

Uniting Church in Australia Wagga Wagga Pilgrim Congregation



Annual Report, 2024



Congregation Chairperson's Report

It's been a significant year for us. Our second year as an independent congregation. At the beginning of the year we embarked on a journey looking at our mission statement. This developed over the year with the assistance of Rev Ann Perran. I want to thank everyone who was involved in developing our mission statement and plan.

We now have a clear statement and foundation that allows us to identify who we are and where we may be going in the future. It is a living document as we are a living congregation. I hope it helps guide us as we seek to explore what it means to be a community of Christians seeking to listen to where God's Spirit might be leading us.

Strategic Mission Plan

Our Vision

Building a community of care

We Value

All generations

All Cultures

Justice

Integrity

Authenticity

Creativity



Mission Directions

Provide a safe and welcoming place for all people

Grow all generations in the Christian Faith together

Share God's love with the wider community

Support newcomers to our community

Support those on the margins of our society

Mission Plan

1. Engage with the Pulse Team from Uniting Mission and Education and complete the 'Growing Young' program.
2. Develop strategies to engage with the wider community.
3. Learn new ways to respond and support the needs of people from multicultural backgrounds. Seek the assistance of the Uniting Mission and Education Intercultural Team to develop ways for Pilgrim to offer hospitality and support people from multicultural backgrounds.

Glenn Elliott-Rudder

WAGGA PILGRIM CHURCH COUNCIL

Chairperson's Annual Report 2024

Thank you to the Congregation members and church Council for supporting me as Chair over the past year. I have just been a figure head while others have done the work.

We have met usually twice a month during the year. Last Saturday of the month we have had discussion meetings where we have shared ideas and sounded each other out about our approach to different matters, meeting time from 9:00am until midday. The second Wednesday of each month we have had our administration meeting where we have made decisions, meeting time from 7:00 to 9:00 or 9:30pm.

Ruth Kerr has stepped in as assistant secretary when Marilyn has been away and we have appreciated her help.

Colin has stepped up as acting Chair when I have been away and also discussed other matters with me which as chair I have not picked up on. I have found this very helpful and appreciate his raising these matters. Apart from assisting the Old Chair Colin has been busy with the mission side of our congregation which is a continuing work in progress and is not as obvious as the other tasks. The year ahead will show some of that behind the scenes work.

Marilyn has done a tremendous job as Secretary as well as lay preaching and hospital visiting. We thank Ron for his support as we know he has helped in many quiet ways.

George our famous treasurer who not only looks after our finances but also does the financial work for what used to be Presbytery as well as some assistance with Synod finances. When he has nothing to do he manages our property matters, trains new Office Staff for Presbytery office which now resides in The Pilgrim office space, drives lawn mowers and chain saws and dreams up new ideas. We trust that one day Kaye will get her husband back.

Phil has worked hard as assistant Treasurer, IT expert, visitor of many, and emailing news each week.

Jan has managed morning tea matters as well as garden maintenance.

Congregation members have all helped out when help has been needed and you have all supported your Council by actions which have been a great encouragement to all.

I and other members feel that God has something in store for this congregation and we look forward with anticipation to the future. It is easy to look at the present and wonder what we are doing. Please continue in prayer and look with hope to the future and be prepared to be surprised.

May God's Blessing be upon you all.

Rob Fraser.

Treasurer's Report

Included in this report are the Wagga Pilgrim Congregation Balance Sheet as at 31st Dec 2024 and the Income and Expenditure statement for the first six months of the Financial Year 1st Jul 2024 to 31st Dec 2024.

All compliance matters have been met on or before schedule. The Business Activity Statement for 30th Dec 2024 is yet to be submitted but will be completed not later than 31st Jan 2025.

The Balance sheet shows that the financial resources of the Congregation are quite healthy. The outstanding Accounts Receivable amount is outstanding from Uniting Riverina and we anticipate payment in a reasonable period. All liabilities are current and paid within the agreed terms. The congregation is extremely solvent.

Income & Expenditure shows income and outgo for the first six months of the current financial year. These figures are compared with the budget for 2024-25. Income to date is a little better than half the annual budget which can be considered quite satisfactory.

Expenditure is well below half of budget at 29%. This is in most part due to budget not yet spent. Expenditure on building maintenance has commenced but major projects including painting and IT upgrade have been delayed.

