



# HOPE ON THE RISE THE FIRST 50 YEARS

A HISTORY OF THE MOUNT PLEASANT  
METHODIST - UNITING CHURCH





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## FOREWORD

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From its humble beginnings in the 1950's, Mount Pleasant Uniting Church (MPUC) has grown to be a vibrant worshipping community into the 21st Century. The original members of Mount Pleasant Methodist Church (some of whom are still with us today) first met in their own homes before construction of a Church Chapel on the current site commenced in 1958.

The following pages provide considerable detail of that remarkable journey.

In 1971 a hall was added to the original Church Chapel building which became a big boon for youth activities but as numbers grew in the seventies; the hall became the worship area. For the next 20 years, the hall was the home of many concerts, quiz nights, seminars and some wonderful weddings.

The need for more space prompted an expansion into an adjacent house in the 1980's. In the 1990's the call of God to develop new programs to serve the local community resulted in the crystallisation of a long-held dream of a community-focused facility and after much prayer and planning; the current buildings were completed in 2001 and thus fulfilled the master plan of the original Board of Church Trustees.

MPUC members accept the Holy Bible as the Word of God. We seek to love God and each other, and our purpose is to serve God and our community, sharing the good news of Jesus Christ. We look to the Bible for guidance, to the life of Jesus Christ as an example of how we should live, and to the Holy Spirit for inspiration and strength.

MPUC has always valued the inter generational nature of its family, and this has led in turn to a sense of diversity and creativity in worship and activities. Driven initially by the vision of one lady; in the late 1970's, an activity centre for aged people was begun which still operates today based at St Stephen's Applecross Uniting Church. More recently MPUC has placed a strong emphasis on young families, largely through playgroup and related activities. Playgroup was started by a small group of young church mums and now runs 5 mornings a week and caters for over 100 local families.

Young people and their opinions are also important to us and MPUC has been blessed through the employment of a number of gifted part-time youth pastors who have developed various programs for teenagers. Assisting teenagers and young adults to develop a vibrant personal faith in Jesus Christ has been a source of great joy over the years and we have sent out a number of our young people into full time ministry both within the church and as school chaplains. An internship program has recently been developed to continue to offer opportunities for young people to grow in their faith while actively participating in ministry.

MPUC is firmly committed to the priesthood of all believers – that all of us are called to a ministry within the church and to service to the community. We believe all people have God given abilities that can be used to further His Kingdom.

As we commemorate, celebrate and give thanks to God for the first 50 years of our Ministry in Mount Pleasant, we look forward with great excitement to the next steps on our journey as we seek to enact a vision that calls us to an even greater engagement with and service of our community through each member actively seeking to be God's hands and feet wherever life takes them. This vision resonates in our Mission Statement - "that we may reflect the love of God as revealed in Jesus and through His Spirit make Him known by word, sign and deed."

We pray that God will continue to grow each one of us into a closer relationship with Jesus so that we and those that come behind the present generation of the Congregation of Mount Pleasant Uniting Church can better serve Him in both the local and wider community as living examples of 'Hope on the Rise' for the next 50 years and beyond.

**Gail Horne**



## FROM THE AUTHOR

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It is still a little bit of a fog as to whether I was appointed or volunteered for this project. Either way, there is no doubt in my mind that someone more versed in the history of the Mount Pleasant Methodist and Uniting Church; a better skilled communicator; and a longer term committed Christian within our Congregation would have been a wiser selection.

However I accepted the assignment with humility and if the truth be known; I have always had a yearning to be a journalist but at this advanced age in my life, time was running out so such an opportunity was not to be passed up. The task has been carried out with good faith and an amount of research that time would permit to enable the publication to be ready in time for celebrations consistent with the 50th Anniversary of the day of the laying of the foundation stone for our Church on 1 November 1958.

For that time line having been achieved; I express gratitude to the Church Council for initially ratifying my role as author of the history project and subsequently allowing me the freedom to press on with the task in my own way. As the project neared completion, I received tremendous assistance, encouragement and counsel from Rick Read in his capacity as the present Chairman of the Church Council.

In terms of research; I am indebted to Peter and Kath Leggoe, Faye Wells and Barbara Nicholls for their almost inexhaustible and exquisitely accurate recollection of Church history, related events and activities. Also thanks for the equally exquisite morning and afternoon teas prepared by Kath Leggoe when a home visit became necessary to validate my research. I made sure that plenty of validation was necessary to make those visits more frequent! The vast resources of the City of Melville were always at my disposal and I am grateful to their staff for their assistance.

I am so appreciative of the open manner in which the Revs Mervyn Jay, Rod Marsh, Patrick Yeo, Les Brockway and James Matthews were so forthcoming in their personal experiences surrounding their time at MPUC. James Matthews was also a constant source of encouragement and motivation to me to ensure that the project had continued momentum; and always with the print deadline in sight.

Heartfelt thanks to the generosity of time spirit and monetary donations in kind to two long standing friends and colleagues of mine; graphic designer Christian Komnick, surely one of the most gifted and amiable graphic designers in Western Australia and to Marcus Henriques of Cambridge Media who have printed the book within the required time and with great professionalism.

My style of recording this history has been very much minimalist in terms of personal recognition to a huge range of contributors to the evolution, growth and sustenance of Mount Pleasant Methodist and Uniting Church in its first 50 years.

That policy was motivated by a great desire not to make too many omissions. If that policy and the inevitable errors of fact in this history, done with utmost of good faith and good will; causes any consternation, pain or disappointment; please accept my sincere apologies.

There is no doubt that others that may follow in creating ongoing works on the history of Mount Pleasant Uniting Church; will do far better than my humble offering. But my fervent hope is that this publication can at least provide a solid foundation for those future endeavours and be a small token towards the joyous celebrations of our Church's 50th Anniversary.

**Geoff Havercroft**





# CHAPTER 1

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## SETTING THE SCENE

The year is 1958 and before it is concluded; on 1 November 1958, the foundation stone for the Mount Pleasant Methodist Church Chapel will have been laid to the Glory of God by the Rev Herbert Lindley.

Australia is well progressed in riding the post world war two development boom and the ‘Menzies’ Federal Liberal Government is about half way through its cycle of electoral domination in Australia.

Workers rights are being accelerated with the extension of three weeks annual leave on the landscape for all workers and the alluring prospect of a shorter working week of 37.5 hours and the principle of equal pay for equal work done by women, cornerstones of that enlightened industrial relations climate.

The nation is starting to develop a social conscience towards its original inhabitants with the formation in Adelaide of the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines that was to be followed in 1959 by the first strong move for what to later generations would appear, the rather gratuitous gesture of granting full Australian citizenship rights to indigenous people, something that could be rightfully inferred should always have been their birthright.

Truly the nation is travelling on the wool off the sheep’s back with wheat and grain all playing their part in economic prosperity while the mineral resources explosion is not yet making its mark of today in major international export markets.

There is still the ominous threat of war of some nature in other parts of the world with simmering tensions in the post Suez crisis never far from erupting in the Middle East; and with guerilla warfare frequently reported in Vietnam that was to escalate into a full scale war in the following decade and by an unpopular Act of Federal Parliament; bringing Australian troops in to war time combat alongside American counterparts.

There is some joy however in international conflicts with the formal withdrawal and return home of the Australian military contingent that saw action in the Korean War. With some degree of foresight, the returning chief of the Australian forces advises reporters on his return to home shores that the situation in Korea is peaceful but by no means stable.

Nationally reported events of significance of that year included advice of:

The opening of Australia’s first nuclear reactor in Lucas Heights in New South Wales; commissioning of the Tumut Dam in the Snowy River hydro electric scheme paving the way for irrigation and hydro power for many residents, farmers and businesses in New South Wales and Victoria; the ground breaking news for Qantas airways in introducing a round the world service, symbolic flights simultaneously leaving Melbourne bound for Heathrow in London via the Middle East and the east coast of the USA respectively, with each designed to arrive at their London destination at the same time; a young Queen Elizabeth II is accompanied by her mother on another Royal visit to Australia; the first ever Sydney Opera House \$100.000 lottery winner,



a piece of fortune that was to have both euphoria and tragedy for some subsequent winners; rock star Johnny O'Keefe with his hit song of the year appropriately, somewhat sadly and prophetically titled 'The Wild One' is the biggest star in international concert promoter Lee Gordon's 'The Big Show' while Lucky Star has almost been everywhere at this stage of his singing career.

On a lighter note and for the trivia buffs; Australian tennis ace Lew Hoad and acknowledged world number 1 seed of the time; turned professional (as did most if not all of the great amateur tennis players of the time), while compatriot Ashley Cooper continued Australia's domination at Wimbledon in winning the men's singles crown. Collingwood interrupted Melbourne's record equalling sequence of four Premiership victories in the VFL competition; Richie Benaud succeeded Ian Craig as Captain of the Australian cricket team and commenced a successful reign with a four nil thumping at home against England in the Ashes summer of 1958-59; (some things always seem to stay the same!) Western Australia's legendary middle distance runner Herb Elliott continued on his winning ways in Oslo Sweden, shattering the record for the one mile in the process in a ground breaking 3 minutes 54.5 seconds and despite the retirement of the much loved FJ Holden; its successors from the General Motors stable continued to dominate national car sales.

Here in Perth, the people of Western Australia have entrusted Government of its affairs to the Bert Hawke State Labor party (the name Hawke was to be prominent in Federal politics a quarter of a century on when Bert Hawke's nephew, R.G (Bob) Hawke swept Labor into power for a record period for Labor to be in control of the Treasury benches); the population of Perth is a modest 400,000 in a year when electric trams are superseded by buses and reclamation of a large piece of the Swan River in the Mounts Bay Road area is well advanced to accommodate the requirements of the soon to be opened Narrows Bridge as a first stage of the Kwinana Freeway connecting the City with the Canning Bridge in Applecross with rapid vehicular transport.

Perth has been allocated the honour of staging of the 1962 British Empire and Commonwealth Games, and even four years out from the Opening Ceremony, planning is well advanced for construction of ground breaking new sporting facilities for our City for swimming, athletics and cycling as well as a satellite accommodation village for the competing athletes and officials to be built in the already prestigious suburb of City Beach.

Things are really starting to happen south of the river in our particular suburban area. Applecross with its proximity to the Swan River and always considered to be an elite residential area in like manner to its north of the river equivalents in Peppermint Grove and Nedlands, is now being matched in housing demand by Mount Pleasant as its scenic joys are being rapidly discovered.

Interestingly, City of Melville records reveal a land developer's scheme of the early 1930's to open up a housing sub division in prime riverside land in Mount Pleasant under the ownership of the Bateman family and known as Crest Estate, only to fail to attract sufficient investor interest due in part to its perceived isolation but more specifically in the wake of the world wide economic depression.

But with all of the post world war II optimism and prosperity in the community; such gilt edged housing opportunities could not be ignored and the well informed and the well resourced quickly took advantage of this real estate when it was available in the real estate market again.

That the Trustees of the time of the Methodist Church in Mount Pleasant were able to secure the plot of land that the Mount Pleasant Uniting Church stands on today is a story in itself to be told more fully in the next chapter.



1958 was a milestone year for establishing Church and community resources in our district. Not only did that year mark the laying and dedication of the foundation stone for the Mount Pleasant Methodist Church but it also saw the commissioning and dedication of St David's Anglican Church in Applecross and the Applecross Senior High School.

Creating an upper level educational facility quickly became essential within an area servicing a rapidly expanding number of young teenage children.

But to commence the story only in the year 1958, is to understate earlier milestones and achievements all accomplished with little or no resources and finances that led to the laying of the foundation stone for our Church and subsequently the building of a Chapel to enhance the Worship opportunities of the environs of Mount Pleasant.

Our district, along with past present and future generations have a lot to be thankful for a small band of deeply committed Christians, who with unswerving faith, determination, initiative, vision, planning and God's ever presence and guidance, accomplished a dream.

Befitting the wisdom of the master plan established by the original Sites and Building Committee; the principles of that master plan for a "Community Centre" endured solidly to successive Church generations and administrations; to the point that two subsequent progressions of the master plan were completed in 1971 and 2001.

For the sequential record, the story will initially focus on the physical aspects of achieving a place of Worship for the Glory of God with later chapters then relating the people and the Ministries doing God's work in our community as the Mt Pleasant Methodist Church and its successor with Union in 1977, into the Uniting Church of Australia.



## CHAPTER 2

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### GOD WILL PROVIDE

Despite the rosy picture of the era painted in the introductory chapter, it is well for the context of our story to go back a little further in post war West Australian history.

Released and relieved after six years of international warfare, the more fortunate of the combatants returned home to loved ones, albeit many sadly scarred with the physical or mental legacies of the horrendous international conflict.

There was of course much to be grateful for in life and plenty of scope and enthusiasm for the work of the Lord and Worship in our community but there were also many material challenges to be faced and surmounted in that post war era for those people and families who were indeed making up the 'Church'.

In the words of Peter Leggoe (pictured), one of the original Trustees of the Church:

"Most of the young families were still getting their lives together again after the war. Many things including housing were in short supply. A lot of us were just starting out having found a job and married since the war. Many of the men folk were still studying having had these pursuits interrupted by war.

We all seemed 'broke'. Any uncommitted money soon went on floor coverings, furniture and other items to make the home more comfortable. Some couples were building their own homes at nights and weekends with the help of sub - contractors. Many had yet to acquire a car. We were all one income families; it was not yet fashion for wives to work..... And it was the middle of the post war baby boom!

In those days, now familiar street names such as Ventnor Avenue and Henley Road were just bush tracks. On the corner of Coogee and Raymond Streets where the bitumen road ended, there was a forest of letter boxes for the houses scattered through the bush towards the Mt Pleasant Primary School. Some of those houses were without light and power although there was a Council by law to preclude occupation without water."

The earliest recorded memories of the evolution of the Mount Pleasant Church on its present site commence in 1953. About that time, the building of the Applecross Methodist Church Hall commenced. (later to be dedicated in 1955)

Under the Methodist Church system of governance of that era, Applecross was within the East Fremantle 'circuit' headed by the Rev. Fred Sampson. The specific governance of Applecross was further devolved to Deaconess Margaret Geddes assisted by the Rev. Herbert Lindley who started working as a supernumerary in the district in 1952.

Rev Lindley known affectionately as 'Digger' by his family and friends, resided in Rookwood Street Mt Pleasant from the late 40's and is widely credited as a pioneer of Methodism in the





Applecross/Mt Pleasant district and justifiably had the honour of laying the first foundation stone of our Church Chapel.

A gentle unassuming man with a twinkle in his eye and a sense of humour, he was much loved by all, and had a great gift for always seeming to know within his circuit what ladies baked and on what days they did in fact bake their many treats.

