I am also mindful of all the unseen expressions of God’s kingdom that we don’t know about: the helping hand, the delivered meal, the faithful prayer, the much-needed financial blessing. Acts of kindness and generosity carried out by you, the church, without roster or public acknowledgement, but noticed by our Father in heaven.

As we look to the future, we do so with a growing sense of hope and anticipation of what God will do in us and through us: of more people coming to know Christ as Lord and Saviour, more people knowing and living out of their God-given identity and purpose, more people being welcomed into faithful community as part of Horsham Church of Christ.

***May the Lamb  
that was slain  
receive the  
reward of His  
suffering!***



# Mainly Music

Victoria Dennis

*In 2025, we witnessed God at work in remarkable and unmistakable ways throughout our ministry. His presence was evident in the joy, growth, and community that flourished every week.*



## Attendance & Growth

Last year exceeded all expectations. Our numbers continued to rise, with regular weekly attendance exceeding 90 people, and several weeks reaching over 100 attendees. One particularly memorable week saw 11 prams lined up, each representing a baby, an older sibling, and at least one parent or caregiver. These moments reflected the vibrancy and life of our ministry.

Most of our families come with little to no faith or church background, making their engagement even more significant as we continue to introduce them to the love of Jesus in gentle, meaningful ways.

## Bible Gifting Initiative

True to our commitment—and through the generosity of our church community—we gifted a Bible to every family who attended mainly music in 2025.

To date, 60 Bibles have been given out, trusting fully in God's promise that *"His word will not return void..."* - Isaiah 55:11.

## Connection with Worship Services

In November, we invited our mainly music families to participate in a Sunday worship service. We were delighted to welcome six families, and together we sang two favourite songs: God Made the Kangaroo and Noah's Ark. We continue to see a small number of families attending worship services and remain committed to extending warm, personal invitations to church, RIVERkids (for those age-eligible), and various other programs across our church community.

## Volunteers & Ministry Support

I want to express my heartfelt thanks to our dedicated volunteers and faithful prayer warriors. Your commitment creates a warm, calm, and welcoming environment every single week - a peace so often noticed and appreciated by attending families (John 14:25-27). Despite high attendance numbers, God continues to bless us with a beautiful sense of order and grace.

## Looking Ahead...

### Opportunities to Serve

As our ministry continues to grow, we need your help. I invite you to prayerfully consider how you might serve in the year ahead. You can commit to as little as once a term or more regularly. Opportunities include:

- Baking
- Preparing fruit and serving coffee
- Greeting families as they arrive
- Providing tech support
- Creating newsletters or invitations
- Assisting during the general running of the program.

There are countless ways to be the hands and feet of Jesus (Matthew 25:34-40) within this beautiful ministry.

### Into 2026

We look forward with anticipation to all God has in store for mainly music in 2026. With His guidance and the support of our church family, we are excited to continue serving, connecting with, and loving the families in our community.



## RIVERkids

*Tanika Thorne*

RIVERkids is a space where primary-aged kids can discover who God is and who they are. In 2025 we used the GodSpace Curriculum, guiding kids on a great adventure through the Bible. We regularly heard from our digital friend named Goober (a character the kids loved), who asked thoughtful questions about God's truth. In small groups we explored the answers together, encouraging kids to develop their own curiosity and desire to know God more.

Over the year we saw four primary-aged children baptised, choosing to trust God, follow Jesus and live with the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Congratulations to Erin Walker, Bethi Hanhe, Ariel Moore and Ruben Morrell for accepting Christ's invitation into His family. Children's Ministry is more accurately described as Family Ministry, as parents play a key role in discipling their children. This year we intentionally invited parents into the room during pick-up, creating opportunities for connection and community.

Our Prayer Pairs Initiative continues to be a key support for families and children. Now in its third year, we have received encouraging feedback. One grandparent shared that while praying weekly for his Prayer Pair he realised he had not been praying as regularly for his own grandchildren - now he does. Another took her Prayer Pair out for a special café visit, blessing both the child and her mother. These stories remind us that prayer is care, and when we pray for our kids we demonstrate love for them and trust in God's plan for their lives. Thank you to Joylene Newell for faithfully coordinating this initiative.