In conjunction with the Growing Young programme and the Mission Planning process which we are currently completing, a task group is commencing preparation of an Expression of Interest (EOI) seeking a Strategic Growth Grant to underwrite part of the cost of staffing the implementation of the mission plan.

Thank you to all of you for your contribution to the financial life of Wagga Pilgrim,

George Thomas

Treasurer.



UCA WAGGA PILGRIM CONGREGATION

BALANCE SHEET		31-Dec-24
10000	Assets	
12999	Cash and Short Term Investments - Total	547,927
13299	Account Receivable & Other - Total	5,116
14499	CURRENT ASSETS - Total	553,023
14500	NON CURRENT ASSETS	
14799	Fixed Assets & Accumulated Depreciation - Total	4,066,693
18999	NON CURRENT ASSETS - Total	4,066,693
19999	ASSETS - Total	4,619,716
20000	Liabilities	
20500	CURRENT LIABILITIES	
21199	Accounts Payable - Total	-3,124
21358	Other Payables - Total	-1,396
24499	CURRENT LIABILITIES - Total	-4,520
28999	NON CURRENT LIABILITIES - Total	0
29998	LIABILITIES - Total	-4,520
29999	NET ASSETS	4,615,196

UCA WAGGA PILGRIM CONGREGATION
INCOME & EXPENDITURE

	\$ Actual	Year to 31DEC24	Budget Full Year	Variance %
40000	INCOME			
41399	Funds - Offerings & Donations - Total	29,674	47,690	62.22%
42999	Fees & Charges - Total		600	0.00%
44199	Interest Income - Total	7,980	18,850	42.33%
46999	Property Income - Total	43,505	87,503	49.72%
49999	INCOME - Total	81,159	154,643	52.48%
60000	OPERATING EXPENSES			
61399	Employment Costs - Ministers Stipends - Total	12,501	0	Zero Budget
61499	Employment Costs - Other Staff Costs - Total	200	19,031	1.05%
62399	Property Costs - Property Operating Costs - Total	13,518	28,127	48.06%
62599	Property Costs - Repairs & Maintenance - Total	8,526	28,470	29.95%
64499	IT Costs - Total	1,104	8,736	12.64%
64999	Marketing Costs - Total	396	40,700	0.97%
65999	Travel & Accommodation - Total	585	1,000	58.48%
66499	Motor Vehicle Expenses - Total	136	1,700	8.00%
67499	Insurance Expenses - Total		3,900	0.00%
68499	Other Expenses - Total		500	0.00%
70499	Church/Mission Expenses - Total	1,336	19,642	6.80%
70599	Levies and Charges - Total	9,500	9,500	100.00%
89998	OPERATING EXPENSES - Total	47,802	161,306	29.63%
89999	NET SURPLUS/DEFICIT Before Non-Operating Items	33,357	-6,663	-500.64%
90299	Fixed Assets Depreciation - Total		1,000	0.00%
99999	NET SURPLUS/DEFICIT	33,357	-7,663	-435.31%

Worship, Discipleship and Pastoral Care Report

Glenn Elliott-Rudder. Marilyn Walter and Rob Fraser

Worship Team Report (Glenn)

The small team continued to lead worship this year relying on some excellent worship resources from a number of sources; Sanctified Art, Saltbush and Liturgy, Learning and Life (Media Com). These resources helped guide us with providing creative, meaningful and reflective worship.

We've also started streaming services – from Terrigal UCA and Newtown Mission.

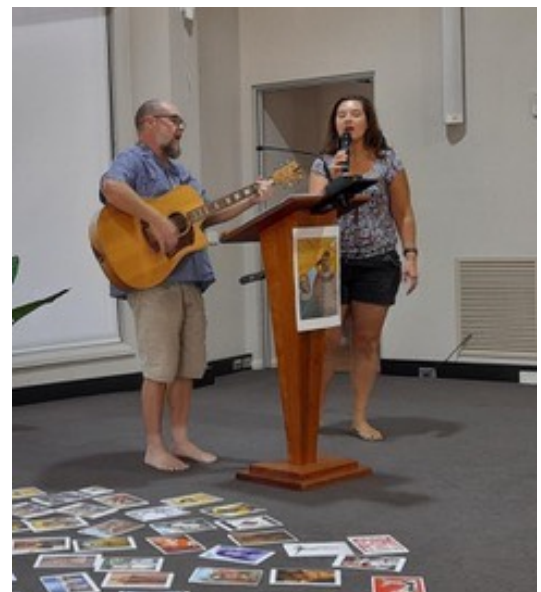


We were fortunate to have Rev Kyle Provan join us for three months during the year and he brought a bit of “magic” to the services he led. It also gave the team a rest from leading worship.