It is recorded that late in his formal ministry, Rev Lindley became the Superintendent Minister of the Melville Circuit, the successor to the above named East Fremantle Circuit, responsible for an area bounded by the Swan and Canning Rivers, West almost to the Fremantle Traffic Bridge and South to High Rd. (now Leach Highway) Within that circuit of responsibility were Methodist Churches in Applecross, East Fremantle- Bicton, High Road and Mt Pleasant.

To enact those significant responsibilities involved quite a considerable amount of travelling. As the Rev Lindley did not have a car, the governing Church body acquired an auto-cycle for him to do his 'calling'.

It was an odd contraption with a little motor about the size of a lawn mower engine, plus a set of pedals.

To get it into motion, Rev Lindley had to pedal furiously until it started, often ignition achieved in a cloud of white smoke and when he came to a hill he had to help it to the top with more energy sapping pedaling otherwise the engine would stall.

Sadly the auto-cycle always seemed to be breaking down, and as Rev Lindley possessed a very limited mechanical knowledge, someone from the Church was always fixing it. With so much down time for the auto cycle when under repair, Rev Lindley was obliged to do a lot of his visitations on foot.

On June 16 1953 the West Australian State Government Education Department gave permission for the Rev Lindley to hold Services of Worship in the Mount Pleasant Primary School. The charge for the use of the premises was to be 10/- per quarter. (ten shillings was the equivalent expression to \$1 in pre decimal currency; that was not to be part of Australian monetary culture until February 1966)

To ensure that they received their rental entitlement, the Education Department deducted the 10/- each quarter from the Headmaster's salary leaving him to collect it from the Rev Lindley or the Methodist Church. That procedure should not necessarily be interpreted as any unwillingness or lack of capacity to pay on behalf of the Church. One could only imagine however, the industrial response such a procedure would attract in this day and age.

On April 16 1956, a meeting of interested people was held in the Mt Pleasant Primary School under the Chairmanship of the Rev. Fred Sampson, at which meeting it was decided to proceed with the formation of a Methodist Church in Mount Pleasant.

The first Mt Pleasant Church members are recorded as Kath and Peter Leggoe, Faye Wells, Myrtle Courtney, Phil Stagg, Mrs Campbell, Mildred and Fred Bertram, Mr. and Mrs. Ray Jodrell, Mr. and Mrs. Norm Jodrell and Mr. and Mrs. Don Pearce. The size of the initial congregations was augmented by visitors from the neighboring Applecross Methodist Church.



Those pioneer members of Mt Pleasant Methodist Church adopted a roster of those required to arrive early at the School to prepare the allocated school room for the Service of Worship. Resources were sparse with a tiny number of hymn books available (although in fairness the demand from a small number of attendees in those early days was modest) and for several years, music was provided courtesy of a small portable organ loaned from the Bicton Church and played by Mrs. Odgers and Mrs. Schroeder in Church Services and Mrs. Courtney at Sunday School.

Initially the Services of Worship were held in the morning and were combined with Sunday School for the younger fraternity but this was soon changed to Sunday mornings being dedicated to Sunday School and an adult Service of Worship in the evening. Early in the winter of 1955 it was decided that the school was too cold and Services were then held for a time in the home of Mrs. Campbell in Ullapool Rd Mt Pleasant but later reverted back to the Mt Pleasant Primary School on a regular basis from 1 July 1956.

Those early worshippers were also soon to be grateful for the Christian Spirit of St Michael's Anglican Church via their Rector of the time, the Rev Bill Riley, whose Church kindly gave permission for our evening Services of Worship to be conducted in their recently built Church in Gunbower Street. These premises were to be the home of the Methodist Church evening Services of Worship until the construction of the Mt Pleasant Methodist Church Chapel on its present site.

As is frequently the case with Church Ministries; the Ladies Guild was a cornerstone of the early activities of the Mt Pleasant Methodist Church and the Sunday School was already a vibrant and well supported resource that reflected the burgeoning number of young children in the district, before the decision was made to form the Mt Pleasant Methodist Church Trustees to address the strategic development of the Church and a permanent home for it.

When the Trust was originally constituted, (under the chairmanship of Rev Sampson) it did not have lofty expectations or ambitions. Literally speaking it had nothing to be Trustees of having little more than a small and aged Globite (a popular brand name of the time) case containing 8 hymn books, a small wooden bowl for the Sunday offering, a strip of blue cloth to transform the image of a school desk into an altar for the purpose of conducting Worship and on which was to be placed a 12 inch high wooden Cross.

Having formed the Trust, the Trustees were directed to open a Bank account which in itself produced another significant challenge, because there were no funds with which to open such an account. God was as always, ever present and the Holy Spirit was at work in the offer from both Norm and Ray Jodrell who each loaned the Trust ten pounds on an interest free basis to open an operating account.

So a governing body for the fledgling Mt Pleasant Methodist Church was now a going concern.

The initial Trustees were: Norm Jodrell (Secretary) Fred Bertram (Treasurer) Wally Armstrong, John Courtney, Don Pearce and Peter Leggoe. Many others were to serve diligently as Trustees of the Church over the years as a variety of reasons necessitated original appointees standing down from Office.

At the time the Trust was formed the Church was thin on membership with only 13 families on the roll.

Given the circumstances of a developing suburb and individual domestic responsibilities within that environment and a complete lack of funds, the challenge of even contemplating construction of a Church building was daunting to say the least. Much prayer and God's guidance was going to be essential.



As a first step in undertaking the question of a home for a new Church; a Sites and Building Committee was formed to evaluate and investigate the feasibility of securing a suitable plot of land for building a Church Chapel. That Committee comprised: Peter Leggoe (Chairman), Wally Armstrong, John Courtney and Don Pearce.

At the time, Methodist Church headquarters were allocated a single block of land opposite the Mt Pleasant Primary School, by the State Housing Commission. This site was deemed unsuitable by the Committee, with this land later being used for the original Mt Pleasant Infant Health Centre. A second and separate block was offered in Bedford Street for the purpose of building a Manse with a third and again separate block option available to Methodist Church Headquarters in the Brentwood State Housing Commission sub division.

The Sites and Building Committee were united in the belief that a minimum of two adjoining blocks were going to be needed for the Church, but it appeared that the Housing Commission at that particular time could not meet this request in a central area or in a place the Committee deemed to be suitable for a Church.

One of the dedicated servants of the Church as both a Trustee and a member of the Sites and Building Committee in those embryonic years was Don Pearce who as providence would have it, was an architectural draftsman working in the State Government Mines Department. In that position he was able to establish that the Lands Department was drawing up plans for a new land sub division release. This tract of land which at that time existed in name only on a planning map, was further south on the corner of Melville Parade, (later to be renamed Reynolds Road) and Coomoorra Road (which also only existed on the map).

The land release was to be handled by the State Housing Commission. The first plan the Trustees saw for the release of this new land sub division included high rise flats and seemed to cover most of the area now bounded by Reynolds, Rogerson, and Coomoorra Roads and Canning Avenue.

Don Pearce's investigations discovered Housing Commission plans for this land contemplated the inclusion of provision for a Church and other non residential sites. A meeting was set up by Don Pearce for the Mt Pleasant Methodist Church Trustees to meet with the Town Planners working on the project and who enquired what it was that we have in mind in terms of real estate for the proposed Church.

After carefully studying the plan of the proposed sub division, the Trustees were able to choose lots in the north east corner of the proposed development. This real estate was closest to the centre point and highest point of Mt Pleasant; indeed one of the few areas accessible by roads existing at the time and which land, forms part of the major part of the land holdings on which our Church buildings stand today.

The good will of the State Housing Commission was quite breathtaking when they not only said 'OK' to the Trustees choice of land but added will a couple of blocks do?

The Trustees found it difficult not to say 'yes' too eagerly! Later the Trustees were to find the blocks of land were smaller than expected and subsequently asked the Government for and were granted a third block fronting on to Coomoorra Road.

The total cost of the three blocks of land was £2,250, a monumental bargain by today's standards but a massive debt for 1957. The amount owing rendered even more formidable by the fact that the Mt Pleasant Methodist Church had no money and a very small and not particularly wealthy congregation from which to elicit the required generosity to meet commitments.



In those dire circumstances the Trustees saw no alternative than to engage the ‘Wells Organisation’ an institution of the time with a reputation and track record for large scale fund raising through a pledging system.

However its methods were viewed as insensitive even though most times effective. Based in the eastern states, they were virtually a forerunner of modern day fund raisers for charitable institutions, largely bereft of personality but very well organised towards achieving stated objectives. It was reported that Churches in other places that had enlisted the Wells Organisation for fund raising, found that there was collateral damage of some Church members leaving because of opposition to such insensitive commercialism.

Some members of Mt Pleasant Methodist Church were also unhappy about such methods but desperate times called for desperate if not unpopular methods. Even if the ‘Wells’ appointment proved to be successful, it was not going to totally solve the financial equation but would at least provide a platform for satisfying the requirements of the State Housing Commission as the sellers of the land and ultimately the Bankers of the new Church’s sparse financial resources.

Larger problems lay ahead for the Trustees of not only having an income sufficient to meet standing commitments, but what was really needed was seriously big money up front to get on with the building of a Church Chapel which by the way was only a series of visions in people’s mind at this point and not yet entrusted to any documented architectural plans or feasibility study.



## CHAPTER 3

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### A MASTERPLAN IS BORN AND SET IN MOTION

Developing ideas and plans in the elementary stages was as simple as members of the Sites and Building Committee visiting some thirty different Churches and Church halls of all denominations throughout the Perth metropolitan area to identify concepts used by others that they considered would work in the to be constructed Mt Pleasant Methodist Church Chapel.

Finally in June 1957 and after hundreds and hundreds of hours of dedicated work by all concerned but in particular by Don Pearce who drew countless number of plans and revision to the plans and later was to supervise the construction phase of the project; the Sites and Building Committee submitted a master plan to the Trust for their consideration, for the construction of a 'Community Centre' on the recently acquired land.

The original master plan was for a Church, Chapel, Hall, Tennis Court, Children's Playground and 2 Car Parks. The first recommendation of the report was to proceed with construction of a Chapel, Hall and 1 Car Park as stage one of the Master Plan. The visionary elements of those recommendations in the context of the requirements for a community centre, complementary to a Chapel for the conduct of Services of Worship, now half a century on is quite a revelation although the magnitude of the challenge and the legacy of debt required to be met is eerily familiar within subsequent Mt Pleasant Church extension projects. Extracts of the original report of the Sites and Building Committee under the pen of its Chairman Peter Leggoe are repeated below:

*'We of the Sites and Building Committee believe that this plan for a 'Community Centre' will best suit the needs of our activities in this district, however we do not wish to appear dogmatic as this is not a complete plan in the true sense of the word; this is only the beginning and we therefore submit it for your consideration and criticism.*

*A masterplan has been drawn up for the eventual development of the entire site. A more immediate term plan has been drawn up for the development of portion of the site to fulfill our immediate needs. This immediate plan dovetails in and forms part of the master plan and is our immediate consideration at this stage even though it may appear to be ambitious and beyond our present means.*

*But the Trust is a little more than twelve months-old and you will all agree that in that time we have achieved much. Our recent Wells Organisation canvassing has been a great success. This is a young, modern and growing suburb and we are not only building for ourselves and our children but for the generations that come. Therefore we must accept the challenge. We have the best Church site in the district. Let's aim high and use what we have as the foundation on which to build the best possible Church centre.*

*As you are aware the Housing Commission has advised me of the lot numbers of the two blocks allotted to us. At the time we received this information we queried the total area of them and were advised that the survey was not complete but that they were big blocks and just short of the promised three quarters of an acre. Don Pearce has recently had access to a survey plan, from which it was evident that the blocks were small and that the area would be in the vicinity of approximately three eighths of an acre.*

*This matter was brought to the notice of the Housing Commission and they readily indicated that they are prepared to allot a third block to us in Coomoora Road, adjoining the two blocks already allotted.*





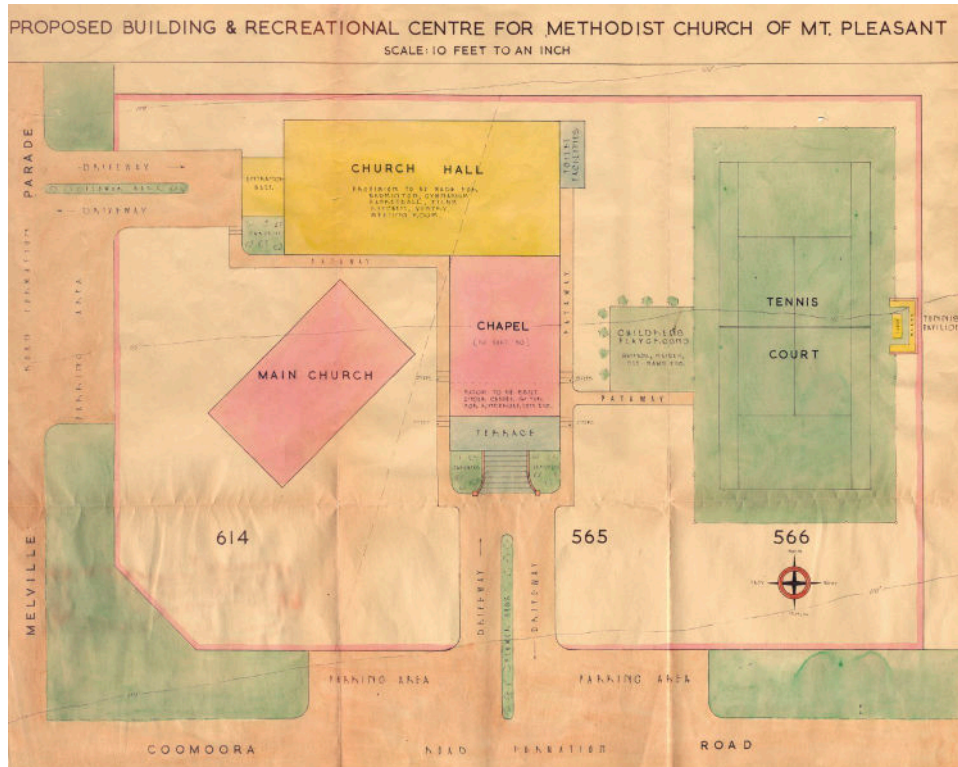
As already mentioned these blocks are small and the total area of the three blocks will exceed half an acre but will still be short of original expectations of three quarters of an acre. Nevertheless the Committee considers that there will be ample land in the three blocks for our requirements. Unfortunately this extra land will mean extra cost and it is anticipated that the total cost of land will exceed £2,000 but should not exceed £2,400. No official cost figure is yet available from the Housing Commission.