One of the defining strengths of the RIVERkids team is the number of people involved and the diversity of gifts they bring. Many serve once or twice a term, allowing them to participate in the main worship service while still contributing to RIVERkids. Our team is grateful for the teenagers who are regularly committed: Lewis Walker, Ryan Clarke, Amber Korf, Grace Flett, Jy Dennis, Camille Arthur, Payton-Rose Priestley and Xavier Moore. We also deeply appreciate the perseverance and contribution from our adult leaders and helpers: Jennifer and David Arthur, Joylene Newell and Newelly, Lachie Walker, Genni Smith, Lynne Dale, Rachael Morrell, David Reichenbach, Manisha Busbridge, Oriana Panozzo, Bree Russell, Leonie Marshman, John Reichenbach and Leanne Panozzo.

Sunday mornings typically included a Bible passage and prayer, along with activities such as memory verses, songs, crafts, games and shared morning tea. It has been encouraging to see many children grow in confidence; volunteering to retell Bible stories, pray for the group, and even stand in front of the wider church. In December, we all witnessed a big step of faith as several kids collectively helped share the Christmas narrative during the main service. We pray this confidence continues to grow as kids discover more faith, hope and love in their Heavenly Father.



## RIVERyouth

*Tanika Thorne*



The word that comes to mind for RIVERyouth in 2025 is 'deeper'. This year focused on deepening the roots of teens' faith – their understanding of God and their relationships with one another. It was a year of consolidation, recognising that deep roots allow for greater fruit. If a ministry hopes to have a wide impact, it must first impact those within it deeply. The old saying is true: you have to go deep before you can go wide.

In 2025, two secondary school students stepped up to the challenge of youth leading. Thomas Risson and Bradley Robinson committed to VETA (Veta Morphus), a program guiding Year 11 & 12 students through a Certificate III in Christian Ministry & Theology. Both completed their certificates in December, and it was encouraging to see their hearts and minds grow in love for God throughout the year. RIVERyouth wouldn't be possible without the preparation and leadership of our RY team. Along with Thomas and Brad, we welcomed two new leaders: Josh Lourensz (Term 1) and Brendan Schmidt (Term 3). Thank you to our 2025 leaders and helpers for their consistent commitment, energy and fun: Cindy Wright, Bree Russell, Ryan Pfitzner, Josh Lourensz, Brendan Schmidt, Thomas Risson, Bradley Robinson and Adam Fax.



Throughout the year we shared in many activity nights, building memories and celebrating life together. Every second week we met in 'Flow Groups' - smaller groups for Bible study, discussion and prayer. Our four discipleship pillars shaped the year: Worship (Term 1), Character (Term 2), Community (Term 3) and Influence (Term 4), encouraging teens to find their identity in Christ. Youth also continued serving across the church in Worship, RIVERkids, the tech team, café and welcoming. In Terms 3 and 4, Bree and Josh ran an early Friday night Bible study called Deeper, with eight youth regularly attending. Thank you to Simon and Andrea Risson for cooking and serving dinner on those nights.

Among the highlights of the year was State Youth Games. Our team grew to 52 participants across Horsham, Ararat and Stawell. This made the way for a stronger connection between RIVERyouth and YAH (Young Adults Horsham) which continued through shared lunches and Friday nights. Another highlight was seeing 20 people committed to Safe Water September. Due to huge support from our church family we saw an incredible \$11,487.32 raised to provide clean drinking water overseas. A final highlight to share is the celebration of unity across town as we joined with Empire Youth from Harvest Church for events such as Youth Alive (Undivided and Main Event), and the end of year pool party.

It has been a strong year of discipleship and leadership with lives transformed in the name of Jesus. I invite you to join with us by praying into the image given in Psalm 1: That youth may be like a tree planted by streams of water, which yield its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither - whatever they do prospers.