We want to thank everyone who has been involved with me in leading and supporting worship at Pilgrim: Rob Fraser, Gwen Webb, Holly and Darren Wright with Theodore and Isabelle, Rev Andrew Morris, Marilyn Walter, Jan Batt and Lyn Nash (music), and Phil Kerr and Collin James (IT). Amongst visiting worship

leaders were Dorothy Creek (Frontier Services), David Toogood (Growing Young) and Rev Ann Perrin (Mission Growth).

It is indeed a team effort.



Sacraments and special services (Marilyn)

I presided over Holy Communion during 7 Pilgrim services, attended by members of the 10am and 1pm Mizo communities, while Kyle presided during his three month supply. I had the joy of baptising Imogen Kendall, Savannah Salim, Claire and Leo Coburn into membership of the universal church.

I also conducted funerals for Rev Dr Roger Webb and Muriel Menz at Pilgrim, and one each at Wesley and a funeral home.

Pastoral Visits (Marilyn)

Both Rob and I have been called out for bedside visits in palliative care situations, usually by the facility at the request of the resident's family. Conversation, prayer and blessings provide much needed comfort at these times.

Phil has also provided sensitive pastoral care through his regular visits to The Haven.

Hospital Visiting

John Wilson and Ellen Vidler (Wesley) and I (Pilgrim) take a team approach to hospital visiting, with each person going on a different day. Marilyn visits Wagga Base and Riverina Calvary Hospitals on Tuesday afternoons. A brief statistic of her visits shows its impact - in 33 weeks once a week, pastoral greetings and conversation were offered on behalf of UCA in Wagga to 175 patients at the Base and 87 patients at Calvary. It is a valued ministry, not only for Pilgrim members, but also UCA members and their families from all over the Riverina and beyond.

Marilyn Walter

Hospitality Report

The morning tea roster is still working very well mainly because although certain people are rostered for each Sunday we are always ready to give each other a hand, particularly with the dishwasher.

The people on the roster at the moment are Carole and Rob, Fay, Jan and Ken, Jenny, Kay, Lyn and Ruth. When a person finds themselves unable to come on their rostered day they just swap with someone else. This system has not failed us yet. There is always a space for you if you would like to join us.

As the hospitality group we are also responsible for providing food for the occasional meeting or function at Pilgrim. There will be an occasion on 1 March when we will need to provide Morning Tea for a Presbytery meeting and help set out the catered food which will be served at lunch. On occasions like this we sometimes ask the congregation if they could help us out with a cake, slice, sandwiches etc.

If you are on the roster for a Sunday, you are not expected to cook a lot of food. We keep a well stocked pantry of basic biscuits and although something brought from home is well received we don't want anybody to feel pressured.

Jan Batt



Resources & Communication Report

The Resources & Communication team continues to be engaged in the operation of the physical assets of the Congregation and to seek to maximise the effectiveness of the communication within and beyond the Congregation.



The arrangements with Uniting Riverina continue to our mutual benefit and their financial contribution which commenced this financial year is reflected in the increased property income.

Some preliminary investigations into utilising the vacant area on our site have been taken. A plan to address the need for more storage for both Wagga Pilgrim and Uniting Riverina and also possible ways to generate additional income are key goals.

The residence, at 42 Pinaroo Dr Glenfield Park, is leased commercially and a renewal of lease to February 2026 has been agreed to by Church Council.

Our building is now 10 years old, and maintenance is needed. Floors have been treated to improve appearance and aid effective cleaning. Budget provides for some interior painting, but this is yet to be scheduled. Repair of lights and equipment present some challenges as parts and replacements are often unavailable.

Working Bees play a vital role in maintaining our grounds. Careful adjustment to trees and groundcover all aim to reduce the maintenance burden while maintaining an attractive appearance.

Technology, including hardware, internet systems and social media presence are matters that are identified as needing enhancement and will be the focus of action in coming months.