As surveys have not been completed, the Commission is not yet in a position to transfer the land to the Trust. However we consider that the land will be transferred by the time we want to start building operations. A letter has been sent to the State Housing Commission requesting permission to erect a sign on the land indicating that it is the site of the proposed Methodist Church or wording to that effect. Don Pearce has kindly offered to do the sign writing.

The master plan which proposes a Church Chapel, Hall, Tennis Court, Children's Playground and two Car Parks undertakes the development of the entire site and incorporates the Immediate Plan.

The Committee feel that when erected the Church should be in a central and prominent position, and it will be seen from the plan that an area has been set aside to enable the Church to be built forward on the corner block facing the intersection.

It is fortunate that the third block runs North and South and it is recommended that this area be set aside to provide for a tennis court and players' shelter. The car parks are not actually built on Church property but on the land between our boundary and the road, but we will have to bear a big percentage of the cost of their construction.



*This plan is designed for the immediate requirements and the Committee urges that a start be made along these lines with the minimum of delay. You will agree that we must provide accommodation for Church, Sunday School and social activities now.*

*The Committee feels that it is too much to ask one building to cater for all these requirements and that some definite place should be set aside for worship alone. We do not consider it right that the children should grow up using a Hall for everything including Church worship.*

*The Church is the hub around which our other activities revolve and if the Hall is used for worship as well as pictures, dances and other social interests, then we will have no actual Church and there will be nothing sacred in our place of worship. With this in mind the Committee submits the proposal for a Chapel and Hall to be erected in one structure as the first step in our Immediate Plan.*

*Reference to the plan will show the Chapel facing Coomoora Road. Apart from providing a place set aside for Worship alone, it is suggested that this small building with a seating capacity of approximately 50 be attractively constructed and fitted out to become the "show piece" of the Immediate Plan.*

*One of the features we have in mind is glass doors opening on to the porch so that when the Chapel is closed, people will be able to see into what we imagine will be an attractive and modern interior. The slope of the blocks is towards Coomoora Road and the front of the Chapel would be high and therefore it would not be possible to look into the interior from the street.*

*It is considered desirable that in providing Sunday School accommodation, the Kindergarten be kept apart from the Senior School. The high front to the Chapel will enable a large room to be excavated out of the foundations for the housing of the Kindergarten.*

*You will see from the plan that there is also a small vestry opening off the back of the Chapel. The aim in the design of this portion of the building is for it to be a large "all purpose" hall across the back of the blocks with the entrance from Melville Parade (Reynolds Road), to accommodate (and conduct) special Church Services too large for the Chapel, Senior and Junior Sunday School, Ladies Guild meetings, social activities, boys and girls clubs, picture shows and dances, gymnasium, basket ball and badminton courts.*

*It is suggested that there be nothing lavish about the finish of the Hall and that the emphasis be on size and utility with a reasonable porch, store-room and appropriately fitted out kitchen at the rear. Also at the rear of the Hall would be toilet facilities which will be handy to the tennis shelter in the Master Plan.*

*It is recommended by the Committee that a plan along these lines be put into operation immediately.*

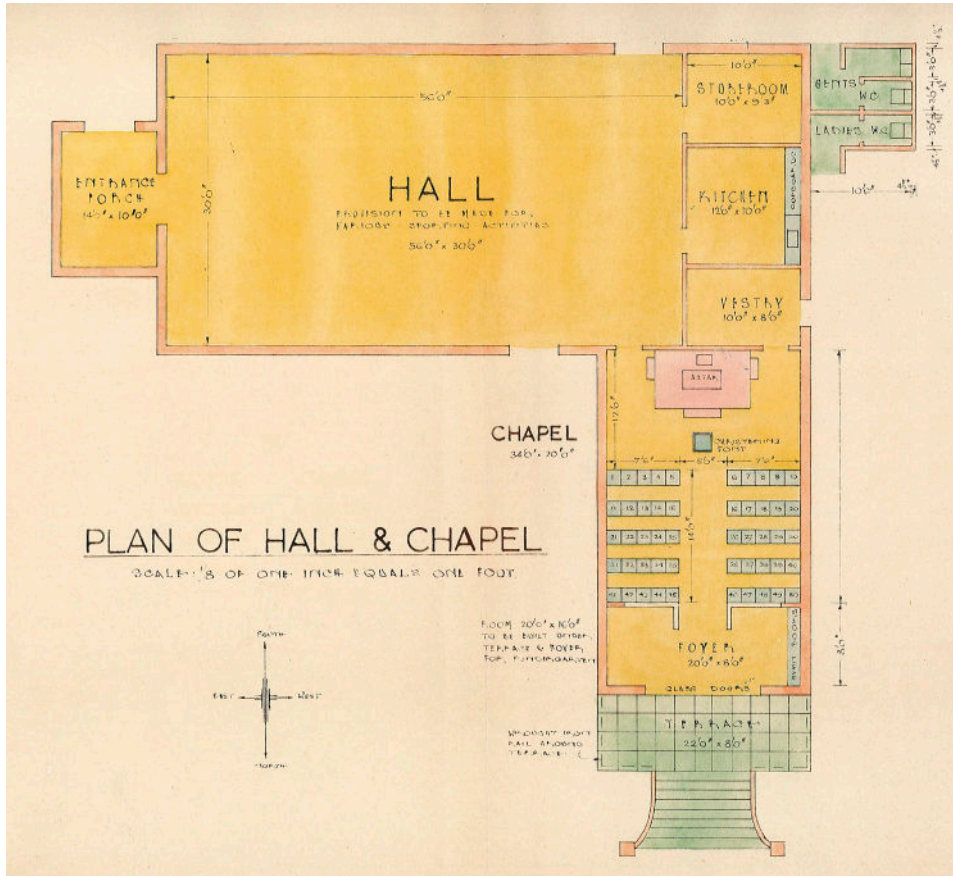
*This report covers only a broad outline of what we have in mind. It is June now and if this proposal is accepted there is a lot of detailed work to be done before any building can be undertaken. If a start can be made on the actual building by the end of this year, there is no reason why by June of next year the building of the Chapel/Hall could not be nearing completion.*

*Cost has not been investigated to any great extent but enquiries have been made and we are of the opinion that a Chapel/Hall structure could be erected for £3,000 to £6,000.*

*It is possible that some of the fitting out and finishes may have to be deferred to enable the financial position to recoup and it is estimated than it will take 3 to 4 years to complete the entire immediate plan to the finish we propose, although the actual building could be up within 12 months.*

*We are fortunate to have some very willing workers and there have been many offers of help which the committee feel could be used to advantage. It is hoped in this way to considerably reduce the total cost'.*





With God's will firmly behind them, the Trustees and in turn the membership of Mt Pleasant Methodist Church, fully supported those visionary recommendations but there were enormous challenges still ahead.

After approval to proceed, the next step was to call for tenders for the now documented plans for the construction of the Chapel and Hall for which the estimates were between £11,000 and £12,000 and far beyond the Church's expectations and means. Finally the Trust agreed to go ahead with the Chapel at a tendered cost of £6,500. The land cost was £2,250.

Arranging project finance was still a problem even with a considerable increase in anticipated cash flow arising from the aforementioned Wells program cash and pledges. The Bank was happy to loan money but their contribution was only going to go part of the way and there was a further major complication.

The Trustees could not get a title to the blocks of land that we had purchased because the entire sub-division was still on one title held only by the State Housing Commission and the principles of banking and solid security over loans was far more rigidly administered in those times.



Finally and still without producing the individual titles for the Church's three blocks of land, a Contract of Sale document was entered into between the Church and the State Housing Commission and the Bank reluctantly agreed to accept that document as security and the basis for their loan to the Church.

Fortunately this arrangement gave us an unexpected opportunity to avoid paying all the money up front due to the State Housing Commission for our real estate purchase and with some degree of cheek, the Trustees argued that if we were not getting the title we should not yet have to pay all the money for the land. As would have been expected the State Housing Commission did not quite see things that same way at first but finally agreed to a deposit and our payment of the balance when the title was available.

The product of all of this of course was that the Mt Pleasant Methodist Church was mighty content and in fact did not have any concern as to how long it may take the State Housing Commission to produce the land title but on the other hand the Bank's position in the loan transaction was even further diminished with the Church having an even smaller up front equity in the project at this point in time.

Even with the Bank's money and not having to pay the full amount for the land at inception, the Church was still well short of the target realistically needed to commence the project. Following an age long tradition that decrees that when short of money, first of all approach the parent or parents; representatives of the Church Trustees knocked on the door of the Methodist Church Head Office Sites & Building Fund.

While they were willing to assist, they were not prepared to bridge the gap of our present short fall of funding, maintaining that the Mt Pleasant Methodist Church would be over extending itself and did not have the resources to meet ongoing commitments even with the benefits of increased income from the Wells program. (the costs for which still needed to be paid to their principals)

Of course Head Office was right, even though the Trustees of the time defended the Church's plans, which were ambitious in the extreme. It must be appreciated that the Church started with no money and had to date only paid a deposit on the land designated for the project.

In effect the Church was really looking to borrow 100% of the cost of the project with no security at all to offer any lender. As pointed out by the Sites and Building Committee, this was courting financial disaster.

With some degree of pragmatism the Trustees predicted that it would be unlikely for the Bank to foreclose on a Church if it were to get into financial difficulties and unable to meet its commitments and if the Church could get a building constructed on its beautiful plot of land, it would also be unlikely that the State Housing Commission would want to take the land back in that scenario.

Finally and to their eternal credit, the Methodist Church Head Office Sites and Building Committee reluctantly loaned Mt Pleasant Methodist Church their best available amount; a figure which the Church gratefully accepted. But it still left us short of the required target.

A call went out to all Mt Pleasant Methodist Church members and adherents for assistance. Finally an anonymous 'White Knight' weighed in with a free of interest loan to provide sufficient extra funds to launch the project.



Despite the prime real estate that the Church site was then and is today, in pre construction mode it was essentially virgin bush land and fairly heavily timbered. For instance where today is the location for the steps leading down to the undercroft; in 1957 there was a huge black Tuart stump about 20 feet in height that was probably a mature tree when Governor Stirling arrived in Perth more than a century ago and had stood the ravages of countless bushfires in the intervening period. How to dispose of it was an early site preparation problem?

Those in charge of the project had plenty of initiative to go with their many other qualities and a well practiced mantra of the day was to do as much of the work as they could at no cost but to have no qualms about making use of anybody's expertise irrespective of the depth (or lack) of their connections with the Church. Solving the problem of removing the Tuart tree stump fitted very much into that province.

At that time, contractors were working with bulldozers in the district, clearing the road lines. Don Pearce spoke to a fellow who was working on Coomoora Road. Don asked the contractor for a quote to remove a large tree stump. They agreed to meet at the site later that day to further explore that question.

Don was astonished to find the contractor had arrived for the appointment by driving his bulldozer from where he had seen him earlier in the morning. After recovering from that initial shock, Don explained what needed to be done in terms of the Tuart tree stump and that it was Church owned land being prepared for the construction of a Church Chapel.

'I'll knock it over for you now', was the contractor's immediate response as he climbed back on to his bulldozer. After some effort from the contractor and his bulldozer, the stump was down and liberated from the ground, after which he asked Don. 'Who owns all that vacant land up there?'- indicating to vacant blocks beyond the Church's land holdings.

Don advised him that said it was State Housing Commission land which brought the instant rejoinder from the contractor of 'good we'll give the stump to them, and while I'm about it, I'll clean up!'

By the time the contractor had finished, the Church had three clean level blocks and the State Housing Commission had some fill through absolutely no input of the Church.

We also had a very worried Trustee who knew only too well the state of our finances or rather the lack thereof in which to pay what was surely going to be a sizeable cost for the contractor's efforts.

What do we owe?' Don asked rather tentatively. 'She's right mate, it's for a Church', was the extraordinarily generous reply. And with that, the contractor drove off in his bulldozer and out of our lives, down what was to become Coomoora Road.

There are many other similar stories which could be related attesting to the tremendous good will exhibited by a whole myriad of people quite obviously touched by the Holy Spirit as the vision of a Church Chapel and Hall for the Mt Pleasant Methodist Church slowly became a reality. For example:

The excavation of the undercroft was done at no cost because someone noticed trucks carting sand to develop the Deep Water Point area and asked them if they wanted some free sand.

Blinds mysteriously appeared on the Church windows and the Ladies Guild of the time knew more about that than they were prepared to admit.





Sprinklers appeared for which action and generosity there is a strong suspect but the Trust had no record in their books of account for the cost of either materials or labour for the accomplished task.

A street side car park was put in but the Church was never billed for it.

Pedestrian paths were laid but where the slabs came from and who laid them remains a mystery.

A piano appeared from nowhere and chairs multiplied in number as if there had been a population explosion but again at no cost to the Church.

All furniture and fittings, except the pews, were made by someone associated with the Church for the cost of materials only. Likewise the painting of the Church was the product of a generous benefactor.

There are many other unrecorded stories of generosity in time, materials and labour, or straight financial assistance all of which played such a big part in establishing the Church in Mt Pleasant.

The ideas generated from earlier mentioned reconnaissance missions to other Churches for design concepts were incorporated into the completed Church Chapel. Those who at the time were familiar with the Como Methodist Church would know where the idea came from for the original padded pews which wore exceedingly well and far better than ever could have been expected.

The idea of the lighted glass cross facing the street came from a visit to the Baptist Church in Nedlands and the concept of the Cross inside the Chapel came from observation and admiration of a visit to a Roman Catholic Church in North Perth.

What can be told in a few pages in a documented history in effect took a considerable time to plan and construct. A tribute to the quality of the work on the drafting of the plans that were originally done by Don Pearce was that when it came to approval by the Wesley Church Head Office Sites and Building Fund; only one quite major amendment was required by the Church and that was to alter the height of the entry level steps to the Chapel in consideration of later expectations of an aging population within our district and thus our congregation.

This change involved amending the foyer entrance and turning the proposed building foundations around for the entrance to face south instead of north. All of this involved another redrafting of plans by the tireless Don Pearce. Neither change proved to be insurmountable and with the passage of time proved to have been constructive requirements.



## CHAPTER 4

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### THE DEDICATION - A GRAND OCCASION



It was a mighty occasion on 1 November 1958 when the Chapel's foundation stone was laid and dedicated. At that time the Rev Len Broadbent (the father of Marylee Masarei) was in charge of the Melville circuit and the Rev James Vaughan (Estelle Vaughan's father) was President of the Conference, each of whom were significant figures in the Service of Dedication. Fortunately proceedings of the day were well photographed and preserved for history with some of the snaps of that historic occasion, appearing in this publication.