# YAH (Young Adults Horsham)

*Zara Humphreys & Steph Barber*

**2025 has been a fantastic year of spiritual growth and deepening of relationships across our young adults community. Continuing on with our vision of seeing our Horsham Young Adults encouraged in their faith, equipped in their leadership and sent out to make disciples who make disciples.**

The year started off with the launch of our new Bible Study structure which follows a study tool called SOAP; Scripture, Observation, Application and Prayer. Through this model the young adults have been studying the book of Luke and breaking down the passages to see what God is saying to us, getting to know His character further and how we can apply the teachings of Jesus to our lives. The study also includes splitting off into pairs after reading the Scripture to delve deeper into the passage, discuss questions and unpack what stood out. We then come back together to share our learnings and reflections with the wider group. It has been so great to see our young adults actively engaging, sharing their thoughts and hearing how God is speaking to each of them through His Word.

Study was paused across May through to July whilst the YAH team joined in on the Alpha course with the wider church. We had 2 tables of young adult participants, some new and exploring faith and others deepening their existing faith. Alpha provided challenging questions to encourage us to be able to articulate our faith and be able to have faith based discussions with those who don't know Jesus. Our young adults have since reflected on how valuable participating in Alpha was for them and we have witnessed them growing in their faith and deepening their relationships with one another through this.

Mid way through Alpha eight of our young adults joined in with Western United for State Youth Games! This was an action packed weekend full of competitive sport, relationship building and praise and worship. It was so fun coming alongside and supporting the youth, bouncing off their energy and getting to know other young adults and youth from Ararat. Aside from a concussion and a broken finger we came away with great memories and are excited to return again with Western United in 2026!



In September we held a YAH Adventure Day. We were blessed with the offer from Rebecca Baker to host us at the Roses Gap campground. The young adults challenged their tolerance of heights on the giant swing, shared a BBQ lunch, played board games and hiked to Beehive Falls. This was a lovely day of fellowship spent with young adults from different churches and from across our wider community.

Over 2025 we (Steph and Zara) had the opportunity to participate in the Accelerate Leadership Program run by Churches of Christ Victoria & Tasmania. This was extremely impactful and has helped equip us further both personally and in our leadership roles. We are so excited that two more of our young adults, Bree Russell and Brendan Schmidt, are participating in this program across 2026.

Aside from the bigger events already mentioned, young adults participated in many other opportunities to connect with each other and the wider church community through regular lunches after church, board game afternoons and serving across various areas of the church and community.

We'd like to thank the wider church community for their ongoing support and encouragement. We are very much looking forward to what the Lord will continue to do in 2026. We invite you to join us in praying with expectant hearts for more young adults in our community to come to know Jesus as their personal Lord and Saviour, and for those that already know Him to continue to grow deeper in their faith and be empowered and equipped to be disciples who make disciples.

Zara Humphreys and Steph Barber.



## Upper Class

Faye Smith

Upper Class continues to prove a great tool for social interaction for those aged 55 and over, within our church.

Over the year it ran numerous, interesting programs that attracted people to hear a range of different topics including:

- Ann Rohde from Samaritan's Purse
- Edwin Bartlett on the work of the Gideons
- Hugh Delahunty on his years as a state politician
- Kerrie Flett on her work at Grains Innovation Precinct
- Glenn Kimberley on the Wimmera's homeless.

An outing to Horsham CFA also proved to be a most interesting excursion!

Upper Class also enjoyed an afternoon session by Tom Cray who showed some of his excellent bird photos - mostly taken near Horsham's waterways.

In September we had great attendance at a breakfast meeting with guest speaker Kerrie Godbold on the ways we can better survive increasing temperatures and the 2025 year concluded with a shared Christmas lunch with the Silver Strings ukulele group as our guest, once again.

Throughout the year donations went to our guest speakers, Compassion Australia for overseas programs and a contribution to the Safe Water September program which amounted to \$1000. This is a great effort considering the money came from gold coin donations at meetings and a Christmas Tree appeal.

Thanks again to our very dedicated helpers; Lorraine Pilgrim, Sheryl Bartlett and Carol Schneider. With their help we were again able to serve an afternoon tea of homemade cakes and more after each meeting. We are also saddened to lose Lorace Crocker and Joan Green who have moved into care, and Bruce Johansen, Ivan and Judy Sherriff who are no longer able to attend.

We look forward to what 2026 brings to Upper Class, including Generations Pastor, Tanika Thorne taking oversight for the group.