Safe Church audit by Synod attracted a very positive audit comment reflecting our efforts to present a safe environment for all. We have yet to establish a formal Volunteer Policy and Process, and we hope to embed this during calendar year 2025.

The Resources and Communication portfolio is a vital but broad element in the functioning of the Wagga Pilgrim Congregation, so we welcome questions, suggestions and proposals from all.

George Thomas.



Mission and Outreach Report

Pilgrim people faithfully champion many different activities. Several groups such as Boomerang Bags, Pilgrim Craft Group, and Koinonia Fellowship operate under the Mission and Outreach umbrella (some contribute individual reports). Lots of other things happen that go almost unnoticed, such as pastoral visits, morning teas served, sausages cooked, lawns mown and broken things mended – plus lots more. It is great to see the Pilgrim family supporting one another. Thanks everyone for all you do!

Events held included: our Day of Mourning service, State of Origin nights, a great Bonfire at Fay Martin's place, Board Game nights, among others.

Kids Camp Out

A group of 11 children and 4 adult leaders attended Kids Camp Out (KCO) in Wedderburn, near Sydney in April 2023. Uniting again graciously lent their minibus to travel, and Wagga Pilgrim assisted with financial support. Three leaders were from Pilgrim's 10am worshipping community, and 1 leader from the Mizo community. Children were enthusiastic! Leaders were tired! 😊

Worship services at Riverina Gums and SignatureCare

Rob and Carole Fraser have regularly led worship services throughout 2024 with music and singing and/or Bible study, while on alternate months Marilyn Walter has presided over Holy Communion in her services. The preaching roster is arranged so that each facility receives a UCA service once a month, all being well (excepting Dec/Jan, Covid lockdowns etc). Attendance ranges between 2 and 8, and services are very much appreciated.

Welcome Packs Pinaroo Village (built by Open Doors Foundation)

After the visit to Kippax UC (Canberra) Ron Walter proposed that a gift be prepared to welcome the residents in the newly opened Pinaroo Village to our neighbourhood. Using Boomerang Bags and Church Council funded contents, such as soap, toothbrushes, biscuits, teabags and so on. At a worship service, the congregation filled these bags for delivery to the Village office. The office manager reported that the residents were highly delighted with the gift and its thoughtfulness. More residents will be moving in once the second stage is completed in 2025 and the Welcome Pack project will be continued.



Growing Young

Pilgrim began the Growing Young program in late 2024 with the help of Rev Ann Perrin. While Pilgrim already tries to include youth, children and families, this program seeks to adjust our mindsets to further be a church where youth, children and families are welcomed and love to come. The program will continue into 2025.

Strategic Mission Plan

During 2024 Pilgrim has sought to discern our strategic mission plan. Rev Ann Perrin, on behalf of Synod, has assisted us. While we are still on this journey, our plan for the next 12-18 months is included below. During 2025 we will build on this foundation. Please continue to pray and discern what God's plan is for outreach into our community. Work has begun to express interest in the Synod Growth Fund for additional funds to support our mission in the future.

Wider Church Connections

Pilgrim people also contributed to the wider work of the church. George Thomas (Pilgrim and Presbytery Treasurer) and Cindy James attended Presbytery Summits on behalf of the Riverina Regional Partnership (previously Riverina Presbytery). Discussions at these meetings sought to find ways for NSW/ACT Presbyteries to be sustainable. Topics included the redevelopment of Presbytery boundaries and equitable resourcing and oversight for all Presbyteries. Recommendations to form new, larger, and better resourced Presbyteries will go forward to the July 2025 Synod meeting.

Cindy James was accredited as a Safe Church Trainer and ran three Safe Church workshops across the Riverina. Safe Church training and materials are being redeveloped by the Culture of Safety Unit at Synod for 2025.

George Thomas continued to serve on the Riverina Regional Partnership (in lieu of a formal Riverina Presbytery), and both George and Cindy James continued as members of the Regional Partnership Working Group.

Collin James

Bula Build

Although not directly a mission idea of the church, the church community supported us both in our trip to Fiji to build houses for vulnerable people with Habitat for Humanity. Pilgrim people gladly purchased home-made jams to help with fundraising for the build, and upon our return to Australia, people attended a 'show and tell' night held at Pilgrim.