With that symbolic milestone in the construction phase achieved, the actual construction of the Church building was contracted out to a local builder TG Evans. He was obviously very astutely chosen for such a spiritual assignment. Throughout the project, Mr. Evans possessed the patience of Job and was a real Saint in terms of cooperation and assistance.

The vision of the founding Elders was fast becoming a reality and the Trustees considered it was now appropriate to place some consideration into a proper name for the soon to be completed structure.

To this point reference had always been made to the Methodist Church in Mt. Pleasant and as mentioned in the introductory words at the time, our Church was part of the East Fremantle 'circuit' that comprised four south of the river Methodist churches - Carrington Street Bicton, High Street/Leach Highway, McKenzie Street Applecross and of course the new Chapel.

A lot of discussion took place among the inaugural members of the Church. Some wanted the word Chapel included, others wanted it referred to as a Church, and others wanted a traditional Methodist name included such as Wesleyan.

Another question to be addressed was it to be, Mt Pleasant or Brentwood, the latter land parcel became known as a State Housing Commission area with perhaps a mild stigma attached to that association but from which our Church was fortunate to draw some of its early members. City of Melville records reveal that Brentwood was named after a village in Essex in England of the same name and also the place of birth of the Bateman's, a pioneering and influential family of our district referred to earlier.





Pictured on Dedication Day, (from left) Revs George Bensley, Jim Vaughan and Herbert Lindley.

Fifty years on, the renewal and transformation of Brentwood into a prime residential area is almost completed from those humble beginnings.

To further complicate the question of suburban identity, members of the Sites & Building Committee who had been privy to the Lands Department plans of the proposed new sub division knew that the Church was in the north east corner of a suburb to be named Booragoon (of indigenous origin) and said to mean south part of Canning. (which assumes south of Canning River)

As a compromise to the above two options which were being considered with some degree of animation among Church members, and to defuse the emotional state of the debate, the Sites and Building Committee put forward the suggestion that it could be called the Booragoon Methodist Church.

Nobody other than those who had sighted Lands Department papers had ever heard of Booragoon and unsurprisingly that suggestion did not get to first base. It appears that the name Mt Pleasant Methodist Church was adopted by general usage rather than a recorded formal vote in the matter.

Mount Pleasant previously was known as Canning Bridge up until the 1940's and was the property name of HR Simpson (not Homer!) a prominent citizen of the district at the turn of the century. It was later renamed Mount Pleasant; that name derived from the name of the 1950's estate sub division.

And to complete the brief historical analysis of our present land, the Coomoora in Coomoora Road again is of indigenous extraction and Reynolds Road bears the name of William Charles Reynolds, a member of the West Australian Roads Board from 1926 to 1947 and its Chairman during the war years of 1943 to 1945.



## CHAPTER 5

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### LET THERE BE WORSHIP



After a remarkable evolution of the Chapel of Worship, it was now time to give Glory to God for the many gifts showered upon our Church pioneers and for the work of the Lord to be given more meaning and impetus through a magnificent building standing at the corner of Coomoora and Reynolds Road.

Saturday May 9 1959 at 3pm was set aside as the date and time for the dedication service for the new Mount Pleasant Methodist Chapel. The Service was conducted by Melville circuit Superintendent Minister Rev Leonard Broadbent assisted by his colleague Minister Rev. George Bensley. The Chapel building was dedicated by the Rev James Vaughan as President of the Wesley Church Conference. Fittingly in view of the enormous work that they had done to bring the building to fruition the building was declared open by Don and Pam Pearce.

The pastoral prayer of the Rev Broadbent has stood the test of half a century in our community and we still hold those thoughts and requirements of God deep in our hearts and earnestly strive to do more.

The following day (10 May 1959 and Mothers Day) the first Sunday Services of Worship were conducted in the brand new Chapel at 8am, 11am and 7.30pm respectively.



### Early Mt Pleasant Methodist Church Milestone Dates and Events:

16 June 1953	Education Department approve Services at Mt Pleasant School
29 April 1955	First Sunday School teachers' meeting
6 April 1956	Meeting of interested people held in school Chaired by Rev Sampson voted to proceed with forming a Methodist Church in Mount Pleasant.
24 May 1956	First meeting of the Ladies Guild
7 June 1956	First meeting of the Church Trustees
1 July 1956	First service recorded in the register was conducted by Deaconess Margaret Geddes. Eleven persons attended.
25 November 1956	First Sunday School Anniversary
24 February 1957	First Baptism by Rev. Sampson
3 March 1957	First Harvest Festival conducted by Mr. B. Freeman
12 May 1957	First Mothers' Day Service First planned giving under the Wells scheme
7 July 1957	First Church Anniversary - 120 attended.
25 August 1957	Reception Service conducted by Rev. Roger Reid.
20 July 1958	Choir started
1 November 1958	Chapel Foundation stone laid by Rev. Herbert Lindley
21 December 1958	Special Christmas Carol Service
15 March 1959	Church Promotion Service conducted by Mr. Wally Armstrong
9 May 1959	Chapel dedication and building declared opened.
10 May 1959	First of Services of Worship conducted in the Chapel 8am and Communion Rev L Broadbent 11am and 7.30pm Rev G Bensley
5 July 1959	Church Anniversary conducted by Rev. L. Broadbent.
8 August 1959	First Sunday School Teachers' Dedication service

Those early days of Worship in our New Chapel were uplifting experiences and the Sunday School grew strongly under its new Superintendent Fred Bertram (a pretty stern title deemed to be suitable for those times!).

Music was an important component of Worship at Mt Pleasant from the early primitive organs to the modern day maestro Margaret Doepel. Vocals have been from a variety of choirs through to the marvellous Voices in Praise in cameo appearances from time to time. Such has been the significance of music in Worship that MPUC Church Councils of the modern era engaged highly qualified musical directors Rosalind Appleby and Claire Coleman-Phillips.

Those formative years also produced significant changes in our Church Ministry and Governance.

Rev Lindley went into full retirement being replaced by Rev George Bensley as a supernumerary and the district governance duties flowed to Rev Len Broadbent when replacing Rev Fred Sampson. Rev Roger Reid replaced Deaconess Geddes, until he left to further his studies; at which time Rev George Bensley came out of retirement to enact the duties in a part time role; assisted by Rev Tom Burt.





Sometime in this era, Mt Pleasant Methodist Church broke away from the East Fremantle 'circuit' of governance and with Applecross Methodist Church formed the Applecross Mt. Pleasant circuit. Rev. Bill Hawker became the first Minister of the new circuit to be followed by Revs. Keith Carter, Alfred Canning, Milton Davies, Mervyn Jay, Ken Ogier, Patrick Yeo and Rod Marsh.

At the time Mt Pleasant were working in "partnership" with the Applecross Methodist Church and while each Church had its own individual bank account and ran its own finances, Applecross supported us by taking a greater share of the financial responsibility for this end of the circuit. Their support of the Mt. Pleasant Church in those early years should not be understated and is the basis of the many common bonds that we share to this very day with its Uniting Church successor in St Stephens Uniting Church Applecross.

Without their help in those troubled financial years it is doubtful whether Mt Pleasant Methodist Church would have been able to meet its commitments. So parlous were the Church's financial affairs in those early years that the Treasurer of the time would often send the quarterly cheque up to the Circuit Steward with a note pinned to it - 'Don't bank this before Sunday'.

Eventually Applecross and Mt Pleasant Methodist Churches became separate circuits. However a lasting legacy and operational to this very day; was the creation in 1981 of what is known as Day Care Centre. Within this program is an expression of love and care for the frail, aged and disadvantaged of our community as an extension of established work that was already being successfully undertaken in Queensland under a program known as 'Cross Roads' that came to Rev Ken Ogier's while attending a national conference.



With a strong spiritual theme; Day Care organised activities and outings including transport, to add some joy, purpose and interest to otherwise difficult lives. The inaugural program also had the support and assistance of the Bicton Palmyra Church in providing premises for activities which have now localised to St Stephens Uniting Church in McKenzie Road Applecross. Such is the community benefit of the work of the Day Care Centre and its dedicated helpers, that it received a City of Melville Community Award in 2001 and one of its founders Dorothy Chatfield (pictured left centre) being honoured by the internationally respected Rotary movement.

There are also documented occasions too when the Church did not have the funds to pay the electricity account yet somehow the Ladies Guild would always be able to find sufficient funds from their activities to save the day (and the Church's reputation) and pay the bill on time.

The rather earthy shadow of debt and how to service it were never far away after the Chapel had been built, fitted out and operational. By the end of 1960 the Mount Pleasant Methodist Church still owed \$17,000 to four financial backers or lending institutions.

However, a decade of financial consolidation and spending restraint followed; and through a wonderful combination of faith, generosity and perseverance; by 1971 the Church was debt free and willing to contemplate stage two of the original masterplan.

Again it was necessary for the Trustees to recommend borrowings that would once more see the Church heavily into debt causing considerable problems for the Trustees at the time.



The second stage in fulfillment of the original master plan, involved tackling funding and construction of the Church Hall to enable the vision of a community centre to become more of a reality and to increase the options and capacity within the Church buildings to Worship God. Central to that theme was a sense of community where the new ‘commodious hall ‘ as described in the December 1971 edition of the ‘Western Methodist’; was designed primarily for the purpose of Christian education and healthy social activity.

Interior of the building which retained a rustic appearance of the natural brick finish and acoustic tiled ceiling with appropriate ventilation; followed the line of the timber rafters, while the Church Hall and Church Chapel were separated by a flexible folding door, which served as sufficient insulation from noise generated from either area.

A new foyer was added to the original Church Chapel and the Chapel itself was increased in size to permit extra pews to be accommodated, a feature which pleasingly had become necessary as the number attending Sunday Worship grew.

This stage of the master plan is recorded as having been committed and completed with considerably less duress than the original Chapel building and won admiration from within and external of the Congregation for the simplicity and functionality of its design.

But even that additional Chapel capacity was nowhere near sufficient to accommodate the estimated 300 people in attendance for the November 1971 Dedication Service with the Church Hall proving its early worth in handling the over flow of Worshippers. Pleasingly other Churches from the District were well represented at the dedication ceremony; a testament to the close and special bond in Christ enjoyed between our Church and St Michaels CE (Anglican) Church and Applecross Methodist Church.

The official opening and dedication was performed by the Mt Pleasant Minister of the time the Rev AC Canning assisted by the President of the Conference Rev CT Lambert who had responded to the ceremonial knock on the door and invitation given by Church Trustee Mr Ken Williamson.

It was a happy coincidence that the resident supernumerary Minister of the time and also present on this happy and significant occasion was none other than Rev James Vaughan who as President of the Conference had dedicated the original Church Chapel in 1959.

In his address; the Rev Lambert noted and congratulated Mt Pleasant Methodist Church for its progress since that 1959 milestone but reminded those present that the Church had initially been established not primarily to fill every pew and chair each Sunday but for its members to be servants of Christ in the wider world.

To come later was the purchase of Cannon House (later to be demolished) on the block adjoining the southern boundary of Mt Pleasant Methodist Church property. The original block was later sub divided with the front portion sold and used to fund 2001 Church extensions and the back portion of the block being part of the existing car parking.

And to mark a momentous transition in the life and administration of the Mt Pleasant Church; came ‘Union’ in 1977 and the Uniting Church was established and the Trust under the old Methodist Church administration was disbanded.



## CHAPTER 6

### RESPONDING TO CHANGE AND GIANT PROGRESS

The next twenty years in the life of Mt Pleasant Uniting Church involving adapting to change and always seeking to express the love of God in the most appropriate way as taught to us in the scriptures; are told by a succession of our Ministers' with great personal insight, humility and passion for Christ within their own individual Calling to serve; in the Chapter dedicated to 'Ministers of the Word'.

By the time of the Rev Dr Les Brockway's appointment to Mt Pleasant Uniting Church in 1998 much consideration over many years had been given to fulfilling the final chapter of the original building masterplan. But somehow the dream was never quite realised. In the words of Les Brockway.

'Facilities at MPUC were inadequate for the burgeoning ministries and mission of the Church, both within the Church and in the community. They were a less-than-adequate witness to the community for a Church that was vibrant and contemporary, calling the people forward. This was especially so in relation to our children's and youth ministries.

Following two previous failed attempts to renovate and rebuild, we captured the moment of a fresh sense of unity and enthusiasm to rebuild and move forward. There was a narrow window of opportunity which we believed God had given us, so we grasped it'.

God again blessed MPUC in abundance with the instruments of his will to enact the final stage of the Church building. It is recorded earlier in this chronicle that Norman and Ray Jodrell and their respective wives' had been among the founding members of the Mt Pleasant Methodist Church; that Norm Jodrell was an inaugural Trustee of the Church (and Secretary); and it was the ten pound interest free loan from Norm and Ray Jodrell that enabled the opening of the first operational Church bank account. So it should come as no real surprise that another 'Jodrell' was a key player in the 2001 redevelopment.

Peter Jodrell a member of the congregation and relative of all of the above, among his many talents, is an architect. MPUC were so blessed to have the benefit of his good will and expertise to create a contemporary design that optimised the marvelous real estate; (so astutely selected by the original Trustees of the Church) to provide panoramic views of the city and river while at the same time including all that was desired of a community based facility and a tranquil, yet inspirational place of Worship.

Peter's high level of professionalism and wisdom coupled with the generosity of his time and advice enabled the project to maintain a fiscal discipline without sacrificing any of the integrity, aesthetics, purpose, and functionality of the completed building.



Chair of Council, Faith Kronberger, turns the first sod for 2001 redevelopment.

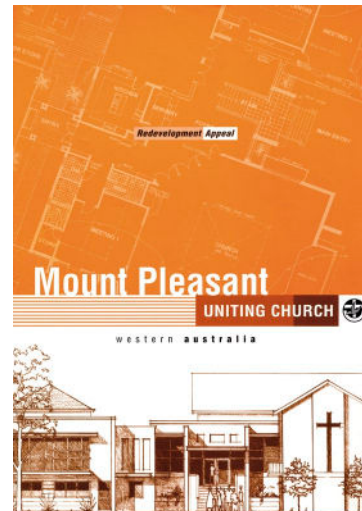


Many of the elements and hurdles that had to be surmounted in the 1957-1958 embryo project were still to the fore; but the passage of four decades had produced significant advances in technology and the district of Mt Pleasant and surrounding suburbs from which our Congregation is drawn, could in the main, now be considered to be one of the more affluent suburbs of Perth.

Those ingredients enabled planning, communication and fund raising connected with the project which had a price tag in the region of \$1m; to be conducted in a far more sophisticated environment which included a glossy brochure made available to all members of the Congregation that detailed plans, costs and how the project was to be funded.