## Crafty Friends

Carol Schneider, Jenny Walker, Jan Janetzki, Julie Harmer & Di Krella

***"Encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing."***

***1 Thessalonians 5:11***

This scripture has become Crafty Friends committee's theme scripture because it is what we aim to do; encourage, love, share, pray, laugh, cry and support each other. The women are encouraged and supported as they encourage and support. The more we give, the more we receive! We serve a great God and his blessings abound.

We have enjoyed learning some new crafts like jewellery making, embroidered wall hangings, embroidered sewing baskets, boomerang bags, Christmas decorations; as well as lots of knitting/crochet for charity and our usual crafts: cards, scrapbooking, UFO's, quiet books and quilts.

Our Thought of the Day spot continues to bring encouragement, deep thought and usually laughter! Some ladies have started sharing a bit about themselves which is nice to get to know each other on a deeper level. Most of us know each other superficially, but to learn a bit about our lives brings transparency and gives us another level of interaction, connection, trust and intimacy.

We continue to support many projects through the year: Wycliffe, Chaplaincy, Samaritans Purse shoe boxes, Horsham Church of Christ, Safe Water September, the Christian Emergency Food Centre, Operation 19:14, Compassion and Natimuk show sponsorship.

For our final week, we enjoyed entertainment from Jack Janetzki and Chris Leskie, Shelley Baker and Tanika Thorne as well as a wonderful morning tea.

A big thank you to those who lead crafts and for all their effort in preparation, and to those who set up and pack up each week as this is a huge job and we are ever so grateful to John and Birgit Brown, Gary Harmer, Jack Janetzki, Mick Schneider and Lachie Walker.

We are also amazed and thankful to Jesus for His love, leading, provision, and gifts of the Holy Spirit which enables us to minister to the ladies. All praise and glory to Jesus!



# Reflection on Life Group

*Samantha Apostolopoulos*

**Through Life Group, you don't just witness the greatness of God. You see real growth, learning, surrender, and healing. You see peace and trust in Jesus being built — not only individually, but together as a family of faith.**

In 2025, Con and I opened our home to take over hosting a Life Group, which had previously been held at Simon and Andrea's home.

When we first came to faith, being part of a Life Group was an incredible experience. We learnt so much and built strong, lasting friendships. Taking on the role of hosting was something we felt led to do so we could continue with the same group while also welcoming in new people.

This step required us to move outside of our comfort zones, as we were — and still are — quite new to faith. However, with Jesus, a supportive group of people, and our church family, the transition was made much easier.

With a child and the need for routine, we decided to hold Life Group earlier in the evening, from 6:00–7:30pm, fortnightly. This timing worked well for the group.

During the year, two members were unable to continue attending, but we are blessed to say they will be returning in 2026, and we couldn't be happier to welcome them back. We were also blessed to welcome two new members into our group, both of whom were new to faith. It was such a privilege to see them open their hearts to being part of a Life Group. At our largest, we had eight members in total.

Our group began by settling into a regular rhythm — getting to know one another, sharing praise points and prayer requests, and diving deeper into the scripture that had been preached on the Sunday before.

Our Life Group was later paused due to the Alpha Course being run at church. During this time, two members chose to step back from Life Group for the remainder of the year. We are so grateful to share that Jesus has led them back to our group for 2026. After Alpha was completed, we reconnected with a casual catch-up and then resumed Life Group. Even though our group had reduced to six members, we trusted in God's plan and continued to pray for those who were unable to attend.

During this season, we were also blessed to welcome Damian Tanner into our home to share about their ministry and their obedience to God's call to move overseas to set up their ministries. Throughout the remainder of the year our time together allowed us to bond over the trials and challenges we had all faced, how the Lord had carried us through those times, and the blessings He continued to pour out, even in the middle of our storms.

Our Life Group was made up of people at very different stages of their faith journeys, which made our time in the Word especially meaningful — particularly as we studied the book of John. Some members had grown up in Christian homes, while others had come to faith later in life. These differences brought a beautiful mix of wisdom, faith, prayer, and testimony into our group. God knew exactly what He was doing in forming our small Life Group of six.