Collin and Cindy James

Kippax visit

Fact-finding Visit to Kippax 28-29 July 2024

As part of our mission discernment process, Rev Kyle Provan, Phil, Ron and I spent 2 days at the Kippax Uniting Church and UnitingCare Kippax, Canberra. We attended worship, and discussed their mission plans and practice with church council, congregational members and Revs Karyl Davison and Aimee Kent. We drew these insights from our visit:

- Build our relationships with our neighbours and our neighbourhood.
- Start with small projects – maybe of 6 weeks, and being consistent by continuing for the set time period. If only 2 people turn up the first week, make it a celebration and continue for the 6 weeks.
- Recognise that our ministry is through our mission. While community members may come and get involved in our activities eg Boomerang Bags, we must accept that they don't need to come to services.

These insights have been integrated into the Mission Plan currently being devised.

Marilyn Walter.



Boomerang Bags

Boomerang Bags started in Australia in 2013 and has now spread globally. To quote from their website <https://boomerangbags.org/> 'Boomerang Bags is about connecting communities, making bags, diverting waste, starting conversations, fostering sustainable behaviour, and having a bit of fun!'. Our group in Wagga started in 2017 and is endeavouring to deliver these outcomes.

During 2024, we have met nine times with attendances of between 3 and 6. Some ladies have faithfully registered their apologies when unable to attend. Generally, the participants come from Wagga's UCA congregations but there are others who join in because they are interested in the environmental aspects of the work or come along for social contact. Some members have contributed by undertaking work at home in between meetings.

During the year, bags have been distributed through the Koorinal Post Office, FoodWorks Lake Albert, The Red Pomegranate Organic Food Shop and the Riding for the Disabled Op. Shop. Approximately forty bags were provided to Foodbank for use at their Autumn pop-up site held at the Riverside Precinct to assist with the distribution of food to those in Wagga dealing with food insecurity. A small number of bags also went to a local school for use as library bags. Invariably, the provision of each distribution of bags is greeted with enthusiasm.

A Wagga Pilgrim initiative utilised twenty-five of our bags which were filled with treats and practical items and passed on to Pinaroo Village, the affordable seniors housing and specialist disability accommodation recently built next door to Wagga Pilgrim. These 'welcome to our neighbourhood' packs were made available to interested residents. Church Council has determined that this missional act will continue, and Boomerang Bags will support this.

A surprise donation of patchwork panels saw one of our members edge and quilt these into lovely lap rugs which will be donated to an aged care facility. These beautiful rugs were used to set the theme for the services through Advent.

The group has a more than adequate supply of donated fabric and threads. We are keen to have more people to assist with the creation of reusable shopping bags, as there are a range of tasks anyone can help with. This will reduce the use of environmentally damaging plastics and the amount of unwanted fabric going into landfill. Come along for a chat and to see if you would like to be involved!

Kay Thomas

Boomerang Bags Coordinator.



Men's KYB

The men's KYB (Know Your Bible) group had an informal component of general catching up from 7:30 to 8:00pm. The formal study was finished at around 8:50, the last 10 minutes of our meeting we reserved for prayer points, making sure that we were finished by 9:00pm.

During the last 12 months our fortnightly attendance went from 5 to 3.

We found it difficult to meet on a regular basis.

Despite having good materials to use, we found that quite often we would get bogged down (but that was OK with us).

For the last few months we decided not to meet, with a plan to re-evaluate what might happen for 2025.

Therefore, for the time being, we will not be meeting. We are having some discussion in church council as to what might be a possible change with a view to involve more men in a friendship building type of meeting. We are praying about what God might be wanting for the men of Pilgrim.

Phil Kerr

Pilgrim Prayer Group

A small group continues to meet each week for prayer for our church and community. Earlier in the year, three members met in private homes, but in May it was decided to base the group at Pilgrim and change the meeting time to Friday afternoon. This enabled more people to attend and usually about six participate. We also continue through school holidays when possible, apart from a break over Christmas/New Year.

We share needs, concerns and items for thanksgiving and offer our prayers to the Lord.

Everyone is welcome to come or to contribute any prayer requests.

Contact person: Ruth (0424696332)

Ruth Kerr

Craft and Friendship Group

We are a small group of ladies, of all ages, who meet each Tuesday morning at Pilgrim. In the last few years more emphasis is on 'Friendship' than 'Craft' and Tuesday mornings are a good outlet for ladies with family issues. We are very grateful for this venue and hope we can continue again in 2025. All are welcome.

Ellen Vidler