The brochure concluded with these words “A new building with new amenities providing new opportunities for outreach is a great way to approach a new century. We hope that you share the excitement of what God is doing in our midst and want to be part of the desire to share the love of Jesus in Worship and Service’.

Part of the funding for the project was to come from the realisation of earlier propitious real estate purchases, generous contributions from individuals within the Congregation plus modest amounts from earlier reserves and fund raising. The generosity of the Congregation in both monetary terms and commitment to the project was overwhelming. All of that combined to limit borrowings to a manageable amount which with the passage of time to the present year has seen substantial inroads made into the principal amount that was initially borrowed.



Of course all of that is not to understate the financial and physical challenges in construction which was not without its own drama.

Amid site preparations was the discovery of a sinister looking object which the Australian Navy identified as a World War II sea mine. It transpires that the owners of real estate adjoining the Church building had used the mine as a sand filter for their swimming pool and was therefore not considered to be dangerous as an active mine.

Nonetheless its presence and removal provided consternation, media interest and photo opportunities before it was professionally removed by Navy personnel. This relic of an evil time in world history now serves a useful purpose as a naval training aid at ‘HMAS Stirling’ at Garden Island.



And so the journey that was commenced with that momentous masterplan of the Sites and Building Committee presented to the Church Trustees in 1957 by Peter Leggoe; was now a completed project.

It is very relevant to pay tribute to the Rev Dr Les Brockway (pictured) in this phase of the massive last stage of the masterplan, as it is difficult to contemplate how hard it must have been for him to play a significant role in many development related decisions and continue to function within his Calling and ongoing Church programs and Services; all amid a construction site in full flight.



Les accepted all of those trials and challenges in his equable style and these words from him echo everyone's sense of achievement at the completion of the project. 'I shall never forget the great day of opening and dedication of our new Worship and Community Centre'.

And the occasion matched the magnificence of the completed building. A vibrant committee organised an eight day festival of events which truly provided something for everyone. Among the activities were Memorial and Dedication Services of Worship, a rock concert, choir recitals, art and craft exhibition, community seminars, ladies guild reunion and a host of children's activities and entertainment attractions.

The highlight of which; in the middle of those celebrations; was the Dedication Service held on Sunday June 24 2001. It was conducted in the presence of the Rev Ken Deveraux, Chairperson of the Presbytery of Peel; Elizabeth Burns, Moderator of the Uniting Church in Western Australia; Rev Sealin Garlitt, Chairperson of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress; with the opening ceremony presided over by the Chairman of the Church Council Ken Wadley; while the Service was led by Faith Kronberger and the Preaching of the Word fittingly delivered by the Rev Dr Les Brockway.

And with great symbolism to conclude the journey of the enactment of the final stage of the visionary master plan, two of the original Church Trustees Don Pearce and Peter Leggoe handed over the keys to the Church with these words.

'We offer you the keys and ask that you now dedicate it to the worship, ministry and mission of Almighty God'.

Praise be to God.





## CHAPTER 7

### MINISTRIES



#### SUNDAY SCHOOL

While a Church was being grown, it was not surprising that two important ministries of any vibrant Church of God were also being formed: That of the Sunday School and the Ladies Guild; foundations that were to be integral to the growth of the early Church in Mt Pleasant and of course still enduring and an important part of the fabric of our Church now a half a century on.

Thanks to some marvelously preserved record keeping; there are minutes of meetings still accessible revealing a meeting of the Mount Pleasant Methodist Sunday School being held in the Leggoe's residence 16 Raymond Street Ardross on 29 April 1955. Meeting minutes include some remarkably precise accounting records of the revenue and expenditure of that time, lovingly given and so carefully expended for optimum effectiveness.

Attendees at what was quite an historic meeting were; Mrs Leggoe (pictured right), Mrs Courtney, Miss Hill and Deaconess Geddes with an apology recorded from the Reverend F Sampson the Superintendent Minister of the time.

Reflecting a young and growing suburb and many young married couples in the environs of Mount Pleasant, it is recorded that there already were 26 'scholars' on the roll; 10 of whom being pre school or first year school age; a further ten being 7 to 8 years old; with the remaining six in the older age ranges. The spiritual teaching duties were divided among the ladies within age ranges consistent with the above. Sunday School music was provided by Jacqueline Goddard.





Awaiting a traditional Church for their Sunday worship and education; early Sunday School and their major events were usually conducted in the Mt Pleasant Primary School with the kind cooperation of the State Education Department and the Headmaster of Mount Pleasant Primary School of that era; or in the homes of ever willing members of Mt Pleasant Methodist Church.

All of the activities of a well organised Sunday School were in evidence right from the beginning of their history; among them an attendance roll including a cradle roll; a Harvest Festival Service; a Mother's Day Service; an Annual Picnic, a Christmas Party and the ultimate event for any Christian youngster of the time; the much looked forward to Sunday School Anniversary generally held in late November.

This was the occasion for the genuine Sunday best clothing, bringing out the best of child singing learnt so willingly during the year under review and the keenly sought after acknowledgement and prizes awarded for attendance punctuality and learning during the year. Of course all climaxed at the end of formal proceedings by the ultimate in feasts that Church groups set the community trend and standard for in excellence and home cooked variety.

Sometimes of course the children's clothing did not return home in the same pristine condition that it had started as a result of either careless eating or perhaps the running and games that inevitably followed the feast as parents understandably exchanged stories and pride in the spiritual and community growth of their kin.

The growth in Sunday School numbers was constant and within less than two years since formation the initial numbers had grown by more than 50% and eight willing and capable Sunday School teachers had volunteered to instruct the youngsters each Sunday and look after them in other related activities.

The teaching resources were structured; with one of their number appointed superintendent, the inaugural appointee being Deaconess Geddes who was shortly to be seconded to higher duties within the Methodist Church in WA and succeeded first of all by Miss Carson in a temporary capacity and later in a full time capacity by Mr Armstrong; accepting another major responsibility in the formation and growth of Mount Pleasant Methodist Church.

Acknowledgement of early Sunday School Superintendents would be incomplete without paying tribute to the long serving Fred Bertram who provided many years of dedicated service and Christian direction to a host of Mt Pleasant youngsters.

Those youngsters who showed an extended keenness to find more about Christianity were given structured lessons and ultimately examinations on what they had learnt. And for those wanting to make a definitive commitment to a life in Christ, there were what was referred to as 'Decision Days'.

Although many of the youngsters making that decision would have moved on to other suburbs and Churches as their lives and that of their parents progressed; it is clear that the early instruction provided by Mt Pleasant Methodist Church Sunday School Teachers had a profound affect on a lot of young lives. It is those pioneers that lit the lamp for those that followed in their path and to this day have such wonderful leadership via Sue Stephens, that have helped the modern Mt Pleasant Uniting Church to reach out to the children and youth of our district and help them not only in their Christian journey but where those young people have also been the lifeblood of renewal for our Church.





Some members of the Ladies Guild celebrate WA's 150th Anniversary in period costume in 1979.

## LADIES GUILD

And of course where there are children there are mothers.

At a meeting of the Mt Pleasant Methodist Sunday School on 16 February 1956, there is minute that states that 'it would be a good idea to send out a note to Mothers of the Sunday School children to establish an interest in forming a 'Ladies Guild'.

That suggestion obviously fell on fertile ground and it is recorded in the minutes of a further Mount Pleasant Methodist Sunday School Meeting of 23 August 1956; that a Ladies Guild has been formed (on 24 May 1956) with an inaugural Membership of 17 with already several well attended social functions and operational meetings having been conducted.

The foundation of the Ladies Guild naturally had a spiritual conviction and commitment with the tradition of opening each meeting with devotions and readings from the Bible, prayer and hymns, inaugurated at that time; still prevailing to this very day.

Although Christian fellowship has been an enjoyable by product of times spent together, the Ladies Guild inventive and dedicated fund raising activities and pastoral visitations were always lovingly directed to the benefit of the Mt Pleasant Methodist / Uniting Church and their various Missions; the wider disadvantaged community of Western Australia and a variety of overseas Missions.

Significant among these overseas Missions was a 1960 Mt Pleasant Methodist Church Ladies Guild alignment to the Save the Children's Fund; assisting access to powdered milk for the children of Korea; in the process, extending to sponsorship to adopt a family of five children in Korea until they were self supporting. Other early Save the Children sponsorships involved aiding a young boy in Morocco with his schooling, until he obtained paid employment, a young girl in India and starving children in Africa.



Aiding refugees in our community that came to the notice of the Ladies Guild has also been a large focus of whatever material, emotional, spiritual or educational assistance that could be given to enable those people to better make their way of life in their new land.

A delightful and rewarding relationship was initiated by the Ladies Guild with the hospital at Ba in Fiji at the time when Estelle Vaughan was Matron of that hospital. Each Christmas the Ladies Guild generated enough resources to ensure that each patient and staff member was sent a wrapped gift as a further reminder that God loves them.

In times of need for a new sterilising unit for the hospital; the Ladies Guild mobilised fund raising which even crossed interstate borders, with such generous impact that not only was the necessary \$3,000 raised to pay for the required sterilising unit, but moneys in excess of the original target were able to be diverted to the purchase of other essential hospital items.

The warmth and appreciation of the people of the Ba Hospital, to the Ladies Guild and the Congregation of Mt Pleasant; is expressed in the gift to Mt Pleasant Uniting Church of the magnificent work of crochet titled 'Jesus the Good Shepherd' (a more expanded explanation of which appears in this book dealing with significant displays and exhibits).

There is an unwritten rule and credo consistent with the scriptures within the Ladies Guild; that no request for assistance goes unanswered and to this day donations are still directed to the Ba Seniors Centre in Fiji and other world wise causes for the needy; as well as worthy causes in Australia; Fremantle Mission, Frontier Service, the Royal Flying Doctor among them.

Time sadly has moved on in terms of fund raising opportunities for the Ladies Guild to help various needy causes and programs that are identified in the community. Fetes and cake stalls are a product of a by gone era with funds generated today almost exclusively coming from the sales of jams and preserves made by Joan Nicholls with great love, experience and skill.

The influence and assistance of the Ladies Guild in the creation of resources for the original Church Building and enabling the annual Church budget to be balanced in those early difficult years cannot be overstated. (refer 'God will Provide' in this history of MPUC).

And always very subtly in the background of any MPUC Church Service of Worship or function is the unmistakable hand of the Ladies Guild and their members; be it in the provision of delightful food, music, flower arrangements, assistance with Communion sacraments, and provision of Sunday School teachers, fund raising, working projects or pastoral visits. Praise be to God for the creation, love, and work of the MPUC Ladies Guild and indeed the Ladies Guild of Churches everywhere.



## CHAPTER 8

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### SIGNIFICANT DISPLAYS AND EXHIBITS

Over a period of 50 years it has been a sometimes difficult and delicate exercise to retain items of historical significance in the evolution of Mt Pleasant Methodist Church into Mt Pleasant Uniting Church; particularly in the face of two distinct construction phases since the building of the original Chapel. Fortunately dedication plaques have stood the test of time and still can be seen in the Church entry foyer or in the old office section.

The new Church of 2001 provided additional opportunities to glorify God with carefully thought of and constructed displays and exhibits; be they banners, tapestries, paintings, prints, tiling or pottery works.

Indeed one of the features of week long celebrations to commemorate the opening of the new Church building in 2001 was an exhibition of textile arts and craft by Aboriginal and Torres Strait artists from the Dunnili Art Centre at Nungalingya College in Darwin. Items of that exhibition dedicated by then candidate for Church Ministry and the now Rev Willie Pickett; are among those featured in this chapter which explores origins and meaning of selected works of art.

#### THE LAST SUPPER - TAPESTRY

The late Gwen McKenna; sister- in- law to Margaret and Ralph Doepel had a great love of tapestries. Having worked one for each of her family, Gwen bought 'The Last Supper' intending to work it and donate it to the Church. Unfortunately Gwen suffered a stroke and was unable to do the work, so she asked Jan Johnson to do the needle work for her.

Jan agreed and worked very hard to finish it in six months, knowing of Gwen's deteriorating health and wanting Gwen to see it finished. Gwen indeed did see it completed, had it framed and donated it to our Church. It was presented at the Harvest Service in 2005 and now hangs at the back of the Chapel near the sound desk. Gwen was pleased to be at that Service.

#### INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVES - PAINTINGS

Each tells stories of fallen creation and the renewed community in Christ from a Nyungar perspective.

##### **The Crow and the Magpie:**

The painting portrays three stages of the dreamtime story from the top down. First, there is the hunting expedition in the beautiful garden. Then, there is the sitting around the camp-fire cooking the food and waiting for the fire to die down. Third, there is the disharmony between the two brothers, with the one brother wounding the other and knocking him down into the ashes. This brother emerges as someone different covered in white ash patches over his body.

And this is how it is with the crow and the magpie. Have you ever noticed the distance kept between these two creatures? All is not harmonious out there in creation, and there is learned respect from a distance. We live in a broken world.





### **The Willy-Wagtail**

The painting is about Jesus who brings us hope by suffering for us in our stead. The cross and resurrection of Jesus brings us into new relationships in a new community. God's love is a suffering love.

Bandung's picture is about the Nyungar story of the Jitty Jitty (which is associated with the willy-wagtail jumping from side to side), the respected elder who stands in front of the accused person and jumps from side to side deflecting the spears saving the accused. This is the hope that Jesus gives us, and we become the restored, joyful, grateful, humble and forgiven community. In God's reign all things can become new.

We thank God for the new community of faith and love through the life of Jesus and His Spirit. We also thank Marilyn Garlett (Bindarn) for these splendid paintings.

### **Jesus: The Good Shepherd - Crochet**

From 1966 to 1977 Estelle Vaughan was Matron of the Ba Hospital; during which time her parents the Rev James and Mrs Muriel Vaughan were strong supporters of the hospital and assisted in raising funds for the Friends of Ba Hospital Benevolent fund. In 1970 James and Muriel became members of Mt Pleasant Uniting Church and Muriel became a member of the Ladies Guild.

For more than 20 years; the Ladies Guild organised a box into which members of the Mt Pleasant congregation could place Christmas gifts for all hospital patients and staff. This was always appreciated by all concerned as the gifts were wrapped and ready for distribution and no one was forgotten.

After the hospital was handed over to the Fijian Government to run; the Ladies Guild maintained the sending Christmas gifts to the Methodist Church run 'Veilomani Boys Home' in Ba; In recent years; Christmas gifts have been sent to the Bali family, as personal contact with the Boys Home has been lost.



'Jesus: The Good Shepherd' was a gift from Ba Methodist Hospital and the Ba Methodist Church in Fiji as a thank you gift to Mt Pleasant Uniting Church and the Ladies Guild. It was crocheted by Martha Bali, mother of Satya Bali, long term friend of Estelle and successor as Matron of Ba Methodist Hospital in Fiji.