Con and I have been part of this group since late 2023, and being able to walk alongside others through an entire season of life — and then witness the Lord's faithfulness and blessing — has truly been humbling and powerful.

As we step into 2026, we currently have 10 members. How good is our God!! Thank you, Jesus!

Blessings to everyone.

Con and Sammi.

# Reflection on Worship

*Ryan Clarke*

My name is Ryan Clarke, and I currently serve on the worship team. I had always been interested in joining since a young age and last year I was given the opportunity.

Whilst serving on the team, I have seen the Spirit at work within the congregation. I have witnessed people full of joy for the Lord but also people experiencing the lows in life. It is an honour to be a part of leading worship at Sunday morning service.

Becoming a part of this team has allowed me to put my musical knowledge and experience into serving the Lord and worshipping him. I had already been playing the bass guitar for a few years before I began serving on the team and it has been very rewarding to be able to put that skill into praising our Father instead of just playing for social occasions.

I am truly thankful and honoured for the opportunity to play on a Sunday and to work with the amazing team that our Church has. I look forward to many years ahead in serving on the worship team.

Ryan.



# One Heart

*Genni Smith & Jennifer Arthur*

One Heart Ministry continues to be a fun and welcoming friendship group supporting migrants from the Horsham area. We meet on the first and third Mondays of each month during school terms, led by Jennifer Arthur and Genni Smith.

This year has been a busy one. We have enjoyed another year with the support of Shirley Brown, Leanne Panozzo, Carol Schnieder, and Wenda Netherway. Our support team continues to faithfully serve and create a warm, inclusive space for all who attend.

Throughout 2025, we have shared many joyful and meaningful evenings together. Our gatherings have included:

- Celebrating engagements and birthdays
- Recognising Harmony Week
- Honouring Mother's Day
- Sharing meals from different cultures
- Craft nights and creative activities
- Lots of laughter, conversation, and friendship

Our fortnightly meetings provide a regular welcoming space for cuppas, English conversation, encouragement, and faith-filled connection. The sharing of food and stories continues to be a beautiful expression of unity within our group. We are more than a social group — we are a group where people practise English, build lasting friendships, and experience the love of Christ in practical ways.

As we reflect on this past year, we are thankful for:

- New friendships formed
- Cultural diversity embraced
- Women feeling welcomed and valued
- Regular attendance by some men
- Spiritual growth within the group.

***Our prayer for 2026 is to continue growing as a united and loving community. We hope to see more of our friends come to know Christ personally and to witness continued spiritual growth, courage, and belonging among the people God brings to One Heart.***

## *One Heart Bible Study*

In 2025, we stepped out in faith to introduce the One Heart Bible Study on alternating Monday nights. This study group is led by Genni Smith, Shirley Brown and Susie Penny. It has provided an opportunity for women who are seeking to deepen their understanding of the Bible in a gentle and supportive environment. It has been encouraging to see women learning, asking questions, growing in confidence, and strengthening their faith.



## Mealbox

*Kerrie Flett*

Mealbox has been operating for over 5 years now, continuing to serve our local community. For those who are not familiar with Mealbox, we are teams of volunteers who get together once a month to make a meal, which is collected by the Christian Emergency Food Centre (CEFC) for distribution to those in need. We currently consist of three teams of 4-6 people and the meal made is always a version of Savoury Mince (beef mince, vegetables and pasta), donated by the CEFC. We are grateful for the wonderful facilities here at the church to be able to run no-fuss cook ups on the second Saturday of the month, and have enough fridge and freezer space to store the meals before collection.

Mealbox volunteers come from our church, the CEFC and friends of those people. Some with faith, some without. Cooking the meals not only provides for our community, but also brings people together with a sense of purpose, generosity and friendship. Below is a reflection from Sandra, one of our team leaders.