The original work was given to Mt Pleasant Uniting Church in the late 1980's and was framed first by Estelle Vaughan and then later by the Ladies Guild when it needed some restoration work done. Mrs Bali did the finest of crocheting as is evidenced in this wonderful piece of work that now hangs in Meeting Room 1 and was their community's way of saying thank you to the faithfulness of the Ladies Guild and the members of Mt Pleasant Uniting Church.

Both Satya and her mother have died but the Ladies Guild still send a gift to Dorothy Bali and continue to financially support the Ba Seniors Centre that Dorothy manages.

### **Various Banners on Various Themes of the Scriptures**

Prime 'architects' of the many banners that are displayed throughout the Church had a firm conviction that they should in their content and interpretation; represent appeal across generations and genders.

The central theme running through the banners is the concept of creation and the imagery and thoughts surrounding creation that provides a visual testimony to the Glory of God. Through the product of much prayer, research and creativity of more than 40 members of Mt Pleasant Uniting Church working in seven 'syndicates' or work groups independently of each other; the finished exhibits achieved all of that.

### **'Give Thanks' - Quilted Wall Hanging**

This was designed and made for the Mt Pleasant Uniting Church as a part of arts and crafts commissioned for the new Church building. The location of the new Church and God's provision of this gift of a new building to the Congregation and community; inspired the design of the quilt which took 18 months to create and was completed in time for the Harvest Festival Thanksgiving Service on 5 February 2003.

The quilt depicts the cross on the hill of Mt Pleasant with the communion symbols and Bible at the base of the Cross representing Christianity and the location of the new Church. The background shows the skyline of the City of Perth also visible from Mt Pleasant Uniting Church with the sun rise of a new day.

The image of the tree forming part of the quilt denotes that it was originally part of the Church property and is recognised for its significance of times past. Mt Pleasant flora is to be imagined in the colours of the hill and with the native grass tree prevalent at one time also remembered.

Additions of the stars of the Southern Cross formation, the Uniting Church symbol and the Willy Wagtail; add geographical and, spiritual and cultural links to the imagery. In aboriginal representation, Jesus is likened to the Willy Wagtail. (Refer also to Rev Dr Les Brockway reminisces of this imagery)

The 'Give Thanks' quilted wall hanging was designed and constructed by Tenna Bridge, Alison Stockman and Pat Timmel with assistance from Jacqueline Cavanagh and Gail Horne while Barbara Johns completed the necessary machine quilting of the finished product.





It now hangs prominently in the entrance stairs inside the Church building in fixed framework that exhibit its many qualities and imagery in full view for all who may come to Mt Pleasant to Worship or for other Christian occasions.

#### **‘The True Vine’ Mosaic at the Foot of the Entrance Steps to Main Church Buildings**

The grand new building and entrance cried out for an entry statement that paid recognition that here in Mt Pleasant Uniting Church is a House of God created only by the gifts given to us by our Almighty God.

And so it came to pass that Tony Solomons in our Congregation was so moved to deploy his tiling talents to the Glory of God. But what to depict became the subject of much prayerful interaction between Tony and his Lord before, as recalled by Tony; a ‘vision for his work to be done was clearly revealed to him in the unmistakable voice of the Lord, one momentous day while driving along the Freeway’.

Inspired by the scripture reading that declares ‘I am the true vine’ the splendid work so lovingly created by Tony and assisted by a close friend working long hours into the night was completed in time for it to complement the newly constructed building and remains today as a permanent reminder of our one true Saviour as all enter this House of God.

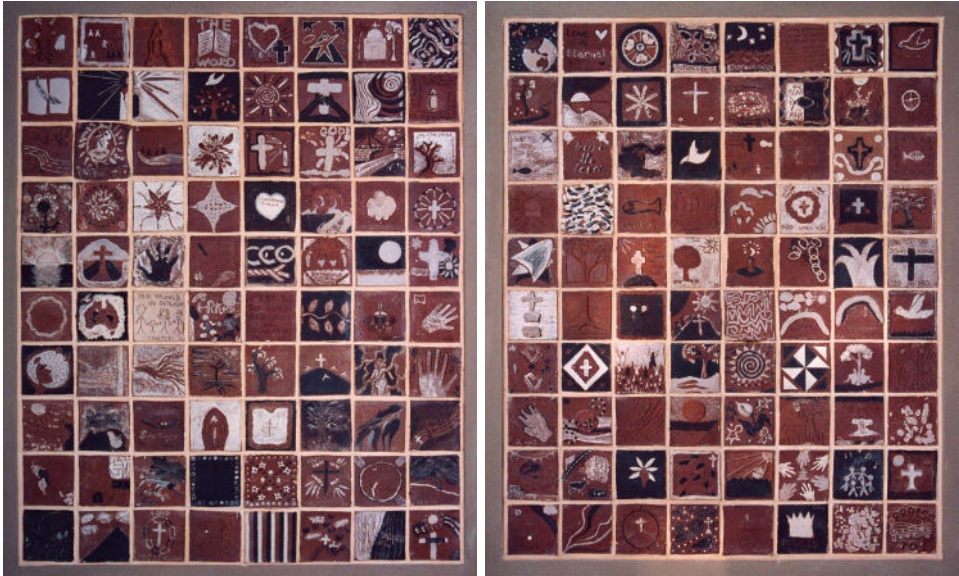


#### **‘Unity’ Twin Feature Wall Mosaic Tile Display at Main Church Entry Doors**

Having traversed ‘The True Vine’ and surmounted the steps to MPUC, any Church visitor cannot help but notice and be awestruck by the two feature displays at the top of the steps. The creation of Melanie Sharpham, it features eighty individual tiles in each frame, with each of the tiles bearing an image of spiritual significance, that when combined together could almost be construed as a Church Service of its own simply by viewing and reading them.

Under the theme of ‘Unity’, the great pottery and firing skills of Melanie were harnessed by total involvement of the whole Church family of all ages with the imprint of congregation members and their own idea of the scriptures and faith being represented in each tile.





The above display was completed in time for the Dedication Service of the last stage of Church redevelopment held on June 24 2001.

### **Sunday Play Group Wall**

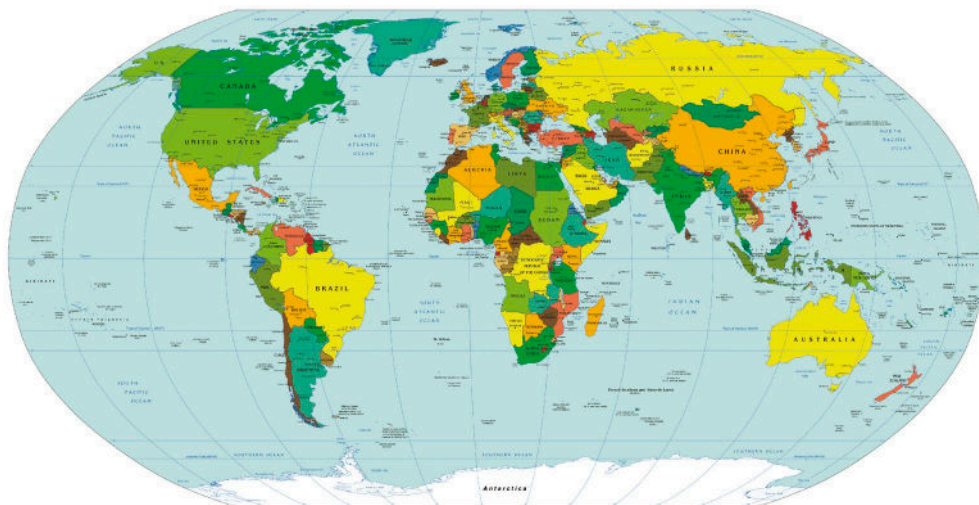
The most recent MPUC feature exhibit was a special project undertaken in 2007 by the Sunday School Play Group. An innovative concept of fired glazed tiles in bright colours in the form of a mural, with each tile carrying the imprint of a child's hand or foot and the entire mural; gives the appearance of a stained glass window and which is complemented by an appropriate scripture verse.

Sue Stephens was a guiding light behind the project while Melanie Sharpham again devoted many dedicated hours of her expertise to bring about such a unique but professionally completed display as a lasting testament to young lives now and gone before. The display which proudly remains in situ on the outside wall of the Church's back courtyard; was dedicated at a Church Service in November 2007; at which fittingly; the children of our Church were the central focus.



## CHAPTER 9

### MPUC MISSIONS TO THE WIDER WORLD



Leaders at Mount Pleasant Methodist and Mount Pleasant Uniting Church were very much aware of world mission and a desire to spread the Word of God and whatever physical or financial resources available from the Church to dedicated regions of constant need or those places that had sustained a natural disaster.

Recognition of early instances of mission aid to the wider world is covered briefly in the part of this history devoted to the birth and evolution of the Ladies Guild. Further mentions also appear in the chapters devoted to the origins of some of the works of art that adorn various corridors of the Church and the reminiscences' of the Rev Dr Les Brockway.

By the mid 1990's, the passage of time had enabled MPUC to be better resourced to expand its global horizons in terms of specialist Ministries. These resources; initially inspired under the term of tenure of the Rev Dr Les Brockway; saw the appointment of successive Youth Ministry leaders in Kent Morgan and Randy Salmond which in turn harnessed a wave of committed young Christians and a youth mentoring program who desired to spread the gospel and make a difference in affected corners of the globe.



In the past fifteen years, MPUC has represented God's Word and God's work in the following countries and by the following people:

- Nicky and Steve Rehn – Ivory Coast (bible translation and other related projects);
- Tracey Leon – Kirgizstan as part of the Interserve program;
- Ian Dowley in Kabul, Afghanistan, also under Interserve (physiotherapy);
- Phil Lindsay and Toni Law have served in Nepal as part of the Tear Mission;
- Rev Val Bock has spent a series of extended terms in communities in Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand;
- Claire Burge accompanied Val Bock on a mission trip to Thailand
- Sarah and Simon Barns and Sara and Vince Mateljan have served in India as part of an aid program run under the name of 'Efficorps',
- Phil and Julie Sparrow as senior representatives of Hagar International have missioned to world conflict locations of Afghanistan and Iraq to assist the interests of women who are very much marginalised and in some instances persecuted in those regions.
- Cameron and Nicole Kingwell spent a year in Bangladesh working for the Australian Volunteers Abroad.
- Trevor and Barbara Morgan were in Bangladesh for a few weeks in October 2008 assisting with computing projects and literacy work.

More recently a major MPUC overseas Mission focus has been to Mongolia, working with the Veterinary and Educational Training Network (VETNet) to provide teaching and other resources to regional schools in Galshar, Kenty Province in north eastern Mongolia.

MPUC committed to this program for 3 years and in addition to financial support; short term mission trips by Tania Ledwij (3 trips 2006-8) and Tammy Hawkins and Tom McGuinness (2007) helped build relationships and share God's love. Connections to the local Mongolian community in Perth have also been established through this work.



Steve Rehn



Tom McGuinness

This project grew from a long-term commitment to supporting the work of VETNet Mongolia by veterinarian Rick Read, a member of MPUC

It is with great sadness that we record that Tom McGuinness died as a result of a freak lightning accident while on youth mission related work in Thailand shortly before this publication went to print. Around the same time, Steve Rehn was killed in a motor vehicle accident while bike riding in Africa following another mission trip. We acknowledge the wonderful work that these two fine men undertook on behalf of their Lord and Saviour and commit them both to his care.

The recent connection with Thailand through the work of Tom McGuinness, Randy Salmund and others is currently being further evaluated through a sense of God's calling to continue his work in this part of his creation.



# CHAPTER 10

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## THE MINISTERS

Earlier chapters make reference to the ‘pioneers’ of the Applecross Mt Pleasant district and the role that they each played to spread the Word of God. Mt Pleasant has been blessed that God has called His dedicated servants to Minister to successive congregations of Mt Pleasant and to serve our wider community. We give thanks for their time among us and for the valued contributions that have been made.

Below is the sequence of Ministers who were part of earlier referred to ‘circuit’ ministry or accepted the calling to Mt Pleasant Methodist Church and after Union; to the Mt Pleasant Uniting Church.

Rev H Lindley	Rev A Canning	Rev R Marsh*
Rev L Broadbent	Rev M Davies	Rev R Ross
Rev G Bensley	Rev M Jay*	Rev Dr L Bockway
Rev K Carter	Rev P Yeo*	Rev J Matthews
Rev W Hawker	Rev K Ogier*	

\* Indicates Minister in Association with St Stephens Uniting Church in Applecross

Profiles of the late Rev Jim Vaughan and the Rev Len Broadbent (in addition to the personal reflections of past and still living Ministers of our Church) are most appropriate to include in this history of MPUC. Not only for their involvement in early history and leading roles in dedication Services of the infant Mt Pleasant Methodist Church (in their respective capacities as President of the Methodist Conference and in charge of Melville circuit) but noting that their daughters’ Estelle Vaughan and Marylee Masarei continue the inspiration and teaching of their father(s) as leaders of various Ministries at MPUC; service and commitment which still continues today.

### Rev James (Jim) Vaughan

James Vaughan came to Australia in 1927 as a 26 year old Home Missionary from England. His first appointment was in Mullewa. After three country appointments he came to Perth to undertake Theological training at Wesley College. Following his ordination, he married Muriel Charlton in 1935 and his first placement was in Bayswater.

In those days, Methodist Ministers were stationed by a committee of the Methodist Conference for a period of about 5 years in each placement, and Rev Vaughan was stationed in both country and metropolitan areas. His final settlement was in Albany Wesley where he served for a period of 7 years. From there he retired to Brentwood at the age of 70. James and Muriel became part of the Mt Pleasant Uniting Church family from 1970.

It was during the time that James was President of the Methodist Conference (a period of 20 months) that he had the privilege of opening the new Mt Pleasant Uniting Church and there is a plaque in Meeting Room 2 (the Sunday School room) attesting to this event.

During the early years after his retirement from active ministry; James and Muriel provided supply ministry for several congregations including Nedlands, West Leederville and Moora.





He regularly preached for other congregations for the next 10 years or so, including the Mt Pleasant Uniting Church.

It was following James's death in 1992 that the evening congregation which was faithful but small in number and at that time had no Minister to lead them; continued to appreciate his sermons that Estelle read as part of those Services of Worship.

James and Muriel Vaughan attended Church twice every Sunday at a time when Mt Pleasant Uniting Church had 3 services each Sunday. People remember them fondly for their welcoming nature with new people and visitors, often being taken to James and Muriel's home for lunch after morning worship. As a retired Minister, James attended Church Council until his hearing deteriorated so much that he could not actively participate in those meetings.

He remained as the Chaplain of Mt Henry Homes until his death, visiting Mt Henry residents and nursing home patients every week, and taking regular worship services for the residents there. He was also called upon to conduct funerals and the occasional wedding. The last wedding he conducted was that of his granddaughter just a year before his death.

James Vaughan was a mentor to many of the younger ministers all his life and Mt Pleasant Uniting Church greatly benefited from his wisdom and his many other attributes. His life ended on 28th December 1992 at the age of 91 years. His wife Muriel predeceased him by just over 2 years.

### **Rev Leonard (Len) Broadbent**

After a journey of 5 weeks on the S.S. Berrina, Leonard Broadbent disembarked at Fremantle wharf at 7.00 am, in February 1927. So began his story of 50 years of Christian service in Australia, 47 of which were shared with his wife Ella.

Home Mission work in pioneer settlements, whether in agriculture, mining, timber mills or station country; challenged this young Englishman to a time of adventure, as he shared his Christian faith midst the adversities and struggles of many people, who then became lifelong friends.

Len Broadbent's mode of transport for the early years in Nannup, Corrigin, Gosnells and Perth was a twin Douglas motor cycle, which is now in the Perth Museum. It was purchased for 50 pounds, a third of his salary for the year at that time.

In 1930 Len Broadbent commenced theological studies, after which he was ordained in 1934 and then appointed to the Gosnells Circuit, where he met his future wife Ella Grey. Children John and Marylee were born and joined in the adventure of living in country towns and Perth suburbs, moving almost every three years, as was usual in those days.

The Rev Broadbent's first contacts with Mount Pleasant Uniting Church came in 1957 when the family moved into the East Fremantle Circuit. The Circuit included Bicton-Palmyra, High Road, Applecross and Mt Pleasant Churches and stretched from North Fremantle Traffic Bridge to Canning Bridge. After some years, Applecross and Mount Pleasant became a new circuit as was more fully described in the introductory chapter of this history.

The family stayed in East Fremantle for 6 happy years. During that time great things were happening in the Church. Billy Graham conducted a crusade in Perth. Many people became Christians, churches in the circuit were revitalised and many people were helped to grow into mature Christian faith and service.





Rev. Leonard Broadbent helped Rev. Herbert Lindley with laying the foundation stone for the new Mount Pleasant Church. He wrote at the time that the Church building represented a huge act of faith, as finance for business or housing was very limited in 1958.

For Leonard and Ella, it was always a shared ministry. Ella was president of three Ladies Guilds while they served in this circuit, including Mount Pleasant, and both were very much involved with pastoral care and youth ministry.

In the years of faithful service that followed, until his passing into God's care in 1977, Leonard Broadbent testified that he and Ella were sustained by the presence of Christ in all circumstances, however tough. The foundations of Mount Pleasant Church were built on the faithful lives of many who loved God and devoted themselves to His service and the building of His Church here on earth.



It is insightful to include reminiscences of some still living past Ministers of MPUC on their time at Mt Pleasant and who remain loved and respected by the Congregation. Each was asked of their feelings when receiving; and leaving the calling at Mt Pleasant as well as challenges and achievements during their term as Minister of the Word commencing with:

#### **Rev Mervyn R Jay 1978-1984**

'How honoured I was to be coming to this Parish. I had only been ordained in October, 1970, and my settlement at Mt Pleasant began in January 1978!

I had left school at the end of year 10, and gained access to University through mature age matriculation, while in Theological training. At that time I was doing second year studies of a part-time Arts degree at Murdoch University. I also believed that my family would benefit from being in the Mt Pleasant congregation (and this proved true during our seven years there.)

Many senior Methodist Ministers had been there before me. It was a great challenge being a large and growing Congregation in addition to the additional responsibility for the Applecross Uniting Church Congregation. My wife and I knew Brian and Margaret Hill from many years past. There were also two other university professors in MPUC congregation of that time!

The main challenge I knew of when I began at Mt Pleasant was helping the parish come into the Uniting Church, which had begun seven months before my calling. It comprised of a combined Congregational – Presbyterian congregation, plus the two Methodist congregations. The latter were suffering somewhat from the fact that the 'infant' had grown larger than the 'parent' over the years, and the 'parent' congregation found it hard to accept this fact.

Another challenge was to so build up the people of the congregations in their faith, that they would be empowered, challenged and enabled to share their faith in work places, shopping centres and in leisure activities; in short to fulfill the great commission.

There was a considerable awareness of world mission activities within the Mt Pleasant congregation, and I was keen to encourage and increase that.

My memory suggests that there was only a small and limited youth group operating at the beginning of my time. However, when David Doepel took on the role of leader, at the time allowing his B.Sc. studies to take second place to youth leadership, God brought such an increase in youth, that the numbers peaked at about 100.



These young men and women came to a mid-week Bible study time (which took over the Doepel house for the night, with different sections scattered through various rooms). They came to the evening service, and a Friday night activity had to be commenced to give a social facet to this work. There was a hidden danger, as there came to be a pressure on those 'not yet Christians' to make a commitment to Christ.

At Mt Pleasant; a group had been formed late in my predecessor's time, by a group of families.

They had a meal together in one of their homes about once a month, during which a service of worship aimed at, and geared around the children of the families, was held. I learned of this and was keen to encourage it and see it grow.

However, one family involved went abroad for most of 1978, and so it was discontinued until their return. When they returned, and a general meeting was held; about 70 people (including children) met and about 8 Family Worship groups were begun. My Wife Dorothy and I, with our children; were part of one group, the only one which met over a lunch meal to accommodate my program with other commitments.

These groups had a profound effect on the life of this congregation during our years there with many of the families that came into Mt Pleasant congregation in those years were from the eastern States, as executive appointments within their firms in Perth. When any such family, or part thereof, came to a Service of Worship they would be speedily invited to join a Family Worship group, and most did.

Many times a crisis in a family was being effectively ministered to, from within the Family Worship group, before I as the Minister became aware of the crisis! Some husbands and fathers became Christians through these groups.

Dorothy was involved in the Christian Women Communicating Internationally (CWCI) movement, and during our time at MPUC this led directly to many of the women from our Parish, especially Mt Pleasant, coming to the yearly live-in conventions. As well as the direct impact of the conventions on these women, a number of Know Your Bible (KYB) groups began. These groups are required to be interdenominational, and benefit from being so, but they had many MPUC women in them!

As 1984 began, Dorothy and I began to plan for Long Service Leave. I had been in the work of the ministry since 1963 and this was our first period of long service leave! Our eldest daughter had married, and some of our other children were now living away from home, so we had begun to look forward to this break, which was planned to begin after our second grandchild was born, in July-August of that year.

Before we went on leave, I was approached about considering moving to another parish from the beginning of 1985, and it seemed right to accept this settlement. The Applecross- Mt Pleasant Parish still had two ministers, and Patrick Yeo had settled in well to the northern end of the Parish. Mt. Pleasant continued with very strong lay leadership, and I sensed could benefit from a new Minister's drive and direction.

There were many very joyous and pleasant memories at Mt Pleasant, and we were leaving behind many precious friendships which have continued over the years since. There had however been some difficult times and stresses, which we needed to move on from.

So my thoughts were mixed but I had no doubt that God, would continue His work, and that it was time for me to leave.'

Footnote: Rev Mervyn Jay conducted Silver Jubilee Service for Mt Pleasant Uniting Church.



### Rev Patrick Yeo 1984-1994

'I came to Applecross UC at the beginning of 1984 from Mandurah to fill a vacancy. The Church needed a new Minister and I was ready to come up to Perth to be with our elder daughter, Rebecca, who was starting her Medical Technology course at WAIT (now Curtin University). So, it was a happy arrangement for both groups.

Mt Pleasant and Applecross were one parish then operating under one Parish Council (now Church Council) with Rod Marsh pastoring the Mt Pleasant Congregation and me the Applecross Congregation. After being in the joint parish for about 18 months a decision was made by the respective Congregations to split the one parish into two separate independent parishes. This was done with a belief that the two Congregations would develop faster and more smoothly as independent Congregations.

Mount Pleasant had a younger congregation with a good number of young professionals and very dynamic core of lay leadership, particularly in the persons of Brian Hill and Barry McGore - professors from Murdoch University.

The Church had three services each Sunday. The first morning Service was a traditional hymn singing Service for older members conducted by the resident Minister followed by a younger family oriented service conducted by lay people. Then in the evening, they had a service shared between Rod and me. A Youth Worker in the person of Randy Salmond was employed originally to develop youth ministry of the joint parish but he found himself needed a lot more by a very active youth group meeting at Mt Pleasant.

Meanwhile, the Applecross congregation was developing very differently. It too had a very committed group of retired lay leaders but lacking in younger families and working professionals. In addition, it was still recovering emotionally, psychologically and spiritually from the merger of three separate churches (Methodist, Congregation and Presbyterian) to become the Applecross Uniting Church Australia.

Sunday Services were held in two separate buildings on alternate months - one at the old Presbyterian Church on Canning Highway and the other at the former Methodist Church in Applecross. Quite a few members got confused with this arrangement and dropped out! This was during the time when an influx of refugees and migrants was taking place in the community and the wider nation. We saw a good number of migrants in particular (from Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia and Korea) beginning to appear at our services in Applecross.

This congregation was ready for a new direction in Ministry. The lay leaders were ready to rise to the challenge. By the time I left the Applecross Parish (ten years later) to answer the call from Kardinya UC, the Congregation was happily worshipping as one in a brand new building and was averaging a Sunday attendance of 150 worshippers with at least 30 new migrant families joining our membership.

The Church at the Mount Pleasant end had developed significantly too - maintaining its younger and professional membership profile as well as attracting new migrants to its services. The split into two independent parishes was a good move. God had blessed both congregations richly.



### **Rev Rod Marsh 1985-1994**

After completing a Bachelor of Divinity from London University at Moore College Sydney, I had decided to candidate for the Methodist Conference in WA.

So I was amongst the last candidates accepted at the last Conference of the Methodist Church in WA. After further training, I was amongst the first ordained in the Uniting Church in WA in 1979 (following one year of “Methodist” probation).

By the time I arrived at Mount Pleasant Uniting Church, I had spent seven years in the ‘bush’, ministering to Congregations in Pingelly Brookton, and Beverley and surrounding Shires. My excitement at being in the ministry of the Uniting Church was still fresh.

I had decided to join the ministry of the first “Australian” Church because it was genuinely indigenous; supported the ministry of women; was not hierarchical; supported lay ministry; had a Biblical view of the importance of social justice, was genuinely ecumenical in outlook and supported the emerging Aboriginal Church. Subsequent experience has been somewhat disappointing in the implementation of some of these emphases, but these issues were important to me at the time.

From the beginning of my time at Mt Pleasant, I greatly valued the support of the Congregation. I regarded it as a strength that great value was placed upon lay participation in the services and the ministries of the church and there were also many other strengths I experienced.

Throughout my time at Mt Pleasant, the various Chairpersons of the Elders were wonderfully willing leaders and inspiring “co workers with God”. It was great to work with my colleague Rev Patrick Yeo. His wisdom, experience, sensitivity and guidance were deeply appreciated by this impetuous, keen youngster!

There were also other clergy in the Parish: Revs Jim Vaughan and Bob Boulter had retired into the Mt Pleasant congregation and were always supportive. Bob’s stories of his pre war depression days working and ministering in the outback were fascinating. It was a great privilege to join my many gifted friends in the Mt Pleasant congregation “Planting and watering ..... in God’s field”, and most rewarding because it was “God we were serving”.

Mount Pleasant Uniting Church was in a state of transition when I arrived with distressingly deep conflicts between visions of roles of the Congregation and Minister. Not all saw the change from a ‘Minister centred Congregation’ to a ‘lay centred Congregation’ as a desirable move.

I saw my role as a member of the congregation with certain gifts which should be honoured but this did not mean that I was more important than other members of the congregation. Additionally, I saw my role as Minister to both “services” in the Church.

By nature I am a conflict avoider and characteristically wanted to be liked, so I tried to meet the needs of all in this time of conflict and change. As anyone would know, it is impossible and undesirable for any one person to meet everyone’s needs. The Congregation all needed to ‘bear one another’s burdens’, by careful listening to one another.

As a Church we needed to learn a hard lesson - that the Church has one foundation and one Lord and Saviour, and all, whoever they are, are subject to one another in Christ. We needed to build a “Christ centred congregation” rather than a Minister or Lay centred Congregation (though, of course these are not mutually exclusive).



As Paul says “Let each carpenter who comes on the job take care to build on the foundation! remembering that there is only one foundation; the one already laid: Jesus Christ.” In God’s grace, we began building together a church on the one foundation in order to be qualified to be in-dwelt by the Spirit

After several years of sharing the ordained Ministry in the Parish of Applecross/Mt Pleasant it was decided to form two separate “one congregation” Parishes. I supported this move because it allowed Patrick and I to concentrate on the rather separate issues and distinct character of both congregations. The downside was that I could no longer share responsibility for my mistakes or short comings!

Another important truth is relevant to Mt Pleasant Uniting Church. All true Ministry is a body thing, with all sharing roles and responsibility. Nobody misses out on unique ways in which they show God’s love to others, so all should be honoured. All have a place, and no one is to feel or be left out, from the youngest to the oldest.

In one of Paul’s many analogies of the church Paul likens the church to a building, temple, inhabited by the Spirit. “. . . you are the temple of God, and God himself is present in you. No one will get by with vandalising God’s temple, you can be sure of that. God’s temple is sacred—and you, remember, are the temple.” I recall an incident which illustrates the tradition of everyone having a role in the ministry of Christ:

I had asked Rev Jim Vaughan to come forward during children’s talk, and hand a baton on to the youngest member (a baby) as a symbol of all sharing the ministry. Jim’s gentle smile, and quiet manner said it all – he was conveying the love of God through the generations, not just symbolically, but really.

Previously, I had understood another lesson of the ordained Ministry, which was appropriate to Mount Pleasant. There is one Ministry and it belongs to Jesus, and this ministry does not depend on my success or failure. Faithfulness in pastoral, teaching and preaching work was what I was called to, not success. In such a spirit I tried to unify the Congregation and call all to respect others’ opinions and traditions.

It was many years before, as a Congregation we were able to stabilise our service pattern to an earlier “contemplative” Service, followed by a “family oriented Service! But we did it, and most people began the journey along the rough road to our goal.

My final summing up of my years at Mt Pleasant: God, the Church, family, justice and other key issues, are about relationships, and relationships which are not based on the commitments and practices of love, yield nothing of substance or permanence.