***“What a fun time we have on the second Saturday of the month at the cook-ups. Lots of catching up on each other’s news and concerns, sharing recipes, ideas for holidays, you name it, no topic is off limits.***

***The biggest concern, apart from peeling onions, is the condition of the pots after we have finished cooking. Joan Gordon prides herself on never burning the bottom.***

***What makes the morning extra special is that we are cooking for a worthwhile cause. We know that each meal will be such a help to others. Feedback (from CEFC clients) tells us that the meals are very well received both for taste and need.”***

So you can see, God is in so many aspects of this ministry. From the CEFC clients, to the people cooking the meals, the prayers over the meals, and the relationships. We give thanks to be able to serve in this ministry and have faith that we are just a small part of God's plans for the Wimmera.



## Garden & Grounds

*Gary Harmer, Graham & Maree Goods*

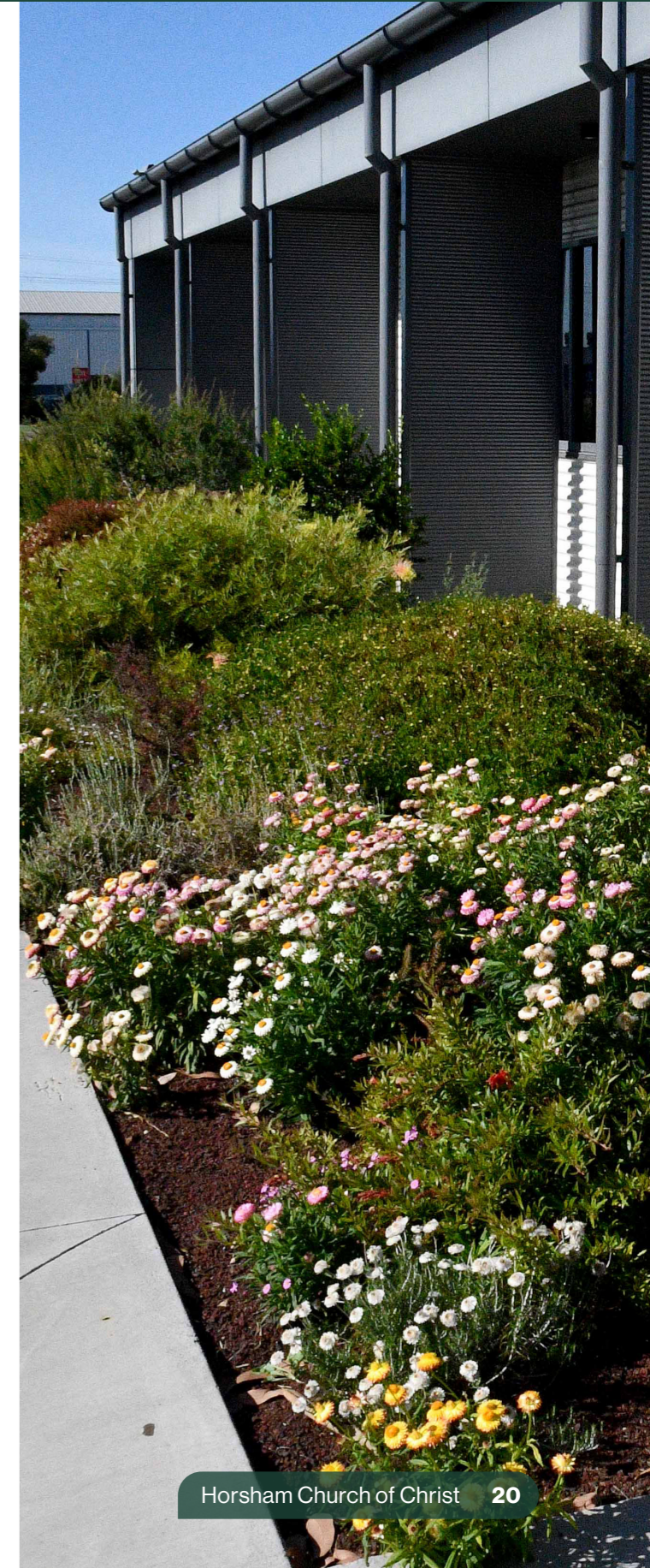
Our team consists of Gary Harmer, Ian Ruwoldt, Lester Judd, Graham and Maree Goods with others chipping in to help at various times. The joy of working on this team is that each person takes responsibility for their own “patch”.

Most of the input is now general maintenance with mowing, weeding, pruning, spraying, replacing any dead plants and attending to any other jobs that arise.

We are delighted to see that flowers from the Church garden are being used regularly for table centres and other places throughout the Church building. Two years ago, a large group of RIVERkids planted out part of the garden to replace some plants that hadn't been doing very well. These plants have grown so well and now blend in with the rest of the garden.

We are indebted to one Church family, Laurie and Barb Davis, who have donated a John Deer Ride-on-mower. Their kindness has been very much appreciated.

We know that the garden and grounds bring great joy not only to ourselves but to many parishioners and visitors. However, we must always keep in mind that our small input is being done for the glory of God who created all that is around us and without him none of this would be possible. It is a privilege to contribute to the stewardship of the Church garden and grounds which brings glory to God.



## Operations

*Lachie Walker*

Heading into 2025 was both known and mystery in different ways. Jarrod was starting the year as Senior Pastor, Narelle was stepping back from event coordination to support him after two years in the role and did much to refine the role and set it up for the future. Sarah Korf also left us mid-year after two and a half years valuable service in Administration. We took time to refine how the roles might look and restructure positions to best serve the ministry team and the needs of the church. A big thank you to Angela Morrell for working extra hours to complete the admin tasks around the office.

Events were plentiful, kept me on my toes and generated around \$24,000 income for the church. This is most helpful as it covers some of the running costs of the church such as building compliance, cleaning and minor repairs. I am very grateful for everyone who came along and helped out in the kitchen, served food or moved furniture. A couple of highlights being the 80 Years of Service Afternoon Tea of the College Chaplaincy, The Wimmera Eisteddfod and the DEECA Seed Science Conference. We also hosted services and served 17 families grieving the loss of a loved one.

Financially we were looking good in 2025 with reduced payroll and budgeting a more conservative rise in offering compared to the previous year. And that's the way it turned out with a delay in hiring as we worked out role structures and job descriptions until the second half of the year. We did see an increase in offering but not to the budgeted level but a combination of event and funeral hire made up some of that difference so that over all income deficit was just less than \$3,000.

With less ministry staff, that meant less expenses in the budget so we had budgeted surplus of \$49,939. We ended up with an actual surplus of \$67,170 with expenses being under budget by close to \$20,000 also saving on the events co-ordinator role. This means the FMG (Finance Management Group) was able to move \$60,000 into our longer term savings account called Genesis41, securing it for future ministry of our church and maintenance of our buildings.

Property maintenance is becoming a larger portion of expenses every year as the building ages. Apart from cleaning and emergency systems servicing, we had added some gravel to the carpark, replaced a broken solar inverter and spent money fixing a roof leak at the highest peak of the building requiring specialist labour. Catering was over budget with extra expense spread evenly around Sunday fellowship, communion supplies and funeral catering. Insurance has steadied, SMS costs were \$600 down, printing costs were \$3,000 down and photocopying costs were up \$500. Guest speaker costs were down \$2,000 and Software/Website costs were up \$4,000 as we paid for a new website and transitioned Church Management systems from Fluro to Planning Centre Online (PCO).

Mission giving was healthy yet again. With five main mission partners we aim for \$50,000. Some got a lot more like the Tanners and Morrells as we are one of their major sending churches but giving was up around the board so the overall was up from \$64,644 in 2024 to \$77,194 in 2025.

The big story of faith giving and trust was giving to the Ministry Centre loan repayments. The church was so blessed to receive \$540,878 throughout the year. A number of families were able to give extra, responding to the needs presented last year and I thank each and every family that gave throughout the year to see this amazing amount given. With a reduction in interest rates at the end of the year and effective amount owing on the building being \$1,488,356 (Loan \$1,955,737 less offset \$467,381), 2026 is looking very positive although there are still many years to go.

The church leadership thanks everyone who gives generously to the work of the church, to the building loan and to the work of our mission partners who faithfully serve the church in diverse cultures.

Finally, I would like to end by thanking everyone who has contributed the upkeep of the grounds and building. Without you, the property would not look nearly as good as it does and serve our community in a loving way.

Blessings Church,

Lachie  
Operations Manager



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