In the light of this fact, I am grateful for my years at Mt Pleasant Uniting Church. Especially I am grateful for all those dear brothers and sisters who, by immense patience and tolerance, loved me and my prayer is that God’s love in Christ which we shared together will still be growing and yielding fruit to God’s glory. John Wesley’s last words of thanks are an appropriate acclamation for Mount Pleasant Uniting Church, “The best of all, God is with us”.





## Rev Dr Les Brockway 1998-2006

When I accepted God's call to Mt Pleasant, I looked forward to the challenge of parish ministry again, after 17 years in educational ministries in the Northern Synod among both Aboriginal people and non-aboriginal people, though mostly among Aboriginal people. I felt very comfortable about practicing a facilitating style of ministry within a congregation consisting of very strong lay leadership. I felt that this was compatible with the style I had developed in the Northern Synod as we sought to raise up leaders controlling their own mission and ministry.

Among other things, I knew I had an organising gift from my experience in the Northern Synod as Secretary of the Board of Education for Ministry with its various educational roles (including Dean of Students and Director of Field Education) and then as Principal of Nungalinya College where we had 30 staff in Darwin and 300 students across Australia.

But I could only hope I had the necessary gifts for Mount Pleasant Uniting Church which I was aware had some difficult experiences in its previous history. I could see that the gift of peace-making and community-building would be really helpful. There was a sense that I knew that I would have to affirm and encourage the people at MPUC in such a way as to enable healing of brokenness in the congregation, and thus facilitate a growing sense of unity.

Together we would need to affirm and embrace the vision of a holistic ministry involving word, sign and deed – to hold together the balance of three major aspects of Christian theology and practice: (1) the evangelical word of the gospel in evangelism, (2) the respect and encouragement of the variety of charismatic gifts in the Spirit, and (3) the exercise of vigorous social justice within the context of the Kingdom of God.

Facilities at MPUC were inadequate for the burgeoning ministries and mission of the Church, both within the Church and in the community. They were a less-than-adequate witness to the community for a Church that was vibrant and contemporary calling the people forward. This was especially so in relation to our children's and youth ministries.

Following two previous failed attempts to renovate and rebuild, we captured the moment of a fresh sense of unity and enthusiasm to rebuild and move forward. There was a narrow window of opportunity which we believed God had given us, so we grasped it. I shall never forget the great day of opening and dedication of our new Worship and Community Centre. The theme of the message that day was 'Living in the Dream and Vision' and we took as our scriptural texts Joel 2:28 & 29 and Colossians 2:6 & 7.

The Joel passage reads: "Then afterward I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even on the male and female servants, in those days, I will pour out my spirit". This was a powerful intergenerational inclusive prophetic word for the coming Messianic age.

The Colossian passage reads: "As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving".

I also used as a model for our dreams and vision, words by John Stott recorded in Mary Endersbee's book *Hidden Miracles at All Souls*, related to the renovations of All Souls cathedral in London:

"I have a dream of a church .....which is a biblical church.....-

"I have a dream of a church.....which is a worshipping church.....-

"I have a dream of a church.....which is a caring church.....-

"I have a dream of a church.....which is a serving church.....-

"I have a dream of a church .....which is an expectant church....."



In my time at Mt Pleasant I sought consolidation and building on existing foundations of Ministries already in place but can reflect back with some satisfaction and gratitude developments in them highlighted by the following achievements:

Firstly, the covenanting partnership with Maaman 'O' Miya; and the Aboriginal congregation at Coolbellup Uniting Church: In addition to the enormous value of cross-cultural people relationships, it enabled the birth of the funerals ministry in the WA Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (with their own hearse), the establishment of an education fund for lay leadership, and the growth of financial services for people in need. We have some key images bearing testimony to this in some wall hangings and paintings in the church: "Sunrise over the Ocean", on the one hand, and Marilyn Garlett's paintings of the Jitty Jitty (representing Jesus) and the crow and the magpie, on the other.

The people's ministry of creativity and art which evokes a spirit of life and inspiration may be found in many areas of our Worship and Community Centre. Each work of art tells a story: "those who have eyes and a heart to see, let them see".

Occasionally holding an Agape Love Feast celebrating what God was doing in our midst and in the community was another highlight for me during my time at Mt Pleasant Uniting Church.

Also assisting with courageous and bold ministries overseas in a number of countries through various agencies such as Interserv, Uniting in Mission, Tear in addition to personal contacts.

I give thanks for the prayer and healing ministry with the coming of the Rev. Val Bock as a Minister in Association during her time at Mt Pleasant Uniting Church and the mission outreach and evangelism ministry with the coming of the Rev. Ian Robinson as a Minister in Association at MPUC.

It was with considerable disappointment that I retired prematurely because of my wife Margaret's ill-health. While I knew that some others were/had been even younger, I had to overcome an acute sense of injustice that somebody as young as Margaret should have become a victim of Alzheimer's disease.

Nevertheless, I also knew by faith; the deep experience of God's grace and living presence comforting us during this long and tough journey of gradual decline and I will be forever grateful to the people of MPUC for surrounding us with love and support during these years. I knew I had been in the right place, in a Congregation which practised aspects of shared leadership among the people of God.

I felt I should leave MPUC at the time I did, to make way for somebody with fresh energy who could take this strong congregation to new levels of ministry and mission.

I also felt I needed to accept the offer of part-time service at Fremantle Wesley and Spearwood Uniting churches so that I could give space for my successor at MPUC to be called and become established, and so that I could keep active while I journeyed along with Margaret caring both for her and for myself. This continued for a period of two years.

More recently, I am grateful to the Rev. James Matthews for welcoming me back to the ministry team in a voluntary capacity as Pastoral Carer.

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And fittingly this chapter concludes with the thoughts and perceived challenges ahead when the Rev James Matthews responded to God's calling and the unanimous decision of his appointment of the 2005-2006 JNC; in accepting the role as the current Minister of the Word at MPUC.





**Rev James Matthews 2006-**

'Hope on the Rise' well describes the Congregation I encountered when Emma, Josh (16), Pete (7) and I arrived at Mt Pleasant in August 2006.

I found I had 'inherited' superbly refurbished facilities and a people passionate for ministry and mission across the generations. A feature of this corporate passion was expressed in the Mission Statement – "This congregation seeks to reflect the love of God as revealed in Jesus and through His Spirit to make Him known by sign, word and deed, in a creative, caring and contemporary manner." There was a great commitment to children and youth ministry, advocacy and mission, and gathered worship.

It soon became apparent that this was a Christian community well aware of the gifts and blessings it had been given through God's grace. Also clear was this Congregation's awareness of being among "those to whom God had given much and from whom God was expecting much!"

MPUC in my view was ready and eager to embrace new challenges in God's work with a welcome blend of new and longer term members, a highly active laity and a great crop of retired and associate Ministers.

All generations were well represented with two dynamic but distinct morning congregations and a monthly youth and young adult evening service which turned out to be in its final throes. Individuals and ministry teams were wondering how best to engage human and material resources so as to bear witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ and grow the Kingdom of God.

The Mount Pleasant Congregation of the Uniting Church in Australia was rich with a gifted and motivated church family and humbled that God would bless and charge it with such opportunity and responsibility. At the same time this was a group of people waiting with expectation for a new season – a new season of leadership, a new season of mission, a new season of growth and a new season of vision.

I discovered that the DNA of MPUC is to ask the big questions (Who is God calling us to be and what is God calling us to do?). We are aware we can't do everything that needs doing nor should how we've always done things hinder us from discovering even better ways of operating.

However we needed a vision for the future. Church Council recommended at the Congregational Meeting in April 2007 that MPUC begin what was to become a year long visioning process featuring the formation of an interim structure comprising a Ministry Management Group who were to make operational decisions to ensure that the current ministries continued and an Interim Church Council who were to identify God's vision for MPUC from 2008 – 2018.

The product of that process is featured in the final chapter of this recording of the first fifty years of the Mount Pleasant Methodist/Uniting Church.

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Footnote: Apart from serving Ministers, Mt Pleasant has been blessed through the ages with a whole retinue of retired Ministers or Ministers in Association calling Mt Pleasant their place of Worship. Not only were those Ministers such an invaluable asset to the wider Church Congregation, their presence and generosity of time and spirit in times of need either in the pulpit, pastoral care or counsel with a variety of Mt Pleasant ministries, have truly been gifts from heaven. To this very day MPUC continue to receive the joy and benefit of having retired and some still practicing Ministers in our Congregation.







## CHAPTER 11

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### COME WITH US IN TO THE FUTURE OF MPUC

It is not difficult to read into all of the preceding pages of this publication how much this Church has been continually blessed by God in all that has been achieved in half a century; and to His people from so many diverse sectors who have been imbued with the Holy Spirit in a glorious mixture of faith, commitment, courage, discipline and vision.

And it is all of those ingredients that are going to need to be to the fore again as the challenges of the next half a century beckon to ensure that the baton of Christ and his love within our community continues to be held, nourished, enhanced and then passed on to generations to come.

At Mt Pleasant Uniting we recognise we are on a journey of discovery and celebration. We know God has been with us for 50 years and has enabled us to worship, witness to, and serve him in many varied and wonderful ways. We have seen capable and humble folk give generously and faithfully of their time, talents, energy and money; in some cases unstintingly for several decades or more! We draw inspiration from our brothers and sisters in Christ over the last half century and from the wider Church across the millennia and around the world.





After a long period of searching within hearts and minds of our Church leaders, a contemporary Vision for MPUC was conceived through 2007 and 2008. Most significantly in this year when we give thanks to God for all that he has achieved for us in our first 50 years, the new Vision was unanimously adopted at a Congregational meeting in April 2008.

This new Vision is both exciting and scary – our awesome God, the God of the Universe, wants to step up his unique relationship with Mt Pleasant Uniting to a new level, teach us some new things and interact with us in new ways! This will demand levels of faith and faithfulness of Old Testament covenantal proportions. We are being called to live as covenant people – kingdom people – in an environment that is at the same time both familiar and strange. We are being called to embrace more fully an attitude of openness and willingness to share our lives with others who do not yet know God's grace and love in Jesus. Yet we do this realising there is much for us still to learn!

The Vision God has given to us is shaped by the following Core Values that will guide MPUC future decision making, relationships and use of its resources.

### LIVING THE REIGN OF GOD

God is the ruler over all things; His rule is enacted through the person, life, death and resurrection of Jesus. All people live under this reign in a broken world. God's story as told through the Bible and continuing in the work of the Holy Spirit is one of God seeking to restore and renew His created world; ultimately achieved through Jesus' victory over the powers of evil, sin and death.

As we experience our part in God's story we understand our vocation to live out the transforming power of God in all that we do, in all areas of society and in the world. This is expressed locally and globally and shares God's special heart for the poor and the marginalised.

### LIVES FOLLOWING CHRIST

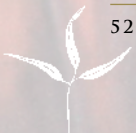
Our Christ- following (discipleship) encompasses all aspects of our lives and activities. It is a life- long process of faith, growth and action, informed by God's revelation of Himself and His purpose in Scripture and in the ongoing ministry of the Holy Spirit. We actively participate in our learning and we grow through the teaching, activities and mentoring of the Church.

### COMMITTED (COVENANT) COMMUNITY

God created us for relationships. God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit model community. In relationship with us, God is reconciling, loving and faithful. God calls us to create generous, hospitable communities that help people build relationships with the living God and with each other. We intentionally do this in our own faith community and other communities of which we are a part.

### SHARING GOD'S STORY (MISSION AND EVANGELISM)

The gospel of Jesus is the promise of restoration to wholeness under the reign of God, both here and now and after death. God desires this for all people. Our mission is to work with the Holy Spirit to bring about this new life and so draw people into the gospel and relationship with God. To do this we follow God's lead and live among those outside the Church getting to know them better and sharing life.





Understanding our culture enables us to be creative and caring in our communication and actions, but also challenging when God leads us to be. It involves living lives that model God's new life (sign) actions that bring about God's new restored world (deed) and words that explain the story of Jesus and our hope in God (evangelism).

## LIVES OF WORSHIP

Our whole lives are lived as worship, honouring God in all that we do. The Holy Spirit leads our individual and gathered praise, thanks, lament and petition. We gather as an expression of our lived worship and these gatherings are therefore relevant and connected to our lives. The risen Christ meets us in many ways- through God's word read, proclaimed and enacted, in creation, in sacrament, prayer, music, silence and reflection and through other people.

## SERVANT LEADERSHIP AND ENABLING STRUCTURES

Our leaders are servants and our structures exist to enable mission and ministry. We value shared and team leadership, which empowers, invests in, mentors and facilitates, rather than dictates. Our leadership has a cross section of spiritual gifts and identifies and draws out those spiritual gifts in others. Clear communication, good support and accountability, strong decision making and healthy resolution of conflict are central to our communal life.

Does this new Vision and its Core Values have implications on what we are on about as a church? Absolutely! It means we will still be red hot for God but it means we will be less focused on church-centred matters and more about being Christ-like in the community – both community among Christians, and community between Christians and the wider community.

We believe God is calling MPUC to a new season of mission - to be 'missional' in all aspects of our being.

We are to continue to strive to reflect the love of God as revealed in Jesus and through His Spirit make Him known by word, sign and deed. However we are also being called to have the Core Values shape our daily lives as they guide our decision-making, relationships and our use of resources.

What MPUC will look like in practice and after several years will be discovered over time – time spent developing our character as a church according to those Core Values.

To claim we know for sure what our shape will be in five years is to get ahead of ourselves and we risk failing to listen closely to the Holy Spirit along the way. We are being called to live the Core Values outlined in the Vision, to listen to the Holy Spirit and to allow God to shape us as he leads us into the future.

In our journey we have reflected on Mt Pleasant Church past and present and have found that much of what we already do is in line with the Vision. What's new about the Vision is that God is calling us to a greater level of relationship and missional intent amongst those who do not yet know God's grace and love in Jesus. What we will experience is the strength of unity and gathering momentum behind shared Vision. Our wide range of ministries utilising the gifts and passion of individual leaders will find greater focus and direction. As members of a church community that is greatly blessed we have a sense that much is expected of us.



Our Vision requires great faithfulness to God and enables us to return greater fruitfulness for the kingdom of God. It will stretch us – but when we are stretched we grow. It will challenge us – but God promises to walk with us every step of the way.

In a world where social patterns and views of church and spirituality are very different from 50 years ago and even only 20 years ago; where congregations of mainstream denominations such as ours are declining notably, and many who express interest in Jesus have rejected Sunday church as the place to encounter Him, the ‘family church’ MUST remain committed to the gospel of Jesus Christ..... and be very flexible about everything else!

We look forward to what God is opening up for us in the future. This is the starting point of the next era in the history and life of the Mount Pleasant Church. We invite you to come on board and continue the journey with God and with us.







 **Mount Pleasant Uniting Church**  
*hope on the rise*

